

INVESTING IN YOURSELF: ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNALISM IN THE DIGITAL AGE

by

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Investing in Yourself: Entrepreneurial Journalism in the Digital Age
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Abstract

This dissertation is grounded in a Critical Political Economy of communication theoretical framework in conjunction with extensive, qualitative interviews with eighteen emerging journalists, three journalism educators from different types of journalism schools (academic, vocational, hybrid) and four editors from different types of news organizations (legacy, public broadcaster, digital first media) in order to navigate between institutional structures and the agency of individual actors. This work examines how the current structural configurations of the news media industry are impacting how emerging journalists negotiate the expectations that they develop personal brands online, including their perceived control and autonomy over their work. It also aims to understand how journalistic training and hiring practices in news media organizations are changing given the financial uncertainty of the industry. The death of the advertising business model, the increasingly precarious nature of the journalism workforce, and an increased reliance on social networking sites for distribution, referred to as the 'new media environment', are shaping the way news is produced and the ways in which emerging journalists are able to achieve paid employment.

This dissertation presents an original inquiry into the online brand building and professionalization practices of emerging journalists. This study finds that as journalists are increasingly required to personally brand themselves and act as entrepreneurs, the governing values of the profession and the work of doing journalism has changed greatly. It was found that the notion of journalistic autonomy is complex and contradictory as journalists prefer the freedoms that are afforded from working in a freelance capacity but are also compelled to use social networking sites for professionalization and must engage in self-promotion and personal branding.

The findings further demonstrate that emerging journalists must undergo layers of what the researcher refers to as *visibility labour*, which refers to the layers of unpaid labour, the processes of self-commodification and personal branding that emerging journalists must undertake to promote themselves, gain recognition and build audiences around themselves in attempts to build a sustainable career and resist precarity.

This dissertation considers policy responses and proposes ways forward for the news industry, journalism education, and for journalists themselves.

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Table of Contents

AUTHOR’S DECLARATION FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF A DISSERTATION	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Chapter 1- Introduction	1
Context	4
Theoretical Frame: Critical Political Economy of Communications	12
Literature Review.....	15
Journalistic Identity.....	16
Brand Culture	19
Digital Labour.....	25
Chapters.....	35
Chapter 2- Research Design and Methodology	39
Sample	44
Emerging Journalists	44
Journalism Educators.....	47
Editors at News Media Organizations.....	48
Generalizability	49
Semi-structured Interviews.....	50
Coding.....	51
Ethics.....	53
Chapter 3- A Political Economy of the Canadian News Media Landscape.....	54
Trends Towards Corporate Convergence.....	54
What is a democratic communications system meant to look like?	56
What has caused media convergence? How did we get here?.....	58
How have recent trends impacted journalism?.....	60
Financialization of Canadian News Media.....	61
An Industry of Struggle	63
Turning Tides?	65
Social News: From A Public Mass Model to Information Democratization	66
Accountability in Turbulent Times?	71
Journalistic Autonomy.....	75
Advertising	76
Infotainment, the strive for ‘objectivity’ and ‘official sources’	77
Losses in diversity or giving the people what they want?.....	79
Autonomy or Echo Chamber?.....	80

The Public Broadcaster’s Role in Producing the News.....	81
Should we bailout the news industry?.....	84
Digital Innovators	89
Chapter 4 - A New Direction in Journalistic Training?.....	92
Why the new direction?.....	94
Entrepreneurial Journalism as the Solution?.....	94
A Brief History of Journalism Education in Canada	99
i. On Entrepreneurial Approaches to Journalism Education and Practice	104
ii. On Brand Building Through Social Media and ‘Objectivity’?.....	109
iii. Do values of entrepreneurship and public service journalism clash?	114
iv. On Challenges to J-School Education Going Forward	119
DISCUSSION	123
CONCLUSION	126
Chapter 5 – Making the News in Canada 2.0	129
Evolving Business Models	131
Tech Giants and Business Models in Journalism.....	134
The Rise of Branded Content and Native Advertising.....	135
Original Reporting.....	138
Shifting Dynamics in the Canadian News Industry.....	142
Branding: Should you be everything to everyone?	142
Struggles	147
Shifting Definitions of Journalism	148
Metrics and Audience.....	150
Advertising	152
The ‘Ideal’ Journalist.....	154
J-school or no J-school?	154
Skills?.....	158
Personal Branding and Social Media	160
A Specialist or a Generalist?	163
Being Opinionated on Social Media	164
DISCUSSION: NEWS ORGANIZATIONS.....	166
DISCUSSION: JOURNALISTS.....	171
CONCLUSION	174
Chapter 6: Emerging Journalists in Canada: Professional Identities and Personal	
Branding	178
Journalism Education	181
Personal Branding	183
i. Niche Brands and Inbound work.....	185

ii. Successful Brands.....	188
iii. Opinions and Personalities Get More follows.....	191
iv. Visibility Labour and Branding.....	194
Journalistic Identity and Values	196
ii. Definitions of journalism.....	200
iii. Supplementing Income with PR Work	202
iv. Developing Media Startups.....	204
Autonomy	206
i. Ideal Work is Freelance.....	206
ii. Straying from your Brand	209
iii. Reliance on Established Networks.....	211
iv. Commodification.....	214
v. 'I have to be on social media'	216
DISCUSSION.....	217
CONCLUSION	224
Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations.....	225
Research Summary.....	225
Critical Political Economy of Communications.....	231
Journalistic Autonomy.....	234
The New Paths to Success: Personal Branding	238
Between Two Worlds	240
Industry	242
Education	250
Journalists	253
Reflections and Future Research	257
List of Appendices	261
1.0– Interview Protocol (Educators)	261
1.1– Interview Protocol (Editors).....	263
1.2 – Interview Protocol (Journalists)	265
2.0 – Qualitative Analysis	267
References	268

Chapter 1- Introduction

This dissertation presents an original scholarly inquiry into how changes in the structure and practice of news media making in a digital context have had an impact on emerging journalists' professional identities in Canada and the ways in which they professionalize in search of career mobility. These dynamics result in a more fluid conception of what journalism 'is' as the governing values of the profession are questioned by emerging journalists. While the decline of mainstream media institutions and the proliferation of digital technologies that enable more accessibility to media production are trends that have shifted the historically 'top-down' approach to media making, the premature celebration of this 'shift' requires unpacking to determine if it has produced increased freedom and autonomy for journalists. As the advertising business model for journalism becomes increasingly untenable and mainstream media organizations restructure and thin their workforces through massive layoffs, scholars are divided between those who praise the newfound autonomy of journalists (Shirky, 2008; Bruns, 2008), as they navigate through non-standard working conditions and those that caution that the downfall of mainstream media's stronghold on information production does not represent a revolution in the pluralistic and grassroots production of news media (Compton and Benedetti, 2010; Cohen, 2015) .

This dissertation will explore the impacts and changes of what will be referred to as the 'new media environment' on the field of journalism. The new media environment refers to the lack of stable journalism jobs and increasing precarious nature of journalism work, the decline of the advertising revenue model for journalism, and an increased reliance on social networking platforms to deliver news content to audiences. Given the steady decline of the standard employment workforce in large media companies, which historically characterized the job trajectory for new journalists (Deuze, 2006), the new professionalization climate for emerging journalists who are entering the field will be explored in this dissertation. This project will investigate the macro level institutional dynamics and broader economic forces that create, shape, and sustain the role of journalists in digital environments, while also exploring how the agency of individuals interacts with and mutually constitutes structural forces to produce a particular set of social relations. This dissertation hypothesizes that with the increased focus on audiences and commodification of news media with the emergence of digital technologies, journalistic autonomy has been eroded.

The broad research question of this dissertation asks how journalists, journalism educators and digital news editors in Canada are navigating the new media environment. For journalists who are entering the field, what does it mean to develop a personal brand and entrepreneurial skills independent of the infrastructure of a media organization? What are the dimensions of building a brand online? What makes a

successful brand? Drawing upon Deuze's (2011) understanding of journalistic autonomy, meaning freedom, independence, editorial autonomy, freedom from censorship, advertising influence, and market influence; do emerging journalists possess journalistic autonomy in this environment? Subsequently, how does this environment impact journalistic identity and the very definition of journalism?

For journalism educators, how is the new media environment impacting the way journalists are trained? Are personal branding and entrepreneurial skills being taught in journalism schools? Does combining entrepreneurship and journalism impact traditional conceptions of journalism and the role of the journalist?

For digital news editors, how are business models adapting to the collapse of the traditional advertising business model? How is the reliance on social media platforms for news distribution shaping the ways news is produced? When it comes to hiring journalists, what does an ideal or successful candidate look like? Is possessing a personal brand required?

Grounded in a Critical Political Economy of Communications (CPE) theoretical framework, this dissertation also draws upon Digital Labour studies, Journalism Studies, as well as Brand Culture Studies to examine the case study of journalism (and journalists) in a precarious and rapidly shifting environment where the expectation for journalists to employ personal branding through social networking sites (SNS) for professional development is becoming normative. These questions will be addressed

through interviews with emerging journalists who are currently trying to enter the field of journalism and are actively seeking out paid work in the field, journalism educators, and digital news editors at different types of organizations. These interviews will allow the researcher to examine how journalists are interpreting and practicing their roles in the current climate in relation to broader structural changes and practices in order to assess the agency and autonomy of individual journalists in the Canadian news media landscape.

The benefits of conducting this research will be a richer understanding of the experiences of emerging journalists (including the unpaid labour they must employ) and the relationship between vocational training, professionalization practices and what is expected by employers. Further, it will provide insight into how journalistic autonomy and journalism itself are changing in a digital environment.

Context

Journalism as a profession is in a state of uncertainty, it is constantly being forced to reinvent itself as digital technologies intensify the processes by which news is created. The traditional barrier between journalist and audience has been dismantled with the use of social networking sites by journalists. Citizens are participants in journalism production and audiences are becoming ever more important in determining what is newsworthy. At the same time, there is currently a 'crisis of journalism', which this dissertation characterizes as the rise in non-standard and precarious work in the

journalism field, declining advertising revenues for news-media organizations and increased competition arising from strictly digital news platforms and social networking sites (SNS). As Dwayne Winseck's (2017) research with the Canadian Media Research Concentration Project illustrates, advertising spending appears to have hit a ceiling and declined in relation to the growth of the network media economy on a per capita basis. Spending per person declined from \$380 in 2012 to \$347 in 2016 (Winseck, 2017). While the pie is shrinking, Facebook and Google are carving out a bigger portion for themselves when it comes to digital advertising revenue. These two companies accounted for approximately 72% of Canada's 5.5-billion-dollar internet advertising industry.

Structural changes to media organizations that have emerged through intensified media concentration and corporate convergence have had major impacts on content creation as well as the labour environments for journalism in Canada and internationally. Digitization has led to vast changes in the logic of media corporations as they strive to exploit the benefits of synergies while focusing on short-term profitability and maximizing audiences. This has undoubtedly influenced how journalistic content is produced, monetized, and consumed. These shifts have developed in tandem with major disruptions in the news media industry, including lower advertising revenue, dwindling subscriptions and the need to regionalize and nationalize content to cut costs. Postmedia's recent layoff of 90 journalists in efforts to

regionalize and synergize operations (Watson, 2016) is one example amongst many in the current Canadian media landscape that points to the increasing instability in the journalism profession. Fewer journalists are working within major media corporations as a result of digital convergence, as journalism work may be adapted for multiple platforms. In addition, scholars have noted that intensified pressures to capture audiences has led to less investigative journalism and more entertainment style news (Cooper, 2005, Skinner and Gasher, 2005), enhancing the profit-based orientation of news-media making.

On the other hand, the affordances of digital technologies and social networking sites (SNS) has led to the rise of 'citizen journalism' and user-generated content (UGC), leading some to question the future and utility of the journalism profession. In many ways, digitization has reduced barriers to entry, leading to the creation of new forms of content by individuals including blogging and the creation of many other forms of UGC including audio and visual material. This era has been praised by many as representing a new era of cultural production from the bottom up where people can become producers without having to go through traditional organizational channels (Bruns, 2008). While the democratizing potentials of new technologies is surely important to consider, so are the implications this environment has on the labour that goes into that cultural production. This is particularly important to consider in the context of rises in precarious and unstable labour in the creative industries, and journalism more

specifically. Some have even argued that citizen journalism may fill in the gaps of the lost labour from massive layoffs (Shirky, 2008). While it is true that media organizations often rely on citizen contributions when reporting the news (Compton and Benedetti, 2010), this has implications not only for the labour of the profession but also for understandings of what it means to be a journalist.

In many ways, this environment cannot be separated from the 'crisis of journalism', which has often been framed through declining revenues for news media organizations. The labour environment that has ensued is nothing short of precarious for those pursuing a career in the field, as internships and freelance work become normative. For those that are able to secure stable journalism work, their jobs have been expanded outside of information gathering and news-reporting to include photography, editing, page production (Skinner, Compton, and Gasher, 2005, Compton and Benedetti, 2010), and more recently brand building and social media engagement, which severely alters their capacity to do actual 'journalism work'. As Cohen (2015) argues, entrepreneurial journalism has been proposed as one potential solution to the crisis of journalism. The idea that journalists must be 'savvy' and think like entrepreneurs to both build a brand and reach their audiences is becoming pervasive. While entrepreneurship in journalism is not a new phenomenon; disruptive digital technologies, the rise of neoliberalism and the financial downturn have all been

instrumental in bringing this term to the forefront of discussions on the future of journalism.

Entrepreneurial journalism is being adopted more and more as a pedagogical approach in some journalism schools in the US and Canada. Educators have argued that the move towards entrepreneurialism and a heavy focus on technical skills and innovation in journalism education, detracts from the aims and functions of journalism's long established role in society as a public service and for democracy (Bendetti, 2015, Francoeur, 2015, Levine et al, 2015), these arguments are counterbalanced by examinations of the tough realities in the marketplace and the expectation that graduates come equipped with particular sets of skills (Picard, 2015, Shapiro, 2015). Picard (2015) argues further that a focus on entrepreneurship and innovation could actually contribute to the fostering of independent journalistic media production. Regardless, there are few journalism scholars who are advocating for a continued obligation to teaching traditional journalistic values (Anderson, 2014; Gasher, 2006). In many ways, this can be understood as a shift towards a demand-based approach to journalism where students are to first consider audience desires, advertisers, etc., and views the journalist's role as fulfilling a market function rather than that of a social good (Mensing and Ryfe, 2013). This certainly presents a paradigm shift in the teaching of journalism for those institutions who have adopted this approach considering

educational institutions have long separated editorial processes and the economics of media production (McChesney, 2013; Gasher, 2015).

However, now that there have been decades of decline in mainstream media audiences and the rise of digital technologies that have lowered the barriers to entry in creating media products, there has been a premature celebration by some scholars regarding the newfound autonomy of the journalism field or of journalists themselves. For Shirky (2008), in the new media ecosystem, long standing mainstream media institutions have been weakened, and this provides an opportunity to create content without the 'filter of newsmedia'. Historically, journalism could be conceptualized as more of a one-way street, where journalists and editors decided what stories were 'newsworthy' and the audience was somewhat separate from the production process. The celebration of this democratization or 'ubiquity' of news-media production is both a critique of the paternalism or top-down approach of old models for media production and viewed as a potential solution for the lost labour of journalists, who, amidst major layoffs, find it increasingly difficult to obtain secure work in the field. However, it is important to consider, whether the increasing focus on audiences precipitates further commodification of news-media and journalists, rather than a move away from it. Further, it must be considered whether the democratization of media technologies produces a democratization of news media production. Do journalists

have more autonomy in this day and age? Also, how can we conceive of this 'autonomy' in the context of the current state of the news media industry in Canada?

The idea that journalists have more autonomy in this environment is often argued by proponents of 'entrepreneurial journalism'. The term 'entrepreneurial journalism', a somewhat vague or undefined term, emerged after the financial crisis in 2008. Unsurprisingly, the discussion surrounding entrepreneurial journalism in this context spoke to the need to innovate and find new business models to sustain journalism considering the stagnation of old business models. At the heart of the search for innovative new models for news-media was the figure of the journalist as an entrepreneur. In other words, if the jobs no longer exist, create them for yourselves. Struggles for stable work in the field can be repurposed as opportunities for those entering the field.

Cohen (2015) situates the rise of entrepreneurial journalism within the rise of enterprise culture more broadly, which she attributes to the intensification of neoliberalism in the 1980s. This culture was particularly prominent in the cultural industries and very much reflects the decline in standard work; ie. full-time work for a single employer with workplace benefits (Vosco, 2010) and its replacement with non-standard work; i.e. precarious, part-time, contract, casual work with little to no workplace benefits. Journalists are increasingly engaging in self-branding and promoting to adapt to the precarious and 'flexible' nature of the workforce (Hearn,

2008). It is not just self-promotion that is often required of workers within digital media organizations but also pressures to increase circulation. Some are even paid based on how many people read their articles (Cohen, 2015).

It has certainly been recognized that so-called 'personal brand journalism' (Wolf, 2014) is replacing traditional career paths for journalists where one completes a journalism program and attains employment at a large media organization. Increasingly journalists are required to gain notoriety before securing any paid work. According to Kuehn and Corrigan (2013) this is characterized through either writing for exposure or developing a social media following that can be leveraged into paid work. In this sense, entrepreneurial journalism is "a response to spreading precarity, a way to cope with job scarcity, declining wages, declining faith in the occupation, and journalists declining autonomy and control" (Cohen, 2015, 516). As a result, the dismantling of mainstream media may not present increased autonomy for journalists after all, but rather an increase in risk, personal responsibility and unpaid labour time spent in order to secure paid opportunities.

It has been argued that neoliberal policies and the proliferation of digital technologies have led to increased precarity for creative workers leading to a great deal of freelance or project-based work, where risk is offset to individuals (Harvey, 2006, Flew and Cunningham, 2010, Neff, 2012). This has certainly become commonplace in the field of journalism. In this environment, individuals are increasingly

engaging in self-branding for the purposes of establishing authenticity, credibility and building social capital to ensure they have continued work in their field (Banet-Weiser, 2013). There has been an increased focus as of late on the prevalence of unpaid work and the exploitation that occurs through unpaid internships (Cohen, 2012; Corrigan, 2015). Less attention, however, has been paid to online branding as 'work' and how this may be understood in the context of the digital labour debates and understandings of autonomy, alienation, and exploitation. To appreciate how this environment has been created, it is important to contextualize the forces that have given rise to changes in the production of news media and in turn, journalistic labour. This dissertation seeks to examine how emerging journalists, who must brand themselves online experience autonomy, alienation, exploitation and understandings of their professional identities.

Theoretical Frame: Critical Political Economy of Communications

The critical political economy of communications provides an important theoretical frame for understanding the importance of new media for a functioning democracy, while critiquing structural factors that constrain media production, including the industry's increasing rationalization and commodification of information. According to Mosco (2009), political economy of communications is the study of "social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution and consumption of resources, including communication

resources” (2). The purpose of political economy is to trace the impact of those forces on the range of media choices available to audiences. In this respect, a critical political economy of journalism and news media requires an analysis of how power dynamics, specifically ownership of the media, operate to alter the processes of news media making and in turn their ability to facilitate democracy.

Critical political economy (CPE)’s emphasis on history will provide a frame for understanding structural and policy changes in the field of journalism and how they align with processes of globalization, neoliberalism and technological change (See for example, Skinner and Gasher, 2005, Cooper, 2005, Winseck, 2008). This includes an examination of how these forces have mutually constituted the current era of media concentration, privatization and corporate convergence. Additionally, an assessment of these broader trends provides insight into how labour conditions have shifted alongside these changes, including the growth of the precarious labour force in the field of journalism. Additionally, CPE’s focus on moral philosophy provides a frame for understanding the social utility of news media and a vision of how journalism ought to serve the public interest and democratic functioning as well as how the current economic system interacts with these goals. In providing a framework for what a healthy communications system would look like, one can assess how the current climate for emerging journalists adheres to or undermines those ideals (See for example, Murdock and Golding 1996; Baker, 2007; Zhao, and Hackett, 2005).

Political economy as an approach has been criticized for economic determinism as well as paying too little attention to agency with respects to what audiences want, challenging that the approach to content production is as top down as has been suggested (Babe, 2009). While there may be some truth to those claims, CPE's focus on the social totality examines the relationships between the commodification of information, social relations (including labour relations) and economic systems and institutions to provide a comprehensive frame for understanding social trends and phenomena. The increased pressures to capture the attention of audiences needs to be critically contextualized to understand the role of news media as a social or public good in the digital age.

Scholars have long since argued that the hyper-commercialization of the media and the focus on short-term profits comes at the expense of 'public service journalism'. In other words, more and more market forces are determining and constraining media production and media products (See for example, Baker, 2007, McChesney, 2004, Herman and Chomsky, 1988). In many ways, this speaks to the lack of autonomy of journalists working within mainstream media organizations to pursue content that may be in the public interest. These critiques were very much connected to the growing media concentration, corporate convergence and digitization that were increasingly rationalizing the production of news-media in North America. Now, however, that there have been decades of decline in mainstream media audiences and the rise of digital

technologies that have lowered the barriers to entry in creating media products, there has been a premature celebration by some scholars regarding the newfound autonomy of the journalism field or of journalists themselves.

The question then becomes, do journalists have more autonomy in the new media environment just because they have access to platforms that democratize media production? How does precarious employment impact autonomy? It is important to consider, whether the increasing focus on audiences precipitates further commodification of news-media, rather than a move away from it. Given the focus on structural forces in the CPE theoretical tradition, other bodies of literature must be examined to understand the agency of individual journalists who are navigating the current structural arrangement of the news media industry.

Literature Review

Theoretical work on how digital technologies have disrupted the production and consumption of media is quite prevalent. However, there are many debates that still persist within various disciplines with respects to how these changes should be understood and how they may impact journalism as a field, journalistic identity, and what may be understood as 'work' in the digital age.

This study uniquely applies and reconceptualizes understandings of digital labour by examining personal branding online through a case study of emerging journalists in Canada who are working in non-standard employment conditions. By synthesizing the

literature on journalistic identity, branding and digital labour, this research will critically examine how the 'free use' of social networking sites for professional development differs importantly from the labour of engaging in social networking for 'play' often termed 'playbour' and other forms of online cultural production. This dissertation will reinterpret Dallas Smythe's (2001) concept of the audience commodity in a digital environment by discovering the dynamics of professional identity branding amongst emerging journalists, who must build audiences to leverage for future work. Importantly, this study aims to determine if there is a relationship between processes of self-commodification that occur through personal identity branding online and the types of journalistic brands that are able to succeed in this environment.

The idea that journalists must brand themselves, gain a following and employ entrepreneurial skills to survive, thrive, or even enter the field as a journalist is a new challenge that both industry and vocational institutions are grappling with.

Journalistic Identity

Considering some major shifts in the industry, this dissertation will consider the 'lowered-barriers to entry' that accompany the higher barriers to secure employment and all of the unpaid labour that must accompany that journey.

At the heart of the debates surrounding major shifts in journalist's professional identities is how an increasingly audience focused industry might shift what it means to be a journalist and the work involved as social media engagement and personal

branding become commonplace. The proliferation of digital technologies and adoption of said technologies in the journalism field has put increasing pressure on journalists to be hyper-active in social media. This shift in the daily role of journalists has put the identity norms, practices, and values of journalists in a state of flux.

This state of flux is not lost on many scholars who attempt to assess these shifts. There have been several studies that look at the relationship between branding of individual journalists and the negotiation (and sacrifice) of personal identity online as a result (see for example: Holton, 2015 or Bossio and Sacco, 2016). Other studies have looked at how social media has become a tool for audience participation (see for example: Hermida, 2009, Sheffer and Schultz, 2009). Further, there have been studies on how social media is used amongst professional journalists (see for example: Hirst and Treadwell, 2011; Hjort, Oskarsson, and Szabo, 2011) and how the norms, ideals and identities of journalists may shift in relation to increased social media use (see for example: Armstrong and Gao, 2010; Broersma and Graham, 2012; Hedman and Djrf-Pierre, 2013). Finally, research has attempted to examine the autonomy of journalists, particularly those who are increasingly working in a freelance capacity, noting the freedoms and constraints that accompany 'being your own boss' and having control over the content you create while also being precariously employed (See for example: Mathisen, 2017).

Despite the extensive research that has been conducted on this subject matter, a more comprehensive study is required that synthesizes past research to understand the intersection of social media use by journalists, shifts in professional identity and most importantly journalistic autonomy. What is often missing from these studies is an understanding of social media use in an unpaid, professional development context. Specifically, there is more research needed on emerging journalists who often must “pay for the chance to work” (Bousquet, 2008, 63). This is why this dissertation will explore how emerging journalists, who do not have stable labour in the field, and are actively seeking paid employment, negotiate personally branding themselves online and building an audience. This is particularly important when looking at how the field of journalism has changed and how professionalization has played a role in determining what is considered ‘real journalism’ and who may be considered ‘real journalists’. As Deuze (2005) points out, the traditional journalistic values including the public service ideal, neutrality, credibility, autonomy, immediacy, and legitimacy may be challenged by the introduction of social media into the daily lives of journalists. Not only will this dissertation look at how these changes may transform journalistic identity and values but also how the social networking platforms journalist’s use with their own structures and logics, may impact the content that emerging journalists develop to build their brands.

Given that the journalistic ideal that journalists possess autonomy was predicated on a separation between audience and journalist, can autonomy persist in the new climate for professionalization of journalists where personal branding online is becoming commonplace? A survey of the literature on branding is necessary to understand how branding is technically not new in journalism but how it has taken on a completely different form under neoliberalism, impacting the paths to success for individual journalists.

Brand Culture

Studies of brand cultures provide both a historical context as well as a contemporary frame for examining branding and the role it plays in contemporary capitalism and in this case, with respects to journalism. Branding is by no means a new phenomenon, it has long since existed as a tool in business to protect, differentiate and market products. However, many theorists are interested in tracing the widespread adoption of branding practices beyond business contexts and into our everyday lives, looking at the way that branding both shapes our behavior and has become a structural feature of modern culture (See for example, Banet-Weiser, 2013, Aronczyk and Powers, 2010, Klein, 2000).

Entrepreneurship and self-branding is not new, but has been implicated in journalism for quite some time. The 'star system', which began in radio, catapulted journalists from anonymity to celebrity. Davis and Owen (1998) characterize the rise of

the star system alongside the commodification of news media, where the news industry assumed the characteristics of the entertainment industry. They note an early example of this during WWII, where a group of American journalists overseas used radio to broadcast coverage of conflicts. They became known as the 'Murrow Boys' and their coverage turned them into celebrities. Davis and Owens (1998) argue that the cult of personality journalism was exacerbated with the rise of television in the 1950's. Journalists that gained star status were given new opportunities to showcase themselves outside of their typical roles as journalists. In many ways, journalists were not just reporting the news they were becoming the news as well.

The star system created a paradox when it came to troubled times for the news business. Media organizations began downsizing but kept on star reporters that commanded higher salaries. This created two classes of journalists, an elite of celebrity journalist press personalities and the majority of lower paid working reporters (Davis and Owen, 1998). There is evidence of this trend happening in Canada with the public broadcaster fostering star journalists like Peter Mansbridge and Jian Ghomeshi. It was reported that CBC's Peter Mansbridge was making over a million dollars per year before he left *The National* (Brown, 2016b). Despite being perpetually cash-strapped, the CBC ensures their star journalists are extremely well compensated. According to the 2011 Statistics Canada census, the average income of a journalist was \$46, 621 (Salamon, 2016), which means that this level of compensation amounts to 20+ full-time

journalists' salaries. The star system has also been criticized for contributing to a decline in the quality of news by prioritizing entertainment value and opinion over quality journalism and the labour of research and reporting:

The system works on the premise that it is not so much information that is important, but the person who is delivering it, reporters who have specialized areas of expertise now need to become instant experts on a wide range of stories and issues (David and Owen, 1998, 192)

There is also the concern that celebrity journalists who are paid for appearances and speaking to special interest groups are unable to be truly independent from these groups when covering them.

The creation of 'celebrity journalists' has also been tied to hard-hitting, breaking stories that end up having wide reach and profound impacts on the public. When Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward reported on the Watergate scandal in 1972, they were young journalists who had not yet risen to notoriety. Their investigative coverage of the story that was bigger than the burglary was one that radically shifted how people looked at the American government. Their coverage of the Watergate cover-up, of the war that Nixon had waged on the anti-Vietnam war movement, on the media, and on democrats, ultimately led to the president's resignation. Importantly, this occurred in the 'golden age' for newspapers, where reporters had the resources and time to follow a story to wherever it may lead. This coverage led to very lucrative careers for Bernstein and Woodward, including the co-writing of the nonfiction book 'All the President's

Men' about their investigative coverage of Watergate. This book was also commissioned into a film of the same name in 1976. In investigating the stories that no one else was touching, this reporting elevated the brand and celebrity of the two journalists as well as the *Washington Post* for serving the public with coverage that illustrated that the media would hold those in power to account and fulfill its idealized watchdog function.

It is important to recognize that star system progressed in tandem with the journalistic infrastructure that was built in the 20th century. Journalists were catapulted into stars within the confines of the well-funded infrastructures of trusted and established media organizations. These journalists were paid employees and had salaries. These journalists had time to chase a story, to foster relationships with sources and to build credibility. They did this all while earning a full-time salaried wage. By reporting the most important news, you might just get a front-page byline and become the news.

Despite the history of the star system, the current moment presents very different challenges and contradictions when it comes to the 'cult of personality' and personal branding for journalists. While there are still journalists who garner attention for their breaking or investigative coverage, this is still often within the confines of working for an established media organization. The increasingly reliance on a freelance, precarious workforce in journalism creates a very different context for how journalists

develop brands or gain recognition. For example, the use of social networking platforms for professionalization and to gain notoriety is a relatively new phenomenon that requires further study. Without the well-funded, old infrastructures of legacy media organizations in place, all emerging journalists are left with are the social networking platforms that bear the promise of turning a nobody into a star. The dynamics have changed greatly. There is no 'front' page of the internet. Journalists must still chart their paths to success, chase stories and develop networks and sources but that work is now often/in many cases unpaid and without the guarantee of a payoff. Banet-Weiser (2013) argues that brand cultures have become a contemporary feature of neoliberalism through a 3-part process: from Fordist mass consumption marketing, to post-Fordist niche marketing, to current individuated branding. These processes and their historical development offer insight into the contemporary logic that branding is increasingly becoming a feature (and in some ways a necessity) of modern life for individuals. Aronczyk and Powers (2010) go further to argue,

"Among the flexible accumulation strategies of postindustrial capital, in which labour processes, markets, products, and consumption patterns are subject to constant commercial, technological, and organizational change, brands emerge as the ideal rhetorical device to smooth and soften the impact of such change" (p.5).

In this sense, brands have become a vital practice by which institutions and individuals establish authenticity, credibility and stability in a context where significant structural and technological changes are occurring. This is echoed in the literature on branding in

journalism. Branding is viewed as a way to establish credibility and legitimacy to the news by having a more active audience and lowered barrier between journalists and audiences (Andersson, 2009). This is said in some cases to be important for journalists to build loyalty and community (Hermida et al, 2012). However, branding is also an important strategy for resisting precarious working conditions that journalists now find themselves in.

Banet-Weiser's (2013) work further provides important contributions to the examination of contemporary branding practices by addressing this issue of authenticity in branding. While addressing how branding has historically been treated as inauthentic and fake in its strictly commercial/business context, Banet-Weiser (2013) pushes for a conceptualization of brand cultures and the supposed authenticity they offer as ambivalent. She argues that brand cultures may take a variety of forms, including politically progressive ones. This will be an important theoretical frame to utilize when analyzing how brand building and the increasing audience orientation impacts traditional journalistic values such as transparency and autonomy.

Ambivalence accounts for the tense relationship between the commercial and quantifiable imperatives of branding and the potential for brands to be authentic and genuine, despite the fact that authenticity is being commodified. While Banet-Weiser (2013) argues that all forms of labour in late capitalism are exploitative, the prospect of authenticity in branding makes it more difficult to recognize that personal branding is

exploitative, unpaid work, because the separation of leisure and work becomes increasingly untenable.

Understanding individuated personal branding as a strategy for resisting precarity is important because it gives insight into how it may, on the one hand, establish credibility and authenticity, but that it also leads to a further encroachment of the values of the entertainment industry into the news world without the old infrastructures that allowed the development of brands through paid, standard employment. Now, journalists are branding themselves online without standard employment and this dissertation argues that these activities in fact constitute work.

Digital Labour

The literature on digital labour will be instrumental in this dissertation for helping to situate and elevate understandings of journalistic identity, work, and autonomy in a new light. Digital technologies have led to an increasingly decentralized network of media producers. The proliferation of social networking sites, blogs, and citizen journalism have enabled various forms of user-generated content. In this context, there have been many efforts by communications scholars to interpret participation in communicative activities online as a form of labour, more specifically referred to as digital labour. Theories of digital labour have often been grounded in a revitalization of Marxist theory in communication studies as well as a reinterpretation of Dallas Smythe's 'audience commodity' in the digital age. Efforts have been made to

conceptualize user-generated content and more broadly use of commercial social networking sites (SNS) as work. This notion has been widely contested, leading to what have been referred to as the 'digital labour debates'. At the heart of these debates is 1) whether such engagement may be considered 'work' in the Marxian sense (i.e. a wage relationship) and 2) whether that relationship produces alienation and exploitation. This labour has been interpreted as distinct from wage labour relations as digital labour is often unpaid, invisible, and conceptualized as leisure. This frame is extremely important not only to apply to communicative activities that may be considered 'leisure activities' but also to activities that may be deemed necessary for securing employment in a field like journalism.

Given the seemingly 'free' use of social media sites, web browsers, and search engines, there have been efforts to apply Dallas Smythe's concept of the audience commodity to the digital age, situating the activity and content that is generated by users as labour as it is what creates (surplus) value for these companies (Terranova, 2000, Andrejevic, 2013, Fuchs and Seignani, 2013, Cohen, 2011, Cote and Pybus, 2007). This involves a shift in understandings of labour outside of the typical understanding of wage-labour relations to include activity that creates value, or immaterial labour (Hardt and Negri, 2000). Smythe (2001) was concerned with the relationship between what he called the 'free lunch' or the media product and the advertising that enabled it to be free. The work of the audience was to do something

of value for advertisers to be worth their asking price, making the 'free lunch' a fiction of sorts as well as secondary to the selling of audiences to advertisers. What was being sold effectively then, was 'audience power', the attention of audiences and for them to be responsive consumers to advertisements. In the digital age uploading content, revealing information about personal preferences, and even simply liking things on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, can be translated into advertising sales and social networking sites are dependent on this content to profit.

The relationship between the 'free lunch' and advertising in the digital age is more complicated as the medium is far more malleable and customizable than it was with traditional mass media (Andrejevic, 2014). There is a far greater ability to measure audiences in the digital medium because audiences themselves rather than major companies are the content producers. Christian Fuchs maintains that "audience ratings no longer need to be approximated, but permanent surveillance of user activities and user content allows the definition of precisely defined consumer groups with specific interests" (2012, 702). Active audiences have blurred the line between producers and consumers and has led to conceptualizing users as 'prosumers' (Fuchs and Seivgnani, 2013, Cohen 2011). The free lunch in this context may appear to some to be the 'free' use of the social networking site, which resonates with Jhally and Livant's (1986) idea that television programs are the wages paid to audiences. However, Andrejevic (2014) argues that the free lunch in the digital age is not use but organization. By this he

means that companies like Google and Facebook structure digital information spaces by tailoring searches and information that is presented to users as 'natural' results. This, he argues, masks the economic imperatives of these companies. For example, Google would have different results for the same query to different users, but their imperative is not to provide the 'best results'. Instead, "it's not what you need to know, it's what you want to know, what you're most likely to click" (Andrejevic, 2014, 201).

The idea that the 'free lunch' may be organization is extremely important for understanding how the field of journalism has changed over time. The ability to monitor what audiences are likely to click on has produced not only the further commodification of news media but of journalists themselves who must also build an audience and following online. Anderson (2011) argues that increasingly metrics are being used in newsrooms to make editorial decisions about what stories are likely to perform best, reinforcing the 'culture of the click'. The reinterpretation of the audience commodity in light of the rise of personal brand journalism will be an important part of the theoretical contribution of this dissertation. In many ways, these norms are entering into the professionalization practices of emerging journalists as journalists utilize commodified social networking sites to build their own following and brand that they can leverage into future work. In this sense, the value that the journalist can add to an organization through their social media following may be their ticket to paid work. The

entrepreneurial journalist both works as an audience member and must perpetuate the culture of the click.

A tension within the digital labour debates surrounds whether it is fair to understand people's use of social networking sites as labour and whether that relationship is exploitative and leads to alienation, or loss of autonomy. This requires moving beyond Marx' understanding of the tradition wage labour relationship to understand work in the neoliberal economy, where the distinction between work and play time is further blurred and unpaid professional development activities are dubiously conceptualized as 'work'. Many scholars have also questioned whether these types of online activities produce exploitation given that there is an element of voluntarism involved in participation and a lack of explicit coercion or force (Caraway, 2011; Hesmondhalgh, 2010; Arvidsson, 2011). Terranova (2004) notably described 'free labour' as "simultaneously voluntarily given and unwanted, enjoyed and exploited" (74). This sentiment is echoed in Andrejevic's earlier work on YouTube, where he finds it difficult to commensurate the autonomy that users may have with the commodification of the SNS's (2009).

Given this understanding of digital participation on social networking sites, it is necessary to rethink understandings of force and coercion. For many, the idea that there is any sort of explicit force to use Twitter is an unconvincing argument. For Marx, wage labour was coerced under threat of violence because if workers do not sell their

labour power, they cannot afford the commodities they need for survival. With SNS there is no threat of violence. However, Fuchs (2012) would counter that by arguing that there is ideological coercion in the sense that, as SNS become more entrenched and companies possess a monopoly over communications, there are social disadvantages and exclusions for non-participation. Further, when extending the concept of coercion beyond day to day social media use, how 'voluntary' can digital labour activities be when they are a requirement for entry into a field? Individuals who are engaging in online identity branding and content creation because they must build a following or gain exposure before securing paid work cannot be said to have the voluntariness that accompanies creating content for fun. Exploitation needs to be reconsidered given the reorientation of work under neoliberalism.

Hesmondhalgh (2010) argues that unpaid work may not be a problem in and of itself and is skeptical of the sweeping application of the designation to all aspects of our daily lives. However, he does maintain that we must understand how different forms of unpaid work may contribute to patterns of inequality- perhaps in the way that unpaid domestic labour does. This is already happening in the field of journalism where "women, people of colour, Aboriginal people, and working-class people are drastically underrepresented" (Cohen, 2015, 526). This reality is exacerbated by the expectation that one work unpaid internships and be precariously employed in addition to

engaging in unpaid online identity branding. The affordances of entering this field become that much greater as the layers of unpaid labour amass.

Marx (1844) characterized alienation as a separation of control over the labour process, from the products one creates and from other workers. The application of alienation to cultural work has been criticized as eliminating subjectivity (Caraway, 2011; Hesmondhalgh, 2010). Their critique goes back to Smythe's idea of the audience commodity and his notion that "all non-sleeping time under capitalism is work time" (1977, 6). The idea that capitalism subsumes all and our activities exist in an umbrella under it, perpetuating it, may be reductionist and in some ways ignorant of struggles for change. On the other hand, Smythe's observation point in many ways to how the increasing commodification of our daily lives vis-à-vis communications technologies and SNS may extend into the seemingly autonomous realm of cultural work. Further, the increasing rationalization of the news-media industry has huge impacts on the level of autonomy that journalists have in their practice.

Caraway (2011) and Hesmondhalgh (2010) also argue that it is problematic to assume that all creative work should be for a wage as opposed to some other reason such as self-actualization or fulfillment. Importantly, these are legitimate outcomes that can stem from creative work (Corrigan, 2015). However, focusing on these rewards ignores the real losses to stable labour in the creative industries that have occurred over the last 30 years, particularly in the journalism field. This dissertation will argue

that it is problematic to assume that a passionate body of citizens will fill the lost labour of journalism just because creative work bears the possibility of bringing a sense of internal satisfaction. If this argument were applied to other fields, it would surely not hold up.

Workers in the journalism field may have some degree of autonomy, but in an increasingly rationalized and competitive industry, where do workers stand in relationship to those processes? Nikolas Rose (1999) and Gillian Ursell (2000) well articulate autonomy under neoliberalism by pointing to the processes of commodification and self-commodification that one must embark on to improve their chances of employment. One is autonomous in the sense that they are alone and individually responsible. If they are not successful, they only have themselves to blame. In many ways understanding media as ubiquitous parallels understandings of the ideal neo-liberal worker. They are flexible, adaptable and mobile, blurring the lines between productive and leisure time. Cohen explains that the entrepreneurial journalists is:

an enterprising individual who does not rely on traditional media organizations and who can chart her own path to success. She is an ideal neo-liberal worker: flexible, unattached, and adaptable. She embraces new technologies and 'innovative' practices to reinvent journalism as socially relevant, but also profitable. Well calibrated to market needs, the entrepreneurial journalist engages in perpetual self-commodification and self-marketing. Independent of any audience, she builds an audience around her personal brand, develops, creates, and promotes content, and constantly hustles for work. (2015, 517)

Central to the figure of the entrepreneurial journalist is that they are expected to participate in not only the commodification of news media but also of themselves through online identity branding. These processes of commodification have been connected to many other aspects of digital labour, and as Manzerolle argues “the relative alienation and precarity of this category of workers is masked by the triumphalism of the prosumer” (2010). The question then becomes, do these levels of alienation and precarity shape the opportunities that are available to journalists, do they shape the types of content that journalists may produce? This crucial question will be examined in depth in chapter 6.

The idea that one must build a brand and sell that brand for future work means we are already speaking in the language of commodity exchanges. Cohen (2015) argues that the competitiveness and pressures of being an entrepreneurial journalist entices journalists to create not what they want to write about but what they can sell. In an environment where you bear all of the risk, it is unlikely that you will step outside of the bounds of industry expectations. The news-media industry more than ever is beholden to audiences and quickly produced journalism. In this environment, the question becomes; are precariously employed journalists likely to pursue lengthy or investigative stories? This context has a bearing on the role and capacity of news media more broadly.

A great deal of the digital labour debate has fixated on more generalized discussions about individual contributions to social media platforms. By focusing on journalists, there is an impetus to consider the well-established imperatives of the profession. Journalism as a profession has placed a strong emphasis on autonomy, truth seeking and independence. While there has always been immaterial labour associated with the profession such as networking and establishing sources; the current context is vastly different. These connections are much easier to make if you are from an established media organization. There is also now the added dimension of establishing a personal brand and audience independent of any infrastructure besides the social media platforms themselves.

In this literature review the researcher has connected the debates and discussions on journalistic identity, branding and digital labour in order to bring them into the context of contemporary journalism practice. Literature on branding shows us that the phenomenon is not new, but personal branding online is still relatively recent and has not been studied in depth with respect to the field of journalism. The fact that personal branding happens online requires incorporating the literature on digital labour, as personal branding is work. Taking into account that journalists are increasingly not employed in standard working conditions at one organization coupled with the addition of online personal branding, means that journalistic identity and the work of journalism may be changing in relation to these trends.

While journalists are the main focus of this research, it is also important to understand the other moving parts of the industry. Not only is it imperative to understand how journalists are navigating this uncertain terrain but also how educational institutions and news media organizations are shifting their priorities in this new environment.

The following questions will frame the findings chapters of this research:

- 1) What is the new media environment? What are the institutional changes and forces that are shaping the current news media environment in Canada? How are these changes shaping the production of news, the values that govern the profession and the labour/professionalization environment for emerging journalists?
- 2) Is the development of a personal brand online becoming a requirement for success for emerging journalists who do not have standard employment? If so, how do they conceive of the implications of personal branding online, independent of an organization, with respects to journalistic identity, the ability to pursue quality journalism and ultimately journalistic autonomy?
- 3) How are journalism educators responding to the new media environment for journalism? How are educators preparing journalists to enter an uncertain environment? Are journalism educators feeling compelled to orient journalism education towards personal branding and entrepreneurship?
- 4) How are editors responding to the new media environment in their own organizations? How is it impacting content creation and values within news media organizations? Is the deployment of personal branding factoring into hiring decisions for digital news editors?

Chapters

This dissertation will proceed in the following way. Chapter 2 will detail the research design and methodology for this project including a rationalization of the objects of study, sample size, selection and generalizability of this study.

Chapter 3 will trace the institutional forces that have precipitated the current climate for the field of journalism. This will involve tracing the structural changes that have occurred within different types of media organizations as a result of digitization including media concentration, conglomeration and the rationalization of the news industry, competition from digital first news media organizations and foreign digital media companies, and the precarious status of the public broadcaster. By examining broader economic trends including the onset of neoliberalism; this chapter will trace a history of the rise of forces that have impacted professionalization dynamics as well as labour conditions for journalists, including the rise of ‘citizen journalism’ and of branded journalism, the decline of unionization in journalistic labour, and the shift in the day to day jobs (and responsibilities) of journalists. It will contextualize the embracing of entrepreneurial journalism and neoliberal logic to ‘solve’ the crisis of news media to set up the framework for how the ‘job’ or being a journalist has changed significantly and how journalistic autonomy can begin to be understood in this context.

Chapter 4 aims to interrogate the phenomenon of “entrepreneurial journalism” – a trend in teaching journalism in post-secondary schools as well as an approach to journalism production, to understand changes to the field that have emerged as a result of digitization and whether they represent a threat to public service journalism. By drawing on qualitative open-ended interviews with journalism educators from three different types of Canadian journalism schools (academic, vocational, and hybrid), this

chapter draws on the perspectives of educators in an attempt to comprehend the extent to which this model is being adopted in Canadian schools and if so, why, educators' perspectives on entrepreneurial journalism and what values are at the forefront of their teaching practices. Further, this chapter will explore how entrepreneurship has been taken up in journalism programs to reinterpret the way journalists ought to professionalize in the current climate and how there may be a shift occurring in the way that journalists understand and practice their roles. Importantly, this chapter considers whether entrepreneurship and traditional journalistic values can be combined in a coherent normative system.

Chapter 5 will trace how different types of media organizations are responding to the new media environment. This chapter will analyze how news media organizations are adopting new business models, branding, and utilizing metrics-based techniques in news media production and engaging in brand building to measure, build and sustain audience attention in a digital context. It will consider the expectations in different types of media organizations when it comes to hiring journalists and whether the values that govern different types of media organizations are changing as a result of digitization and shifting media consumption habits.

Chapter 6 will be at the heart of this dissertation's original contribution. By exploring how emerging journalists brand themselves, how they leverage their work into paid gigs, how they interpret these practices vis-à-vis traditional journalistic values

and identity; this chapter will present three important original contributions. The first contribution will be to the literature surrounding digital labour, how the work involved in unpaid professional development may be understood as 'work' and to what extent it may produce exploitation and alienation amongst emerging journalists rather than an increased sense of autonomy, as some have suggested. The second contribution will be to the literature on journalists' professional identities given the necessity of branding and increased social media work. The third contribution will be to the literature surrounding personal branding and its relationship to journalism, how it impacts content and how it has changed the job of being a journalist without standard employment.

Chapter 7 will articulate the results of this study in their parts and then more broadly to interpret the main challenges for emerging freelance journalists in a digital environment, the challenges for the field of journalism more generally, and the implications for educational institutions who provide the training ground for those entering the field. In synthesizing the results of this study, this chapter makes policy recommendations for how to go forward and addresses some of the contemporary issues and challenges for news media organizations and freelance journalists.

Chapter 2- Research Design and Methodology

In order to understand the dynamics of personal branding and journalistic autonomy in the new media environment, this dissertation seeks to evaluate both the macro and micro level dimensions of this context in order to strike a proper balance between structure and agency. To this purpose, this research is firmly grounded in a critical political economy framework to understand the institutional dynamics of the news media industry in Canada in the current moment. This understanding helps to shape both the questions that are asked of different actors navigating this space and also to place their opportunities for agency within a particular set of social and economic relations. The micro dimensions of this context will be explored through qualitative, semi-structured interviews with emerging journalists, editors at different types of news media organizations and journalism educators.

Critical Political Economy

Critical political economy's focus on history, moral philosophy and social change provides an analytical tool for understanding how the industry used to operate, how digitization has vastly impacted the journalism field, and for conceptualizing the ideal role that news media ought to perform in a democratic society (Mosco, 2009). In turn, CPE provides a frame for analyzing how structural shifts are altering traditional definitions of what it means to be a journalist and what it means to 'do journalism' in 2018. Drawing upon Mosco's concept of structuration, critical political economy will be

a tool to analyze how “agency is constrained by structures and structures are built with agency” (Ballesteros et al., 2010). Structuration looks at the ways in which agency and structure interact to produce particular social realities. Lee McGuigan (2017) uses the concept and critical lens of ‘productive capacity’ (in his case applying it to television) as a tool to evaluate “what a given configuration can or cannot produce”, he goes further to illustrate that “productive capacity implies biases or limitations regarding what is to be produced, how, and for whom; it orients scholarly focus towards constraints, pressures, priorities, and the conservative influence of institutions and infrastructures” (McGuigan, 2017, p. 5). It is imperative that this dissertation strikes a proper balance between understanding institutional constraints and priorities in the news media industry and how this impacts the productive capacity of individuals working within a particular configuration. Understanding the institutional dynamics of the industry helps to shape the questions that are asked to those navigating through these configurations, in this case emerging journalists without standard employment working conditions.

Qualitative Semi-Structured Interviews

This study has conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews in order to understand the micro level dimensions and lived experiences of those that are currently navigating the wider institutional configurations of the news industry.

Educators are an important part of understanding this context as they train prospective journalists to enter the industry. Picard (2015) argues that journalism education is a “loose body of professional practices and techniques” (6) and that there has always been a divide between a non-university trade approach and a university liberal arts approach to journalism education. Different approaches to training students to be journalists impacts changing professional values, strategies for succeeding as journalists and the very definition of journalism itself in a time of uncertainty in the industry. The two approaches are very different as one focuses on the skills needed to enter the industry while the other has a dual focus on developing skills and also specialized subject matter expertise and critical thinking. Universities under neoliberalism are experiencing immense pressure to adhere to a market-driven paradigm (Giroux, 2013), where the focus is on preparing students to enter the job market rather than critical thinking.

However, how do they teach students to enter an industry where the path to success is not clear and standard employment jobs are scarce for emerging journalists? Are Canadian journalism schools adapting their programs to focus on entrepreneurship and personal branding? Understanding how journalism education is changing at different types of journalism programs (vocational, hybrid, and academic) and how journalism educators are interpreting those changes enables a better understanding of

the functional role of post-secondary journalism education in the current moment. Is journalism education becoming more market-orientated? Understanding this shift will assist in better understanding how journalists are negotiating and understanding their professional roles in the current moment.

Qualitative interviews with digital editors at different types of news media organizations (public broadcaster, commercial legacy media, and strictly digital) are an important part of understanding how the structural changes in the industry are impacting the hiring choices made by actors within these organizations. While the collapse of the advertising model has been felt throughout the Canadian industry, interviews with digital news editors at different types of news organizations with different business models, brands, and priorities will help to situate the nuances and commonalities across organizations, providing a better understanding of the pathways to success for emerging journalists. Are these news organizations expanding traditional understandings of what journalism 'is'? How are the business models for journalism changing? How is the increased reliance on social networking platforms as distribution channels impacting the way content is created within organizations? Are editors looking for traditional reporting skills from prospective hires or are entrepreneurial skills becoming necessary? Are journalists required to develop personal brands to be hired?

The complexities of these questions could only be ascertained through in-depth interviews with those who are in decision making roles within these organizations.

Qualitative interviews with emerging journalists are necessary because they must navigate their own paths to success in an industry where the former trajectories for successful careers are fading away. Qualitative interviews will allow the researcher to develop a deep reflective understanding of the experiences and perspectives of emerging journalists that are typically hidden from view. By asking journalists if brands assist with navigating precarious working conditions, how they build personal brands, what makes a successful brand, and whether they possess autonomy; the researcher is able to gain in depth insight into the pathways to success, how journalists are understanding and navigating their professional roles in the new media environment and how this impacts journalistic identity, autonomy, and what journalism 'is'.

Ultimately, each set of interviews aims to understand if structural forces are constraining educators, editors, and journalists. Interviews with emerging journalists will enable understanding the relationship between employing personal branding and obtaining paid work and being 'successful'. Interviews with journalism educators serve to provide context to the ways in which journalism programs are adapting their curriculum for the freelance economy. Interviews with editors at major news media

organizations will give some context to whether personal branding is becoming normative and if so, what brands are likely to succeed in the current moment.

Sample

In order to obtain participants for the study, the researcher employed non-probability purposive sampling (Trochim, 2006). This is also referred to as 'theoretical sampling by Knight (2002). This involves 'selecting people who meet a given criteria' (121) or set of criteria. My sampling has been based on a number of criteria for each set of interviews. All interviewees have been made anonymous in the presentation of this research unless they have specifically specified that they would like to be identified, as was the case with journalism educators.

Emerging Journalists

To select emerging journalists for this study, the researcher employed five criteria in order to identify participants.

1) The first criterion is that each participant is a graduate of a journalism school program so that each participant has received equivalent vocational training. The assumption here is that not having equivalent education may be an impediment to finding work in the field.

- 2) The second criterion is that the person has been working as a freelance journalist (is not working full time for a media organization) for 5 years or less.
- 3) The third criterion is that there is an equal number of males and females so there is adequate gender representation.
- 4) The fourth criterion is that the potential participants are willing meet or speak via telephone or Skype for 45-minute semi-structured interviews.
- 5) The fifth criterion is that the participant is Canadian.

For half of the participants, they had to meet all 5 criteria. For the other half of participants, they only had to meet criterion 2-5. The reason for extending the call to freelance journalists who have not attended journalism school came as the result of extensive research and interviews with industry professionals and journalism educators. The interviews indicated that in some cases having attended journalism school was a hindrance to obtaining employment. This presented an interesting challenge for this project. If journalism school is (in some cases) a hindrance to employment, are freelancers who have not attended journalism school having more success? Efforts have been made to ensure there was adequate gender representation in the participants that are selected. I have limited my sample to 20 participants, which

should be sufficient for gauging an adequate picture of the current climate for emerging journalists and the professionalization practices they are engaged in.

The researcher obtained participants for her study through a number of methods. The first method was to reach out to Canadian journalism schools to distribute a call for participants to alumni. These calls were sent out to several j-schools in the Toronto area including Humber College, Ryerson University, University of Toronto Scarborough/Centennial, and York University/Seneca College. The program administrators in these schools assisted in redistributing the call for participants. The second method was to issue a call for participants through various social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, Craigslist, and through J-Source (The Canadian Journalism Project). These varied methods exemplify a certain degree of 'opportunity sampling' (Knight, 2002).

The researcher also paid for a Facebook advertisement that she was able to customize to ensure the ad would reach the target audience. By applying filters, she was able to promote visibility to participants who are Canadian, are working in the journalism field, and are also freelancing.

Despite the many avenues the researcher utilized to reach out to participants, there were some difficulties in obtaining participants, despite having strong interest in

participation. This presented a challenge after approximately 10 interviews with freelance journalists had been conducted. At this point, the sample was completed largely from 'snowball sampling' (Knight, 2002). This proved to be helpful particularly because many of the interviewees had connections to other freelancers or peers from journalism school who they could put the researcher in direct contact with.

Journalism Educators

In selecting journalism educators to interview, the researcher employed purposive or convenience sampling. In choosing journalism educational institutions, three four-year university journalism programs were chosen as case studies, and an educator from each of those institutions was then selected based on their areas of specialty and perceived appropriateness to speak about journalism curriculum as well as the phenomenon of entrepreneurial journalism. Three schools were chosen that had differing orientations when they emerged as journalism schools. One school chosen is known for its academic focus, the second school's program has been considered to be a vocational program, and the third is a hybrid of the two (academic/vocational). Having an example of each of these types of schools gave a sense of whether the adoption of market-oriented, entrepreneurial models of education was more likely if the school was more academically or vocationally oriented.

It is important to note that each educator interviewed for this research, after reading the consent form offering anonymity, explicitly mentioned that they wished to forgo anonymity for this study. While this initially was surprising to the researcher, it became apparent that participants perceived there to be not only a low risk to identifying themselves and their perspectives in this study but more importantly that they wished to have their views accounted for on record. It is possible that because educators have secure employment and are public intellectuals who espouse their views on these subjects often that they were so quick to dismiss the need for anonymity. Given the forgoing of anonymity, the researcher was able to discuss the specific educational institutions that participants teach at, the participants, and their experiences, in more depth as a result.

Editors at News Media Organizations

In selecting editors to interview for this research, the researcher employed purposive or convenience sampling. This approach was used to select editors who are in a position to speak about the expectation of personal branding for freelance journalists in a digital context. In choosing editors from news media organizations, there were 3 categories of news media organizations that were included; the public broadcaster, a commercial legacy media organization, and a digital first news media organization. All interviewees were high-level managers in a position to speak to hiring

practices (the expectation of branding for freelancers), the mandates of their organization, and challenges of making news in a digital environment. Given that there is only one public broadcaster, the editor chosen was someone who is in a high position within the organization. For the legacy media example, the organization had to be involved in production of news in both print and digital and the editor chosen was in a high-level decision-making position. Similar criteria were used to obtain a participant from a digital first news media organization. Establishing the suitability of candidates required a certain degree of pre-interviewing to ensure that the participants could speak to these matters.

Generalizability

A main concern when choosing the sample was the generalizability the researcher hoped to obtain through completing this research. Due to the fact that the researcher is coming from a critical realist/social constructivist paradigm rather than a positivist framework, the researcher wished to develop an understanding of how emerging freelance journalists are situated within the current debates surrounding the autonomy of journalists in a digital environment, their professional identities and understandings of digital labour. Given that the plan was to employ a certain level of 'opportunity sampling', one way the researcher has improved the generalizability of the study was to increase my sample size through 'snowballing' (i.e. obtain participants

through other participants) (Knight, 2002, 46) and continuing to add to the sample until the researcher no longer hears anything 'new', reaching the point of saturation. For example, the researcher wanted to have a range of perspectives of freelancers; from those that are heavily branded in online environments to those that have very little engagement with social networking sites or online branding, and of course those that fall somewhere in the middle. The sample reflects the broad range that was sought after.

For the data obtained from journalism educators and editors at news media organizations, the goal was not to provide an exhaustive view of perspectives from educators or editors in the Canadian news media landscape. Rather, these interviews meant to examine trends in education and industry from key informants who could speak to the challenges of and changes to journalism education in a digital, freelance economy. For editors at news media organizations, the goal of these interviews was to understand how the structure, business model, and mandate of a particular news media organization may impact their expectations of emerging journalists.

Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews best fit with the research objectives of this study because they provided the opportunity to explore participants' perspectives in depth regarding changing conditions in labour and identity branding (for emerging

journalists), shifting paradigms in journalism education (for journalism educators) and expectations of journalists and pressures of the digital news environment (for editors). Each interview included mixture of closed and open-ended questions. Interviews with participants were typically between 1 hour and 1 hour and a half in length. The semi-structured nature allowed to ask specific questions but also to be flexible in determining the next question based on participants' answers (Knight, 2002, 89). The interviews have all been recorded in order to ensure that nothing was left uncaptured from the interview. It was very important to minimize the extent to which recording equipment may influence participants' behaviour, so that the validity of the study is not compromised. However, given that participants were given the option to remain anonymous in this study in addition to the fact that many of them are well-versed in interviewing practices given their field, this was not a major concern. A video recorder seemed as though it would be more invasive but a small recording device, may not influence the participant behaviour a great deal as they may forget about it because it is not visible (Knight, 2002, 168).

Coding

The researcher undertook extensive coding of the interview data. This was done after transcribing the interviews in full as well as coding the data using NVivo's qualitative data analysis software. Transcripts and field notes were carefully read in full

before the coding process took place. The careful coding of data is vital as it helps develop the storyline that the researcher wishes to communicate in their evaluation (Gibbs, 2008).

Coding is both a way to organize your data and to make sense of what is happening. In this sense, both the process of coding and the interpretation of data afterwards constitute analysis. Many of the coding categories used were anticipated based on the questions that were constructed for the interviews; these served as 'apriori categories'. According to Knight (2002), the ways in which data is captured influences the ways in which data will be coded (185). With this in mind and using Figure 8.1 from Knight's "Small Scale Research", having broad preliminary analytical categories to place material in was a good place to start for this research. These categories then produced subcategories, which were presented in a diagram to show their relationship to the preliminary categories (Hansen et al, 1998). This method of analysis provided the researcher with ways to categorize complex and very detailed interview responses. For example, one way of coding the data was with respect to the length of the responses. Some of the interview questions were open-ended, inviting a great deal of discussion, opinion and interpretation, while others were yes or no answers that do not involve a great deal of elaboration. Importantly, beyond the 'apriori' codes, many emergent codes were established. While some responses are

expected, emergent codes are often information that is unexpected: new concepts, relationships, and viewpoints that have not been anticipated by the predetermined codes (Gibbs, 2008).

As Luker (2008) points out, coding allows you to outline the main arguments of your study (201). This was very effective in this study because there were very specific questions that were asked of participants. It is important to conduct a second round of coding to avoid "tunnel vision" (Knight, 183). It is important to recode the data thoroughly, to ensure the stability and reliability of the coding categories. This was done by going over the interview data a second time and ensuring that the coding categories were the same (Berger, 2000). It was important to make the codes fit the data and not the other way around (Lofland & Lofland, 1995).

Ethics

This project has adhered to ethical policies and procedures as established by the Ryerson Research Ethics Board. Consent forms for participants as well as recruitment materials have all been approved by the Research Ethics Board at Ryerson University. All participants have been read consent forms in full and have provided their written consent for participation while also being made fully aware of any risks to participation.

Chapter 3- A Political Economy of the Canadian News Media Landscape

Critical political economists have argued that news media should play a distinct role in society and for a functioning democracy. This role, it has been argued, has been increasingly compromised by major shifts that have occurred in the journalism field over the last 30 years. Those trends can be summarized as corporate convergence in the context of neoliberalism as a social and economic paradigm; the disruption of advertising-based business models for news production, as a result of digitization and competition from social networking sites; the economic rationalization of newsrooms, the introduction of metrics into journalism production and other changes to journalistic labour. This chapter will critically examine how journalistic autonomy has been understood historically and how it is being complicated by industry struggles. By exploring current trends in-depth, various facets of the Canadian media system will be examined including legacy media organizations, digital first news media platforms, community news, and the public broadcaster.

Trends Towards Corporate Convergence

Trends towards media concentration and corporate convergence in Canada and globally have been well documented. Referred to in Canada often as the 'Big 4' - Rogers, Bell, Shaw and Quebecor (vertically integrated companies) in conjunction with a few second- tier media firms - constitute what Winseck (2011) calls the "centerpiece of the network media economy in Canada" (p. 142). Critical political economists have

long been concerned with the implications that the restructuring of media organizations around these lines may have with respects to providing and facilitating a democratic communications system, particularly with respects to journalism. Once distinct media (print, broadcast, and online) with distinct regulations and ownership rules have now been converged as a result of digitization, deregulation (and reregulation) and the development of business models based around synergies and short-term profitability.

This chapter will take an approach that encompasses the central qualities of the political economy approach; namely history, moral philosophy, the social totality, and praxis (Mosco, 2009). This chapter will examine the way political economy as a moral philosophy has envisioned how journalism *ought* to serve the public interest according to conceptions of the public sphere and democratic functioning. It will then examine how structural and policy shifts as a result of neoliberal ideology, globalization, and technological changes have facilitated the era of privatization, media concentration and corporate convergence. Based on conceptions of public interest journalism, an analysis of the ways in which journalism has undergone transformation in the last several decades to undermine these prospects will be established. This will include a documentation of the rise of platform concentration and how this impacts the news industry in Canada and abroad. Then the role of the public broadcaster will be

considered as providing a space to establish public sphere ideals and challenge market-based logic.

What is a democratic communications system meant to look like?

Critical political economy of communications, since its inception, has been tied to moral philosophy and ideas of the public sphere, the public good, and democracy itself. CPE's views about the public sphere are intrinsically tied to conceptions of the market, namely that 'free markets' are not free in any sense and that there needs to be some form of intervention to account for this. Many theorists have taken different positions on what this entails, but at the base level, critical political economists have supported the following premises regarding the public sphere and the role journalism plays in achieving this end:

- 1) citizens depend on the media to make sense of the political and economic forces that shape their lives (Skinner and Gasher, 2005),
- 2) the media *should* serve as a means to hold those in power to account (McChesney, 2008)
- 3) views should be able to be expressed inclusively and that there should at least be 'dissemination of information from diverse and antagonistic sources' (Cooper, 2005)
- 4) democracy implies a wide dispersal of power within public discourse, including a wide dispersal of media ownership (Baker, 2007)

Many political economists argue that it is impossible to talk about how the media could or should facilitate democracy and a public sphere without discussing the structure and power dynamics of media organizations themselves. It has been argued that this should take the form of more equal distribution of ownership and power

across and within media institutions (Baker, 2007, Zhao and Hackett 2005). This discussion points to the need for citizens to be informed from a broad range of perspectives and sources on the one hand but also argues for dispersed ownership and more of a democratic structure within media organizations. This would imply that journalists have more autonomy to pursue stories without censorship, particularly those that may be in the public interest.

Murdock and Golding (1996) go further to link ideas of the public good to definitions of citizenship and conceptions of citizen rights. They define citizenship as 'the right to participate fully in social life and to help shape forms it might take in the future' (65). With this definition comes the assumption that citizens should have access to a diverse range of communicative and cultural resources, access to a wide range of interpretation and debate regarding matters of political importance, that they should have their beliefs represented without stereotyping and also have the ability to dissent and propose alternatives to the current system.

According to critical political economists then, a healthy democratic communications system should not only provide checks and balances to the functioning of power systems in society but also facilitate meaningful participation in the democratic system. Meaningful participation is predicated on there being access to a wide variety of perspectives that can inform citizens. It is this conception of the ideal role of news media that will serve as a point of departure to analyze recent trends in

the news media industries and the impacts this may have for the role journalism should serve in democratic life.

What has caused media convergence? How did we get here?

Before looking at how things have changed to provide such a concentrated media environment, it is important to briefly look at the historical frame for communications policy development in the first place. Zhao and Hackett (2005) identify two elements that characterized the rise of communications policies in the 20th century 1) “the organization of the economic, social, political, and cultural life around the nation-state axis” and 2) “public service, the idea that principles of citizenship, equality, and democratic participation count as much as or more than the market and private property in decision making” (4). These foundations have been challenged by trends towards neoliberal economic policies and deregulation, globalization and vast technological changes.

Neoliberalism has been characterized as a turn in dominant political and economic thinking since the 1970s that has promoted free market policies leading to privatization, deregulation and a decline in the state’s role for intervening in social welfare (Harvey, 2005). These trends go hand in hand with a focus on individualism, specifically personal responsibility and consumer choice, and a conception of an unregulated free market as ‘the only rational, fair, and democratic allocator of goods and services’ (McChesney, 2008, 284). Intervention in profit making, which is seen as

the essence of democracy in a critical political economy perspective, is seen to be undemocratic under neoliberalism. For critical political economists, deregulation is better understood as reregulation by the state in the interests of big businesses (Curran, 2003, Skinner and Gasher, 2005, Mirowski, 2013). In this sense, neoliberalism is not laissez-faire but requires the state to actively propagate the fictions of markets. Critical political economists argue that markets are in fact not free; and that without state intervention, inequalities in society are severely exacerbated and the public good is undermined.

Corporate convergence is thus viewed as a product of the decline in the state's role as a regulator of media ownership and public interest obligations. This has been witnessed through the push for greater horizontal and vertical integration in the media industry in conjunction with the relaxing of foreign and domestic ownership rules. In the US, the Telecommunications Act in 1996 removed ownership limits and reframed the state's role as a facilitator of competition. In Canada, regulation that had previously separated newspaper, broadcast and telecommunications now allowed for a number of mergers that intensified media concentration (Skinner, Compton and Gasher, 2005; Arsenault and Castells, 2008; Winseck, 2011).

It is important to note that trends towards concentration are not new. They began with newspapers becoming horizontally integrated to exploit economies of scale in the US and Canada. Economies of scale can be defined as economic advantages

gained from increasing the scale of an operation. This means that operation costs can be reduced by utilizing the same material (and in some cases workers) for a broader audience. This concentration has led to the creation of multi-media conglomerates, operating in many different media markets including television, film, newspaper, and Internet (Winseck, 2008). Technological advancement, particularly digitization, has been a major force in the logic of media corporations as they strive for the benefits of synergies, or efficiencies gained from consolidation where content can be repurposed for several different media (Skinner and Gasher, 2005). Distribution has become more flexible than ever before and this has led to an increased global focus and reach of media corporations. The emerging system is “increasingly global in ownership structure, production, distribution and consumption” (Zhao and Hackett, 2005, p. 6). This global restructuring was particularly prominent in the US, where globalization went hand in hand with the lifting of foreign ownership restrictions, the privatization of public service broadcasting, and neoliberal trade policies (Skinner, Compton and Gasher, Chapter 14, 2005).

How have recent trends impacted journalism?

Trends towards media concentration have had a significant impact on journalism’s ability to operate in the public interest due to the heightened focus on commodifying news media for short-term profitability and the losses to media diversity that ensue in such concentrated environments.

Financialization of Canadian News Media

The desire to exploit economies of scale has pushed media industries towards oligopoly or even monopoly (Cooper, 2005), which challenges the neoliberal free market logic that true competition is fostered by lack of state intervention. The fostering of media monopolies has created significant barriers to entry for prospective competition. When concentration is high, the ability to squash competition is also high (Winseck, 2008, Skinner, Compton and Gasher, 2005). This means that the prospect of diverse and antagonistic voices in the media is likely to be compromised by such an environment and therefore justifies state intervention to maintain a relative level of diversity.

This highly converged environment has also led to a shift in the focus of media organizations towards corporatization where they now operate according to business logic and are accountable to their shareholders rather than civil society and tend to focus on short-term profits (Skinner, Compton and Gasher, 2005, Chapter 1, Arsenault and Castells, 2008, Cooper, 2005). This is further exacerbated when corporate mergers are built through financialization (Winseck, 2011). Financialization refers to the increasing influence of finance capital in the structuration of the larger economies of late capitalist societies, and in this context, of the media and communications sectors of the economy (Winseck, 2010). Increasingly, finance and banking interests are dominating newsrooms as corporate boards look for directors with financial expertise

(Cooper, 2005, Winseck, 2008). In this turn, the role of editors has changed to coordinating with financial executives to determine cost saving strategies and formulas for journalistic output. This impacts of financialization have contributed to the further commodification of news media production.

It is important to point out that these mergers can and do fail, as evidenced by the fate of the company Canwest, who sold off its assets to Postmedia in 2010 due to uncontrollable debt (Winseck, 2011) and this is further highlighted by “Bell Globemedia’s retreat from convergence, and the perennially indentured state of Quebecor, Rogers, and Shaw” (ibid, p. 165).

The large amounts of debt that seemingly follow convergence often times lead to major layoffs and resource cutbacks as well as increased pressures more broadly within these organizations to make up for those losses. News media tends to take a large hit in this context. Newly converged companies tend to blame the economy or the ‘crisis state’ of newspapers for decisions to cut foreign bureaus, layoff journalists or centralize news operations (Winseck, 2011) but this completely ignores the role that the financing of these mergers had to play in ‘forcing their hands’ in the first place. These converged companies are not innocent bystanders. Rather, the “reality has come back to haunt them, while others are left to grapple with the underdevelopment of the network media system that has followed” (Winseck, 2011,164). The implications of this environment are that there are fewer journalists working within these companies but

also that the work journalists are engaged in is being adapted for print, broadcast, as well as the web. This move is seen to preclude diverse perspectives from being established because stories are being covered the same way on several mediums. Not only have journalists' jobs been significantly expanded beyond reporting in this context, but they are often left to work with fewer people in their newsrooms as layoffs abound (Winseck, 2017) in the Canadian industry (Skinner, Compton, and Gasher, 2005b).

An Industry of Struggle

A poignant example of these trends has recently spiked controversy in Canada. On November 27, 2017, Postmedia Network Canada Corp. announced a non-cash transaction with Torstar Corporation to exchange 15 of Postmedia's community newspapers and 2 free commuter dailies for 22 of Torstar's community newspapers and 2 free commuter dailies. Torstar announced that they will be immediately closing 13 papers and Postmedia will be closing 23, with only one remaining open (Watson, 2017). In a press release, Postmedia CEO Paul Godfrey maintained that "This transaction allows Postmedia to focus on strategic areas and core products, and allows us to continue with a suite of community-based products, in a deeply disrupted industry" (Postmedia, 2017). This exchange will make it so that Postmedia and Torstar will operate with less competition in the markets they serve, particularly in Ontario. They have essentially carved out exclusive print advertising regions, so that there is less

competition for the print advertising dollars that still exist in those markets. For example, Ottawa will be almost exclusively serviced by Postmedia and the Niagara region almost exclusively by Torstar. Postmedia and Torstar are hoping that local monopolies will provide a lifeline to their newspaper properties. Approximately 290 journalists (both full time and part-time) will lose their jobs as a result of the transaction (Watson, 2017). Many communities will be left without local newspapers to inform them about what is happening in their communities. Many other communities that had multiple papers will be left with only one, leading to losses of diversity in news coverage. The Local News Map, created by April Lindgren and Jon Corbett, displays 234 markers, which represent the losses of newspapers, digital news media and broadcast outlets in Canada since the financial downturn in 2008 (Lindgren, 2017). Declining revenues and layoffs have been the name of the game for local and print media in Canada over the last several years. As of September 2017, Torstar had already laid off 220 positions.

Marc Edge (2018) argues that this deal should be subject to review by the Competition Bureau in Canada, but has doubts that this will actually happen. Postmedia, Edge (2018) points out, is 98% owned by American hedge funds despite limits on foreign ownership of Canadian newspapers. Despite the survival rhetoric that has been used as justification for this deal and the ensuing closures, Edge's (2018) research suggests that the newspapers are not in the dire straits that many believe

them to be in. “Postmedia had operating earnings of \$54.6 million on revenues of \$754 million in its 2017 fiscal year ended Aug. 31, for a profit margin of 7.2 per cent” (Edge, 2018). However, roughly 60% of those earnings went to paying down Postmedia’s large debt (Edge, 2018). Postmedia wishes to absolve itself of responsibility for community newspaper closures but does not acknowledge its role as architect in their demise.

Turning Tides?

While media concentration is still quite prevalent in Canada, there have been many digital first media companies that have staked a place for themselves in the digital media ecosystem. That being said, media concentration is alive and well and legacy players still dominate the attention of Canadians. Despite legacy media’s continued dominance, as Winseck’s (2017) research contends, the major newspaper publishers in Canada have seen revenue losses over the last 3 years (2014-2016); Torstar has seen a 17% loss, Postmedia (30%), and the Globe and Mail (19%). The number of journalism jobs in Canada has technically grown in the last 30 years from 10,000 (full time) jobs in 1987 to 11,631 (full time) jobs in 2016 (Winseck, 2017). It is noted that despite this modest increase in full time journalism employment, the media economy has quadrupled in size during this period, which means that there are fewer journalists relative to the scale of the media economy (Winseck, 2017). The Public Policy Forum’s (2017) “Shattered Mirror” report (using data compiled by the Canadian

Media Guild), estimates that roughly 12,000 jobs have been lost in the past few decades, over 1000 of those in 2016 alone.

The gutting and converging of newsrooms across Canada seriously undermines the capacity of journalists to serve their civic duty when they are overworked, understaffed and in the position of having to compete for digital advertising dollars. For example, the merging of the *Ottawa Citizen* and *Ottawa Sun*'s staffs by Postmedia meant that the two papers were left with only three reporters covering city government (Public Policy Forum, 2017). With so few reporters in paid positions reporting on municipal affairs, the public is worse off. The closure of local news outlets has made it much more difficult for municipal governments to get community information to constituents. While social media can fill some of the gaps, there are also communities with limited internet access that have few options for receiving local news (Watson, 2017). This context also diminishes the accountability that local politicians should provide to the public without journalists to ask questions, investigate, and demand transparency.

Social News: From A Public Mass Model to Information Democratization

The digital age has enabled the development of what can best be characterized as a media ecosystem. Communication and news media creation is no longer a one-way street as it was in the past, but there are now significant reverse flows of information. As Tewksbury and Rittenberg (2012) argue "Messages are increasingly

created by the public, (e.g.) citizen journalism, either to be sent up the power hierarchy to the political elites or to be sent across to other sectors of the public” (150). This is the result of the ease, access, and affordability of digital technologies but most importantly it is also due to the fragmented nature of media structures. On the other hand, those in positions of power, such as politicians or major corporations, now have a direct line (without the filter of news media) to their constituencies and customers via social networking sites. Increasingly, news production and consumption have become social network oriented (Public Policy Forum, 2017). This reality makes it more important than ever to distinguish between information, propaganda, and journalism, to define what journalism ‘is’ (or ought to be) in a time where the traditional business model for journalism has essentially shattered.

The very platforms that have enabled broader citizen participation in news media creation are also changing the way citizens consume news. According to a new study by the Pew Research Centre, 42% of Canadians get their news through social networking sites (Mitchell et al, 2018). Canadians with higher incomes and education levels tend to be more likely than their counterparts to consume news via SNS. This means that increasingly, rather than going directly to the source for news, many Canadians are consuming news that is curated through a newsfeed on platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Before the digital age, there was considerably more ‘brand loyalty’ to news organizations but when accessing news through a social media feed,

“consumers inundated with choice tend to become promiscuous” (Public Policy Forum, 2017, 25). Despite the seeming erosion of brand loyalties in digital contexts, the Public Policy Forum’s (2017) research found that when it came to important decision-making points, citizens invested their trust in established news media brands. While this is true, there has also been considerable worries about ‘fake news’ and the lack of credibility of content that is shared widely through social networking sites and promoted by the sites themselves. For example, Google and Facebook have promoted a whole host of fake news stories including one about the Las Vegas shooter (who killed more than 50 people in 2017) that purported the shooter was an anti-Trump liberal. In 2017, Facebook, Google and Twitter had to admit that groups tied to the Kremlin had used their own services to publish fake news, spur controversy and amplify the reach of their message by buying advertisements (Kang and Wakabayashi, 2018). Importantly, fake news is not ‘new’ but the ability to amplify these stories and have them reach millions of people in an instant is a relatively recent phenomenon.

The vision of the internet as the great facilitator of democracy is being challenged by the opaque algorithms of social media platforms. Facebook has deeply resisted being called a media company as they have wanted to distance themselves from any notions of editorial control, but increasingly this position is untenable. In October of 2017 Facebook’s Chief Operating Officer, Cheryl Sandberg held that “at our heart we're a tech company; we hire engineers. We don't hire reporters, no one's a

journalist, we don't cover the news." (Griffith, 2017). This is an important distinction because there does not need to be an editor deciding what content reaches people, but algorithms make choices too and this might be worse. A major tenet for critical political economists is that the media produce diverse and antagonistic voices so that people may make informed decisions about their lives. However, as algorithms cater more and more to individualized preferences, there have been discussions about the 'filter bubbles' that are created in social networks. Such filter bubbles or echo chambers can be both self-imposed and algorithmically imposed. As the Public Policy Forum (2017) argues, "computer programmers fill the shoes of editors, customizing feeds not for what is considered significant or newsworthy, but what will generate "likes" and leave users happy" (54-55). Facebook's algorithms work to give users 'more of the same'. While there may be more choice than ever before and more news media organizations emerging, the prospect of being discoverable or 'more credible' on social networking sites is further removed from their control. Additionally, the fake news frenzy has pointed to both a growing need for Facebook to intervene in disseminating blatantly false news but also to the need for greater media literacy; to understand where information is coming from and how to assess its veracity.

News organizations must have a presence on social networking sites because increasingly this is where citizens are getting their news. News media companies can (and must) use the social features of social networking sites (sharing and liking) to

encourage users to expand the reach of stories. Journalists too have increasingly adopted social media in their jobs to promote themselves, their content and to foster loyalty to a particular media brand (Hermida et al, 2012). However, the very platforms that are now the intermediaries between citizens and news organizations are now taking the lion's share of digital advertising revenue in Canada (and globally). As mentioned in chapter 1, Facebook and Google alone dominate almost three quarters (72%) of the digital advertising economy in Canada, leaving very little left for news media organizations (Winseck, 2017). Importantly, according to Winseck (2017), advertising spending seems to have hit a ceiling relative to the growth of the media economy. This is not the first time that digital companies have disrupted the news media industry. The founding of Craigslist in the 1990's had a huge impact on print advertising as there became less of a need to purchase classified ads in print newspapers (Seamans & Zhu, 2013).

Winseck (2017) maintains that this is simply a business decision for advertisers; Facebook and Google are the most efficient at delivering audiences to advertisers. These efficiencies, he argues, may be responsible for the ad spending ceiling. This context has left news organizations to grapple with how they will fill the void of their lost revenue. The question then becomes, do news organizations aim to create content that is the more likely to be clicked on and shared or do they maintain a commitment to civic journalism? As the Public Policy Forum (2017) pointed out, even when at their

most profitable, news media companies rarely covered the costs of production with civic journalism. Audiences are no longer concentrated as they were in the past, they are spread across many sources. Tewksbury and Rittenberg (2012) argue that this reality means that content creators need to labour that much more to get their messages to a wide audience.

Accountability in Turbulent Times?

It is becoming clear that establishing trust is vital for news media organizations in order to cut through the noise of clickbait and fake news. This is especially true if news organizations are going to need to rely on new ways to fund news production. A recent report from the Reuter's Institute for the Study of Journalism (2017) revealed that 40% of news consumers trust established media organizations to delineate between fact and fiction, meaning 60% of news consumers do not trust established media organizations to serve this end. This is a problem that news media organizations need to try to resolve. It is one that is becoming ever more important in turbulent political times.

Journalists and news organizations need to be more vigilant than ever in their reporting with respects to accuracy and accountability. Digital first media organizations like Breitbart, a US based alt-right news site, have been performing the ideological work of discounting mainstream media organizations and their 'liberal bias', while presenting themselves as refreshing and much needed alternatives to 'fake news' and

the supposed politically correct culture of the liberal media. No longer are we living in an era where politicians need to provide their public relations material to news organizations for them to dissect. In Donald Trump's case, he has little need for the mainstream news media, only his own Twitter account, which he can use to communicate with the American people and to denounce news outlets like CNN and the New York Times as fake news when they report on his presidency unfavourably.

The alt-right emerges as a resistance to what is perceived to be the tyranny of political correctness and 'liberal feelings'. A recent story that was reported by major media outlets in Canada about an 11-year-old girl who claimed a man cut off her hijab on the way to school turned out to be false. Media outlets across the nation reported on this story and its implications. When the story turned out to be false, this was the fodder right wing media publications, like Ezra Levant's *The Rebel*, had been waiting for to show how quickly the media would report on a story that confirmed their agenda that islamophobia is alive and well in Canada. One charge (laid most scathingly against the CBC) was that the media did not do their due diligence in reporting the story (Levant, 2018). Another charge is that islamophobia is overblown and not the serious problem it is made out to be by the liberal media. Evidence that one person falsely reported a story of course does not negate the fact that police reported hate crimes targeting Muslims have more than tripled between 2012 and 2015 (Statistics Canada, 2017). However, this story points to the war that is being waged on mainstream media

organizations and the counter narratives that are being produced about their credibility and legitimacy, which are imperative for brand loyalty in an age of info glut. Media organizations face a dilemma when reporting the news 'as it happens'. They must balance the pressures to be first to the story and to report the news in 'real time' against the possibility of not having a full or accurate picture of a given story.

While media organizations need to foster trust, social media companies too need be accountable (at least in lip service) to the publics they profit from and serve. Social networking sites rely on people using their platforms and generating content to profit. In this sense, they need to be accountable to the public as well. A lack of trust could impact how people use their services and if they continue to at all. Despite the fact that Facebook wishes to resist being viewed as a media company, they still apparently see themselves as having a role to play in facilitating democracy by providing communication tools that can better community and civic engagement. Facebook has made many changes to their algorithm to supposedly serve this end. In June of 2016, Facebook made changes to their algorithm to downgrade established media and to prioritize content from friends within individual's social networks. Pages that would be impacted by this change were encouraged to "post things that their audience are likely to share with their friends" (Backstrom, 2016). Facebook has also had to grapple with the problem of fake news dissemination on its platform. As of January 2018, they announced further plans to tweak their algorithms to help bring

people closer together by encouraging more meaningful connections on Facebook, which will result in people seeing “less public content, including news, video and posts from brands” (Mosseri, 2018).

The recent announcement echoes a manifesto published by Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg in 2017, where he speaks about the need for diverse voices, the need for informed citizens to turn their enlightenment into action (Zuckerberg, 2017). Facebook will apparently introduce changes that make it easier for people to see local news or news that is relevant to where people live. Facebook users and journalists from collaborating news organizations will also have an important role to play in ranking the trustworthiness of sources to inform rankings in the News Feed. These developments in many ways seem to prioritize users, but will likely further harm news media companies that are already starved for digital advertising dollars that primarily go to Facebook and Google. These algorithmic changes will impact the discoverability of news organizations on the platform.

Facebook can discuss commitments to connect users with relevant local news all they want, but if there are no local news outlets left, there will be no content for them to prioritize. Lafrance (2017) describes Facebook’s role to play in these changes well:

The most cynical way to describe this set-up is to say that Facebook is asking its users to act as unpaid publishers and curators of content—posting baby photos, Facebook Live broadcasts from newsworthy events, and links to news stories by publications desperate for Facebook traffic—and now also to act as unpaid

editors, volunteering to teach Facebook's algorithmic editors how and when to surface the content Facebook does not pay for.

The approach is still very much hands off. Users must labour to teach Facebook's algorithms the proper content to provide them with and Facebook will assume that news media organizations will continue to plug their content on the platform at no cost to Facebook.

Journalistic Autonomy

Questions about being accountable to the public and considering what is 'good for democracy' engender questions about journalistic autonomy. How can journalism purport to distance itself from its business obligations when traditional business models are no longer sustainable? Can journalism distance itself from being beholden to the algorithmic predilections of Facebook and Google? Discussions about the future of the news industry in Canada and their outcomes raise important questions regarding autonomy of the journalism profession and of journalists themselves. Schudson (2005) criticizes how journalistic autonomy has been interpreted by journalists historically. He claims that autonomy was "constructed as much against the commercial as it was the political" (Schudson, 2005, 217). Being beholden to either markets or the state was seen to be equally problematic because of the potential for profits to dictate content on the one hand and for subservience to government officials in the production of news to weaken criticism on the other.

Advertising

The influence of advertising on the production of news has been a prominent area of study for political economists. Arguments have been made that there is overt or explicit censorship of the media in highly concentrated environments as the result of pressure from advertisers or owners themselves to produce content that facilitates a positive selling environment (Smythe, 2001) that is also guided by dominant ideology (Herman, 1998). In this sense, there are parameters set on what journalists are allowed to cover, or limits on public discourse. However, the chilling effect need not be conscious or overt (Cooper, 2005, Smythe, 2001, Skinner and Gasher 2005, Curran, 2003). Many political economists want to move away from the ideological effects of the mass media and focus on the economic structures and how they facilitate certain types of content. Advertising itself is not necessarily the problem but rather that content is created to attract the largest possible audience. It is important to note that the public interest may (and often does not) not line up with attracting the widest possible audience. The characteristics of journalism itself or the 'free lunch' are always secondary because the mass media's goal is to produce audiences to sell to advertisers (Smythe, 2001). Cooper (2005) argues that 'advertising as a determinant of demand reinforces the disconnect between what citizens need and what the market produces' (p. 118). This may be in part because advertising is based around irrational decision-making. However, while advertising is what sustained news media production in the

past, this model is quickly fading as organizations compete for digital advertising dollars.

Infotainment, the strive for 'objectivity' and 'official sources'

Examination of the pressures to capture audience attention as well as the shifts in journalist roles reveals the impacts this has had on the media content itself. There is now less time and resources to pursue investigative journalism and instead a push towards 'exaggeration and emotionalism at the expense of analysis' (Cooper, 2005, 127) or entertainment (infotainment) style news (Skinner, Compton and Gasher, 2005a), rather than 'hard news' to keep audience attention. Journalists in this environment appear to have lost a sense of autonomy in their jobs to pursue particular content. Instead they are tied to a 'lowest common denominator ethic' that is increasingly regional, national, or international in character. This is particularly true with the introduction of metrics-based applications in newsrooms to track the success of individual stories and beats and the necessity of using social networking sites to reach users.

It is important to point out that this environment has emerged in an era marked by the elevated focus on politically neutral, professional journalism, which was best achieved by striving for 'objectivity'. Historically news was highly partisan, and this was not seen to be a problem as long as there was diversity of ownership as well as perspectives being disseminated (McChesney, 2008). It is also imperative to critically

analyze what objectivity could possibly mean in the media. When a certain event or story is covered over another, this signals that there are editorial decisions being made to decide what is important and what issues the public should care about, which makes the claim that journalism could ever be objective, dubious at best.

The shift towards objectivity was instead characterized as a move to increase circulation by appealing to mass markets rather than particular groups (Skinner, Compton, and Gasher, 2005), in this sense it contributes to homogenizing the media. Herman (1998) maintains that the move towards objectivity was not a plea from journalists to owners, but quite the contrary. It could give a stamp of authenticity to journalism in the face of increasingly concentrated environments where there were worries of ownership influence over content.

With the rise of journalistic professionalism came trends towards relying on 'official sources' or 'prestige institutions' for the information that goes into news production. Cooper (2005) argues that pressures to 'break' stories as well as financial limitations creates a dynamic between official sources- particularly corporations and government- where there is an acceptance of this straight from the source, freely available material at face value (Herman, 1998, Cooper, 2005, McChesney, 2008). This seriously undermines the watchdog capabilities of the media as prestige institutions have the ability and incentive craft a positive image of themselves.

This reliance on official sources has also had a profound impact on the diversity of voices, particularly marginalized or underrepresented voices that are present in the media. Not only is there a lack of diversity in newsrooms but there becomes a tendency to affirm the values of liberal capitalism (Skinner, Compton and Gasher, 2005b). The incentives to exploit advertising and production cost savings have produced an environment where the media cater to large aggregate audiences that centralize media content, undermining diverse and local coverage in the process (Shade, 2005). As converged media organizations control local media outlets, there is a lessened concern for local stories and news production. Instead there is a heightened focus on regional, national, and global coverage.

Losses in diversity or giving the people what they want?

Some theorists have alternatively argued that with market forces dominating news media production there is more 'choice' now than ever before, challenging the argument that concentration leads to losses in diversity (Garnham, 2011, Curran, 2003).

This is particularly poignant with the rise of niche digital first news outlets that have segmented audiences. Not only that, but there is more knowledge now than ever before about what audiences want, suggesting that the current system is not as 'top down' as some would suggest. In this respect, political economy as an approach has been criticized for economic determinism as well as paying too little attention to agency (Babe, 2009). Market proponents would argue that media corporations are

simply giving the people what they want. However, McChesney (2008) argues that market forces are giving people what they want “within the range of where they can make the most profits” (421). This is particularly relevant to the rise of click-bait and opinion journalism that media organizations are forced to contend with in a digital context. It is also difficult to have these discussions without looking at how numerical and source diversity can be confused in highly concentrated media environments (Winseck, 2008). Often times there are many sources that are simply reproducing the same or similar content due to converged media organizations having multiple holdings in the same or similar markets or because a particular beat has gained a great deal of traction. In this sense, it seems beneficial to ask- if the same or similar content is being reproduced- does this mean that the needs and wants of audiences are not diverse? Baker (2007) argues that often times the market does not provide for (or is not responsive to) the needs of the less fortunate or demographic minorities, as they are not highly valued by advertisers. Therefore, the market does not benevolently operate according to ‘needs’ but rather according to cost saving and profit motivated logic.

Autonomy or Echo Chamber?

Schudson (2005) is critical of the concept of journalistic autonomy and asks, ‘how autonomous should journalism be?’. He claims that journalistic autonomy has rested on a professional understanding that journalists ought to be free from the constraints of the state and markets and without these constraints they will be able to be

autonomous by making judgments about what is newsworthy. He argues that there are very little critical discussions that challenge the governing assumptions of the profession, namely that journalists can decide what is good for the public. "What keeps journalism alive, changing, and growing is the public nature of the journalist's work, the non-autonomous environment of their work, the fact that they are daily or weekly exposed to disappointment and criticism" (Schudson, 2005, 219).

In the absence of outside pressures, Schudson (2005) argues, "Journalism can wind up communicating only to itself for itself" (222) and that journalism as a profession needs to be more institutionally critical of itself and its supposed authority over what is newsworthy. As Bourdieu points out "Autonomy can lead to an egoistic closing in on the specific interests of the people engaged in the field" (Schudson, 2005, 223). This worry is poignant given the relative decline of the network media economy in Canada. If business models are no longer sustainable, shouldn't it matter what audiences want more than ever? What does this mean for public service journalism? If journalists are communicating with themselves rather than the public, does this too create echo chambers and filter bubbles? These questions will be considered in more depth in subsequent chapters.

The Public Broadcaster's Role in Producing the News

The role of the nation state and the public broadcaster with respects to news media creation has been theorized as having the potential to make up for market

failures that arise from heavily concentrated media environments and uncertain futures for news media (particularly local news) in Canada. However, there is also concern over undue political influence on public broadcasters and caution due to the erosion of national government power in favour of global financial markets and international regulatory agencies (Golding and Murdock, 1996, Mirowski, 2013, Zhao and Hackett, 2005). Many political economists of the Westminster School have developed a positive view of the democratic state as a sponsor of public interest journalism. Having equally accessible news content can foster a sense of community and even equality (Curran, 2003).

Public service broadcasters are said to break with market logic because they address audiences as members of moral and political communities rather than as consumers with potential buying power (Golding and Murdock, 1996 p. 66). There is a sense of equality with respects to access as well as a decreased number of ads, which signifies a break from the commodification of news media that plagues the private sector. That being said, this is more complicated by the retooling of the state surrounding neoliberal reforms (Curran, 2003).

As Golding and Murdock (1996) point out, many public broadcasters have been required to both top up their revenue with ads as well as enter into competition with private commercial cable. Trends towards searching for and obtaining international

audiences for public broadcasting content has led to less creative risk taking and relying on 'tried and tested formulas' (Curran, 2003, Golding and Murdock, 1996). It also must be pointed out that the public broadcaster in Canada remains in a state of perpetual uncertainty, where funding is prioritized when a particular party is in power and slashed when there is a turnover in government. The Liberal government's reversal of their Conservative predecessor's cuts to the CBC is evidence of how the pendulum for publicly funded media swings with the political tides. The Liberal government in their 2016 federal budget, pledged \$675 million to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) over 5 years until 2021. This was more than a reversal of the \$115 million annual funding cut that was instituted by the previous Conservative government and led to the CBC cutting 657 jobs in 2014, with promises to cut between 1000-1500 more staff by 2020 (Bradshaw, 2016).

The story is also more complex than the public broadcaster being able to embody a form of resistance to commercialism in the media. It is equally important to contextualize what the process of national building through the development of the public broadcaster may represent for public interest ideals. Patricia Mazepa's research on the development of the CBC speaks to this by analyzing how nation building via the public broadcaster worked to cultivate a particular type of public, namely one that left out immigrant, labour, and socialist voices. Instead, public broadcasting (she argues)

became associated with a 'white settler media, mainly English, and a largely elite French version based principally in the province of Quebec' (Mosco, 2009, p. 112). Other arguments have been made that the divide between state and commercial media is characterized by a subsidized elite press and a depoliticized mass that has promoted conservative 'common sense', questioning the accessibility and reach of public service broadcasting.

While the CBC has certainly increasingly dominated in the realm of news production in Canada, it is imperative that this does not produce a certain complacency or false sense of security that independent, not-for-profit journalism will always be there. The CBC is another reminder to Canadians that they do not have and may never have to pay (directly) out of pocket for journalism and that state sponsored journalism does not always fully represent the diverse population of a given society.

Should we bailout the news industry?

What remains clear is that there is no obvious path forward for the Canadian news media industry. This has become a matter of concern for news media organizations, public interest groups, policy makers, academics, and journalists as they try to envision interventions that may reinvent or restore the viability of the news industry.

In June of 2017, the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage released a report entitled 'Disruption: Change and Churning in Canada's Media Landscape' for

consideration by Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly, who was conducting a broad review of Canada's cultural policies in attempts to explore how to strengthen the production, discoverability and ultimately export of Canadian content in a digital context. This report argued that the federal government should take a more expansive role in funding Canadian journalism. The report assesses the impact of media concentration and digital disruption, the impact this has had on the news media industry in Canada and its ability to live up to the objectives of the Broadcasting Act of 1991 and commits to ensuring that our media landscape preserves and fosters diverse voices in the Canadian media system. Several recommendations are made, guided by the following principle: "Given the media's importance as a reflection of Canada's diversity and a pillar of our democracy, the Government of Canada must implement the necessary measures to support the existence of a free and independent media and local news reporting" (Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, 2017). This report explicitly defends the role that the media has to play in fostering a healthy democracy. Many of the standing committee's recommendations exemplify their commitment to this, including:

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Committee recommends that the Minister of Canadian Heritage explore the existing structures to create a new funding model that is platform agnostic and would support Canadian journalistic content.

RECOMMENDATION 2

a) The Committee recommends that an Indigenous journalism initiative be created with the purpose of training Indigenous journalists to cover Indigenous government institutions and other relevant issues for Indigenous media outlets across Canada.

b) The Committee recommends that the responsibility for creating this initiative be embedded with the Aboriginal Peoples Television Networks, and that this initiative be financed from programs supporting Canadian programming.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada amend sections 19 (newspapers), 19.01 (periodicals) and 19.1 (broadcasters) of the Income Tax Act to allow deduction of digital advertising on Canadian-owned platforms.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada introduce a tax credit to compensate print media companies for a portion of their capital and labour investments in digital media. This would be a temporary five-year measure.

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada level the playing field among industries publishing Canadian news, on all platforms, by ensuring that foreign news aggregators, which publish Canadian news and sell advertising, directed to Canadians, are subject to the same tax obligations as Canadian providers.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Committee recommends that the Department of Canadian Heritage make the following changes to the Canada Periodical Fund:

- make daily and free community newspapers eligible;
- offer greater support for the online distribution of magazines and newspapers;
- offer greater support to Indigenous, ethnic and official language minority print media; and
- increase the budget of the program in the event that a review of the program's eligibility criteria and guidelines leads to an increase in the number of recipients.

RECOMMENDATION 14

The Committee recommends that CBC/Radio-Canada prioritize the production and dissemination of locally reflective news and programming by expanding its local and regional coverage, including unserved areas across all of its platforms.

RECOMMENDATION 17

The Committee recommends that there be a new section in the Competition Act to deal specifically with news media mergers, which would require a panel of experts in media to do a “diversity of voices” test to ensure there is no dominance in any media market.

RECOMMENDATION 19

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada change the definition of a registered charity in the Income Tax Act to include not-for-profit media or foundation.

RECOMMENDATION 20

The Committee recommends that Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada provide start-up funding for new digital media companies.

These policy recommendations all point to the need for government interventions to both preserve and foster the news media at a time of great disruption as well as ensuring that diverse voices are able to participate in the media system and that media mergers do not preclude this prospect. The Canadian Periodical Fund (CPF), which allocated almost \$74 million to Canadian publishers, magazines and non-daily newspapers in 2015-2016 is seen to be one potential avenue to expand (both eligibility criteria and funding) that will assist news media organizations in adapting their business models, tackling major issues impacting the industry, and to assist with the production and distribution of news.

An association called News Media Canada released their own set of recommendations, including that the CPF be expanded from \$74 million to \$350

million. Board Chair Bob Cox argues that news organizations in Canada are trying to adapt and deliver news digitally, but maintains that it is not paying the bills to support the costs of production. "Most of the billions of dollars pouring into digital ads are going to Google and Facebook, which are not creating local news content" (Cox, 2017). Cox claims that they were not asking for a bailout for poorly run, large newspaper companies. Instead, funding would be tied to journalism jobs as well as innovating old business models. Proposing this major increase in funding, however, requires defining what journalism 'is' and who would be eligible to receive such a subsidy. Their definition of journalism is tied to a conception of 'civic reporting', which they define as "reporting on elected officials and public institutions, courts, city halls, school boards, and current events that help communities know about themselves" (Cox, 2017). News Media Canada recommend a subsidy of 35% of the total of all journalists' salaries, with a cap of approximately \$30,000 per journalist. The prospect of subsidies being tied to labour is important as stable, full-time journalism jobs are increasingly scarce. However, Conservative critics have challenged this proposal arguing that, "A true free and independent press must be free of any government interference or entanglement (even if it comes in the form of 'support' which means a press dependent upon government and inevitably beholden to it)," (Robertson, 2017). These critics also claim that social media and citizen journalism have ostensibly allowed citizens to inform themselves on matters of public import. However, citizen journalism

is complimentary to but should not be viewed as a replacement for professional journalistic reporting.

Digital Innovators

Digital first news media organizations in Canada have significantly altered the landscape for news production and dissemination. Without the bloating experienced by legacy media organizations, they are often able to keep the costs of production quite low. However, there are also challenges to digital first media organizations as they compete with well-established Canadian media brands.

The founder of CANADALAND, a crowdfunded digital news podcast startup that emerged in 2013, was highly critical of proposals to bailout the news industry:

What we do not welcome is government subsidies for our competitors. Too often in Canada, tax breaks, funding and other programs intended to help small startups and innovators like ourselves get hijacked by legacy players. It's a trivial matter for a newspaper to launch a digital lab or project for the sole purpose of tapping these funds, leveraging their brand and status to take the lion's share of the subsidies. At this point, with their efforts underwritten by the government, our competitors could conceivably undercut us on advertising rates and push our revenues down to the point where we would no longer be profitable. We run our organization on a budget lower than the annual salary of one top Postmedia or CBC executive. As sustainable as we are, we are also vulnerable to market interference. In short, we are asking that no subsidies or considerations of any kind be made available to Canada's legacy news organizations. (Brown, 2016a)

There is a sense from some digital first media organizations that, as Winseck (2015) puts it, "subsidies will only preserve that which is destined to die" or that legacy media

organizations and the public broadcaster will be the primary beneficiaries of such subsidies rather than digital innovators who are searching for different business models to sustain their organizations.

The policy response from the Canadian Minister of Heritage through her “Creative Canada Policy Framework”, which was released in September of 2017, illustrated that at least for now, there will be no ‘bailout’ or new government funds funneling into the industry. There will be no taxation of Google and Facebook’s digital ad revenue in Canada. The Canadian Periodical Fund will not be expanded. There is, however, a vague commitment to strengthening the public broadcaster’s role and supporting local news. This response and its implications will be examined more closely in chapter 7.

It perhaps comes as no surprise that discussions about ‘entrepreneurial journalism’ are bleeding into conversations about the how to save the industry in Canada and abroad with no clear way forward. This chapter was meant to explore some of the historical factors, major changes, struggles and policy challenges that are impacting the news media economy in Canada before delving into the primary research that investigates the educational, institutional and individual challenges of the news industry in Canada. A more in-depth investigation into the challenges experienced by news media companies in Canada will be explored in chapter 5. Policy

responses, recommendations and solutions will be explored and critically examined in chapter 7. The next chapter will explore entrepreneurial journalism in depth and detail how journalism educational institutions are adapting their educational focus to respond to the vast changes at the industry level and how this impacts the public service vision of journalism that CPE's have defended.

Chapter 4 - A New Direction in Journalistic Training?

“Habits are changing, so news delivery and the business case for traditional news enterprises is being forced to change too. That means students need to learn about business models and development, how big ideas are pitched and branded. A bit of computer coding wouldn’t hurt either.” (Ireton, 2014)

Julie Ireton’s words are not uncommon or even controversial in some circles given major changes to the state of the news media industry, particularly with respects to the skill requirements and expectations of j-school graduates. Proponents of shifting journalism education towards expanding the vocational training beyond editorial training to include harder technical skills, entrepreneurial skills and understandings of business are often unapologetic as these are the skills that are deemed necessary to be employable in the field at the current moment (Picard, 2015). As Ivor Shapiro (2015) succinctly puts it, journalism educators are faced with the choice: ‘to turn or to burn’. Do journalism educators maintain their obligations to teach journalists to provide a public service, to serve democracy and inform the public on matters of public import or do they teach journalists to brand themselves, focus on finding new ways to make journalism profitable, including expanding the very definition of what journalism ‘is’? Or is there perhaps a third option, can there be a marriage between the traditional conceptions of journalism as a public service and entrepreneurial journalism? This chapter seeks to explore this very question by examining both the history of journalism education in Canada, what journalism education is ‘for’, changes in journalism

education as a result of digital disruption, and looming pressures to conform to a new entrepreneurial model of journalism education. This chapter critically situates how journalistic autonomy is being understood and, in many cases, overstated by proponents of entrepreneurial journalism and how this is being interpreted by journalism educators in university level journalism programs.

This chapter further explores the debates surrounding changes to journalism education towards a more 'entrepreneurial approach', and draws upon qualitative open-ended interviews with 3 journalism educators from distinct types of journalism schools in Canada; academic, academic/vocational and vocational, which emerged at very different points in history and with differing approaches to journalism education. By examining entrepreneurial journalism through a critical political economy approach, this chapter will analyze whether entrepreneurial pedagogy is complementary or contradictory to the public service ideal and the extent to which this has been adopted in key journalism educational institutions in Canada.

This chapter illustrates that entrepreneurial models of education may not be as uncritically accepted by Canadian journalism educators as some theorists have suggested. Instead, educators interviewed in this study are wary about solely focusing on interpreting journalism's role as fulfilling a market function so to not risk diminishing public service journalism further or pushing news media creation to a lowest common denominator ethic.

Why the new direction?

Journalism educators have been grappling with a vocational identity crisis as the demands of the workforce have altered drastically for prospective journalists. Digital disruption and the onset of precarious labour have changed the employment prospects for journalism grads, in some cases even challenging whether undergraduate journalism programs are still viable or necessary. As will be made clear in chapters 4 and 5, one does not need journalism education to 'do' journalism, or to be successful at it for that matter.

As was noted in chapter one, the traditional orientation of journalism education to train students to work in large media organizations no longer matches the realistic employment prospects that journalism school graduates are confronted with (Picard, 2015; Deuze, 2006). Legacy media organizations are faced with dwindling advertising revenues and increasing competition from digital news platforms (Picard, 2015). The question then becomes, how do journalism schools prepare students for careers that no longer exist?

Entrepreneurial Journalism as the Solution?

Entrepreneurial journalism has been proposed as a model for teaching journalism in an age of precarious job prospects. It has been argued that entrepreneurial journalism could be a potential solution to the labour crisis of journalism. If jobs do not exist,

create them for yourself. The idea that journalists must develop business acumen and think like entrepreneurs, whether that be to build a brand or to develop a startup, is becoming commonplace (Cohen, 2015; Benedetti, 2015). Journalists are increasingly being required to brand themselves online to create a name for themselves and to adapt to the precarious nature of the workforce (Hearn, 2008; Neff, 2012). It has been argued that personal brand journalism is replacing the traditional career paths for journalists where one seeks employment at large media organizations post journalism school (Wolf, 2014).

One facet of entrepreneurial journalism is characterized by the rise of small-scale media outlets that have significantly reduced infrastructure needs than their legacy media predecessors (Ripollés et. al, 2016). These smaller scale (and often digital first) initiatives are formed by individual journalists or small collectives of journalists (Picard, 2014; Quinn, 2010).

Entrepreneurship in journalism emerged as having the potential to form employment opportunities. A key element to this phenomenon was that it represented a new form of news production where journalists are not only producing the news, but they are also occupying the role of entrepreneurs and, in the case of startups, owners (Ripollés et. al, 2016).

Ripollés et. al (2016) argue that this environment and new way of working as a journalist has been forced given the current configuration of the market for news media. They argue that entrepreneurial journalism comes as a reaction to the collapsed business model of journalism, to job losses in mainstream media organizations and to the ensuing losses to job security in the field. However, conceiving of a journalist as an 'entrepreneur' requires understanding that the once separate roles of journalist and business manager have merged (Picard, 2014). Entrepreneurial journalists must not only produce news but must also make business decisions.

Benedetti (2015) argues that this current state of affairs in the media has led to two assumptions that have been adopted by proponents of entrepreneurial journalism:

- 1) that technology has rendered the traditional model of journalism unsustainable and the wall between editorial and business must be breeched, and
- 2) journalists may no longer rely on institutional journalism for work, they must develop their own business and brands that combine journalism with profit making.

He argues that these assumptions are embedded in survival rhetoric, namely that the only way to 'save journalism' is to fundamentally shift the way that journalism has historically been understood, particularly with respect to the understanding that journalism should be conceptualized outside of a strict market context. This survival sentiment is certainly echoed by many in industry, including David Skok, former head of digital editorial strategy for the Toronto Star, who argued,

Our traditional newsroom culture taken in aggregate has blinded us from moving beyond our walls of editorial independence to recognize that without sales and marketing, strategy, leadership and, first and foremost, revenues, there is no editorial independence left to root for. (Skok, 2012)

The reality is grim, and the proverbial separation of church and state is painted as inevitable. In many ways, this is what has led major proponents of teaching entrepreneurial journalism, including Jeff Jarvis (2010), to teach that almost anything that can be interpreted as communicative activity can be conceived as journalism.

Many educators have argued that entrepreneurial journalism must be included as part of journalism education (Baines and Kennedy, 2010; Jarvis, 2010; Hunter and Nell, 2011). Picard (2015) argues that too many journalism programs are still teaching students to work for established news organizations when they should be focusing on training in entrepreneurship and teaching individuals how to work and establish themselves as individual journalists. Journalism educators are faced with a dilemma in the context of the crisis of journalism. “Entrepreneurial journalism” is being adopted more and more as a pedagogical approach in journalism schools in the US and Canada – with slower adoption in Canadian schools (Levine 2015, Benedetti, 2015). However, educators have argued that the shift towards teaching journalism students to be entrepreneurs with a heavy focus on technical skills, innovation, and developing startups in journalism education, detracts from the public service ideal of journalism and its role in facilitating democracy (Benedetti, 2015; Francoeur, 2015; Levine et al,

2015). These arguments are challenged by arguments that the realities of the workforce demand that journalists have certain skill sets (Picard, 2015; Shapiro, 2015; Baines and Kennedy, 2010). This has been understood as a shift that breaks down the wall between the editorial and business functions of news media making, where students are to prioritize audience desires, advertisers and ultimately views the journalist's role as fulfilling a market function first and social function second (or not at all) (Benedetti, 2015; Mensing and Ryfe, 2013). The shift in pedagogy represents a major break from ways of teaching journalism that have historically separated the two (McChesney, 2013).

Levine (2015) problematizes the amorphous term 'entrepreneurship', which she argues is appropriated as a savior for journalism partly due to the cultural cache of startup culture but ultimately has very little recognition for the grim realities of most entrepreneurial endeavors. Particularly troubling is that most startups fail within five years and a mere ten percent of startups ever grow (Levine, 2015). While some journalism startups can and will flourish, the reality is that not everyone who tries will succeed. Despite these realities, entrepreneurship is further extended to the realm of freelance journalism work where freelancers are understood as autonomous entrepreneurs (Baines and Kennedy, 2010). The message remains fairly clear for proponents of entrepreneurial journalism; to cope with precarity, journalistic training

must be oriented towards entrepreneurship and self-branding. Journalism schools should be innovating and adopting a more active role in the media industry. Mellor (2009) argues that media entrepreneurs must have extensive knowledge of their niche subject matter, new storytelling techniques, business knowledge of their audience and potential market challenges. When there are many journalism graduates competing for few jobs, there is a perception that journalism graduates should be creating their own jobs or understanding how to succeed as freelancers. In either instance, the language and pedagogy of entrepreneurship does not solve the problem of job losses or precarious work in the journalism field. Instead, it reimagines real struggles as opportunities to innovate and revitalize the industry. The positives aspects of this environment are accentuated, and the negatives are minimized. Journalistic autonomy in this context is often times valorized. Enterprising journalists are not beholden to a specific editor or organization, they are self-employed and establish independent enterprises.

A Brief History of Journalism Education in Canada

While there have been some critiques of the unapologetic adoption of an entrepreneurial model of education in journalism schools (Benedetti, 2015; Francoeur, 2015; Levine et al, 2015), to what extent has this model been adopted in Canadian

journalism schools? Do journalism educators perceive a conflict between entrepreneurial values and public service journalism?

To understand why the author has selected the sample of educators to be interviewed, some historical considerations of journalism education in Canada must be noted. Journalism education in English-language Canada has always lagged behind its US counterparts (Edge, 2016). The first 4-year university journalism programs in Canada did not emerge until after World War II in the 1940s, whereas in the US the first programs of this nature emerged in the early 1900s. The original university journalism programs to emerge out of the post war era were at Carleton University (1945), the University of Western Ontario (1946), and Ryerson University (1950) and Canada did not see other university level programs outside of Ontario emerge until the 1970s. The original three modelled their journalism programs heavily on Columbia University's model, which was very much focused on journalistic practice and skills training (Desbarats, 1996). However, Carleton's program, which was considered to be the leading journalism school in Canada, diverged the furthest from the Columbia model as it developed. Carleton differentiated its program by integrating a mass communications component to supplement the journalism stream, which added the crucial element of teaching journalism students about the political economy of the media to understand media structures, media effects and media criticism. This program was considered to be

comprehensive because it maintained its practical elements while also fostering an increasingly academic approach (Edge, 2016). This direction was very much in line with what many US journalism schools were doing. Ryerson, on the other hand, retained a predominantly vocational focus. This may have been because at the time, Ryerson was still a polytechnic institute and did not become degree granting until 1972. Even as Ryerson was granted university status in 2001, the journalism school retained this approach (Edge, 2016).

Pedagogical approaches to journalism education that strictly focus on practical training have been contentious for both faculty members in more established academic disciplines as well as for working journalists who oppose the very concept of journalism education or those who argue that it should be better grounded with learning from other courses in the sciences and humanities that foster specialized knowledge and critical thinking rather than strictly teaching form (Edge, 2016). Picard (2015) maintains that there is increasingly a need to teach students more specialized forms of journalism but that this requires that more interdisciplinary journalism programs emerge that can allow students to hone their focus to gain specialization in climate change or social policy, for example. While the tradition in the US moved more towards conceptual teaching, many journalism schools in Canada are still transitioning from trade schools to academic institutions. Debates about what journalism education is for and to whose benefit have

been important framing tools to assess the development of Canadian journalism schools. Are journalism schools there to assist students in entering into a career? Are they to assist the media in recruiting employees? Are they to ensure that the ideal of providing a public service is met? Or is it some combination of all three of these?

Given the underdeveloped tradition of 4-year university degree granting journalism programs in Canada, this study sought out the informed perspectives of key informants from different types of journalism programs to understand how they envision the role of journalism education in the current environment, where many journalism graduates are now destined to work in a freelance capacity. Are journalism schools in Canada adding another dimension to their journalism programs, like some of the US institutions have, and teaching students to become entrepreneurs?

Both Carleton University's program (academic) and Ryerson University's program (vocational) were chosen for inclusion in this sample given the long and divergent histories of these institutions in the landscape for journalism education within Canadian universities. The third institution that was chosen for inclusion is much newer, having emerged in 2001. The joint program at Centennial College/University of Toronto Scarborough represents a hybrid program combining both academic and vocational elements. Given that there used to be a separation between technical and editorial training in Canadian colleges and universities respectively, one of the goals of these

interviews was to determine whether entrepreneurial journalism was more readily adopted at one of these institutions given their orientation. The perspectives of the educators at the vocational, academic, and hybrid academic/vocational programs will be represented by identifying the interviewees by last name. The first respondent, Asmaa Malik, from Ryerson University was chosen because they currently teach and also developed the first course that is taught in entrepreneurial journalism at this institution. This meant that the respondent would be in a good position to contextualize entrepreneurial journalism as it manifests in the curriculum at this institution. The second respondent, Dr. Christopher Waddell, from Carlton University was chosen because of their extensive experience teaching business journalism in that program but also because they have been working in the department for over 15 years. This level of experience enabled this respondent to provide perspectives on the changes that have been made to the journalism curriculum at this institution to confront digital disruption, including efforts (or lack thereof) to employ entrepreneurial models of education. The third respondent, Jeffrey Dvorkin, is the program director of the joint program at the University of Toronto Scarborough and Centennial College and this position puts this individual in a unique position to speak about the focus and learning outcomes of the curriculum. These interviews were meant to provide context for the educational environment and pedagogical imperatives of Canadian journalism schools in a shifting environment for journalism labour and content production. By examining how

educational institutions are shifting their priorities, this chapter seeks to critically examine the implications of changes to journalism education with respects to understandings of journalism and its role to play in the functioning of democratic society.

The interviews revealed that this model of journalism education has been adopted more organically in Canadian journalism schools than they have been in the US, through the adoption of particular courses that focus on entrepreneurship, including the adaptation of older courses. However, none of these three programs has been branded as offering degrees in entrepreneurial journalism, as some of their American counterparts have- particularly the MA in Entrepreneurial Journalism at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism and the Scripps Howard Journalism Entrepreneurship Institute at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University.

i. On Entrepreneurial Approaches to Journalism Education and Practice

There is certainly not a broad consensus amongst interviewees that entrepreneurial journalism is or should be the best model to employ in Canadian journalism programs, nor is it viewed as the answer to journalism's problems by any of the interviewees. It is no secret that journalism programs, particularly university-based academic programs have had to reorient their focus to teach not only the editorial skills necessary to do journalism, but also the technical skills that are increasingly demanded

of journalism grads in a digital environment. Another consideration is declining enrollment, which puts pressures on educators and program directors to make their programs seem more attractive. Respondents were asked to discuss the extent to which their institutions have adopted an entrepreneurial model as part of their curriculum, their perspectives on why this has come about, and what the challenges and benefits are to orienting journalism education in this direction.

Respondent 1 from Ryerson University characterizes the entrepreneurial model of journalism education as a response to the lack of legacy media jobs that educators used to train journalists for. In Malik's few years as an educator, she has witnessed shifts towards an emphasis on personal branding, being conversant in the language of coding and a focus on entrepreneurship. Malik maintains that a huge challenge in this shift is that most journalists are not there to take a huge risk or to make money. Malik maintains that they are realistic about the prospects of her students not necessarily being equipped to develop their own startups as there are financial barriers to doing so.

However, there are skills you can learn in entrepreneurship, which are public speaking, how to pitch something, how to clarify an idea, how to listen to feedback, how to figure out people's problems, solutions journalism, this is not necessarily always taught from a money-making perspective (Malik, 2017).

Malik teaches a course in entrepreneurial journalism called 'Journalism Workshop', which is a mandatory course in the MA program at Ryerson and an elective

in the undergraduate program. Malik points out that entrepreneurship is difficult to escape at Ryerson as it is very focused on zone learning, which may be because of its history as a polytechnic institute and short tenure as a university. This course, however, is focused on thinking about creative ways to solve journalism problems, using the lean startup model as the template for the class.

Waddell, an associate professor of journalism at Carleton University, states that there have been no moves within their program to create a course on media startups as of yet. The program does however, offer a freelancing elective. When the interview was conducted, the faculty was in the midst of redesigning the program, but they are more focused on teaching storytelling techniques for online platforms. If students wish to focus on entrepreneurship, they will be able to take an entrepreneurship elective that will be offered by the business school. Waddell is critical of “entrepreneurship”, evaluating that it is an amorphous term like “information”. They indicated that they thought the phrase was simply a buzz word used to attract journalism students that has not gained a great deal of traction in Canada. Waddell echoes Malik’s concerns that not all journalism graduates want to start their own businesses. They point to the makeup of Carleton’s program, where only 25% of the graduates go on to be journalists, whereas the other 75% go into teaching, public relations, law, or a Master’s in another discipline. “Even though we have 90 people graduating from journalism, we

don't have 90 people who are desperate to be journalists" (Waddell, 2017). One of their worries is that journalism may become a two-job discipline, where one must support their ability to pursue journalism by having secondary employment, similar to music and acting.

Waddell maintains that the hype surrounding entrepreneurial journalism was based on the assumption that an organization could be sustained through a combination of advertising and subscriptions, which has turned out to be false. They clarify:

However, I think there is a model that does exist where it can survive- whether it is entrepreneurial journalism or not, what you need to do is find a group of people who don't think they are particularly well served by existing media, who want and need information for their work or their life or whatever they want to do and are prepared to pay for that if they can be guaranteed that the quality of the information they are getting is better than the information anyone else produces (Waddell, 2017)

This definition lends itself to an understanding of entrepreneurial journalism that may potentially serve the public interest, including serving underserved or poorly served communities. Waddell offers a critical and practical perspective to the assumption that journalism startups will be a solution to the problem of a collapsed business model for journalism, but offers an alternative take that renders 'entrepreneurial journalism' as potentially self-sustaining rather than profitable, but must have an audience that is willing to pay for the content produced. The issue with this interpretation is that

communities that might need coverage the most, may not be in the best position to pay for content. In many ways, this understanding of content production is anything but free from market influence.

Dvorkin, Director of the joint program at the University of Toronto Scarborough/Centennial, weighs in by arguing that entrepreneurial journalism has in many ways always been there, and should be there. Their experience teaching entrepreneurial journalism stems from a class that they once taught at Ryerson but now teaches in 4th year at UTSC/Centennial. In this class, the students must create something and combine it with a business plan. Dvorkin's understandings of entrepreneurial journalism echo's Waddell's own understandings, namely the idea that one must find a community that is underserved or could be better served and to find a creative way to do that. This is something that Dvorkin reports having done with several of their classes. In one case, the students developed a website for coverage of an impending revolution in Iran to Torontonians. They realized that Toronto had the second largest Iranian population in North America outside of Iran and that they could serve this community with quality coverage. Dvorkin maintains that journalism schools at the current moment are caught between their intellectual values and their business obligations. However, the learning outcomes in his program have remained consistent to have "the ability to think critically and contextually, an understanding of history, a deep commitment to the idea of service so they see the audience as citizens not just

consumers and to have the skills to do all of these things in various platforms” (Dvorkin, 2017). They maintain that they are not anti-business, but simply pro-journalism.

It is perhaps unsurprising that Ryerson University has taken the furthest steps to integrate entrepreneurial journalism into their curriculum given their history of being closely aligned with vocational training and preparing students to work in the industry. What is more interesting however, is that entrepreneurial journalism has been conceived of as something that needs to go beyond what other news media organizations are doing to find communities that are not being properly served by existing news media production. There is a sense from educators that the model where news media organizations cover every story is no longer sustainable, instead finding niche audiences who want or need content is what is deemed to be most likely to succeed. This understanding seems to leave room for envisioning entrepreneurial endeavours in journalism as potentially having a commitment to public service and informing citizens, but presents a somewhat underdeveloped understanding of the role journalism graduates will play in facilitating these types of content.

ii. On Brand Building Through Social Media and ‘Objectivity’?

Given the current labour market, and precarious job prospects for journalism graduates, the researcher asked journalism educators whether they believed that brand building was necessary for emerging journalists, whether it involves social media and whether objectivity is still important in the context of branding and digital journalism.

Malik believes that personal branding is very important because students need to find out what they bring to the table that makes them special. This is seen to be a large component of entrepreneurial journalism. The brand building course that is taught at Ryerson teaches students “how to leverage their focus, expertise and portfolio into a niche that makes them marketable” (Malik, 2017). They believe that social media, particularly Twitter, is an important part of branding because it helps you to amplify your reach and build an audience and network. However, Malik warns about the dangers of tweeting opinions because future employers will have different policies surrounding social media use for employees. The question of ‘objectivity’ was more complicated for them. They do not believe that a journalist should exhibit their political affiliation, but there is a grey area here. For example, “can you say Trump’s travel ban is unconscionable? Is this being partisan?” (Malik, 2017). They prefer to discuss ‘objectivity of method’,

The way in which you gather news is objective but by nature the fact that you are writing it and you are choosing to put certain voices in and you are choosing the lead and you are picking out the angle, it can’t be objective. (MALIK, 2017).

Waddell is more skeptical of brand building as the path to success, though they do cite some examples of successfully branded journalists. The program at Carleton encourages students to maintain a social media presence (primarily Twitter) and to maintain a personal blog. However, Waddell warns about expressing opinions on

Twitter, and argues that journalists should not indicate that they have preexisting notions about an issue. They question how one builds a brand independently of mainstream media organizations. Waddell surmises that “if social media is the way to draw attention to yourself, then maybe that is the way to go”. On the other hand, they are very skeptical of the broad utility of Twitter for journalists, arguing that it is mostly comprised of journalists in Canada and is a very small network of people talking to each other. Waddell believes that it is lazy journalism to only use Twitter to find sources because the population of people using Twitter is in no way representative of public opinion. It can have value for amplification and recognition, but they maintain a healthy skepticism as to its journalistic merit.

Waddell further argues that it is difficult to build a brand on social media because it is, in most cases, completely unpaid. “I could build a brand on Twitter, but that doesn’t pay my grocery bills. If you want to do this seriously, it’s lots of work.” (Waddell, 2017).

Dvorkin encourages their students to maintain a personal blog and social media presence but is more critical of the move to encourage journalists to have large egos, which they attribute to the rise and personal branding and loss of stable labour in the field. They contextualize the growth of opinion-based journalism:

Because it's cheaper to have someone bloviating on the website than to set up a bureau in Damascus. My sense is that the audience is confused and very conflicted about what is considered to be reliable information, but more reporting is what is going to save journalism not more opinion. Opinion is fine provided that it takes a secondary role to fact-based reporting. Entrepreneurial journalism is important but the downside of it is that it is the contracting out of intellectual content. It means that the institution has no responsibility. Everything has been left to the producer who has no historical understanding or loyalty to either the organization or to the public but just to him or herself. (DVORKIN, 2017).

While Dvorkin criticizes the growth of opinion-based journalism, they also argue that one should be able to express their conscience (Or point 9 of Kovach and Rosenstiel's elements of journalism). They believe that this is really important when it comes to branding.

When I was an ombudsman at NPR during the war in Iraq, employees came up to me and said they were upset about the war, I want to demonstrate against it. I said let's be realistic- what do you do at NPR? Do a lot of people know what you do? If you are in a small town in Maine and everyone knows you are producer on NPR news and you show up at an anti-war demonstration you have to understand that a bunch of people- rightly or wrongly- are going to say NPR is against the war in Iraq. You have a right to an opinion, you don't have the right to the job. This issue of loyalty is hugely important. The idea of personal brands means we don't have any loyalty except to ourselves. So where is the community in this? Where is the idea of journalism for a common purpose- for the common good?

There appears to be a general consensus amongst respondents that having a social media presence and branding oneself are important components of succeeding in journalism in the current moment. However, all respondents warn about the use of personal opinion in one's social media brand, illustrating that these educators do not

necessarily share the view that all communicative content is journalism. There is still a heavy focus on being non-partisan, though this notion is complicated by respondents. There seems to be some fear, expressed by Dvorkin, that building an audience separately from organizations impacts the public good in some way. This is the idea that the individualization of journalism is atomizing journalists and encouraging them to focus on what's important to them as opposed to what is important to the general public. However, this raises questions about whether legacy news media organizations fared any better in this respect. Malik's contention that objectivity never existed points to the fact that certain voices and understandings are often being privileged over others. It could be argued that more issues are becoming a part of the public conversation as a result of social media use and individuals creating journalism with a 'conscience'. As Picard (2015) argues, "online news sites, blogs, and social media are far more often willing to publicly shame elites than legacy media" (5). Further, there are important questions being raised about what it means to be partisan in the media now. Is showing 'both sides' of an issue 'good journalism', when one side is promoting racist legislation, as Malik points out? Importantly, respondents maintain a commitment to encouraging brand building that feigns objectivity, or is at least devoid of explicit stance or opinion. The question then becomes: as the work of a journalist is increasingly tied up with personal social media use and processes of self-commodification, is this increasingly difficult to do? And perhaps more importantly, do

news media organizations that employ freelancers care about this? Do audiences care about this? This will be explored further in chapter 5.

iii. Do values of entrepreneurship and public service journalism clash?

Entrepreneurship has undoubtedly permeated the journalism curriculum in these three Canadian institutions to varying degrees, but does this have implications for traditional journalistic values? Can there be a marriage between entrepreneurship and the idea of serving citizens as public communities, or does it relegate citizens to consumers? Does focusing on rendering journalism profitable undermine goals of public service?

Respondents were asked to consider whether there is a clash between entrepreneurship and traditional journalistic values including freedom from advertising and market influence, editorial autonomy and independence.

Malik argues that there is a clash between values of entrepreneurship and traditional journalistic values - particularly freedom from advertising influence. Malik points to the growth in branded content and native advertising, which is content that has the look and feel of regular editorial content. Chris Rooke defines branded content as "the practice of investing in compelling content". This content, he argues, "enables consumers to align themselves with the lifestyle and belief system that a company represents" (Smith, 2016). Native advertising, on the other hand, native advertising is defined as "a marketing or paid-media tactic that aims to leverage a publisher's

storytelling tools. It gives marketers the ability to promote their branded content within an editorial feed” (Smith, 2016). Malik points to organizations like The Globe and Mail, Postmedia and the New York Times that are leveraging their wide reach to incorporate branded content as alternative sources of revenue. They contend that the “whole success of native advertising is predicated on the idea that you can’t tell the difference” (Malik, 2017). Branded content isn’t new, according to MALIK, the car and condo inserts in Saturday newspapers only exist because advertisers want to advertise in them. However, Malik argues that people are becoming less media literate and sponsored content can take advantage of people being flooded by information. For instance, sponsored content from the New York Times wouldn’t look any different in someone’s Facebook feed. A prime example that Malik points to is a New York Times story about the state of women’s prisons, which is almost indistinguishable from a regular story apart from the tiny Netflix logo that says, ‘Brought to you by Orange is the New Black’ and the tiny font indicating that it is a paid post. They point to the fact that this is a good story with great graphics, illustrating that public service journalism can coincide with values of entrepreneurship. However, Malik questions whether the story would have existed if Netflix were not trying to come up with content for Orange is the New Black. “When it comes to entrepreneurship and journalism this sort of collusion between advertising and journalism is really a problem. Sure the New York Times would say that Netflix didn’t have influence or final say on editorial, but would

the story exist if Netflix didn't want to buy sponsored content?". Instead of the story being important in and of itself, advertising is making the story important, and this practice is inherently flawed for Malik. Transparency is key here, "audiences must know where information is coming from and why, it's not just about putting a positive spin on something or endorsing a product." (Malik, 2017). On the one hand this type of content is seen to be an anathema, it attempts to portray companies or brands in the best light, rather than what journalism is meant to do, namely to inform and contextualize information and maintain a level of neutrality. On the other hand, news media organizations and freelance journalists alike are leaning in to this type of content production because it is lucrative and because the storytelling skills that journalists possess are easily transferrable to the fields of public relations and content marketing (Francoeur, 2015).

Waddell argues that there are positive and negatives to values of entrepreneurship and breaking down the wall between business and editorial. "It's a good way of finding out how many people are interested in a subject, but you can't let that be your sole determinant of what stories you do and don't do or else you would be doing Kim Kardashian stories ever day" (Waddell, 2017). They argue that every once-in-a-while there can be a happy coincidence with respects to what is popular and what is in the public interest, citing the example of President Trump's connections to

Russia and the popularity of those stories in the news cycle. What is different now, for Wadell, is that the shift from a strictly advertising based model for news media organizations to one that relies on audiences for revenue is that it is necessary to think about what audiences are interested in. However, they argue that “metrics cannot be the sole determinant, or it will drive you to a lowest common denominator ethic pretty quickly”.

Dvorkin argues that one of the biggest problems with breaking down the editorial/business wall in the digital age is that “news media organizations are making the assumption that audiences are malleable and can be manipulated. Give them clickbait, will they stay for the news?” (Dvorkin, 2017).

Dvorkin maintains:

Look at the Toronto Star- they are laying off more people now- the largest newsroom in Toronto outside the CBC will be Vice Media. How did that happen? The infrastructure is changing rapidly, the expectations are huge in the era of Trump. News organizations understand that they have to do something to restore their reputation and it's not going to be with clickbait. (DVORKIN, 2017).

They argue that entrepreneurship can, however, coincide with public service journalism, using Jesse Brown's Canadaland podcast as an example of entrepreneurial journalism with a social conscience. However, Dvorkin envisions the broader struggle as one of survival for media organizations, which has changed the sensibility of what journalism is about. They lament the loss of costly investigative reporting that has the

potential to generate lawsuits for media organizations, which they claim was why Jesse Brown sought out partnership with the Toronto Star to assist in breaking the Jian Ghomeshi story (Surfrin, 2014). Dvorkin argues that media organizations are unwilling to take risks and instead focus on counting the hits on their stories and focusing on who's story 'won' on a given day. While Dvorkin has some astute observations about the state of the industry, if the state of the industry is one of survival, how would or should this be any different for journalism graduates who are expected to bear the risk of being self-employed or developing a startup. Jesse Brown's Canadaland is certainly a good example of a media startup with the public interest in mind. He found a niche area that was not being covered in the media and built a company that relies on a combination of advertising and crowdfunding. However, Brown began his startup after already having a name for himself given his successful career working for several major news institutions in Canada. Most journalism graduates do not come equipped with an established media brand that they can leverage into a successful entrepreneurial endeavor.

Each educator expressed concern with the increasing commodification of journalism content but appear overly optimistic that news media organizations will not be able to get away with simply producing decontextualized 'clickbait' journalism. Educators have presented the severing of the wall between business and editorial as a

line that must be crossed to succeed in the current environment, but it is unclear where the limit is from business concerns dictating content. It remains clear that educators are becoming much more open to severing the ties between editorial and business than was the case historically.

iv. On Challenges to J-School Education Going Forward

It is evident that there are many challenges that journalism educators face with respects to preparing students to work in a field that is constantly in flux, where jobs are precarious, technology is always changing, and roles are constantly being renegotiated. Respondents were asked to characterize what they considered to be the major challenges for journalism education going forward, drawing on their own institutional experiences.

Malik argues that there are two major challenges going forward for journalism education. The first challenge is how to sell students on the idea of learning journalism when it is not seen as a growth industry. They maintain that there needs to be a major repositioning of journalism education to shift the focus from preparing students for jobs as daily news reporters (a job that Malik argues will not be around for much longer as many daily news organizations become increasingly unviable), to preparing students for the realities of the job market. "Ok, you are not going to get a job as a daily beat reporter at a Toronto newspaper, but you might be a social media editor for an

interesting niche publication of some kind.” (Malik, 2017). They go further to argue that,

The roles are changing but the skills are still the same and that is the challenge for journalism educators is for students to understand that it’s not about print, it’s not about broadcast, it’s not about any of these things. It’s about telling effective stories and being transparent.

Malik believes that because the technologies change, teaching effective storytelling is what must remain consistent.

The second major challenge that Malik points to is the increasing need for coding skills in journalism as this is not a problem many journalism educators are equipped to solve. However, they argue that this is where the jobs are.

If you are a journalist/developer, people say you are a unicorn. You bring the strong journalistic skills with coding skills and the Globe will hire you, the Star will hire you. They will make room for you. That’s the piece we haven’t figured out (Malik, 2017).

A major challenge here is balancing the necessary skills students must learn to be successful, while also realizing that the path to success is ill-defined and constantly changing. If there is an increasing expectation that journalists have a niche area of expertise, will this too need to be incorporated into the curriculum in some way? It is not clear what the proper balance is between the various elements that are increasingly deemed to be essential parts of a journalist’s toolkit.

Waddell echoes the concerns expressed by Malik. "The challenge is that whatever route to success you think there is, it keeps changing." (Waddell, 2017). However, they are more concerned about journalism schools running up against a university system that is not designed for programs and courses that change constantly. Carleton is in the midst of designing a new program that is partly journalism and partly information technology and online design. From the ideation of this program to implementation it took 3 years, and as Waddell points out a lot can change in 3 years. This is a big challenge for j-schools if they wish to stay up to date and relevant. Another challenge is attracting educators with technical expertise to teach a new course. Waddell recalls speaking with an educator from the US whose program offers a course that designs apps in conjunction with news media organizations. At this institution, they pay the instructor \$20,000 to teach the course, which Waddell contends, equates to about 2-3 contract instructors in Canada.

US universities are funded differently, which may provide access to a lot more funding that allows them to do different things. This is a lot more difficult in Canada because public universities don't have access to that kind of revenue. (Waddell, 2017).

This is the issue with entrepreneurial journalism that they have as well. In the US, Waddell argues, there are foundations that are willing to fund entrepreneurial endeavors but in Canada "for tax reasons and other reasons, foundations don't give a damn about media." (Waddell, 2017).

Dvorkin does not see the balancing act between the many facets of journalism education as a challenge. They believe that this is evidenced by the great deal of growth the UTSC/Centennial program has experienced in recent years, which, according to Dvorkin, was precipitated by opening up the introductory journalism classes to those from other disciplines. The biggest challenge for Dvorkin is how to help media organizations do a better job that preserves public service journalism and “doesn’t involve graduating a generation of sweatshop employees that allow them to maintain profit margins. It is not just the National Post that is giving retention bonuses to people as they lay others off. All media organizations are doing this.” (Dvorkin, 2017).

There appears to be no clear way forward to confront the major challenges of journalism education, which the respondents have identified as attracting students, balancing teaching the skills that are necessary to succeed, updating programs in a timely manner and proper investment in the updating of journalism education, and trying to work with industry to protect ‘good’ journalism jobs.

The funding deficit for Canadian journalism schools has always been a problem (Edge, 2016), but this may be exacerbated by the pressures to update programs alongside or in conjunction with what is happening at the industry level. In many ways, Canadian journalism schools appear to be caught between trying implement aspects of

entrepreneurial journalism in their curriculum while also not being fully equipped to implement them as a result of both deficient expertise and funding. Historically solutions to the lack of funding have come from corporate partnerships with programs or corporate funding from the CRTC and its public benefits program (Edge, 2016). However, these partnerships further diminish any semblance of separation between journalists and media companies, which historically have had very different *raison d'être*.

DISCUSSION

All three interviewees present themselves as cautious adopters of entrepreneurial journalism as a pedagogical approach to journalism education, with the educator from Carleton arguing that Carleton's traditionally academic program has had very little engagement with entrepreneurial pedagogy. Despite teaching courses with an entrepreneurial focus and illustrating the importance of entrepreneurial skills, which may be essential to working as a freelancer, none of the interviewees claim to see entrepreneurial journalism (freelancing or developing journalism startups) as a way to 'save journalism'. Each interviewee stated that there are benefits to the breaking down of the wall between editorial and business, but that this should never be the sole determinant of news media production. However, how does one draw the line

between when a story is good for business and when a story is simply important for citizens to know about?

It is important to note that the interviewees all have a vested interest in maintaining journalism degrees as relevant and desirable programs to enter into. While educators interviewed maintain their commitment to traditional journalistic values, which in many ways is what separates journalism from fields like public relations and content marketing, it is unclear how public service journalism will survive given the current configuration of the news media industry. Surely journalism schools can have a role to play in developing innovative ways to tell stories, but in many ways the aims of higher education must go beyond providing training grounds or innovation hubs for the broken media industries. There must be a focus on fostering “critical thinking outside of convention, policy or rules of procedure” (Edge, 2016, 62).

A newfound focus on the audience may appear on the surface to be a win for citizens and for public service journalism. Shouldn't journalists be concerned with what citizens need, what citizens want? Is that what serving the public means? The breaking down of the wall between editorial and business can be interpreted as breaking free from top-down approaches to journalism that plagued the analogue age. That being said, there appears to be an inherent conflict between entrepreneurship and public service journalism that is difficult to commensurate, but is treated as somewhat

negotiable by journalism educators. What is in the public interest and what is simply interesting to the public can be very different things. The two may coincide occasionally, but in an environment where journalism can be almost anything and individuals are increasingly required to bear the risk of producing it, the types of content that are 'risk averse' may not coincide with what is in the public interest. If public interest journalism, according to critical political economists, is meant to facilitate citizens being more informed about matters of public import and to enable them to participate in the democratic system as a result, the stories that provide this type of content are often "not likely to attract the largest audiences" (Tewksbury & Rittenberg, 2012, 156). When editorial is more directly linked to commerce, the fundamental values of journalism are cast aside in favour of counting page views or allowing brands and advertisers to dictate content. Benedetti (2015) argues that accuracy and transparency are some of the first casualties in this context. Discussions of the threat of fake news in the wake of the 2016 presidential election have certainly brought to light that what can be profitable does not have to be accurate. Earlier this year, when the Washington Post published a story that went viral and turned out to be untrue, stating said that Russia had hacked the US electric grid, the story's retractions were a subdued afterthought (Greenwald, 2017); the damage had already been done, the profits had already been made.

CONCLUSION

While there does not appear to be any inherent conflict between entrepreneurial journalism and public interest journalism according to the respondents, this does not suffice for ensuring that public service journalism persists in the age of digital journalism. Critical political economists maintain that journalism needs to be as removed as possible from market relations, rather than the tenuous and ill-defined marriage between editorial and business that seems to accompany idealized visions of merging the two. Entrepreneurship and public service can and often do clash. In the current moment, some news media organizations are enjoying what has been referred to as the 'Trump Bump' (DVORKIN, 2017), where a boost in subscriptions for news media organizations has occurred since the presidential election. However, Trump is not the savior for the financial woes of the news media industry long term, particularly for Canadian news media organizations. Occasionally, what is in the public interest can also be 'good for business'. However, it is the business first, public interest if it's good for business ethic that is problematic. Journalism educators in the Canadian schools surveyed claim that they remain preoccupied with developing critical thinking in their students, but it should be noted that the goal of a business is to make money, while the goal of journalism is to provide citizens with the contextualized and accurate information that can assist them in making informed decisions about their lives and the world they live in.

As the interviewees from all three universities stated, factoring in the audience is one thing, but it cannot be the sole determinant of news media creation or it will drive news down to the lowest common denominator, where news media organizations cover stories solely for page views and because other media organizations are reporting the same stories. Preserving public service journalism cannot be left up to the whim of advertisers. Educators maintain that their pedagogical commitments still prioritize transparency, context, accountability and serving the public, arguing that entrepreneurship may be reinterpreted in this context as discovering underserved or poorly served communities and finding ways to serve those communities. It remains unclear, however, how these commitments will fare when confronted with the realities of the job market, where journalists must simultaneously bear all of the risk while also possessing entrepreneurial, technical and editorial skills with a niche area of expertise in order to be successful. A commitment to teaching traditional journalistic values in journalism schools should also be accompanied by a curriculum that facilitates public service journalism's survival in the news media industry.

This chapter focused primarily on assessing some of the contemporary challenges for journalism educators as they adapt their programs and courses to confront the realities of the workforce. While there is still a sense of commitment to journalism as a public service, there is an uneasy relationship between

entrepreneurship and public service journalism. Further, there is the question of where critical thinking enters into journalism education as the educational capacities continue to intensify and expand. The next chapter will explore what is happening at the industry level by exploring how the practice of journalism has changed in the Canadian context, and how different types of media organizations are responding to increased competition for audience's attentions. Further, this chapter will explore what news media organizations are expecting from freelance journalists when they hire them with respects to skills, journalistic values, and possessing a personal brand.

Chapter 5 – Making the News in Canada 2.0

This chapter will seek to understand how different types of news media organizations (legacy, public broadcaster and digital first) are responding to the new media environment through interviews with digital editors. How are journalistic business models at each organization changing given this new context? How is this context changing the way that journalism is produced and consumed? How is this context impacting the types of skills and traits that are expected of journalists who are looking for employment? Are journalists expected to have personal brands and what is deemed a 'successful' brand? Is having a journalism school background important for employability for emerging journalists? These questions will all contribute to understanding the institutional forces that may be shaping the conditions for success for emerging journalists while also interpreting the nuances of different organizations with differing structures.

The rise of digital first news organizations have certainly expanded the media options available to Canadians in their news media consumption. Homegrown organizations like CANADALAND, The Tyee, IPolitics, The Conversation, The Rebel, Discourse Media and some Canadian branches of American digital publications such as Huffington Post, BuzzFeed and Vice, have disrupted the news media ecosystem that was dominated by legacy media players. However, the question remains: to what

extent have Canadians diverted their attentions to these platforms and how do these players operate differently from their legacy counterparts?

Despite the reduced barriers to entry for up and coming news media organizations, overwhelmingly, Canadian digital first publications have not made a dent in the market stronghold that legacy media organizations have in the production of online news. In 2016, none of the homegrown news media initiatives were even in the top 60 sources that Anglophone Canadians go to for their news consumption. CBC ranked the highest with 7.1% of the market share for online news, Postmedia had 5.6%, Huffpost (4.3%), TorStar (4.4%), BuzzFeed (3.6%), and Vice Media (2.2%). Thirteen of the top twenty visited English-language news sites are foreign (Winseck, 2017; Public Policy Forum, 2017). These numbers illustrate that legacy media are still dominant in the production and consumption of news and that American digital publications with Canadian branches are rising in prominence. There have also been arguments made that online news organizations are rarely engaged in original reporting (Public Policy Forum, 2017).

This chapter examines the shifting dynamics of the Canadian industry by examining some of the digital first outlets that have emerged, the challenges experienced by emerging and legacy players (including the public broadcaster) and how these dynamics present a turning point in the Canadian industry. This chapter draws upon interviews with four different editors from news media organizations in

Canada; two from strictly online publications, one from the public broadcaster and one from a private legacy media organization. These interviews sought to understand what the unique challenges are for Canadian news media organizations in the current context, how important branding is, what new strategies and business models are being employed, what the expectations are when it comes to hiring journalists and what types of journalistic values are important to these outlets. Given the differing priorities and capabilities of these organizations, this chapter aims to map out an understanding of what it takes to be successful for a news media organization as well as a journalist in a complex, dynamic, and relatively small industry. The larger research question in this dissertation asks whether journalists have autonomy in the current moment. However, before answering that question it is imperative to consider the forces that are shaping news media organizations in Canada and how different types of media organizations are responding to this environment. Perhaps more pressing is the question of whether it is possible for journalists to have autonomy when media organizations are increasingly beholden to social networking platforms and their algorithms that are constantly changing.

Evolving Business Models

Business models for journalism are undoubtedly being forced to evolve given changing consumption patterns and the downward spiral of digital advertising dollars in an environment where five companies (Facebook, Google, Twitter, Yahoo and

Microsoft) are dominating the digital advertising market, accounting for 65% of all digital advertising revenue in 2015 (PEW Research Centre, 2016). With the traditional advertising model no longer being sufficient to cover the costs of production, many news outlets have begun experimenting with alternative revenue streams, including pay-per models, crowd funding, the creation of native advertising and branded content. News organizations are now utilizing web metrics and audience tracking measures to maximize their page views. Audience ratings for content no longer need to be approximated in a digital context as surveillance technologies have enabled the constant tracking of audience's preferences (Fuchs, 2012). Social networking sites are simply better than news media organizations at delivering audiences to advertisers (Winseck, 2017). News organizations are also heavily reliant on social networking sites to reach their audiences, as these are the platforms where people consume news.

Some online startups like CANADALAND (2017) have achieved success or at least sustainability with crowdfunding models. Others, like the Observer Media Group, iPolitics, and The Tyee have found it difficult to derive revenue from subscriptions and digital advertising combined (Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, 2017). There have been discussions about how reforms in Canadian regulation could facilitate philanthropy assistance for news media organizations as has enabled the many nonprofit news organizations in the US (Watson, 2016). However, there is no ProPublica or Knight Foundation in Canada. The Canadian market is also much smaller and the

tradition of charitability to news media has not been adequately developed. Further, it is questionable whether this would be a long term or desirable solution to the lack of sustainable business models given the tendency for the broader interests of foundations to be aligned with those of the corporate world, giving the appearance of pluralism while rarely challenging power structures (Roelofs, 2003).

Legacy media organizations have also been in search of alternative business models. Many Canadian news organizations have dabbled in paywall models for digital journalism, to varying degrees of success. The Toronto Star, for example put up a paywall for its digital content in 2013, allowing online readers to access 10 articles per month before being locked out without a digital subscription to their service. This paywall ended after two years when they introduced the Star Touch tablet app that they invested 40 million dollars into. The app was then abandoned 2 years after its 2015 launch due to its failure to increase readership or seduce advertisers. Layoffs inevitably ensued.

The Globe and Mail has also been pursuing a reader pay strategy. Their plan is to generate more revenue from readership than ads (including print) by 2019 (PPF, 2017). As the Public Policy Forum (2017) contends,

The Globe and Mail is one of the few traditional news media companies confident it can grow its revenue from digital subscriptions—a conviction fortified by its strength in business and political news—by its investment in data and analytics that allow it to serve up stories to readers at the right time, and by the deep pockets of its owners, the legendarily patient Thomson family (82).

While the Globe and Mail may have some successes given the social class location of their readership and prioritizing of quality content (over clickbait), it remains to be seen whether Canadians en masse are prepared to pay for journalism. According to a study by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, only nine percent of Canadians currently pay anything for online news (Newman et al, 2017).

Tech Giants and Business Models in Journalism

When considering the success of subscription models, the tech giants who have siphoned off the lion's share of advertising revenue are also relevant to discussions about the success of user pay models. Google, for example, had a policy for 10 years known as "first click free", which forced publishers with subscription models to allow users accessing links through Google News to have access to a minimum number of free articles per day. Those news organizations who were not in compliance were punished with a lower ranking in Google's algorithm (Google, 2008). In 2017 Google changed this policy given the growing conversation about the domination of tech giants and their roles as gatekeepers. They have now adopted a 'flexible sampling model', which allows news organizations to decide how many stories will be available for free before enabling the paywall (Ember, 2008). While news media organizations are the suppliers of the actual content, they are beholden to the changing algorithms of social networking sites that have as the Public Policy Forum (2017) argued,

In a form of vampire economics, the new portals channel and exploit the content of traditional news organizations, through newsfeeds and ranked search results, even as they siphon away the revenue these outlets require to generate the content in the first place (31).

In 2016, Facebook downgraded established media in its algorithm, claiming that they are in the business of connecting people with one another and connecting people to ideas that they find meaningful. In this sense, Facebook is not trying to be everything to everyone, they are trying to deliver very personal and individualized information to people based on prior media consumption habits and those of your social network. Facebook has not been in the business of displaying the best information or the most accurate information to its users. It has rather made users themselves to be the arbiters of what is the best or most relevant information and then rewarded them with more of the same. The structuring of informational spaces based on past behaviours works to give users 'more of the same'. This is also understood a diagrammatic view of panoptic surveillance where surveillance becomes a 'predictive technique' (Elmer, 2004, Manzerolle and Smeltzer, 2011).

The Rise of Branded Content and Native Advertising

In efforts to diversify revenue streams many news media organizations have begun producing branded content and native advertising, which are "terms for advertising that mimics the look and feel of editorial content" (Benedetti, 2015, 94). As discussed in chapter 4, the premise of this type of content is that one cannot tell the

difference between it and a regular news story. The rise of these types of content has brought on a great deal of controversy, especially given the supposed separation of church and state between advertising and editorial. In some cases, this type of content not only marries the two but also lauds the marriage as innovative and entrepreneurial (Benedetti, 2015). This content works to leverage the brand of a particular publication to produce advertorial content that feels like a regular news story. In this sense, the rise of this type of advertising generates skepticism regarding editorial autonomy as much as it undermines transparency in reporting.

While many US publications have begun using their own reporters to commission native advertising, there has been more of a pushback at some of Canada's legacy media organizations. In 2014, the Globe and Mail announced plans to have editorial staff write branded content and this was met with swift resistance from journalists and was ultimately dropped (Winseck, 2017). However, the Torstar (*Toronto Star*), the Woodbridge Company (*Globe and Mail*) and Postmedia (*Toronto Sun*, *National Post*) have each launched their own branded content divisions: Star Metro Media, Globe Edge, and Content Works respectively. These divisions promise to leverage the established audiences (and segmented demographics) of these legacy newspapers. The Toronto Star's branded content division, for example, promises to deliver millennials, boomers, moms, multicultural and affluent audiences to advertisers.

Whether or not this content is at 'arm's length' from their respective news divisions, it is clear that legacy media organizations are doubling down on attempting to improve their ability to deliver audiences to advertisers, an ability that has been greatly surpassed by social media companies. These moves are part of the increasing diversification of the news 'business'. The CEO and founder of *Buzzfeed* articulates the search for a singled tried and tested business model for digital media as somewhat futile.

Some advocated native advertising, others programmatic; some focused on integrating content with commerce, others hyped the "pivot to video" or traditional TV development models; some chased mass scale while others advocated strong subscription niches. The reality is more complex; there isn't one perfect model for digital media. The best media companies generate revenue from many sources, tapping a combination of advertising, subscriptions, studio development, brand licensing, and merchandising. As digital media matures, the best digital media companies will build diversified businesses with many revenue streams and do it wielding the inherent advantages of digital to be more audience-focused, data-driven, efficient and global than the big conglomerates (Peretti, 2017).

Buzzfeed is committed to moving away from advertising and in 2017 almost a quarter of its revenue will come from outside of advertising, with hopes that this number will become a third in 2018 and half in 2019. While *Buzzfeed's* CEO (Jonah Peretti) has a great deal to say about the media crisis and how it favours cheaply produced clickbait, sensationalism and a race to the bottom, their plans for diversification, he argues will produce a system where the best content wins (Peretti, 2017). This is very interesting

coming from the entertainment-based cat video website that has only relatively recently gotten into the news business. It is great to talk about the importance of democracy and the public good, but if audience views and generating traffic are still the name of the game, how can this represent a move away from sensationalism? There is reason to believe that the more editorial is linked to commerce, the more likely the chase for page views will remain intact.

Original Reporting

With all of the talk of business models, what about what is happening to journalism itself as it undergoes changes in how it sustains itself? The Public Policy Forum (2017) in their 'Shattered Mirror' report, argue that the proliferation of digital first news organizations does not necessarily signal a growth in original news reporting. In fact, they argue that very few are engaged in original journalism and many still rely on the traditional news industry for vital information that guides reporting. They are wary of the emergence of many opinionated publications that rely on a dwindling number of sources of facts. Gasher (2015) argues that original reporting is what journalism is, first and foremost, about. News originates in the lengthy research, interviews, interactions with politicians, people and institutions. Original reporting often takes a great deal of time and resources.

While the context that the PPF speaks to may be true, there are still many Canadian online publications that are dedicated to investing in original, investigative reporting. These organizations also do not have the pressures of 'being everything to everyone' in that they have to cover every story. The idea that legacy organizations are the only ones doing original reporting or deserving of the public's trust needs to be challenged.

A prime example of this in Canada is *Discourse Media*, a journalism startup based out of Vancouver that has taken a unique approach to journalism. Their mantra is simple;

Rather than eroding trust with audience members by chasing clicks in service of advertisers, let's create a journalism product that's so valuable to readers that they'll pay for it. In 2018, Discourse is committed to building a better, more relevant, more compelling journalism product that's so good, our community will pay for it. Every development in the industry — from new research about our online consumption habits to the 2017 performance of other media outlets — validates our approach (Millar, 2018).

Their approach to journalism production prioritizes investigative reporting and solutions journalism. For *Discourse Media*, the way forward for a dying model is not to pound the pavement with business as usual or to wait for a government bailout for journalism. They have been the first media outlet in Canada to reach out to its community to invest in the future of their company by allowing readers to buy shares in the company (a new legal framework makes this possible). In 2017, they set out to raise \$500,000 from their community. They only raised \$300,000 but CEO Erin Millar is not

despairing. Discourse has also paired up on investigative, data driven pieces with several larger media outlets in Canada as well. In addition, their original reporting has been utilized by media outlets all over the country. Millar (2018) is adamant that despite their successes so far,

there's no hack that'll deliver a large audience while also supporting the brand values and audience loyalty needed to thrive in this environment in the long-term. The only strategy is to consistently invest in relevant, engaging, useful journalism that readers won't find anywhere else.

As mentioned in chapter 4, this seems to be the mantra that works for Jesse Brown of CANADALAND as they fulfill an untapped niche in the Canadian market and have been involved in breaking many important stories in Canada (including stories about the Canadian media landscape). Further, as Michael Geist (2017) argued, many other online publications (Vice, The Tyee, rabble.ca) are able to reach new audiences and cover more specific issues in greater depth than their legacy counterparts. It is important to note, however, that many of the success stories in the Canadian media start up world have not propelled into success without having had well established careers within legacy organizations. Jesse Brown, for example, was a well known media figure at CBC and Maclean's; Ezra Levant was a columnist for Sun Media and host on the Sun News Network. Their successes were predicated on them having the contacts and notoriety to be able to go out on their own. They already had audiences and establishing their own entrepreneurial endeavours represented being able to push the

boundaries of news in ways the legacy organizations they worked for wouldn't.

Subsequently they have also become pariahs in the very small Canadian news media landscape where, to some extent, they need to rely on their own personal brands and media companies to remain in the industry.

Though there are some examples of organizations that are invested in original and investigative reporting, there has certainly been a rise in opinion-based journalism. It is less expensive to produce and can be churned out relatively quickly. The increasing competition for clicks has heightened the pressure to turn out stories quickly and when the organizations themselves are not producing the facts, opinion pieces may be the next best thing. It is not a problem in and of itself to have opinionated journalism that represents itself as such. The prospect of having diverse and antagonistic voices in the media system has been viewed by critical political economists as a good thing, a vital thing even. Opinions, however, should be rooted in facts and reporting. Lengthy, investigative reporting is expensive and takes time. It cannot be subject to the same time constraints as the daily news cycle and the race for clicks. Importantly, in-depth and investigative reporting is what drives social change. We must know what the facts are in order to understand what needs to happen. If everyone is opining on the internet but not digging deep, this is not likely to facilitate social change and it may enhance political polarization. It is also important to ask, if

news organizations are now turning to their audiences to pay for journalism- what are audiences more likely to pay for?

Shifting Dynamics in the Canadian News Industry

While it is clear that there have been many attempts to employ different business models in Canada to varying degrees of success. The next section draws upon interviews with two online digital news organizations, a legacy newspaper, and the public broadcaster to discuss how the imperatives of these organizations have shifted as a result of digital disruption and how, as a result of these changes, the expectations when it comes to hiring journalists has shifted. The perspectives of these editors will be represented by referring to participants as Digital Editor 1 (D1), Digital Editor 2 (D2), Legacy Newspaper Editor (LN), and Public Broadcaster Editor (PB), respectively. Given the disruption of traditional business models for journalism, the researcher was interested in the importance of branding, struggles that news organizations face in a continuous news environment, shifting definitions of what journalism is, metrics, audiences and new forms of commerce. When it came to discussing expectations of journalists, the researcher explored the necessity of journalism school (j-school), skills expectations, and the importance of personal branding.

Branding: Should you be everything to everyone?

In an age of info glut, an important theme that arose from interviews with editors was whether it is still viable to pursue trying to be 'everything to everyone'. Is it better

to try to tackle everything and gain the broadest audience possible or is it best to garner niche audience and do what you do really well? Is it possible to straddle both worlds? Overwhelmingly, organizational brand identities for editors were about their promise to their audiences and the journalistic values they believe that their organization represents and upholds. The digital news organizations are both focused on their niche audiences while there is a sense that the two more traditional media organizations are still trying to please everyone.

For D1, their organization very much blends personality with journalism and is “probably among the most aggressive of any of their competitors. I certainly think the branding is really important, 'cause we're being very specific about who we're trying to be our audience to be. We're very much looking for hip millennials, right?” (D1, 2017). Their audience is youthful and they D1 articulates their brand as catering to progressive young people.

For D2, their brand is not trying to pass itself off as ‘objective’, they are not interested in showing that there are two sides to every story, as they do not believe that there are always two sides. Their brand promise is to privilege oppressed voices that otherwise are left out of the media. Their brand is also very much about creating viral, shareable news.

The thing that we care about is really social shares. We care about clicks and all that, but a lot of digital news organizations, their strategy is really based around search, like making sure their SEO is on point and that kind of thing. We're more

focused on... If we put something on Facebook, are people then gonna share it with all their friends? And so, I think you really have to think about how every piece of content we create upholds our brand, 'cause when people share our work, they're buying into that brand (D2, 2017)

D2's audience is young, social justice minded, liberal people. They aim to be the go-to place for the most viral thing that happened on the internet on a given day. "Our first thought is always, "Is this shareable?" And after that it doesn't really matter where it happened." (D2, 2017). They are not trying to be everything to everyone. "I think the idea there is, it's a better strategy than appealing to everybody. If you only appeal to a small group, everybody in that group will share it. You just do that over and over again" (D2, 2017). While their focus was on creating content about Canadians for Canadians, D2 contends that this mandate has changed to focus more on Canadian stories for the world. "So, when we write our news stories, we're really focusing on, "Will an American audience appreciate this? Will someone in Germany be interested in reading this?" (D2, 2017).

D2 believes that their young audience is more understanding of what it means to have a viewpoint. "A lot of our criticism about our lack of objectivity comes from perhaps older, more conservative readers, who think that everybody should be 100% neutral, and really that doesn't exist" (D2, 2017). D2 goes on to describe their organization as 'anti-gatekeeper'. Their brand is not about them being 'all knowing journalism people' while everyone else are the 'little peasants'. If they know something,

they share it, their responsibility is to share information with their audiences and to trust them to be smart.

While D1 and D2 describe their organizations as targeting very specific demographics, the public broadcaster envisions their brand as still trying to be everything to everyone.

As a public broadcaster, our goal is ubiquity. [chuckle] And that is that wherever Canadians choose to access the content, that it's there, and it's there in a way that is consistent with the technology delivering it, so it's the right kind of story for the platform. But, it's also consistent with the CBC brand promise and the values behind our journalism. And we know from research that different people and different age demographics use platforms differently and they migrate across. So, it's about being consistent about that, in terms of connecting to content, but it's not... It's an extension of the same brand. It's not a different brand. (PB, 2017).

PB seems to insist that the brand is not adapting but extending into different places.

PB uses the example of the rebranding of The National. This daily news program used to be positioned as a place where people discover the news. However, PB contends that in a continuous news environment people are not hearing the headlines of the day for the first time at the end of day. The show had to adapt to that context by pushing more depth on a particular story on a given day rather than the headlines, "Internally we call it a little bit sort of the daily commodity, sort of daily agenda or commodity news, pushing that forward, pushing sort of depth in context and meaning" (PB, 2017). Their mission and brand is to provide a Canadian perspective and to "inform, to reveal, to contribute, to be understanding of issues of public interest, and to encourage

citizens to participate in our free and democratic society” (PB, 2017). The public broadcaster details how important independence, accuracy, balance, and impartiality are to their core mission and brand.

For LN, sustaining their brand is really crucial right now, citing the significant downsizing that has occurred within the organization and how their community and people around the world being skeptical about journalism’s ability to get the job done.

I think with a lot of other local competition being shuttered, it leaves only a few bigger players and that also breeds skepticism. So I think branding is even more important because you want to be seen as an insightful, honest, and caring news organization that is representative of the community (LN, 2017).

LN articulates that brand further as wanting to go beyond reporting on the community but to also be a part of it.

I think a lot of journalism in the past was kind of the top down approach from us to the community, us saying here's what's important, you read about it. Now that's being flipped on its head because there are so many other ways to get news and for the first time there's a much more precise way to measure what people are interested in.

LN goes on to further stress the importance of what the audience wants to be hearing about and how their organization realized that stories they had been publishing for years did not garner a ton of interest and they needed to move around resources and divert their attentions. Their lack of resources, coupled with metrics software has somewhat pushed them out of the business of trying to be everything to everyone but also from being paternalistic about journalistic content. LN adds that they have the

advantage of having synergies with other newspapers for content that they cannot always produce locally.

Struggles

When asked about the major struggles each organization faces in a digital context, though they were articulated differently, each editor points to the importance of having a strong and consistent brand in the current moment amidst all of the competition. Other themes that emerged were straddling the digital and print space, reliance on social networking sites, staffing and cutbacks, and having to be consistent across all platforms.

D1 articulates their major struggles as being competition and distribution,

I mean, certainly the noise of... There is so much content out there. It's probably the biggest one for sure. Distribution probably being the other one. I mean, virtually every news organization, and even a lot of legacy operations, we're quite reliant on Facebook and that's frightening. Like every time they make an algorithm change your heart drops because you're like, "Is this the day we lose our audience?" (D1, 2017).

D2 articulates that a major challenge for their organization on the news side is that they were an entertainment site first before getting into news.

And that entertainment side is really the bulk of traffic, the bulk of shares and views and money. So there has been a struggle for us, 'cause we did news later on, to build up that brand and be seen as a trusted news source. We know that, and that takes legitimate work. And I think we've made a lot of strides in that area, but it's hard to get over being seen as an entertainment website.

For PB, the biggest challenge or struggle is delivering on the promise to the audience in a cross-platform environment. The current news ecosystem is described by PB as being extremely complicated because storytelling needs to be catered specifically to each output (citing different social media channels).

For LN, one of the biggest issues that they face digitally is resources.

Right now, especially for us we are a legacy, print publication that is trying to modernize but we are still wearing both hats. There's a good buy in from a lot of people here about thinking online first but after a few hours every day you start to have to wonder what the 2 front pages will look like and everybody gets sucked into that. So suddenly after 1, 2 3pm, people aren't as worried about online anymore. So, it's partially a staffing issue then because it means we don't have enough people to do everything. That's been- especially for us in the last 2-3 years- staffing has been a major issue because there have been so many cutbacks. One other thing- with such a big media company we are not as agile and reactive to technical trends as we should be.

Without pulling the plug on print or investing fully into innovating for digital makes it difficult to do either particularly well. Digital and print have very different 'deadlines' and priorities.

Shifting Definitions of Journalism

When asked about whether the very definition of journalism is expanding (or if there are pressures to expand what is considered journalism) in the current moment, there is a reluctant admittance that this is going on from D1 and LN, an optimistic celebration from D2 and a denunciation from PB.

D1 admits that the types of stories that they cover may be considered outside of the purview of traditional journalism but claims that they push people to still apply the fundamentals of journalism and reporting to those types of content. For example, the “I went and did X story” (D1, 2017). D2 celebrates the fact that anyone can go and write a post on social media and this could be journalism. They also discuss how viral news is seen as ‘fluffy’, but argues that it is still journalism. “I’m still calling my sources and doing due diligence, and people share it ‘cause it hits them in an emotional capacity” (D2, 2017). However, there is a question of where to cover something like a viral tweet about an incident, “do you cover that on the news side or do you cover that on the entertainment side? There’s no hard answer” (D2, 2017).

For LN, they deny that there is pressure to produce clickbait stories. However, they mention that last year they turned a viral tweet into a quick story (50-100 words) and that was their best performing article for 2-3 weeks. LN argues that there is no explicit pressure to produce these types of quickly produced or viral journalism, but they do see that it works. LN argues it is not trying to replace anything and that the organization is not trying to be overly serious with it.

PB believes that the definition of journalism is expanding to include things like data journalism, which combines design, computer science and statistics. However, PB is wary to consider all forms of content creation as ‘journalism’- particularly with the rise

of sponsored content. “Not everything that is distributed digitally is journalism” (PB, 2017).

Metrics and Audience

Each editor indicated that their organization is heavily involved in using multiple metrics software to track the success of the content they produce. Each editor mentioned that they have several of these programs open on their computers all day. That being said, every editor was cautious to indicate that these metrics do not solely determine the content that they create. While none of the editors indicated that there was a culture of competition at their organization with respects to who’s story ‘won’ on a given day, it is clear that metrics are very much imbedded into the daily lives of both editors and journalists. How stories are performing are brought up at morning meetings and stories that are produced have target goals for audience reach.

Optimistically, D1 says “The dream is to affect public policy and do some good, and a shitload of people read it. Numbers aren't everything. They're just one... Frankly they're just one metric. There is still the metric of good or not good.” (D1, 2017). While there are no explicit page view or dollar targets for particular stories according to D1, but there are broader audience targets for each month and year and those numbers are growing. D1 also points out that even though they are generally seen as a success story that they have had layoffs too in the past year.

D2 admits that the real money maker for the organization is the entertainment side but also says,

It's not like we're doing news as a charity case within our organization. But it is understood that we do work that is important, but isn't as widely shared as other stuff. We recognize that some things we do because it's important to the world, because it's good for your credibility as a news organization or whatever (D2, 2017).

PB claims that they have audience targets, particularly surrounding investigative journalism, but that this does not contribute to curating the editorial process,

We don't do anything by algorithm, right? It's driven by editorial minds that are using these as input tools, just as we would use research or focus groups to help us understand how our programs, how our content, how our choices are resonating with audiences or not. Does it mean that we wouldn't do something if it didn't get audience? Not at all. Our push on the missing and murdered indigenous women was a choice. It certainly wasn't a story that was an audience driver in terms of driving more numbers of people to tune in. But it was an important story in terms of our obligations around understanding the country. And that's why we pushed it.

There is a sense that understanding the audience is one thing with respects to feedback and making better choices in the future but catering strictly to the numbers game is not in line with the obligations of the public broadcaster. "Sometimes we are telling them things they don't know or things they need to know" (PB, 2017).

LN contends that while they always begin the day with discussing the stories that performed the best, there are no quotas for individual stories. Instead, LN says that metrics allow their organization to understand what is performing well and to find ways to follow the stories that people are interested in.

While each editor is careful to not fully relinquish control of content creation to metrics and audience chasing, one theme that did emerge with respects to drawing in the audience was the increasing importance of captivating headlines in content creation, particularly in the context of people getting their news through social networking sites. LN best describes this: “every single article online is like the front page of the newspaper so we have to make that not just interesting for the article itself and adding context but making it interesting enough that it could be an A1 story” (LN, 2017). D2 also stresses the importance of headlines and the increasing role that metrics has to play in determining what is gaining traction with the audience. “So we can do up to four different headlines, and then our algorithm sees what clicks better and then defaults to the best one” (D2, 2017).

Advertising

Each editor was asked if their organization was engaged in creating sponsored content and native advertising and every editor except for the public broadcaster appeared to be creating these types of content. D1 says that they engage in sponsored and branded content but claims that there are strict rules in place to let readers know what the content is. D1 also claims that sponsors do not necessarily get to have a say in the reporting that is done, they do not have final say on the edit of the piece. D1 distinguishes this from what they characterize as more insidious forms of

content, like those done by some legacy newspapers where the content is made to look like it belongs in the newspaper but it is actually produced by the company.

D2's organization is heavily involved in native advertising and more recently are getting into banner advertising. Like D1, D2 says that they create the copy for the content in house and guarantee the advertising a certain number of views on the particular piece.

LN discusses how their organization is increasingly involved in producing native advertising and branded content, but argues that it is at arm's length and is executed by the advertising and marketing team. While the content may sit beside regular content, it is clearly labelled as sponsored and journalists themselves, LN claims, are not engaged in producing those types of content.

PB claims that the news side is not engaged in native advertising or sponsored content, but that other divisions of the public broadcaster certainly are. PB argues that it is against their mandate requiring them to be free of commercial (and political) influence. However, PB points out that it has always been a mixed model at the public broadcaster and in the news space "there's been advertising on television and there is certainly advertising in digital" (PB, 2017). The online news content from the public broadcaster is not free of advertisements, but PB claims that this content is at an arm's length.

The 'Ideal' Journalist

There is certainly no one-size-fits-all measure of what it takes to be a successful candidate as a journalist in Canada in the current moment. In fact, editors overwhelmingly appeared cautious to overstate what they are looking for in candidates and what makes someone 'ideal'. This section will explore what editors at diverse media organizations are expecting of journalists that they hire. This section has been coded into three major themes with subthemes emerging within those categories. The main factors that the researcher wanted to address in this section were 1) expectations of j-school, 2) skills expectations, and 3) expectations of personal branding and social media use.

J-school or no J-school?

Chapter 4 extensively discussed the shifting pedagogical priorities of j-schools in an age where there is not a single type of role that graduates will enter in to. Importantly this section explores editors' expectations that journalists they hire have gone to journalism school. The answers overwhelmingly indicated that journalism school not only was not necessary, but also that it may (in some respects) be a hindrance to employment. The exception to this was the legacy newspaper. The answers given by editors to this question are best categorized as the following with respects to candidates having j-school experience: indifferent to j-school, but not very important (D1), j-school may be a hindrance to employment (D2 and PB), and a

moderate expectation of j-school (LN). Interestingly enough, D1, D2, and PB all went to journalism school themselves, while LN is the only editor who did not have a traditional journalism background. Each editor was asked if they were familiar with the term 'entrepreneurial journalism'. Only the editor at the legacy newspaper was familiar with the term. The others had no sense of what it meant.

D1's response to whether j-school was necessary perfectly encapsulates how little of a factor it is:

At least for me, it's almost no factor. I mean, I almost never get to the part of someone's resume where they list their education, which is like the end of the second page. All I care about is reading their cover letter. Can they write? Yes or no. And then looking where they've worked. And you know, when you get 50 or 60 resumes of people you don't know, that is kind of all you can realistically look through. But yeah, I mean certainly my staff, I would say half of them have gone to J-school, and at least two of them I had not even heard of their J-schools. (D1, 2017)

D1 places much more emphasis on the ability of a candidate to write than anything else. Having a journalism educational background won't hurt a candidate's chances, but it is not in any way a big determinant when hiring.

D2, when asked about if j-school is necessary, says "I don't think so. On the news side, it's important that you obviously have news experience. I went to journalism school, but my colleague (also an editor) did not." (D2, 2017). D2 goes on to discuss a member of their news team who had no formal journalism school or formal writing background but began producing for their media organization as a community

member, ultimately wrote pieces that did very well and got hired. "It's almost better if you don't have a background in journalism in a way. I had to break a lot of habits when I came here" (D2, 2017). D2 goes on to discuss that what is learned in j-school is not necessarily in line with what is happening in the industry and demonstrates a skepticism that people who are trained to work in traditional newsrooms are a good fit for their organization given that their focus is on experimentation and change, rather than formulaic models for story production.

When it came to the editor at the public broadcaster, they spoke about their role in the creation of one of their longstanding news shows. PB maintains that they deliberately searched for candidates who had not gone to j-school.

My feeling at the time was that there were lots of people who knew the structure of how you prepare a story at CBC, knew how to write a focus statement and a green and all that kinda stuff but, fundamentally, had no curiosity and critical thinking. And so when I was casting that show, I obviously was hiring some from inside, but the outside people, the outside hires that I did, were very untraditional.

PB goes further to argue:

If you think about it, some of the iconic journalists in this country never went to school. Joe Schlesinger, who's one of the journalism hall of famers in this country, did not go to journalism school. He didn't go to high school. Peter Mansbridge didn't, he was a high school dropout. But, they were people who had a curiosity about the world, and who chased it. I think we get too caught up in journalism school when it's really about critical thinking, curiosity and other things. Not everybody's comfortable with the stance of a journalism. They see it as a television personality or whatever. It really, when functioning properly, is an uncomfortable space. You're pushing people to be accountable, you're a little

bit outside of things. It's not about being an insider, it's about being outside pushing to understand and ask critical questions.

From both D2 and PB there was a perception from their responses that critical thinking was not only lacking in journalism schools, but that in fact they were teaching uniform and institutionalized practices, when this is not what produces good journalists or good journalism. These notions are also echoed by many professional journalists, including Jeremy Scahill, co-founder of The Intercept:

I never went to journalism school; instead, I learned reporting as a trade. I have always believed that journalism should be accessible to all and real reporting requires getting dirt under your fingernails. It was in that spirit that I embarked on a partnership that led to the creation of The Intercept (Scahill, 2017).

The two editors' views resonate with Edge's (2016) observation that working journalists have long been critical of the focus in journalism programs on form rather than specialized knowledge and critical thinking. The idea that journalism is about 'being an outsider' also brings up important considerations for who gets to work in the media.

LN was the only editor the researcher interviewed who indicated that they had a moderate expectation that prospective candidates had gone to j-school. However, LN emphasizes other expectations alongside j-school that are given equal or even greater emphasis.

Yeah, I'd say generally for most reporting positions we'll expect j-school, some experience ideally and an understanding of the media landscape right now. So somebody who has some social media skills, general online skills...those are of course important but it's a mix of everything. We are looking for a mix of

everything but as we hire more people as time goes on, more of those online skills are looked at.

While j-school is a factor for the legacy newspaper editor, there is a sense that the skillset that is important is shifting to weigh towards online and social media skills rather than traditional journalism school. It is possible that j-school is more of an expectation with a legacy newspaper because journalism programs are still very oriented towards legacy media organizations (Picard, 2015).

Skills?

When asked about the expectation that journalists have hard technical skills such as coding, the responses from editors were fairly uniform. The public broadcaster editor indicated they specifically hire people who are journalists and write code, but insists there is still room for lots of other types of journalists within the organization. The idea that it would be nice if a journalist had those skills, but that it is not necessary, was repeated by each editor. There was a sense that it would be great if someone was the Jill of all trades, but they are realistic that most people will not be.

Some of the other technical skills such as photography were seen to be more necessary.

I do want people that can take photos for their own stories, that can think visually, that can... If they can work Photoshop and make their own graphics. That really does add to their skill set. That's certainly not a requirement, but it's a huge bonus (D1, 2017).

D2 (2017) echoes these sentiments,

It's important that you can sort of be able to do everything if you have to, even if you might not always... It may not come up. You should be able to... If you can use an iPhone to do all your media work, you're good here. You don't need anything fancy. But yeah, being able to source imagery. Learning how to make a GIF is like... Sounds silly, but good skill to have. Just basic Photoshop. That kind of thing.

When asked about the skills that are essential for a successful candidate to have in their toolkit, overwhelmingly, respondents placed a great deal of emphasis on having social media skills. LN offers a description of their 'unicorn candidate',

In general, if someone walked in for a job and said I'm fluent in all social media platforms, I've got a big Twitter following, I shoot great video with my iPhone and I can do some video editing and I've put together a podcast before and I know how to use different types of CMS's and a few other online tools, I would be overjoyed. But I know that we're not going to get someone who knows all of those things.

PB (2017) also drives home the importance of understanding digital spaces.

Having storytelling literacy across platforms is a must. There was a time and I think journalism school still weight heavily to newspapers. They're not always successful at teaching what is storytelling for broadcast and what is storytelling for the new digital spaces.

The digital editors are more explicit regarding the insistence of social media skills.

My social media presence 100% got me this job. So, in that sense, it's really important, but I think all of us are really active on social media, not necessarily as a personal branding exercise, but because we like it, and having an understanding of social media is vital to this job. If you're not on social media, how would you understand why a story would share well on social media? (D2, 2017).

Increasingly, the idea that journalists can or should opt out of social media is no longer a reality when the job is becoming more oriented to sharing stories through social networking channels.

Personal Branding and Social Media

While it is clear that social media literacy is an important part of a journalist's toolkit, what about the idea of having a personal brand? Does having a large social media following matter? If personal brands are important, what types of brands are likely to succeed at each organization? Editors speak about how social media presences are not 'necessary', while at the same time editors give off a tacit and sometimes explicit impression that understandings of social media platforms are vital to performing a journalist's job well in the current moment. Editors remain cautious to overstate the expectations of personal branding or how that factors into their hiring processes.

Personal brands are very important for D2, claiming it is not entirely necessary but 'will get you noticed'. They indicate that not only did they and many of their colleagues get their jobs through their own social media presences and 'brands', but that having a large social media following that will essentially travel with a journalist is extremely valuable. When asked about the types of brands that would be successful, D2 says it has to be a good fit for the organizational brand.

I think having a personal brand that revolves around being an expert in a certain area of oppression is really useful. (D2, 2017).

LN has already indicated that a strong social media presence is a bonus when looking at candidates for hire. However, they clarify that big social media audiences can mean different things. They claim that some people are just on there to say they are there, but others are very active.

If it's a big following that can be leveraged then yeah, I mean I'll say that is important but big social media audiences can mean different things. A lot of people, especially journalists, who have large social followings tend to be specialists. They have one very core topic that they know and that's how they gain their followers is by being an expert there and people want to know about that. I find that people who are good at everything and generalists don't have as big of a follow and that isn't necessarily a bad thing because they could be just as smart and have just as many sources and have just as many skills but they just don't suck in the audience as much (LN, 2017).

D1 is realistic about the job requirements of being a journalist right now. At the same time, they are careful to not overstate the 'necessity' of having a strong social media presence,

I mean I think that gets... that does help you get in the door a little bit I think it would be almost impossible to do your job right now without utilizing social media constantly. I don't think you necessarily need have to have a ton of followers or be somebody who's constantly active and chirping shit on Twitter all day but it's a good way to make contacts. It is something that I look at when I get down to my five to 10 people I want to interview, I do look at everyone's Twitter profile to get a better idea of who they are and what they're interested in that kind of thing.

Importantly, D1 clarifies that large audiences do not always mean the same thing. It is important to look at whether those audiences are active to understand what the

journalist might be leveraging. D1 argues that some people have very large followings but almost no engagement with their content, so looking at that level of engagement is important. D1 discusses more specifically what they are looking for in a candidate

I'm looking for progressive, opinionated people. And I actually do... I want people that aren't interested or like the same things as me because one of my biggest worries a lot of the time is just like, "Is this site representing me too much?" Because I do the assigning and I sign off on stories. And so it's always nice to have people that don't agree with you or like different things, so that you're serving the wider audience and not just the people that are in your little world.

There is a sense here that successful candidates in some respects must bring something new to the table or something different than what the organization is already doing.

The PB editor, perhaps unsurprisingly, says that having a strong social media presence or personal brand is not a big factor in hiring.

We tend to look at the work and the credibility of the person. There's nobody who's gonna come to us, who's gonna have a bigger brand than we have. [chuckle] So it really is about what they're bringing in terms of access to a story we couldn't get to, or from a place we're not, or a great idea. So it is about those other skills, what arrows they have in their quiver, in terms of what they're able to do (PB, 2017).

This answer in some ways dances around the idea that having a personal brand is not the most important thing. The idea of having access to a particular story or particular places may be an important part of an individual journalist's brand. And the brand of the public broadcaster may be large, but is it resonating with all demographics?

A Specialist or a Generalist?

Just as the discussion is being had about whether news organizations need to 'be everything to everyone', so too is the discussion about whether journalists have a better shot at employment as generalists or by having strong niche areas of expertise or voice. Overwhelmingly, editors indicated that having a niche is better for employability, with the exception of the legacy newspaper editor.

PB articulates this well:

Beats lead to better stories, generally. And so in that sense, if you're freelancing and you're trying to make a name for yourself or get work, the idea of coming to the table with original ideas that you'd know how you can drive and tell, I think there's value in that. Much harder to say, "Pick me," when the organization has a bunch of other people who could do the same thing. (PB, 2017)

D2 echoes the importance of having a niche area.

Students always ask me for advice. And I always tell them: find an area that means a lot to you that you can be an expert in, 'cause that's the most valuable thing you can contribute to a newsroom. I think it's better to have a niche. I think it's more... To be able to pick up any story and write about it. But also be a go-to person who interviews someone on a particular issue. I think that's incredibly valuable.

There is a sense here that being a generalist is important too because the realities of the job dictate that one will not always be able to write about the same thing but what gets you in the door is that area of expertise. D1 claims "We're looking for people that are not necessarily one to put themselves in the story, but have opinions or have

interesting access to places” (D1, 2017). The idea of having some sort of unique access to stories, places, and audiences is a theme that ran through these interviews.

LN's position on hiring in this regard comes from the economic realities of the organization they are working in, rather than what they necessarily believe would make a better candidate. “Right now, generalists are very important to us again because of the financial realities, the staffing realities. We need everybody to be able to do a little bit of everything right now” (LN, 2017). This position doesn't necessarily preclude hiring someone with a niche area, but instead speaks to how thinly spread the staff are at this particular legacy newspaper. Despite their supposed move away from 'being everything to everyone', their model for journalistic production seems to still be following that logic.

Being Opinionated on Social Media

When it comes to the types of brands and social media presences that are allowed (or encouraged) by each media organization, it really connects to their brand promise to their respective audiences. With respects to social media policy, D1 states that journalists are allowed to express opinions. In fact, when it comes to hiring journalists they argue that having an opinionated brand and social media presence “would probably work better for them, presuming their opinions aren't, 'I love everything on Breitbart'” (D1, 2017). However, there is a line that can be crossed when it comes to expressing opinions. “You're certainly allowed to be like, 'I don't like this

bill from Justin Trudeau.' But the line would be, 'Oh, I don't like this bill from Justin Trudeau because I'm Tory supporter.'" (D1, 2017). D1 further argues that journalists should be somewhat careful to not cross a line and harm your reputation as a journalist because journalism is a small community, and you may never come back from it.

D2 claims that their media organization is coming from the stance that there are not two sides to every issue, questioning the existence of so-called 'objectivity'.

As a company, we have decided that there are not two sides on certain issues. So for example, on gay marriage, we're not going to go and interview homophobes to add a second side to things. [laughter] That is a human right, that's where we're out. So you could tweet something in support of that, but you couldn't tweet supporting a certain piece of legislation. That's the line (D2, 2017).

LN claims that their policy when it comes to social media is quite general and 'not scary'.

I think we've had maybe two issues in my time here where somebody kind of crossed the line a little bit in terms of maybe being a little bit too opinionated about something. But in general it's not an issue for us. It's good for journalists to have personalities. I don't think that hurts at all (LN, 2017).

LN goes further to say that being heavily opinionated on social media would not hurt a candidate's chances for employment. They clarify:

I find most journalists are pretty good at self-regulating that where they will just criticize everybody. So, I generally don't worry about that too much. If somebody- if one of our city hall guys came out and started really advocating for somebody on Twitter while they're still trying to cover it then yeah that would cross the line. I'm not a big advocate for people here or the paper itself to endorse anybody. A lot of editorial boards will do that during elections and I am not a big fan of it. So yeah that would be one of the things I would get people

to not do. Against a candidate is fine because everyone is against everyone (LN, 2017).

The two digital editors and the legacy newspaper editors all have a similar line when it comes to how journalists are able to express themselves on social media. Journalists can criticize everything, but cannot express partisanship towards particular legislation, candidates or political parties. There is much more concern with this than with not being objective. Indeed, the decentering of objectivity in many ways is key to the brand promise of the two digital publications.

The PB editor on the other hand very explicitly articulates the need for objectivity and neutrality as being a large part of public broadcaster's brand.

There's a firewall between opinion and everything else. And in terms of our journalists, we don't allow them to have a position. They have to be neutral and impartial. And that's the promise to the audience. Doesn't mean they don't have personal opinions, but that shouldn't be creeping into the work (PB, 2017).

PB clarifies that these policies are not enforceable for freelancers who do not have an ongoing employment relationship with their organization, but their social media presence still may factor into hiring practices. "If there is a freelancer who's been very positional about the oil industry, for example, would we hire that freelancer to do a piece on that? Probably not" (PB, 2017).

DISCUSSION: NEWS ORGANIZATIONS

Editors interviewed for this research want to claim that they are not strictly beholden to metrics and audiences, but ultimately it is clear that where the money is

made is often not in what they themselves may consider to be 'good journalism'. In some cases, editors expressed disappointment that stories that people had worked really hard on and were seen to be in the public interest gained little traction. This raises important questions regarding the control these organizations have over the content they create. While news media organizations want to maintain that numbers matter but they can't be everything, they fail to draw the line for when a vague notion of 'good journalism' supersedes their business obligations or reflect on how some of the struggles for sustainable business models that these organizations face propel them into chasing hits and page views more than ever. While it is important to note that metrics simply cannot determine every news story given that current events are often outside of the control of news organizations, the notion of a 'generative audience' (Anderson, 2011) or an active audience with needs and desires is increasingly rendering the audience as partners in news production. Each editor spoke about the need to be accountable to their audiences, as this is part of their brand. Indeed, the organizational brands, as articulated by editors in this research have indicated a move away from journalists reporting "from their high horses" and the audience taking what they are given. How do editors and journalists exempt themselves from wanting hits on their stories, validation for their work? What if the audience overwhelmingly wants to know about the latest Donald Trump tweet storm, or whose wedding Justin Trudeau stumbled upon shirtless this week? Importantly, the media has a role to inform and to

entertain, but what comes first? The editor from the public broadcaster is able to claim that they are not entirely curating their content from metrics, but they are also government subsidized and do not face the same pressures and realities of the other news organizations that were interviewed.

The move away from a paternalistic model of journalism (which is mentioned by every editor except the public broadcaster) however, is an important one, especially given the lack of diversity in newsrooms. The stories that get reported should not be left up to any sort of egoist closing in (Schudson, 2005), something that D1 mentioned they were quite cognisant of. The worry is that news organizations will not be able to uphold their commitments to the public with the increasing reliance on new forms of sponsored content and native advertising to support these organizations that blends editorial with commerce, coupled with the reliance on metrics and social networking sites that encourage the production of what is shareable, what is clickable, what is measurable. How can organizations distinguish between what is good for the world (or a community) and what is good for business? This is a compromising position to be in. This also raises important questions regarding the degradation and closure of local news outlets within small communities. Should local news outlets also be engaging in clickbait and viral news to fund the 'real' news? If revenue is being derived from viral news, there is good reason to believe that organizations will be involved in a race to the bottom.

The pressures of a continuous, digital news environment, where organizations are chasing dwindling advertising dollars, have the potential to privilege quickly produced, low quality journalism or what Davies (2008) refers to as 'churnalism'. Editors are wary (with the exception of D2) to explicitly state that there is an expansion of what constitutes journalism is in the current moment. However, there is an admittance that the 'puff' pieces are a big part of what they do, while arguing that they are still doing their due diligence. The expansion of journalism to include aggregation, curation, 'hot takes' and tweetalism all contribute to blending public relations and journalism (Francoeur, 2015). While reporting on what politicians are tweeting is legitimate, in the sense that politicians are communicating to their publics, are the tweets contextualized or are they taken at face value? Are news organizations to trust their audiences, who are on an equal playing field, to be 'smart'? The move away from gatekeeping, cannot undermine the role that journalists have to "cast doubt, to double-check, to look for the contradictions, to refute, to supplement, to reject the information that comes to them from PR" (Francoeur, 2015, 30).

When it comes to the importance of 'objectivity', the digital news editors interviewed appear more willing to do away with the concept, while also questioning if it ever existed. The era of objectivity emerged alongside rising levels of media concentration. This era was marked by an elevated focus on politically neutral, professional journalism, which was best achieved by striving for 'objectivity'. Media

organizations wanted to reach mass markets rather than particular groups (Skinner, Compton, and Gasher, 2005; McChesney, 2008), and the way to do that was to at least feign objectivity. Given the focus in the digital space on niche audiences, the need to pretend to be objective no longer is necessary for the two digital organizations interviewed and indeed the admittance of their positions on certain social issues is a large part of the brand identity of these organizations. The digital media organizations do not believe that there are two sides to every story and that those should be given equal weight, while the journalist remains impartial.

The public broadcaster appears to still be attempting to achieve objectivity and impartiality. There are important critiques to be made of 'both side-ism', which the public broadcaster seems to sometimes confuse with objectivity. This has been particularly important in the context of the creeping rise of the alt-right in Canada and around the western world. The CBC has given an unchallenged platform to the likes of Ann Coulter, "Proud Boys" leader Gavin McGuinness and far right *Rebel Media* contributor, Sheila Gunn Reid. The public broadcaster, with its responsibility to the 'public' seeks the widest audience possible and this lends itself not only to both side-ism (not many-sideism) but to lacking true independence when a change in political leadership might mean major cuts for the public broadcaster. Other media organizations that are aiming for the widest possible readership, like the *New York Times*, have even opted to interview Steve Bannon. The *NYT* interview featured softball

questions where Steve Bannon joked about being 'behind enemy lines' and went on to present himself as a reasonable guy and champion of the American working-class interests who is sick and tired of the tenured political class. Bannon was given the unchallenged opportunity with the wide audience of the *NYT* to distance himself and Trump's policy efforts from white supremacy. However, white supremacist is not a name that groups give to themselves, it is a name they earn. News media organizations have a responsibility beyond presenting information, they must also contextualize it. Further, the insistence on objectivity from journalists is equally problematic. Every journalist has subjectivity, whether that is hidden behind carefully crafted tweets or out in the open. No one can remove their subjectivity. While there is something to be said for providing good, contextualized information and then maintaining neutrality regarding the conclusions; this is not the same as both-side-ism. Pretending to be objective may be a large part of the reason that people have lost trust in media. Both digital news editors interviewed as well as the legacy newspaper editor appear to be more concerned with being non-partisan. In other words, journalists can be critical of everything but cannot show preference for a political candidate or for a political party. This is not the same as objectivity.

DISCUSSION: JOURNALISTS

With all of the debates about the directions for journalism school that were characterized in chapter 4, it is clear that there are perceptions from editors that

journalists who graduate from journalism school are not prepared to practice journalism in the way the industry expects them to, given the shifting dynamics of news production and distribution. There is a tendency to associate journalism schools with legacy media organizations, which are perceived to be out of date with respects to how journalism is made now, which requires experimentation and ingenuity. Interestingly enough, the only editor to indicate that j-school was important criticized their own organization for being very slow to change when it comes to experimentation and innovation in the news business. The LN editor also indicated they are still very much straddling print and digital, which leaves room for a traditional journalism educational background.

LN was also the only editor to indicate that being a generalist is what they are looking for rather than a specialist, someone with a niche area of expertise. Every other editor indicated that having a niche is what sets you apart and allows you to bring something to the table that no one else is offering. Interesting, journalism educators interviewed for this research have indicated that they are aware of this direction. Educators are aware that the industry is moving away from 'being everything to everyone', and so journalists shouldn't try to do that either. While educators have indicated this, it is unclear how journalism programs are accommodating this shift in expectations for emerging journalists. It is unclear how journalism programs are developing their journalism students as subject matter experts.

While educators have indicated that they do not encourage their students to express opinions on social media, the only editor that was interviewed for this project that had a problem with expressing opinions on social media was the public broadcaster. For every other organization interviewed, having opinions and a personality was a vital component of considering a journalist's candidacy and fit within their organization. However, there are rules to expressing opinions and journalists need to be careful that they have the 'right' opinions. On the one hand, blending personality and journalism is a good thing, a vital thing even, but journalists must not take it too far.

When it came to the discussion of personal branding and having a large social media following, it became clear that despite some of the editors' reluctance to admit the necessity of being on social media and having a presence, an understanding of social media is a vital part of a journalist's job in 2018. Social media platforms are an integral part of news organizations deliver the news to their audiences. Drawing in the audience with 140-character headlines is a skill that is needed in the current moment. Not only is social media a distribution channel for news, but news organizations are reporting about what happens on social media. What politicians and celebrities are tweeting about have all become a part of the news cycle.

Each editor interviewed was careful not to indicate that having developed a personal brand and large social media following were full on requirements for

journalists seeking employment. Having these things was treated as a bonus, much like having a story get lots of hits and impact public policy was seen to be a 'bonus'.

However, D2 did admit that their own brand and social media presence got them their current job, similar to many others currently employed within the organization. While it makes sense that it would depend on the brand and whether it fits well with the organizational brand and also to look at what their following means; as D1 points out, large followings do not necessarily imply a high level of audience engagement.

While there was no expectation that editors would be fully transparent about their hiring practices, it appears that the importance of personal branding and social media presence may have been understated by editors given the imperatives of their organizations. The editors admit that their respective organizations are trying to draw in and engage with audiences on social networking sites. Who would be better to contribute to drawing in and growing an audience than someone who had done that themselves, independently from any particular news organization? This seems particularly relevant if a journalist has a personal brand that is tied to a particular beat that is resonating with audiences.

CONCLUSION

This chapter focused primarily on how news organizations are responding to contemporary challenges in the online media environment including increased reliance on social networking sites to reach audiences and how this is impacting the creation

and delivery of news media content. Editors revealed institutional struggles to find sustainable business models and to commensurate the need to commodify and quantify journalism with the need to also resist these trends and not let metrics solely curate the editorial process. The most interesting revelations to come from the interviews surrounding the institutional dynamics of these organizations was the extent to which social media platforms are shaping the way that news is made. The idea that every article must be treated like the front page of the newspaper reveals how the imperatives to make content clickable and shareable relates to the design of these media platforms and ultimately how media organizations now make money. These dynamics may relate to their expressed desire to find opinionated journalists. Perhaps, in their view, opinion and positional journalism is more likely to draw in the audience.

When it came to their expectations of future hires, the most interesting and consistent responses from editors detailed how having social media skills was very important (as news organizations are delivering their content through these channels) but also having unique access to people, places and audiences. These are certainly entrepreneurial skills. The idea that you are bringing something established and special to the table is a crucial revelation as this relates to personal branding. A personal brand is what sets a person apart from the other candidates, what their unique offering is to an organization.

The idea that having a social media following is important but it being the 'right' kind of following was also indicative of the new media environment that journalists must navigate. Those with the best kind of online followings have active audiences, not just followers. However, it must be noted that to build active audiences and to become the 'unicorn' candidate requires a great deal of unpaid labour. It was also noteworthy that the blending of personality and journalism, the development of opinionated journalistic brands was the most sought after by editors. However, a very surprising finding from these interviews was how each editor talked about having the 'right' kind of opinions. One can have opinions on social media, but should not cross a line or there will be real repercussions. These revelations indicate both the increasing necessity and fragility of personal branding online for journalists without standard employment in Canada. You need to follow the rules, but they might not be the same for every organization. Build a following, but the right kind of following. Be opinionated, but the right kind of opinionated and don't cross a line or you may never get work again.

The next chapter will focus on emerging journalists themselves and how the state of the industry may be shaping the conditions for success for individual journalists in the current moment, but also how they are understanding their own autonomy and navigating through the new media environment to support themselves and build their careers.

The findings from this chapter will be very important for considering the final chapter of this dissertation. Hearing from editors themselves about what makes a successful candidate is extremely important for understanding how the conditions for success are skewing towards personal branding, subject matter expertise, and having social media literacy. Further, this chapter importantly establishes how the state of the industry itself and its reliance on social media for distribution may be shaping the pathways to success for emerging journalists.

Chapter 6: Emerging Journalists in Canada: Professional Identities and Personal Branding

While the last chapter focused on how the dynamics of the new media environment in Canada are impacting editors' expectations of emerging journalists in their hiring processes, this chapter focuses on emerging journalists themselves, how they are negotiating and managing their professionalization practices as they seek paid employment opportunities.

When considering personal brand journalism in Canada, several types of people may come to mind. One might think about journalists who are known for writing about a particular subject, are known for having a particular voice, personality, or perhaps a large social media following. How one builds that brand, however, is increasingly independent of standard employment working conditions. Further, the very definition of 'journalist' is shifting in the current climate. There are examples of those in full time employment at a media organization like Robyn Doolittle, investigative journalist for the Globe and Mail who rose to notoriety by breaking the Rob Ford crack story, which took years of investigative work. This work ultimately led to a book deal and publicity tour in Canada and the US. This rise to fame is reflective of the old star system, where the paths to success were charted through institutional employment. However, the new normal is that journalists develop brands independently of a singular news organization. Take Desmond Cole, for example, a freelance journalist and activist who

built his brand independently from any particular organization but really rose to notoriety when he left his recurring role at the Toronto Star as a weekly columnist because he was told by his editor that he had violated their policies on activism and journalism by protesting a Toronto Police Services board meeting. In either instance, there is a sense that having a brand means not only producing the news but being the news as well. However, Desmond Cole's case brought up questions of what it means to be a journalist and whether being an advocate precludes someone from being a journalist.

This chapter considers: in an age where journalism jobs are not secure, business models are unsustainable, does developing a personal brand assist with navigating through the terrain of precarious media work? What do emerging journalists perceive to be 'successful' brands in their experience? What does a 'successful brand' look like and how do emerging journalists build one? What is the labour involved in brand building and professionalization? Is journalism school relevant to succeeding in the field? All of these questions aim to get at the heart of whether emerging freelance journalists have autonomy in the current moment. These questions also aim to investigate how definitions of what a journalist 'is' and what journalism 'is' may be shifting given the new configuration of the industry. This chapter seeks to understand the Canadian context for the experiences and struggles that emerging journalists face in attempting to carve out a space for themselves in the Canadian media economy.

To better understand this phenomenon, this chapter draws upon qualitative, open-ended interviews with 18 emerging journalists, half of whom have graduated from a Canadian journalism school within the last 5 years and are currently working as freelance journalist, and half of whom have not gone to journalism school but have been freelancing for 5 years or less. This research aims to understand emerging freelance journalists' professionalization practices, including their transition and preparedness for the workforce post journalism school (or without a journalism educational background), how they secure paid work, what kind of journalistic values they adopt in their work, difficulties they may find in obtaining paid work, and what role personal branding and social media use has (if any) in obtaining paid work. In order to ensure the protection of journalist's identities, the researcher has opted to completely anonymize them by simply referring to journalists as 'emerging journalists' when quoting them throughout this chapter.

Participants in this research ranged from having very little personal brand development and almost no online brand development to heavily branded journalists with tens of thousands of followers. From general reporters, to those that have honed-in on a very particular niche, their perspectives on and successes with the deployment of personal branding differed greatly and provided important insights into the conditions of success for emerging journalists in the current moment. Rather than indicating exactly how many respondents reported a particular thing to be true, the

researcher utilized words like 'all', 'some', 'many', and 'few' to denote the quantitative significance of the responses.¹

Journalism Education

Chapter 4 detailed the current challenges for journalism educators in the current moment. By conducting interviews with journalists who attended journalism schools in Canada, the researcher sought to understand how their programs had prepared them to enter the labour market. Out of the 9 journalism graduates interviewed for this research, there were only two who attended the same journalism program.

Overwhelmingly the response from journalism graduates has been that their programs did not prepare them adequately to enter the profession nor equip them with the proper tools to succeed. Importantly, none spoke about being encouraged to start their own journalism enterprise and there was a sense that freelancing was a small focus in some programs but ultimately mostly took the form of electives or one-off seminars. Some said that their programs were more focused on communications theory than on journalistic practice. Many of the j-school graduates contend that their programs were more geared towards training journalists to work as beat or general news reporters within news organizations when this did not reflect the realities of their

¹ Please see appendix 2.0 to reference what this language denotes quantitatively.

job prospects post-graduation. One journalist laments the gap between what they learned and what they experienced in the workforce.

I wish we had more of an entrepreneurial focus. We learned a little about being a freelancer but it seemed like they were herding us in the direction of being a beat reporter. People are working for a publication and freelancing as well. Learning how to freelance, how to invoice properly, how to do your taxes like all of those things are incredibly important for everyone. I feel like if they did more a focus on - especially in journalism with tons of layoffs and it's really hard to get a job. If you know how to be a freelancer then you will never be unemployed. If you can freelance and pitch stories and get work then you can fill those gaps and still continue to make money. So, if they teach you how to do that properly I think that would be a huge asset (Emerging journalist, 2017).

Almost every journalist interviewed echoed the sentiments about invoicing, pitching, and doing their taxes. While most interviewees expressed that j-school did cover things like ethics in journalism, how to do an interview, and pitching, there were several references to the need to develop a personal pitching style rather than the formulaic style that was taught in journalism school.

Others were more scathing about the role of journalism school in training journalists.

First of all, I don't think journalism programs- college or university undergrad- need to be multi-year. They do not. I don't even think that there should be undergraduate j-schools because you can't come into journalism school- I hear Ryerson is better. There are very few people who have enough knowledge about the world around them to be able to find good stories. most students are kind of clueless when they enter freshman year in general and so I feel like Master of Journalism absolutely yes but to be a modern journalist you need to have some sort of other learning to supplement that so you can be a subject matter expert on something (Emerging journalist, 2017).

This raises an important question surrounding journalism education that was introduced in chapter 4. Should journalists, particularly given the current labour market for journalism, have better grounding in specific disciplines? J-school grads tended to express that their programs were either intensely focused on the craft of journalism or very focused on theory but the developing of subject matter expertise was not imbedded in the curriculum. The exception to this was one interviewee who attended the Munk School of Global Affairs program at the University of Toronto, which aims to turn subject matter experts into journalists, the opposite of the tradition journalism school model. This program also has some focus on branding, but is generally more focused on pitching and operationalizing ones' expertise.

Personal Branding

Almost every emerging journalist interviewed for this research, whether they had developed a successful brand or not, felt pressures to develop a brand online (through social networking sites) and believed such brand building to be important for their professional development and ability to secure paid work opportunities. Without the ability to rely on one organization for work, journalists are developing or perceive the need to develop their own personal brands. While some journalists were unsure about whether this was a good thing, some rejected the term branding all together and some wholeheartedly embraced it, the pressures to become visible in order to resist precarious working conditions were common to all. The idea that if you are a

journalist you must be on Twitter was reiterated time and time again, with other social networking sites such as Instagram and Facebook being described as having some professional development utility, but to a lesser degree. Most journalists also have a personal website, those that did not lamented that they 'should' have one.

Some felt confident and not very conflicted in their deployment of personal branding as a journalist.

I was one of the early adopters with Twitter. And I knew, again, from working in advertising, I knew the benefits of branding, using brand guidelines to always follow the same type of messaging, and I knew what kind of journalist I wanted to be, but I also knew how I wanted to be perceived by not just the public, but editors and people who would be working close with me on assignments (Emerging journalist, 2017).

Others, felt very conflicted about personal branding but also situated it in a broader cultural shift with the introduction of social media into people's lives,

Well yeah, I have a lot of complicated thoughts and feelings about it because on the one hand, I very obviously am engaged in building a brand but I generally I think that it's just the nature of social media...to a certain extent everybody who participates in social media is in the process of building a commodified version of themselves right? Yeah, I think it's I think it's generally changing the way that people behave and interact with each other especially online which is a whole separate discussion I guess. But the conscious curation of a brand and presenting yourself as not just you know like here's my Twitter account and my thoughts and writing and stuff but also like here is me as a potential person that other people could employ. (Emerging journalist, 2017).

One journalist found the idea of consciously building a brand to be quite off-putting,

I think people who consciously build brands are insufferable. I think it's like trying to give yourself a nickname. At a certain point, you have to do your thing and let someone else give you the nickname. So, I guess that's what I'm trying

to do. I mean I write with a certain voice and I write about certain things and I follow certain topics and I have a certain style of interview. All that together I guess that's what you call a brand. So, I mean am I doing all of those things, yes- am I actively sitting around ruminating on how to build a brand- no (Emerging journalist, 2017).

Another journalist discusses their personal conflicts with developing a brand as a person with a disability.

I think it can be challenging for individuals who might identify as what we think as traditionally marginalized groups in society. So, I have a physical disability. The question of should a reporter who has a disability write about quote on quote disability issues is huge because you are scared of being pigeon holed. You're scared about what people might think or that you might not be able to get a job again or that people will think that you are only going to write a certain type of story. So that makes me nervous when we attach a personal characteristic and assume that has to be their personal brand. what if they don't want it to be their personal brand? (Emerging journalist, 2017).

Others felt pressure to brand but were not entirely sure how to do it or if it would 'pay off'. What became clear from these interviews was that personal branding is rife with all sorts of conflicts, constraints, questions of whether one can stray from their brand and whether actively commodifying ones' identity online is a good thing. However, for those that have developed personal brands, how do they do it?

i. Niche Brands and Inbound work

Many participants reported that developing a brand is about developing your public voice as a journalist but also about developing a niche area of expertise, in some cases areas that are not being reporting on at all. The journalists that were interviewed, particularly those that had larger online followings, were often dabbling

into areas where there were few if any other journalists writing about those subjects or with their particular voices. One journalist characterizes the development of subject matter expertise,

Nobody else was covering it. The only other person other than myself in Canada that looks at these issues across Canada is a blogger that's been monitoring these groups for 20 years. There are no people in Canada that look at the issues that I do across Canada comprehensively. So, I'm in a very limited niche, and I really, really, really wish more journalists would be doing it because I have more stories than I can possibly do. Which is why I give things away, yeah. Cause I've got more stories than I possibly have the time to properly do (Emerging journalist, 2017).

On the other hand, there is also the sense that not every beat (even if underserved) will lead to a great deal of paid work. For example, climate change reporting was expressed be a difficult niche to find consistent work reporting on, particularly in more mainstream publications.

Respondents who have developed strong niche areas of expertise have indicated that this has led to a great deal of inbound work. Developing a strong niche involves not only spending a great deal of time building relationships with editors and other journalists online but also networking in person as well. Most journalists interviewed expressed that cold pitching is very unlikely to be successful.

But pitching, cold pitching is absolutely useless. Going to networking events, having drinks with people, having conversations, reaching out to people on Twitter, often, to start having those conversations has been far more effective in finding me work than cold pitching ever could be (Emerging journalist, 2017).

Another journalist expresses how building their niche has facilitated inbound work,

When it comes to finding work, it's a total waste of time to pitch. People come to me with stories. They come to me asking me to write stories on specific things or I talk to people I already know and I'm like, "Oh, this happened," and they're like, "Do you wanna write about it?" And then sometimes I'll be like, "Yes, okay," then we start writing about it. So I don't pitch-pitch much anymore. And that's kind of the 'built my niche' thing, yeah. (Emerging journalist, 2017).

A big part of the way one develops a successful brand is also through demonstrating subject matter expertise in a public way via social media.

Sometimes I'll see stuff pop up on Twitter and I'll be like, "I know more about this than other people and I can add something to this conversation." And every time I engage and do that and have something original to bring, every time I do it successfully I get 10% new followers like clockwork. Almost exactly 10% new followers (Emerging journalist, 2017).

There is a sense that building a following comes with niche development but also building relationships with others. However, there it was expressed by several journalists that the Canadian market is quite small and there are really very few journalists working in particular 'beats', which can be problematic from the perspective of having diversity in reporting. One journalist well articulates this challenge,

I have a tough relationship with subject matter experts because you know I think one of the biggest things that's driving me crazy about the journalism industry right now is quote laundering. It's the practice of you know figuring out your story and then calling the right people to get the quotes to fill it out. I find it very frustrating. I have been guilty of it too. Every journalist in the world has been guilty of it and I'm just trying to be more cognizant of it. To that end there are a handful of academics and economists, researchers and activists who end up becoming one of a very few number of voices on a story.

This brings up an important question regarding the development of brand niches. How quickly does the market get saturated in Canada for a particular niche?

ii. Successful Brands

Interviewees reported very different measures of what makes a 'successful' brand. However, it is clear that no matter the measure, there is a great deal of unpaid labour involved in crafting a successful brand. A few journalists referenced the quantitative elements of their online following as being the most important metric of whether their brand was succeeding. However, the journalists that had the most incoming work, largest online followings, and had developed the strongest niches and networks tended to measure their success more qualitatively. For example, by gaining recognition from other established journalists or editors. While there is certainly a relationship between the qualitative and quantitative measures of brands, the pure numbers alone do not provide a full picture, which resonates with what one the digital editors spoke about in chapter 5. One can have many followers, but no one engaging with their content.

One theme that emerged was 'consistency',

I think consistency is important to establishing your brand and then finding out what platform you want to build your brand on and then really figuring out who your supporters are, who's in your corner- whether that's other journalists like for me I really wanted to align myself with journalists I respect and admire (Emerging journalist, 2017).

Another theme was the ability of other established journalists to give credibility to individuals who are trying to make a name for themselves. "I don't really care if I have an increasing follower count every day. But I think it's succeeding when established journalists follow me and engage with what I am putting out" (Emerging journalist, 2017). The idea that recognition from powerful others; whether that be influential journalists or editors, can really elevate one's brand and following was a common theme amongst journalists with larger social media followings. This resonates with Olausson's (2017) work that examines 'celebrified journalists' who seek 'fame by association'.

It's not so much how many followers but like who is following you. So for example like there was shit going on in Country X not too long ago and I tweeted something it got like 2.5 thousand retweets and then I noticed that people who started following me after that were like editors and producers and whatnot (Emerging journalist, 2017).

Many journalists also referenced the sought after verified 'blue checkmark' on Twitter that only comes after one has spent a great deal of time establishing their credibility and brand. Journalists perceive that this checkmark makes people pay closer attention and take them more seriously.

The need to establish strong relationships and recognition with editors was reiterated.

I used to have to work and work and work at getting editors to like me or trust me. The more I dealt with them, the more they seemed to like me. When I email them- they always give me the time of day, which I appreciated. I think the more

time I spent at it, the more people knew my name and the more people were willing to give me assignments. If you get a name in your inbox that you don't know you tend to be pretty skeptical, if it's a name you know you get generally more excited. So yeah, back then I think it had a lot more to do with the story and I feel pretty confident now that I get some assignments that I would have never gotten back then because of you know maybe who I am or how many twitter followers I have.

Aside from being likeable, journalists also reported a need to go beyond posting their content on social networking sites but also to engage with their audiences and to try to build new ones.

Talking to other journalists, just reaching out DM, or being like, "That was a good article. What do you know about this?" Or stuff like that has been hugely helpful in building a brand cause it's all been personal networking. So now, a lot of people reach out to me for information, and I think part of that is my activity on Twitter (Emerging journalist, 2017).

For those that don't feel that their brand is necessarily 'succeeding' as well as it could be, they express that they could or should be doing more,

I send out a lot of stuff, but I don't engage people and that's different. that's across all social media. it's very much a one-way street. Unless someone comments, I don't chase them. I don't go to people I am following and start conversations. I am very aware that that's what I need to do on social media for branding (Emerging journalist, 2017).

All of these things point to the fact that to build a brand well, it takes a great deal of time and effort. Even for those that have thousands of followers and lots of inbound work struggle to make adequate wages to support themselves. Only two journalists cited that they had enough work and comfortable compensation. Having a successful brand might not always mean getting paid accordingly, depending on how success is

measured. What is clear is that what the journalist is building is an audience that they can sell or leverage. The pressures to be 'always online' are pressures to constantly give the audience something to tune in for.

iii. Opinions and Personalities Get More follows

A theme that emerged surrounding developing a brand as a journalist was that being opinionated or inserting oneself and one's personality into one's online presence was more conducive to building a large following than being a neutral journalist or being someone who simply posts their work or aggregates journalism. One journalist discusses how in building their brand and doing 'hard news', their brand may not be conducive to building the same following as other types of journalism,

I mean being neutral is huge for me because I've seen some journalists build their brands by being like super left wing or right wing or whatever. I think I could easily like make a huge following by just going crazy left or right (Emerging Journalist, 2017).

Another journalist recounts their own experiences with brand building on social media, "Yeah, I think if you tell the reader your opinion and it's your opinion with your background and expertise that you have, it brings more followers, it brings more people in" (Emerging Journalist, 2017). Another journalist recounts how much developing their own voice has contributed to better success,

At the beginning, I was trying to sound like the publication, which is like a newbie mistake I think a lot of the time you are just trying to like echo what you read. And then as time went on I felt that people were more receptive to me kind of being myself and being a little bit more laid back about writing and not

trying to follow these like meticulous things that I had learned in j-school and just kind of like- being factually correct and all of these things but at the same time having more of a personality in writing. You get better assignments I find from it because they stop giving you the straight-laced articles and give you something more that you can put your own spin on and when they have something a little out of left field, which I like, they will go to me first or another couple of people (Emerging journalist, 2017).

There is also the sense that becoming the news can be good for one's brand and following.

I guess when good or bad stuff happens to you and you have to put it on social media, you end up becoming sort of a news item- people start following you. Sometimes it's dumb stuff. Sometimes I'll make a stupid joke tweet and it will get like 100 retweets and a bunch of followers from that (Emerging journalist, 2017).

There is also the perception that on the one hand there are pressures to have the 'hottest take', but on the other hand journalists need to be very careful so as to not ruin their career in a single Tweet; something that has happened to many journalists. Hot takes refer to commentary (often on social media) that responds to a current event, where the goal is to attract attention.

I mean just because of the nature of like the stuff that I write about like I'm sort of roped into what for could just be described as like the take economy like I'm one of these people that like I get paid to write hot takes for a living and it's like there's a whole system. It's like an arms race of like hot takes and like each person gets to provide a more sort of like scathing or all-encompassing take than the last and the worst thing that can happen is if you say something that's either on brand or like shockingly unpopular and then you just have to delete your Twitter account and leave the earth forever (Emerging journalist, 2017).

While the pitfalls of having a 'wrong take' may perhaps be a touch hyperbolic, indeed the consequences can be very dire for emerging, freelance or even institutionally employed journalists. Tweets can and do ruin careers. Consider freelance journalist Nora Loreto, who wrote a tweet in response to the GoFundMe campaign for the victims of the Humboldt Broncos bus crash. Loreto has indicated that she has lost several freelance contracts as a result (CBC News, 2018). To site another example; tech journalist Quinn Norton was hired by the New York Times only to be immediately fired because of past tweets that surfaced containing racial and homophobic slurs (Musil, 2018).

Importantly, the pressures to pursue the 'hottest take' appear to be in line with the impetus to produce journalism that is clickable, shareable, and ultimately commodified. Journalists are finding that inserting their personality into journalism is conducive to being able to get more work but there is also a great deal of what Goffman (1959) would call impression management going on in managing one's real life opinions and personality and their online personas, using the actor as a metaphor for performing for an audience, while the offstage moments refer to their 'real life'. The need to be consistent in one's 'role' was expressed by most journalists interviewed. However, many journalists also expressed conflicting perspectives of the control they have in their on-stage performances as the journalist quoted above did. While the power of personal branding is often touted, as Hearn (2008) argues, "Its numerous

edicts and rules seriously delimit the field of possibilities within which any imagined 'authentic self' might be performed, reducing the self to a set of purely instrumental behaviours and circumscribing its meanings within market discourse" (206).

iv. Visibility Labour and Branding

Most journalists interviewed tend to think that engaging in social media and brand building does constitute 'work', in that it is a part of their job as a journalist or in the sense that it may contribute to securing future work. As Hearn (2008) argues "Indeed, the production of self must always involve some form of labour in order to create a public persona that might be of practical or relational use" (213). There is also a sense of blurred distinctions when trying to calculate how much time is spent for 'work' and how much time is spent on social media for leisure. This resonates with digital labour theorists' conceptions of the very tenuous distinctions between the two with the integration of social networking sites into daily work and personal lives. Conceptual language such as 'playbour' and 'prosumption' (Fuchs, 2014) help to characterize the ways in which time spent on social networking sites is conceptualized as leisure but also is ultimately productive time that is generating value for SNS's. This reality becomes even more important as emerging journalists use these platforms for professional development and to secure paid work. The need to be 'always online' was expressed by most journalists interviewed as both a professional necessity in some cases and also enjoyment in others;

Every day I'm on social media. I spend at least an hour and my husband can prove it. He knows. And I'm always working. I have my phone, always engaging with people, and always being active. And I think, as a freelancer or an entrepreneur, you always have to be working on your brand. There's not one day that goes by, even on Christmas Eve or Christmas, you're always working and building it (Emerging journalist, 2017).

The idea of having to always be online or be managing ones' online presence was a recurring theme. Importantly, the layers of unpaid labour add up for emerging journalists as they are involved in maintaining a consistent media presence and trying to make themselves 'known', managing relationships with editors, engaging with audiences, invoicing and ensuring they get paid, doing research and constantly pitching. One journalist discusses building their brand and reaching out to editors,

The power of... And to be frank, a lot of the editors I first connected with were over Twitter, so without that medium, and I wouldn't be off-base looking back to say something like this, without Twitter, I honestly don't think I would be where I am today. Just because of the opportunities that the medium provided me to connect with a network of like-minded journalists and editors (Emerging journalist, 2017).

Almost every journalist that was interviewed also engaged in unpaid labour in the form of actual 'journalism work'. The reasons for doing this varied but generally fell into 3 categories: for exposure, to 'pay one's dues, or for a public service reason. The engagement in unpaid labour to 'pay one's dues or to gain exposure has been well documented by other research (Corrigan, 2015; Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013; Cohen, 2012). The public service element of unpaid labour marks an important distinction as it reveals the public service element imperative that comes along with a great deal of

journalism work. Many interviewees cited writing stories and doing unpaid work for not-for-profits or for important causes because they felt the organization was doing important work or they were passionate about a project and there were rewards beyond a paycheck that they received, i.e. 'a labour of love'. Most journalists distinguished this from writing for free for corporations, which felt more compromising and unacceptable.

The labour of love element to journalism also pertained to the journalists interviewed who are involved in investigative journalism. These journalists expressed a responsibility to dig deep and report on specific areas but also expressed how much time and effort it takes to do so, particularly with the chance that it might not pay. Several journalists interviewed indicated that without support from their parents or social assistance, they would not be able to do what they do.

It is clear that brand building has many dimensions; engaging in social media, building a following but the right following, managing relationships with editors and other journalists, and developing a niche area of expertise. This labour happens online and offline and can be conceived of as visibility labour. Visibility labour is labour that must be deployed that is both unpaid and necessary to build a network, gain notoriety and ultimately leverage that into paid employment opportunities in the field.

Journalistic Identity and Values

With the increased use of social networking sites, deployment of personal branding and the normality of precarious work, this presents a context where the skills needed to succeed in journalism combine the skills of reporting, social media skills and entrepreneurial skills. The question remains, with all of the changes happening in the production and consumption of news and professionalization practices of journalists, is the definition of journalism expanding? Are traditional journalistic values shifting? Who gets to call themselves 'journalist' in an age where anyone can create a blog or write a post on *Medium*?

When it came to asking what makes someone able to call themselves a journalist, many struggled to distinguish themselves from others producing content on the internet, particularly those that had not attended journalism school who (in some cases) expressed having 'imposter syndrome'. For some, the title was tied to being paid to do it. Others, spoke about journalistic values and imperatives as being the determinants of what a journalist is;

Good question because now anyone can write anything they want and I am one of those people. I guess the old idea of journalists being held to the standard of accountability and reliability but now I am thinking about some of the newspapers in England like the *Daily Mail* where eat tomatoes and it's going to give you cancer but by Friday it's eat more tomatoes- cure your cancer. It's junk reporting and these people are full paid professional trained journalists just spouting out absolute shit (Emerging journalist, 2017)

Another journalist would take issue that this could even be referred to as journalism,

You have to do it well. Fundamentally- I think fundamentally if you are not abiding by a code of ethics or a set of rules or a guiding principle that is journalism then you are not a journalist. Rebel Media made a big deal about being kicked out of some event- but fundamentally- they are not journalists because they do not apply any journalistic rigor to any of their reporting. Some people think this line is very nebulous- but it's not- it's very easy if you are caught lying if you are caught stumping for a political organization- if you are caught killing stories because they don't bode well with your advertisers- that's not journalism (Emerging journalist, 2017).

The public service element was expressed by several of the interviewees as well,

I mean we can't all be the Spotlight team- but there is an element of journalism about holding people to account and holding people accountable for what they say, which is why I think things like objectivity are so important because if you are not going to hold yourself to high ethical standards then I don't think you should expect that any institution you contact is going to allow you to hold them to those high standards.

Conversations about professional identities and definitions are important, especially considering many people tie the journalist designation to those who are getting paid to do it, which can leave out citizen journalists or journalists who get paid for some stories and not for others. This is what makes the difficulties of any sort of professional regulation of the profession so difficult.

i. Values

When it came to discussions of journalistic values there was a great diversity of perspectives when it came to which ones are important for journalists to possess, particularly surrounding objectivity. Journalists who had not attended journalism school tended to be more critical of objectivity and neutrality.

I think that objectivity means being able to say climate change is real and people are causing it. At the same time, I think that people who go down this line of argument also think that they can call whoever they want, whatever they want so - just because objectivity doesn't mean you have to present both sides equally doesn't mean you should be stumping for one side either. Right? So I mean calling a white supremacist is fine but that also doesn't mean that you should be out there advocating for a certain action to be taken against them or you should be advocating for them to be locked up or punished or whatever. I think at some point you have to maintain the objectivity of reporting (Emerging journalist, 2017).

Others were more comfortable being advocates, which will be explored in considerations of journalistic autonomy. Others spoke about the general lack of neutrality in the industry.

Well I certainly don't feel the need to embody neutrality. I don't even think that many modern journalists do anymore. BuzzFeed does all of these amazing investigations but like I still feel like all of the people who write for BuzzFeed are very left leaning using their social media. That in turn, colours the investigative pieces that choose to do. The Globe and Mail is very high and mighty and so I feel like they are the most chaotic neutral of the media outlets and I don't know if there's any kind of neutral outlet anymore (Emerging journalist, 2017).

Another journalist echoes this sentiment, "I think it's totally ok to have extremely biased journalists as long as everybody is upfront about it because realistically I mean that's all you're really getting" (Emerging journalist, 2017). There is also a sense that putting oneself in the story in some way is creeping into journalism more and more,

Objectivity is still important, but it has its place. I think opinion is leaching more and more into people's work which isn't necessarily a bad thing, but I find I'll write something and then I'll put myself into the story and that's something we have been taught not to do. You kind of have to learn the rules to break them a little bit but more and more people are always in the story and the stories that I

like are when the journalist inserts themselves and does have this moment of their opinion kind of being part of it (Emerging journalist, 2017).

Several journalists who had attended j-school felt that objectivity was far more important than their counterparts. Several journalists expressed that there was a sense that “It is not a journalist’s job to tell you what to think. it’s a journalist’s job to tell you what to think about” (Emerging journalist, 2017). Those that tended to adhere to this view were more careful with what they posted on social media. Some expressed that not being objective, particularly as a freelancer could be harmful to their career,

Because there's no guarantee that I'll get another assignment from any of these publications that I write for, so that... I don't say it strikes a fear in me, but it makes me realize that every time I write a story it should probably be the best version of the story it can be because it may be the last one (Emerging journalist, 2017).

The idea that journalists are neutral, without a stake in the game in many ways denies their subjectivity. Striving for objectivity of method, rather than capital ‘O’ objectivity appears to be more of a shared professional value than not inserting one’s subjectivity. Truth and accuracy appeared to be far more important than objectivity or neutrality. Ultimately, presenting two positions as equally credible is also making a statement that they should be evaluated equally.

ii. Definitions of journalism

Interviewees were somewhat divided on whether economic influence was problematic when it comes to journalism, so too on whether the definition of

journalism is expanding to include other types of content. Many were clear that journalism should be “free from advertiser influence, corporate influence, executive influence” (Emerging journalist, 2017). In a sense, it is argued that journalism must be ‘independent’. The idea that the definition of journalism might be expanding or more inclusive of branded or sponsored content was met with hard resistance from many of the journalists interviewed because it seemed to clash with values of transparency or advertising influence.

Sponsored content? Absolutely not. A journalist could do that and still be a journalist but that is not a piece of journalism. Neither is if you just pick up a press release and report directly off a press release. That isn't journalism either, that's just PR (Emerging journalist, 2017).

Others were clearer about what journalism ‘is’.

If you go deeper on it, and actually do your research and talk to people then yeah, sure, that's journalism. But again, if you're just repeating PR, that's not really journalism either. Journalism requires investigation, full stop. Anything that requires investigation is journalism. Otherwise, what is it? The point of a journalist is to add something to the public discourse, to the knowledge of the people (Emerging journalist, 2017).

However, several journalists found it more acceptable for the wall between business and editorial to be breaking. “I think it's okay for advertising to influence content, if you believe in the product and there is compensation and you're doing it like it's content related, yeah I think that's fine” (Emerging journalist, 2017). Some believed that sponsored content was not necessarily bad, but the problem is if they have

editorial sway on a piece. However, there is a question of how there can be true independence in this scenario.

Branded content isn't necessarily bad. If I am writing a story about tech and Microsoft is a fan of my work and wants to slap a Microsoft logo on it and have zero editorial influence and control (Emerging journalist, 2017).

The question is, can the journalist report unfavourably on Microsoft, are there consequences to doing so?

I think the wall is breaking. I think it might be blending and I don't think it is a bad thing because audiences are what drive funding and you can't write without funding. As more and more content comes in - they are trying to feed an audience's hunger for like clickable stuff (Emerging journalist, 2017).

There is a sense that entrepreneurial values are blending with journalism and this may not be surprising given the skills that are needed to succeed as freelancers are entrepreneurial and 'business skills'. However, this arguably puts journalism in a position that favours its commodification rather than its public service elements.

iii. Supplementing Income with PR Work

Part of the reason for a more expansive definition of journalism may come from the fact that several interviewees cited the need to supplement their income from journalism work with corporate communications, PR work and even some sponsored or branded content. The need for supplementing income in this way signals that the lines between journalism, advertising and public relations are becoming increasingly blurred (Francoeur, 2015). In some cases, sponsored content is quite literally bleeding into

their journalism work. One emerging journalist discusses how doing sponsored content has become something they do for a publication that they have an ongoing working relationship with.

I've had to do stuff for a publication I regularly write for that has been sponsored. And then talk to them about how you want to declare that sponsorship, how heavy you want to go. They are hoping that they never want to be fawning over things for the sake of it and then have sponsored at the bottom. It has to be more of like we'll do a deep dive on the product you guys are paying for. They have to review it before we publish. I am not going to say it changed my life if it didn't, but you couldn't trash the product either. (Emerging journalist, 2017).

While this particular journalist did not seem to have a problem with producing this type of content, another emerging journalist characterizes their split professional identity as being more of a financial necessity.

So there is a sense that if you want to really, really survive, you're going to have to say goodbye to your journalism aspirations or at least temper them a bit and start writing corporate copy. Today my deadline is for a real estate marketing thing. Honestly, it is the job I have had the longest. It is once a month, I write these little blurbs that they send me and it is so mindless. I'm doing it because it's easy money and at the least it's my minimum payment for my credit card. No interviews. No researching (Emerging journalists, 2017).

The dabbling into corporate PR work coupled with the increased need to brand oneself indicates that the lines between journalism and PR as professional identities are becoming more difficult to distinguish in the current moment. Even journalists who report having developed niches and getting inbound work regularly rely on these types of contracts to supplement their journalism work.

I am doing these hour-long interviews, taking these transcriptions and writing 100-200 word stories where I have to choose these pull quotes. There has been some pushback there but it doesn't hurt me so much because I know that for that work I can put less of myself into it because its corporate work.

There is a sense that the skills to do this type of work are transferrable but several journalists indicated that they can turn on and off their commitments to values of transparency or accuracy when it comes to this type of work. There may be reason to be skeptical that these types of work and the values that orient the work can remain so separate. Journalists are not only having to dabble in PR work but also are having to engage in PR work of their own identities and brands. Importantly, the motivations for doing this are mixed; some begrudgingly fill in the gaps with this work and others engaging in it have a more fluid definition of what journalism 'is' in the current moment.

iv. Developing Media Startups

The dream of entrepreneurial journalism is being realized by several of the journalists interviewed in this study as they seek more sustainable ways to make a living. Several interviewees have taken steps to develop their own startups, either blending journalism with commerce or with advocacy. One interviewee justifies the rationale for starting their own company that does branded content,

So my partner and I had both worked in the ad industry and we were shocked by the type of work we had to do every day. How do people like this? Why is half a million dollars being put into this terrible Tropicana ad that people are going to hate and want to mute. Having all of these ideas - how can we make

this product- or how can we tell it through a journalistic lens? How can we make something cooler that people actually want to watch and spend this money in a better way- make it a positive experience for something rather than something that they want to turn off their TV for? The way I see it- it's a more lucrative way of taking journalism and still telling real stories and being newsworthy about it but having a brand fund it because we are so underfunded all the time. I still consider myself a journalist (Emerging journalist, 2017).

In many ways, this interviewee echoes the survival rhetoric that Benedetti (2015) discusses surrounding entrepreneurial journalism. The idea that what funds journalism is advertisers and brands is not lost on this particular journalist and they are attempting to carve out a space for themselves where they are still able to put their journalistic skills to use and make a better living. Another journalist has also started a company that engages in brand work,

So I have a company and I'm trying to use that to make documentaries. So actually I'm going to Kazakhstan in September to do brand work. So the thing that if you talk to more journalists the thing that you'll realize is that a lot of people now are doing both. So it's basically like I get paid a shitload of money by this brand to do this thing that I'm not really that interested in but maybe it's in a weird place like Kazakhstan. So nobody wants to go. That's like our model now. And it pays me like 1500 a day or something ridiculous like that and I don't really give a fuck about it. But I can then use that money to go do this other thing. We can make this other content probably easier in some ways. It's worth a lot more. We can do that and then do what we want. Like reporting the stuff that we actually care about.

In many ways, journalists themselves are deploying the strategies that news media organizations themselves are using by combining journalism and branded content or using branded content to fund their news and journalistic ventures in the absence of stable or well-paying opportunities to pursue the journalism work that they care about.

Autonomy

The emerging journalists interviewed for this study, despite experiencing struggles for adequate income, feel that they have autonomy in their work. Most journalists mentioned that they enjoyed the relative freedom of not being employed by one publication or having one editor. Further, emerging journalists can ultimately 'choose to do the work or not'. Most of the journalists interviewed for this study did not feel pigeonholed by developing niche areas of expertise. Journalists felt that they could stray from their brands. Lastly, journalists overwhelmingly (with the exception of 3) indicated that their ideal employment situation would be freelance. However, it is important to note that journalists did not all share the same definition of what autonomy meant, nor was there consensus on shared professional values. There are also aspects of journalists' work that they feel they have little control over. These nuances are very important for understanding the complexities of being a journalist in the gig economy where there is a heightened focus on branding. The autonomy that emerging journalists cite is underpinned by constraints. The operational definition that the researcher is working with borrows from Deuze's (2011) understanding of autonomy meaning freedom, independence, editorial autonomy, freedom from censorship, advertising influence and market influence.

i. Ideal Work is Freelance

It was surprising that most journalists cited freelance as their ideal working conditions, given that most journalists did not cite being able to adequately support themselves from this work. However, many journalists cited the ability to not be constrained by one editor or publication, the ability to take vacation when they want, the ability to pursue other projects, and also the ability to be more involved in advocacy and solutions journalism. There is a perception of autonomy but that it may come at an extra cost,

Yes. It's complicated for sure. Because I work harder and more now than ever before but at the same time I feel like I do have autonomy, if that makes sense. We have to work harder as a freelancer but you can take your own vacations if you want to. You can make your own schedule, work the way that you want to. So autonomy in some ways and then less so in others (Emerging journalist, 2017).

One can take vacations when they want, but they may need to be able to afford to do so. Others, particularly those engaged in very complex and divisive areas perceived that they would not be able to act as an advocate if they were working in house somewhere. One journalist specializing in climate change articulates this challenge,

I think about the ability to reach different audiences as well. I write policy documents- or I assist in writing policy documents. That kind of thing- and again that goes back to the idea of the shit things we are doing to the world and doing better than we are now. That kind of thing is important. If I was in house as a journalist. is that conflict of interest now? Are we starting to cross those boundaries? (Emerging journalist, 2017).

This brings up a really important tension in the journalism field right now. Are journalists allowed to be activists and advocates? Are there issues, like climate change,

that do not have two legitimate sides? Is it unethical to advocate for change in a particular direction? There is a sense that one may have more freedom to advocate on certain issues if they are freelancing, whereas publications may take a harder stance on this.

The advocacy vs. journalism context raises important questions about journalistic values and how much institutional understandings of journalism allow for a more fluid exchange between the two;

I'm not talking about systemic racism. I deal with overt racism, real hate, death threats. I don't think that I'm biased or I'm objective in taking an anti-racist stance in my journalism because I think as a baseline in a society, we should just say overt racism, calling for death in identifiable groups of people, is a no go, that's just a baseline. I don't claim to be objective, but I report the truth and I try to be fair. And that's more important to me than trying to have this false objectivity. There are real bad people out there, and characterizing a Nazi as a Nazi when they actually bring a Nazi flag to a rally, and when they post anti-Semitic shit online is not a biased thing, in my opinion. I also see some places where measures have been effective in combating this kind of stuff and other places where it hasn't, so I report them. In my experience, what I've researched from what I've read and what I've observed, these are the most effective ways to counter this, should you wanna counter this. Now, to some people that would sound like advocacy. Like I'm saying, "Here's a problem. Here's a solution. Do this thing." But to me it's just an extension to journalism. (Emerging journalist, 2017).

This prospect of advocacy in journalism not only touches on the need to provide solutions, rather than simply reporting the 'horror show' but also that there are issues on which there are not two sides that should be taken seriously. The sense that as a freelancer there is more room to pursue this level of journalism is quite important when

considering journalistic autonomy and the freedom to exposes one's conscience. This resonates with what the digital editors spoke about in chapter 5 when it comes to the questioning of objectivity and 'both-sideism'. This understanding of autonomy, namely the ability to pursue advocacy, was an unexpected finding that complicated the assumption made by the researcher that autonomy was increasingly constrained and commodified with the normalizing of personal branding.

ii. Straying from your Brand

Journalists who have developed a strong niche area or brand and have become the 'go to' person for particular content report having improved working conditions in that they are able to get a great deal of incoming work (without having to pitch). The question of whether they can stray from their brand is an important one when considering journalistic autonomy because what is a beat that is currently gaining traction might not be in 6 months. Further, even the workers with strong niches report struggles for adequate income to support themselves. This means that they may have to rely on work outside of their traditional areas of expertise.

Journalists interviewed overwhelmingly reported not feeling locked in by their subject matter areas of expertise. However, the idea of being pigeon-holed was a point of concern for those from minority groups. There is the threat that they will be pigeon-holed but also that if they do not report on these stories, they might not get told. This

is extremely important to consider as minority groups and women are still very much underrepresented in the journalism field (Cohen, 2015; Women's Media Centre, 2017).

Journalists with a strong network indicated that they had been asked to do things outside of their wheelhouse. However, one journalist interviewed discussed their skepticism with combining ones' personal life or identity with their journalism,

It also makes me nervous- personal branding is different when it comes to lifestyle features and hard news. It makes me a little nervous because people's lives change. So what happens when the prominent mommy blogger who has built her brand around her happy domestic family gets divorced? So your personal brand has to evolve with your life and sometimes readers and editors may be confused by that (Emerging journalist, 2017).

This raises an important consideration when it comes to whether one can truly stray from their brand or whether they may be either locked in to a particular niche, have a fleeting or timely personal brand or have a following that is not willing to evolve with them. The idea that personal identities are not stable entities is very important when considering the deployment of personal branding online and its relationship to autonomy and ultimately stable employability. There is a sense that if one is going to brand themselves they have to be very careful and smart about it because going from a heavily opinionated journalist to a hard news reporter for the CBC is not a move that one can make.

There is also an important point to be raised regarding the ability for 'celebrity journalists' to be able to properly cover a vast range of issues well, including those that

they have little expertise on. This resonates with David and Owen's (1998) work that argues that the star system or cult of celebrity journalism creates a framework where reporters with specialized expertise need (or are asked) to become experts on a wide range of issues. If the person reporting the news becomes more important than the information itself, then entertainment value is of utmost importance. The 'talking head' phenomenon has long since infiltrated American network news production, particularly those with 24-hour news cycles. This prospect is particularly troublesome when considering subject matter that is often reported on poorly. This is the case in areas such as scientific journalism where reporting on scientific research often exaggerates and overstates results (Whitehouse, 2013).

iii. Reliance on Established Networks

Most of the journalists interviewed rely on established relationships with editors and particular publications to have stable work. One journalist well encapsulates the complex feelings of freedom and constraint surrounding this dynamic,

So I do have control in the sense that I decide whether I want to write it or not. On the other side, I haven't really developed my client list very well. I have been relying on a lot of regular people and the odd ad hoc thing here and there. When I am putting stories together I am really thinking about what they want and I am not really necessarily writing about the things I would want to (Emerging Journalist, 2017).

The reliance on these relationships may undermine the autonomy that is perceived to come from not being institutionally employed. Emerging journalists are free to not take

work, but they are also free to starve or to not make rent payments. In many ways, editors or organizations act as gatekeepers for individual journalists. Connected to the idea of being reliant on existing relationships is the ability for journalists to get stories published that are timely when the story does not have a proper place within ones' established networks.

The most difficult thing with autonomy, of being a journalist, is I have a story. It's not gonna fit exactly with the outlets that I have a string or a relationship with, but it's an important story. I wanna get it out there. It's not necessarily like it kinda touches on autonomy, but it's like, I've got this story, I know it's a story, this is a thing, people should read this. And figuring out how to actually get it placed, so that you can advance the conversation and read it, is, I think, the biggest barrier to autonomy. I have a story to tell, and the outlets act as a barrier, often, even when it's a newsworthy story. And not for any reasons to do with the story. You can't get an editor's eyes on it before it's no longer timely. Or it's not timely even though it is important to get this thing on the record to advance reporting in this subject area. But since it's not timely, they're not interested anymore. There's just all these barriers in getting stuff published. I have self-published something before on Medium, and luckily enough it was interesting enough that... I only put it on my Twitter which probably only has like 600 followers at the time and my Facebook and then it ended up having almost 4,000 reads because other journalists just picked it up and amplified it, which was cool, but I don't see any money for that. In terms of autonomy, I wake up, I look at the stuff I wanna do, I do whatever I wanna do, yeah, I feel autonomy. But there is an issue with bringing my stories to the market. That is the biggest barrier that I see (Emerging Journalist, 2017).

On the one hand, this journalist points out that they do possess the freedom to publish stories on a personal blog or on websites like *Medium* or *Buzzfeed Community* when they are unable to secure a paid contract to report on a story in a timely manner. This brings to light that autonomously employed journalists may have difficulties breaking

news given their lack of direct access to media networks through standard employment relationships. On the other hand, this difficulty exposes the complexities of the motivations that journalists have when it comes to their work. There are motivations beyond a paycheck, to get the story out there because it is important for the public to know about or perhaps to try to garner reach with new audiences and elevate their brand. Either way, this struggle for autonomy online illustrates that as much as journalists have access to free platforms to amplify their reach, they are not paid accordingly if their work does in fact gain traction. The websites that allow for amateur or citizen journalism production are the ones who are able to profit from this content, not the creators. This further complicates ideas of risk and reward. Emerging journalists are free to take the risk of researching and developing a story, but there is never a guarantee that someone is going to pay them for it. One interviewee (who does international journalism for Canadian outlets) characterizes the financial risk that they must take to pursue their job,

So for two months ahead of time I started looking at Country X. I mean like I was looking at it as well when it first started earlier this year in April. But then I started to like really plan. I started making like a safety and logistics plan started like pricing out what is this going to cost and what I could I possibly make off of this and who'd be interested. I really put a lot of effort into planning it. So I realized like there's a shitload of interest in it and then I knew I had to invest a lot of money into paying my fixers and for the travel costs and whatnot. I just took the risk.

This journalist has to invest their own money and a great deal of work and research ahead of time to pursue stories that may or may not be commissioned by media organizations. This reveals the amount of free labour that must be pursued in order to 'do their job', labour that would presumably be paid for if working in a standard employment context. This exposes that there is the freedom to create and the platforms to publish but no guarantees of payment for that labour.

iv. Commodification

One of the pillars of Deuze's understanding of journalistic autonomy and indeed has been a long-standing ideal for journalism is the idea that there is not explicit economic or advertising influence over content creation. While many of the more 'hard news' journalists that were interviewed were very explicit that this line should not be breached, many cited instances of corporate influence dictating the editorial of their content. Though these instances are few and far between, they still happen. Several journalists interviewed have more negotiable understandings of autonomy with respects to economic influence.

And it (freelancing) makes you think like a business owner and not so much as a journalist because, yeah, your product is journalism, but at the end of the day, you just like a street meat vendor, are trying to sell something to the public. Whether it's a hot dog or 500 words, you still need to be on top of things to be like, "Okay, what's the audience? Why do they want this? Why do they need this?" To, "Why would it be relevant?" So, yeah, it's definitely a... I feel like I have autonomy and I can do sort of any type of story I want as long as it's worth being paid for (Emerging journalist, 2017).

The idea that something is 'worth' being paid reveals that for some journalists their content is conceived of as a commodity rather than a public service. This notion is further complicated by the rise of the audience and collapse of the barrier between journalist and audience,

I think that those ideals (freedom from economic influence) were established long before the millennium. I don't think we can go back and demand that journalism be paid for by the people for the people or from some sort of benevolent benefactor who just injects funds and has absolutely no editorial sway. So, I think it's either going to be controlled by your listenership which is going to be left or right leaning or its going to be funded by a corporation that has specifics on the editorial content. There's always going to be editorial influence by external partners simply to make the content happen now, even with crowd funded investigative reporting (Emerging journalist, 2017).

The question of whether one can be autonomous if they are beholden to audience preferences is an important one, but should all semblance of independence be abandoned, including economic influence? Economic interests are decidedly different than audience preferences. Further, if economic interests are what drive content, how can journalism hold those in power to account? What if audiences only want clickbait? What if important journalism that holds those in power to account does not draw the biggest audience? What if news organizations are engaging in a race to the bottom and this is not what audiences want? There is certainly evidence to suggest that declining trust in news media is a result of this race (Swift, 2016).

For others, processes of commodification in their work are undesirable but ultimately outside of their control. For example, several journalists cited that they have

autonomy when it comes to their stories but little autonomy when it comes to the creation of headlines.

Now everybody wants a Trump angle. So even like I was abroad in early July and I got asked to do some stuff about Trump because he was there. But it was more about how the democracy is being sort of chipped away at in this country. But then the editor wanted us to because I was coauthoring the editor wanted us to blame Trump for that somehow. We were like that doesn't really make sense- so we wrote the -article in the way that we wanted to read it but the headline was all about Trump (Emerging journalist, 2017).

There is a sense here that there are pressures to make stories more clickable and shareable and headlines are a huge part of that. This relates to the pressures discussed by editors in chapter 5; headlines are so important because every story has to be like the front page of the newspaper.

v. 'I have to be on social media'

Autonomy is constrained by the introduction of social media into the lives of journalists. On the one hand, there is no explicit coercion for emerging journalists to use social media. On the other hand, those that do not will likely be disadvantaged in the labour market. Given that media organizations that journalists rely on for work are heavily reliant on and invested in social media as distribution channels to get their content to the public, the expectation that journalists are conversant in social networking sites is a growing expectation. One journalist expresses their begrudging use of Twitter,

Once upon a time Twitter was more fun than it currently is now. Now it's something of a nightmare. And I genuinely think it's really bad for everybody's mental health and I feel really bad like I'm so invested in it and I don't know. I'm part of this whole like horrible system that's destroying people's brains. But I also need to eat (Emerging journalist, 2017).

Journalists are heavily reliant on their relationships online with powerful others as well as these channels to get their content to the public, making the idea that it is 'voluntary' somewhat absurd. The coercion to use social networking sites for emerging journalists is not the same as how wage labour was coerced for Marx but more of an ideological nature (Fuchs, 2012). There are explicit disadvantages when it comes to employability to not being on social networking sites. The necessity of being online becomes particularly poignant when considering things like the harassment of women on social networking sites, something that was reported to be a concern by several of the female (and a few of the male) interviewees.

DISCUSSION

While this research hypothesized that journalists in fact had less autonomy with the increasing necessity of personal branding for emerging journalists; the operational definition of autonomy used for this research was not the way autonomy was perceived by many of the respondents. The definition of autonomy the researcher utilized, understood autonomy as freedom from outside influence (particularly independence from economic influence) to pursue journalism. However, the understanding of autonomy that was constructed by respondents took on several different and

unexpected forms. For some, they expressed a very neoliberal understanding of autonomy. The idea that they only need to rely on themselves and that through entrepreneurship they are able to use their skills to make money and then pursue their passions on the side was a common thread throughout these responses. Many journalists engage in PR and promotional work because they are then able to pursue journalism, even if the pay is not enough to sustain them. Others had little problem with the blending of commerce and journalism as it may provide more freedom in their work and lives in other ways. It is significant that almost all of the journalists expressed that their ideal work is freelance, illustrating that they feel self-employment is more desirable than institutional employment, working for the same boss and a consistent paycheck.

While the researcher interprets the autonomy that journalists possess as underpinned with constraints it would be remiss to undermine how journalists have expressed that their freelance status has made them free to pursue their conscience, to be activists and to move away from norms of 'objectivity'. This is important as those norms, this research has argued, were constructed for economic reasons in the first place rather than in the service of 'good journalism'.

These understandings of autonomy reveal that when personal branding becomes normative, journalism itself starts to change. As the institutional dynamics that once maintained the field erode, the practice itself shifts. The pathways to success are

different and the way the job is performed has drastically changed. While autonomy has different definitions, there are important considerations that journalists themselves expressed when considering their journalistic autonomy. The reliance on established networks means that journalists are not institutionally employed but they are still heavily reliant on those relationships and networks over time. Journalists reported fears of being pigeon-holed and difficulties breaking stories (in a paid capacity), which they felt undermined their autonomy in some respects.

While barriers to entry are much lower now in journalism than they were in the past, barriers to success appear to be much higher, at least according to the participants that were interviewed. The amount of time that needs to be spent on social media not only brand building and garnering an audience but engaging with your audience and making connections with editors means that the layers of unpaid labour that amass in addition to paid work are akin to a full-time job (or more). Emerging journalists in the current moment are engaged in what has been called hope or aspirational labour (Corrigan, 2013) and more importantly visibility labour. The dynamics of professionalization for the emerging journalists that were interviewed were often complex and contradictory, especially because many are still relying on news organizations for work without the benefits of being a standard employee.

Every journalist interviewed, whether they had developed a 'successful' brand or not, perceived pressures to brand themselves and further felt that they should be

developing an online brand through social media, primarily Twitter. Journalists felt that brand building had a bearing on their professional and economic success. This does not mean that these pressures were uncritically accepted or that people necessarily know how to build a brand or have the time to devote to 'doing it well'. However, there were some patterns that emerged when it came to what were considered to be vital elements of a successful brand. The development of a niche was one element, consistency of voice, an engaged audience (qualitative over quantitative- but hopefully both), recognition by powerful influencers (journalists and editors), being opinionated, and 'becoming the news' were all recurring themes in the interviews. These elements reveal just how much work it is to develop a successful brand and how delicate this space is to navigate. Not only is it an immense amount of work, but if you cross a line, an opinion is taken out of context, or you anger the wrong influencer, it might have serious repercussions.

Andrejevic (2009) argues that digital labour, and what this researcher characterizes as visibility labour, is given freely and with a sense of autonomy, making it unsurprising that emerging journalists reported being autonomous despite having limited pathways to success. This also relates to the blending of leisure and work time, making this work (at times) both pleasurable and self-exploitation (Neff, 2012).

One thing that became clear was that being successfully branded, having an established network and social media following did not always translate to economic

success. These were the exceptions not the rule. Although having this following did ensure that one would at least have the chance to pitch. Journalists, just like media organizations are increasingly straddled between two worlds; survival and doing journalism that doesn't always 'pay'.

It is vital when assessing journalistic autonomy that there is an accounting of the ways in which structure and agency interact to produce particular social realities. McGuigan's (2017) productive capacity is a useful tool for understanding what is possible given the current configuration of the media industry in Canada and internationally. Indeed, the journalist who expressed having the most 'autonomy' in this research was the journalist who has the largest social media following. They indicated that they do not think about or try to 'be employable' for particular organizations, they feel free to push back when their stories are being edited or they perceive there is economic influence coming into play, they are able to make a living from being a freelancer and they do not rely on corporate PR work to fill in the gaps. Perhaps this is ideal, in the sense that their following is so large that their power in the media economy in Canada is big enough that they have a platform and an audience that they will bring with them wherever they go. However, journalists should not have to reach such a large level of notoriety to be successful or autonomous. Having a large following does not necessarily mean that one is a good journalist or able to produce good journalism. As Sternberg (2001) argues, the culture of promotionalism tends to render

notoriety more important than other skill sets. Further, the amount of unpaid labour that is necessary to build a successful brand online is almost insurmountable. The countless hours of establishing connections with editors and other journalists, engaging with your audience, and coming up with constant content; all of this is work in the sense that it pertains to one's employability as a journalist. It is not reasonable that all journalists will be able to do this and it is not necessarily a good idea that they do.

Social media following as a metric of success for individual journalists and brands can be problematic because it may skew towards favouring 'hot take' journalism and personality journalism rather than hard news reporting or investigative journalism. The creation of celebrity journalists in the past has, in some respects, stemmed from powerful investigative reporting. However, with the news industry searching for sustainable business models as layoffs abound, to what extent are emerging journalists being catapulted into fame by their investigative reporting when the budgets for investigative journalism are dwindling? Rather, journalists are using the platforms at their disposal to not only report the news, comment on the news, but to also become the news in the sense that the journalist may be or become more important than what they are reporting. When the platform by which you build your brand gives you 140 characters, coming up with content that is shareable, and clickable is the name of the game. This should not be surprising given that the institutions that journalists rely on for work are also reliant on social media for dwindling advertising dollars. News media

organizations are reliant on the structures and limitations of social networking sites to build their brands and get their content to audiences and the sense is that journalists are increasingly doing the same. Only those at the highest level (with the largest followings) and active audiences were able to pursue investigative pieces more readily in a paid capacity. Part of the reason is that to get access to the publications that pay well for these types of pieces (the dollar a word publications) one has to build their reputation and weather the storm of being an 'emerging journalist'.

Emerging journalists should not have to be pursuing fame to have a paying and sustainable career in journalism. Under post-Fordism, the cult of celebrity of the entertainment industries is becoming commonplace and bleeding into professions like journalism that have imperatives beyond entertaining. While in the past, all employers had was a journalist's past work, now they have social media profiles where they can gauge the potential returns of their investment. However, this is not necessarily an ideal measure of 'good journalism'. While personal branding can indeed lead to the elevation of socially progressive stories and people (Banet-Weiser, 2013), including underexplored topics and groups in society as evidenced by some of the journalists interviewed for this research, there is the question of how long a certain journalist's public persona and voice will be hitting the right notes with audiences. As Lazzarato (1996) argues of immaterial labour, it is constituted by subjectivity and the constant production and reproduction of the self through consumption and marked by

communicative capacity. Celebrities often do not stay in the spotlight forever, and a journalist's job should not be to be in the spotlight, but to put stories in the spotlight.

CONCLUSION

This chapter built on the preceding context, education and industry chapters to situate emerging journalists within a particular set of social and economic conditions that impacted their professionalization practices, with particular attention to the deployment of personal branding and impression management on social networking sites. The complex and contradictory processes of combining personal branding and journalism were outlined as well as the autonomy that individualized branding engenders. The layers of unpaid labour that are amassing in the field of journalism to simply enter into the field are making success in the field only accessible to some who are able to invest the time (which may not pay off) to working towards a level of recognition and continuous work. Importantly this raises questions about the types of stories that might never get told when there are class barriers to entering into the field. This also raises questions about investigative public interest journalism that may not 'pay off'.

The concluding chapter will consider some of the policy challenges and opportunities for journalism education, the news media industry in Canada and for journalists themselves who are attempting to break into the field. It will further reflect on the challenges to conducting this research and opportunities for future research.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

The previous three findings chapters have examined the challenges that arise for journalism educators in teaching their students to work in an industry where the traditional journalism jobs do not exist, the institutional dynamics and hiring expectations within news media organizations in an industry where the traditional business model has been significantly disrupted and social media platforms are now prominent distribution channels, and the experiences of journalist's who must navigate the terrain of precarious work in journalism by engaging in visibility labour on the very social networking platforms that have disrupted the industry. This chapter will present a brief of the research study, highlight some of the major findings, and consider policy responses for industry, educational institutions and for emerging journalists.

Research Summary

This research sought to understand the institutional forces that are currently shaping the media environment in Canada, including the increasing precarious nature of journalism work, the decline of the advertising revenue model that typically sustained journalism in the past and an increased reliance on social networking platforms to deliver news content to audiences. There had been some Canadian research that suggested that personal branding was becoming commonplace for

journalists, but this was the first study that aimed to understand the dynamics of personal branding amongst emerging journalists.

In order to understand the dynamics of personal branding and journalistic autonomy in the new media environment, this dissertation sought to evaluate both the macro and micro level dimensions of this context in order to strike a proper balance between structure and agency.

This study was comprised of three components; the theoretical framework being the critical political economy of communications, the synthesizing of 3 bodies of literature that helped to frame the research questions and the empirical research that took the form of semi-structured qualitative interviews with emerging journalists, journalism educators, and editors at news media organizations.

Given the vast changes to the news business that this project has detailed, the researcher chose a theoretical approach that looked at structures and institutions and how they are producing a particular environment for journalists. CPE's commitment to understanding history, to moral philosophy, to understanding the social totality and to praxis provides a frame for interpreting how broader economic structures, and influences, including capitalism itself, can constrain labour relations and the very capacities of the news media industry.

It would be remiss to discount the evidence that structural forces are influencing the hyper commercialism in the media and that a decaying media business surely

constrains individuals and the agency that they have. That being said, it is important to understand how individuals navigate through these structural constraints to understand the cracks and fissures that might exist in a given structural arrangement, which was explored through interviews with individual actors.

Beyond the theoretical frame, three bodies of literature were important for constructing the research questions of this study. Literature on journalistic identity helped to situate how the norms, values, professionalization and practices of 'doing' journalism are changing in digital environment. Literature on branding helped to situate that while personal branding in journalism is not new; the old infrastructures that allowed the development of brands through paid, standard employment are dwindling. Individuated, personal branding as a strategy for resisting precarity in a broken industry is relatively new. While the literature argues that branding can emancipate individuals, it also often subjects them to processes of commodification- with the increasing encroachment of the values of the entertainment industry into the news world. And finally, the notion that personal branding happens online is why it was vital to incorporate the literature on digital labour, as I argue that personal branding is work even though it defies a traditional wage-labour relationship.

The interviews themselves help to navigate between structure and agency by investigating the micro dimensions of this context through through qualitative, semi-structured interviews. In depth interviews helped to contextualize how emerging

journalists are negotiating their professionalization and the new expectations of personal branding, including perceived control and autonomy they have over their work. While journalists were the main focus, it was also necessary to understand the other moving parts of the industry. Not only was it important to understand how journalists are navigating this uncertain environment but also: how are educators adapting to this new environment? How are they training journalists to work in an uncertain environment? How are media organizations adapting? What are news editors looking for when they hire journalists? These questions gave a better understanding of the world in which emerging journalists are living and navigating. Ultimately, each set of interviews aims to understand if structural forces are constraining educators, editors, and journalists.

In terms of the main findings that came out of this study, it was found that personal branding is becoming essential for emerging journalists to obtain paid employment. There was a consensus from editors, educators and journalists. While this does not guarantee employment, it is an expectation. Despite journalism educators cautioning their students to be unbiased in their personal branding, there is an expectation from editors, that journalists are aware of, that being opinionated and blending personality with journalism is key to being successful in this environment. Journalists are engaged in processes of self-commodification as they strive for the notoriety and quantitative validation that becomes the measure of success when it

comes to personal branding. It was also found that one must have the right kind of following, measured both quantitatively and qualitatively. It was expressed by editors that having a quality audience that is engaged is extremely important as that is what is being leveraged when selling one's personal brand. It was also found that having a niche area of expertise is vital to developing a successful brand, as expressed by editors, educators and journalists. Another finding was that personal branding requires a great deal of visibility labour, which is labour that is necessary to build a network, gain notoriety from powerful others (established journalists and editors) and ultimately leverage that into paid employment opportunities. At the same time, there is a certain fragility when it comes to personal branding. There are fears expressed by journalists that they are one wrong tweet away from ruining their career and this fear was confirmed by editors at news organizations. One can be opinionated but there is a line that both cannot be crossed and is ill-defined.

It was found that autonomy is complex when not working in standard employment for a single institution. Journalists reported having more freedoms in some respects (to pass up work, to take vacations when they wish), and constraints in others (free to make no money, little control over conditions of work). Autonomy was understood in most cases by respondents as personal responsibility, reflecting a very neo-liberal interpretation of autonomy. While the researcher argues that autonomy is

constrained by the current conditions, given that the operational definition used for this project defined it as: freedom from economic influence, and control over one's work and working conditions; there are opportunities for agency that stem from this environment. Journalists express that they feel empowered by being able to work outside of traditional employment and there is the sense that they have the power to change, even if minimally, how journalism is done. Some journalists reported being able to tell stories and develop beats that they feel are being underreported on in the mainstream media.

At the same time, the journalism and PR fields are blending to some degree because of economic necessity where journalists work as part-time journalists and part-time PR professionals. Journalistic values are becoming more fluid and there is a sense that breaking the wall between business and editorial is negotiable given the collapsed business model for news. News organizations are at the mercy of the changing algorithms of social networking platforms in order to reach their audiences and are heavily engaged in metrics, sponsored content and native advertising. News organizations, like journalists, are engaged in a dual model of journalism. They are engaged in forms of commodified (and sometimes "clickbait") journalism so that they may fund the "real" news that matters, reflecting a certain race to the bottom. Educators, editors, and journalists struggle to find consensus and draw the line

between business obligations and journalistic obligations and the integrity of public service journalism is at risk as a result.

Critical Political Economy of Communications

Critical political economy (CPE) of communications, as the theoretical framework that has guided this research, has enabled the researcher to decenter the object of study, namely the impact of the introduction of social networking technologies into both media production and dissemination as well as into the lives of journalists who use these technologies for professionalization.

As the ad business model for journalism collapses, so do the strategies for succeeding within the system. Training and educating journalists to work in this context has become more complex as a result. It is apparent that we are living in the era of what may be considered post-industrial journalism. The news media ecosystem that exists is ever more rationalized, trying to do more with less, and making every attempt to outsource aspects of production. The gutting of local newsrooms in conjunction with the regionalization and nationalization of content production to save on costs, is one aspect of this post-industrialization. Another aspect is the outsourcing of labour to precariously employed freelancers and citizen journalism.

The collapse of the old system and the reliance on 'just in time labour', has made it so there is more onus on individual journalists to develop personal brands to

market themselves. Individuated personal branding has become a strategy for resisting precarity in a broken system. Importantly, trends in journalistic labour are reflective of broader developments in a neo-liberal economy where non-standard employment working conditions are becoming more common (often referred to as the 'gig economy'). Individuated personal branding has implications for autonomy because emerging journalists are autonomous in the sense that, devoid of ample opportunities for institutional employment, they are individually responsible for their successes and failures and must chart different paths to success. As Cohen (2015) argues, the ideal neoliberal worker is flexible, adaptable, mobile, and blurs the lines between productive and leisure time. The blurred lines that these circumstances create may account for why journalists conceived of autonomy much differently than the researcher did. The economic determinism that the CPE framework is often criticized for became apparent in holding the researcher's hypothesis up against the responses from emerging journalists. The reduction of the new professionalization conditions to economics and processes of commodification obscured just how complicated and blurred the lines are between productive and leisure time, and how the freedoms that accompany non-standard employment present a trade-off of sorts for those navigating within that system.

What is left from the old system is the concept of personal branding, 'beats', or niche areas of expertise that can set someone apart from other journalists. However,

unlike the old system where beats were relatively stable categories and were associated with standard employment working conditions, media institutions have now offloaded the risk of developing beats to freelancers. The normalization of personal branding online for emerging journalists as a strategy for professionalization means that news organizations need not absorb the risk of institutionalizing particular beats. They can instead rely on freelance actors external to their organization who have built an online following surrounding a particular beat. This context allows organizations to more easily shift their priorities, to be at the mercy of shifting public interest, and the changing monetary interests of the organization. If certain beats are no longer trending, organizations can move on to the next hot topic that is peaking the interests of audiences.

The idea of being at the behest of shifting public interest was not lost on some of the journalists interviewed for this study. The rewards for building a successful personal brand as a journalist can be quite high, but the journey to get there may be long and the risks may also be high. There is never a guaranteed 'payoff' nor is there a guarantee that the beat that you have built your brand around will stay relevant. Emerging journalists must be entrepreneurial; they must be willing to adapt, to constantly start over and reinvent themselves as the priorities of audiences change. There is a certain fragility with the development of personal brands online that shifts the unpredictability of the industry on to individuals.

Journalistic Autonomy

One of the main focal points of this research was to navigate between structural forces that are shaping the news industry and the agency of individual journalists to understand how shifting professionalization practices for emerging journalists has a bearing on journalistic autonomy in the current moment. While the researcher made an assumption that the current climate was not conducive to journalistic autonomy, the responses from emerging journalists indicated that this context is much more nuanced than the initial hypothesis accounted for. Part of the reason for this was because the researcher's operational definition of autonomy was not the way autonomy was understood by emerging journalists. The question of journalistic autonomy and its relationship to the creation of quality journalism was complicated by the expanded definition of what journalism 'is' from the perspectives of several respondents.

Many respondents conceived of their autonomy by celebrating the processes of commodification they embark on as journalists because of the freedom they have from institutional employment and the freedom that it gives them in their work (i.e. do not have to take any job) and in their lives (can take vacations when they want). Some journalists expressed that the traditional assumption that economic influence should be separated from journalistic production is outdated and no longer reasonable. For those espousing this view, communicative content that commands a price can be conceived of as 'journalism'. These articulations of autonomy are very neoliberal in that they

present an emphasis on personal responsibility (Ursell, 2000; Rose, 1999) rather than structural forces for lack of opportunities and success. Rendering journalism profitable is one of the ways that emerging journalists negotiate their autonomy in the current moment.

Autonomy was further complicated by the ways in which some journalists expressed how their freelance employment status allowed them to be activists and advocates, something that they perceived would not be allowed if they were employed in house at a news media organization. In many ways, their lack of institutional employment is allowing for an expansion of what journalism is in the other direction. This understanding of autonomy was surprising given the assumption made by the researcher that autonomy was constrained and commodified with the normalization of personal branding online. However, Banet-Weiser's (2013) concept of ambivalence well accounts for the tension between processes of commodification and authenticity that individuals experience when participating in personal branding, which makes it difficult to conceive of branding as exploitative. When journalists celebrate their ability to advocate and to express their authentic views on a given subject, authenticity becomes another compounding factor that complicates conceiving of unpaid labour as work because one is just 'being themselves' online. Personal brands can be measured, counted and quantified; resulting in a quantification of the self. It stands to reason that participants reported not feeling alienated by their conditions because having the

ability to be authentic, and to advocate on subjects that are important to them, further blurs the distinction between leisure and work time.

The digital news editors interviewed for this research were not pushing for advocacy per se, but they did indicate that their organizations were moving away from norms of objectivity and assuming that there are two sides to every story. Their organizations were not afraid to take stances on subjects like gay marriage or climate change and admitted that they were looking for opinionated journalists. News organizations are also welcoming authenticity by encouraging opinionated journalism and journalists. Giving more of one's personal self into one's work may allow journalists to more readily accept the conditions under which they work, even though they may be exploitative.

While almost every journalist expressed that their ideal work would be freelance, there are elements of both freedom and control in this context. For one, it is clear that conditions for success are being shaped by the reliance on social media platforms for professionalization. There are freedoms that come with this but also constraints as it is difficult to 'opt out' of social media platforms and still pursue this career path. Journalists feel they have autonomy in some respects but also admit that it is tenuous in others. For example, emerging journalists expressed that not only do they have the freedom to divert from old norms of objectivity that they were taught about in journalism school but that opinionated journalists online get more followers and draw

in the audience more. This sentiment was echoed in the responses from digital news editors. However, both editors and journalists point to the delicate space one must navigate when engaging in the hot take economy. If you have the wrong take or express an unfavourable opinion, you might have to, as one journalist puts it, “delete your Twitter and leave the earth forever” (Emerging journalist, 2017). While the move away from norms of objectivity is not necessarily a bad thing, journalists are in precarious positions in relation to brands they develop. It is also important to note that the blending of personality and journalism inevitably leads to a blurring of leisure and work time. This blurring further renders the labour involved in professionalization as invisible.

For the few who understood their own journalistic autonomy as the ability to pursue journalism that is free from freedom from economic, editorial, and corporate control, they had very large online followings and a great deal of inbound work. This autonomy was not achieved overnight. The path to achieving this type of autonomy is a long one that requires a great deal of unpaid labour through achieving recognition and approval from powerful others (journalists and editors) and personal branding. In all the different ways that autonomy has been understood; it is clear that the perceived requirement for journalists to brand themselves and build audiences on social media platforms to resist precarity is impacting quality journalism. The neoliberal conceptions of autonomy speak to personal freedoms, but this research wishes to critically analyze

the processes of self-commodification that encourage creating content that is clickable and shareable. This is becoming a large part of brand building and gaining recognition and this research argues that this is having an impact on quality journalism.

The New Paths to Success: Personal Branding

Ultimately the pathways to success for emerging journalists look much different in the new media environment than they did in the past. According to editors, journalism school is not only unnecessary, but in some cases, may count against prospective candidates given the perception that journalism schools are out of date and behind the times with respects to how journalism is produced in the current moment. This means that there are not educational barriers to pursuing this career path.

Scholars have focused on the expanded opportunities that digital platforms have afforded individuals (Shirky, 2008; Tapscott and Williams, 2007; Jenkins, 2006) and indeed individuals have free access to the platforms that enable journalism production and distribution. Without educational barriers and with access to the platforms necessary for professionalization, it may appear that the barriers to success are much lower. However, in a professional development context, the use of these platforms for personal branding is unpaid work and there are no guarantees that it will pay off.

Emerging journalists maintained that developing a successful brand required many different elements: a niche area of expertise, a consistent voice, a strong audience and social media following that is engaged in the content you put out, being opinionated, and having 'hot takes'. News media editors confirmed the importance of possessing many of these entrepreneurial skills including personal branding, developing a niche and an online following, and being opinionated on social media (with the exception of the public broadcaster). There is a sense that journalists are required to have something that sets them apart and makes them special, including the ability to draw in the audience using the social media platforms that news organizations rely on for distribution. The development of a 'successful' brand in this respect requires a considerable amount of unpaid labour and self-promotion. These are not the same skills that used to be required to do journalism. As well, there are considerable barriers to being able to pursue indefinite unpaid work online.

The star system used to put journalists in the spotlight for reporting on important stories that were in the public interest. A journalist's job used to be to put stories in the spotlight. Now, increasingly, a journalist's job is to be in the spotlight, to build an audience around themselves. Being in the spotlight as a journalist means that to get work you must have already built an audience around yourself. Journalists then draw the audience in because of their attachment to the story, making it important. This is a clear shift in the pathway to success. Emerging journalists do not have the

resources of a news media organization, nor do they have standard employment that may allow them to chase a story and produce their best work without wondering where their next paycheck is coming from. Instead, journalists must take the risk, engage in unpaid, visibility labour and hope that the right people notice them and engage with their content.

Between Two Worlds

News media organizations and journalists are increasingly straddling two worlds; survival and doing journalism that doesn't always pay off. With the decline of the advertising model and lots of online competition, there are pressures to treat every article as the 'front page' of the newspaper in order to draw audiences in. While editors (like educators) claim that the goal is to be able to create journalism that both serves the public in meaningful ways and is good for business, there is an admittance by editors that this does not always happen. There are, however, less expensive (less labour intensive) ways to draw the audience in and get hits on a news site. There are imperatives to produce 'churnalism', puff pieces and tweetalism (reporting tweets); which are not necessarily contextualized or 'good' journalism but they get page hits.

The reality is that the influence of social media platforms is shaping journalism as news organizations are heavily reliant on these platforms for content distribution. They offer incentives for particular types of content such as live video (Bell and Owen, 2007). Consequently, there are punishments to not adhering to their algorithmic preferences.

While social networking companies are coming around to this realization, particularly with concerns about Russian interference in the U.S. election by the circulation of “fake news”, there is a larger issue at play. Social networking sites prioritize low quality content over high quality content. This system favours shareability and scale when it comes to content, not content that might be important for citizens to see such as civic journalism. This does not mean that news organizations are not creating this content too, but rather that they are engaged in a model where commodified ‘churnalism’ is pursued so that they are able to pursue the public interest pieces.

Similarly, many journalists are divided between producing journalism that doesn’t always pay and doing promotional PR work that does. For some, PR and journalism are bleeding into one another. For others, doing corporate PR work gives them the freedom to pursue journalism when they otherwise would not be able to. In either case, the lack of sustainable job opportunities in journalism means that the fields are exchanging workers because the skills required to do journalism are aligning with the skills that are required to do public relations. Workers are doing both because PR and branding work pays well, and journalism does not.

The new media environment for journalism has enabled significant changes to how news is produced and how journalists must professionalize in the absence of standard employment working conditions. This chapter will now focus on critically examining potential policy changes at the industry, education and professional levels

that aim at moving away from the need for journalists to engage in processes of self-promotion and commodification to succeed in the industry. Part of resisting these trends is attempting to create a more viable news industry in Canada.

Industry

This research has demonstrated that the current productive capacities of the news media industries have been constrained by current business models while ultimately providing little space where individuals do not have to commodify themselves or embark on a great deal of unpaid labour to achieve 'success'. News media organizations have become increasingly beholden to tech giants, their algorithms, and preferred methods of content delivery. At the same time, these same companies, especially Facebook and Google, have garnered a majority of the market for digital advertising in Canada (72%), without contributing to the Canadian system through either taxation or investment in news production. Canadian journalism has suffered greatly, and many local news outlets have been shuttered. Mark Zuckerberg (Kosoff, 2018) recognizes that Facebook has posed very real challenges to democracy with its historically 'hands off' approach to editorial, but what remains to be seen is how moving into the editorial space will fare for Canadian journalism. For example, Facebook recently announced that only 4 news outlets in Canada would have the ability to declare news as 'breaking' on the platform; City News, Global News, CBC

News and Le Journal de Montréal (Rhyu, 2018). There are certainly challenges to Facebook deciding what news organizations get to be elevated by their algorithms.

The Canadian government has exhibited an unwillingness or failure to act on subjecting foreign e-commerce companies to taxation, despite the significant revenue streams it would produce. The suggestion that online digital news aggregators like Facebook and Google be subject to the same tax obligations as Canadian companies should not be controversial as they are currently operating businesses in Canada. Making Media Public in partnership with the Communications Policy Working Group (2016) made this recommendation as part of the “Canadian Content in a Digital World” consultations and many others have called on the Canadian government to level the playing field.

The prospect of updating taxation policies is particularly important given foreign owned media companies’ share of online digital advertising revenue but also because digital media companies should not be treated as exceptional. Despite these proposals, there seems to be a resistance to doing so and instead what we are getting is public/private partnership deals with foreign owned tech companies that pay lip service to investing and growing the Canadian industry, but ultimately do not do enough to contribute to its sustainability or viability.

As part of the Creative Canada Consultations or “Canadian Content in a Digital World”, led by the Canadian Minister of Heritage in 2016, there were calls for a \$350

million bailout for newspapers. However, the Creative Canada (2017) framework included no new government investment in journalism. The policy document suggested that the Canadian Periodical Fund (CPF) would not be expanded but the selection criteria would be expanded to be more “platform agnostic” so that “digital only” news organizations would also be able to qualify. This decision also announced partnerships with both Google and Facebook.

Facebook will launch a partnership with the DMZ at Ryerson University and the Ryerson School of Journalism at FCAD to create a digital news incubator – the first of its kind in Canada – with participants receiving start-up funding from Facebook, mentorship and research support from the Ryerson School of Journalism, and a residency at the DMZ” (Creative Canada Policy Framework,2017).

This partnership will provide seed funding of \$100,000 to 5 startups and a \$50,000 Facebook marketing budget while prioritizing pitches that are “tackling a compelling problem within the Canadian digital news and journalism landscape” (Saleh, 2017). It remains to be seen exactly how much influence Facebook will have over the selection of successful applicants or through their “mentorship”.

There are several things to be skeptical about with this partnership. First of all, it is a very small amount of money, considering that Facebook and Google share 72% of Canada’s \$5.5-billion digital advertising market (Winseck, 2017) and yet pay no taxes on it. This partnership is treated as part of an innovative digital strategy but really does not deal with the need for broader sweeping policy measures that render

journalism sustainable in Canada. The Creative Canada Policy Framework (2017) claims that there was support from the consultations to have companies like Google, Apple, Amazon and Facebook contribute to the Canadian system, however, in the absence of a 'consensus' on the best approach, we are left with these partnerships that will not solve the industry's problems. The lack of transparency on how this program will be carried out, particularly with respects to Facebook's role in decision-making is quite troublesome. Given that growing platform concentration appears to be one of the very problems journalism needs to 'solve', there are very obvious contradictions with being reliant on Facebook's (potentially one-time) charity payment where they may not be at arm's length when it comes to decision making. This partnership obfuscates the need for a broader digital strategy that requires these companies to contribute to the Canadian system but at an arm's length. If journalism's innovation is increasingly directly reliant on concentrated platform companies, the question remains whether the companies who are providing the seed money for the party will be held to account. Can Ryerson's journalism school really afford to sour their relationship with Facebook? Can the University? The Internet is increasingly controlled by a few companies and unless there is a strategy in Canada and internationally to curb some of their power, the disrupted industries that have been impacted will face difficulties.

The prospect of taxing these companies could be extremely significant for reinvesting on the ground in new journalism ventures that do not have the need to straddle the digital/print space and can work towards new business models that sustain journalism rather than degrading it to the lowest common denominator. This revenue could establish an independent journalism fund that ensures local journalism and public interest journalism remain priorities.

Paying for the News?

Journalism seems to embody a particular place in the media economy. It is recognized that journalism is important for democracy and that it must continue to exist/thrive. It is also assumed that it will always be there. Audiences are willing to pay \$9.99/month for Netflix and Spotify, but will they pay for the news? This question is extremely important going forward as news organizations attempt to stay afloat through troubling times.

The general decline of the advertising model for journalism highlights how journalism has never been wholly paid for as a service. It has always been a subsidized industry through advertising or public funding. In the US, there are a considerable number of foundations like ProPublica that fund journalism not for profits. The same trends have not occurred in Canada. While pay-per revenue has surpassed ad revenue

by a ratio of 5:1 in 2016 (Winseck, 2017), the question remains whether this model could work for journalism.

There is not good reason to believe that advertising dollars are going to return to previous levels and there is no evidence to believe that tech giants will not continue to siphon the digital ad revenue that is left. In this scenario, there needs to be a better model. Instead of pursuing clickbait, sensationalized, journalism to fund the 'real news', perhaps organizations should take a new approach.

While the bailout for the news industry that was proposed by the Public Policy Forum (2017) was not a part of Heritage Minister Joly's "Creative Canada Framework", the Government of Canada's 2018 budget, indicates there will be a bailout after all, albeit much less than what was recommended (by PPF and the Heritage Committee). The government has proposed that the money be spent to ensure local journalism stays alive, given the drastic closures of 225 weekly and 27 daily newspapers since 2010 (Public Policy Forum, 2017).

To ensure trusted, local perspectives as well as accountability in local communities, the Government proposes to provide \$50 million over five years, starting in 2018–19, to one or more independent non-governmental organizations that will support local journalism in underserved communities. The organizations will have full responsibility to administer the funds, respecting the independence of the press. 184 Chapter 4 Further, consistent with the advice laid out in the Public Policy Forum's report on news in the digital age, over the next year the Government will be exploring new models that enable private giving and philanthropic support for trusted, professional, non-profit journalism and local news. This could include new ways for Canadian newspapers to innovate and be recognized to receive charitable status for not-for-profit

provision of journalism, reflecting the public interest that they serve (Budget 2018, 183-184)

The question of how local journalism or underserved communities will be defined given the overall gutting of newsrooms throughout the country remains to be seen. This bailout is a band-aid solution at best for the industry. Though the funds will be administered by independent organizations, it remains to be seen whether the funds will flow to newspapers or to digital news organizations or some combination of the two. It is not clear whether the funds will be devoted to “innovation” or tied to journalism jobs. It is important that this funding be tied to labour as the deficit of labour is declining the quality of journalism and the ability of news organizations to fulfill their role in society. This funding could also be tied to particular ‘beats’ that are typically under reported on in the media, such as climate change.

The prospect of giving news organizations that are not-for-profit, charitable status, is an important step and news organizations should be striving towards this model. When the imperative is profit, rather than providing a quality news product, the two may only coincide occasionally rather than being an organization’s *raison d’être*. Perhaps instead of doubling down on trying to improve their ‘audience selling’ game, as all of Canada’s major newspapers are doing, there should be better innovation that searches for alternatives to intensifying the commodifying of the audience to fund the news. The potential for charitable status also allows for more exploration of the

foundation models that have been fueling American news media organizations and research institutes that are committed to producing quality, impactful, journalism.

Crowd funding models have worked to some degree in Canada with organizations like CANADALAND and Discourse Media but there is also a considerable amount of unpaid labour that goes into crowd funding (Hunter, 2017). The prospect of pay-per models has also been discussed, however there may be challenges to these as well. Blendle, a Dutch startup, aggregates news from media companies with paywalls and allows users to pay micro amounts to read single articles without any advertisements, even allowing users to get their money back if they are not satisfied. However, the company that began in the Netherlands had to branch out to the US (and incorporate US publications) in search of profitability, beyond such a small market in the Netherlands (Popper, 2016). Canada too has a small market. The prospect of people being required to pay for good journalism also raises questions about information inequality. There is certainly a growing need for the public to recognize the cost and importance of independent journalism, and there needs to be a cultural shift surrounding the assumption that journalism is free. Pay-per journalism can be beneficial in this respect, but it may cater the news to those that can pay for it, which begs the question about what stories are being left out. To this end, there is certainly a need to bolster independent journalism that is separate from the CBC, but that works with the public broadcaster as collaborators rather than competitors in the news business.

Education

There appear to be several aspects of post-secondary journalism education in Canada that need to be reworked. However, teaching journalists to be entrepreneurs and to render journalism profitable should not be the imperative of journalism educators, nor the direction they should be working towards. Most journalists are not in a position to start a company post-graduation and the ones that work for themselves are struggling. This doesn't mean that there should not be a focus on teaching students to navigate the working conditions that they will actually face when they enter the industry or providing them with basic skills of survival. This also does not mean simply molding students to work in the industry. The reality right now is that journalists are not leaving journalism school and walking into standard employment journalism jobs. Many are working on a contractual basis and/or are freelancing. Journalism students need to understand the history of journalism and its institutional dynamics to be able to navigate the industry as practitioners. There also needs to be more of a focus on how the industry ought to be developing so that journalists can be actors in the development of it.

In the field of journalism, the technologies that are used in the field may constantly change so perhaps it is not the best use of time to focus on developing those skills. For most participants in this study, the technical skills they have acquired

have been on the job and mostly self-taught. There appears to be a need to better teach as well as critique strategies for survival in the current moment. Journalism educators should teach about branding, but not uncritically. The ethics of branding should be discussed in depth including discussions of the risks and rewards and the labour that is involved. Given that a great deal of the brand work that emerging journalists in this study described was gaining reputation with powerful others such as editors and other high-profile journalists, it stands to reason that journalism schools could be better fostering those connections in their programs.

At the level of journalism education, the values that have defined journalism historically still matter greatly. As the field struggles to redefine itself, it is vital to draw the line between what journalism is and what it is not. Specifically, the line between public relations and journalism must be clear. If the goal for solving journalism's problems is profitability, the lines between sponsored content, native advertising and journalism will continue to blur. The idea that journalism schools should be trying to come up with ideas to solve journalism's problems sounds promising. However, there is a growing need to invest in business models for journalism that are for not for profit and that dabble into solutions journalism.

Critical Political economy as a moral philosophy has a particular focus on social change. But how can the media advocate for social change when they are constrained by economic necessity to produce clickbait or to entertain more than inform? Further,

how can the media drive social change if they are striving for objectivity? The media landscape has undoubtedly exacerbated the “narcotizing dysfunction” (Katz, 2014), where citizens feel overwhelmed by the news cycle, but also feel powerless to change anything. Whereas the rise of ‘objectivity’ in the media in the 20th century was meant to attract large audiences (Taylor, 2016; McChesney, 2008), and was in many ways a business decision, it really focused more on distributing information rather than analysis. Research has already shown that the introduction of social media use in journalism is not associated with traditional norms of objectivity and scrutiny (Hedman & Djerf-Pierre, 2013) and this is where the news is increasingly being distributed. According to most of the journalist’s interviewed, objectivity is not the goal of their journalistic practice. This is not a bad thing. Objectivity never truly existed, and journalism schools should not teach that it does. However, this does not mean that all we should be left with is opinions on the internet. The move away from norms of objectivity has the potential to privilege quickly produced, decontextualized journalism. Moving away from the norm of objectivity should not mean moving away from good reporting. Solutions journalism enters as a plea for the journalist’s job to be more involved than presenting information. It is very much about evidence-based reporting and understanding the root causes of issues and how certain responses work or do not work. This type of reporting investigates, but also assess ways to move forward rather than simply reporting on an issue and leaving audiences to contemplate

in the comfort of their homes. Solutions journalism is what enables social change. To that end, this should be a major focus for journalism educators and new media startups alike. Ryerson's journalism program has begun focusing on this to some degree. Journalists should strive for objectivity of method but not objectivity in that there can be no advocating for a way forward.

Connected to the move away from objectivity is the need to incorporate opportunities for subject matter expertise development in journalism schools. The intense focus on the craft of journalism detracts from the subject matter expertise that may be helpful (and necessary) to find good stories and having the knowledge to tell them well. There may be some resistance to change from journalism schools and educators because they are interested in maintaining their programs and also growing them. There is also institutional red tape to updating courses and programs because there are restrictions by colleges and universities to doing this in a timely manner. There needs to be more flexibility in this respect to retool journalism programs to better prepare students for life post j-school but also to contribute to creating better journalism.

Journalists

Critical political economists have often focused on the role that journalism ought to play for a functioning democracy to exist and to hold those in positions of power to

account. More attention must be paid to how the precarious state of media work and the expectations for professionalization might hinder those visions from being realized. Deuze (2005) argues that traditional journalistic values including the public service ideal, neutrality, credibility, and autonomy are likely to be challenged by the introduction of social media into the daily lives of journalists. While there were many emerging journalists who articulate that these traditional values are important, there is also evidence that the distinctions between the PR and journalism fields are becoming narrow.

Journalists are being encouraged to adopt a market-oriented identity in their practice. This orientation narrows the aims and capacities of journalists to realize the promise of the role that journalism ought to play in society according to critical political economists. Many of the journalists in this study are in a position financially where they must straddle the line in their professional lives between journalism and PR. There is reason to believe that the more journalists straddle these professions, the more traditional values associated with journalism may slip away.

If journalists must subject themselves to processes of commodification, to build an audience that they can 'sell' for work, then they will always need to give the audience something, to engage with them, to provide content for them to stay relevant. The idea that one can 'opt out' of social media has become increasingly irrational.

In understanding the way individual journalists are 'free' to use social media or that workers have autonomy under neoliberal working conditions, Marcuse's (1982) distinction between "individualistic rationality" and modern "technological rationality" is important for exposing how illusory it is. Individualistic rationality or individualism is described as being based on self-interest and autonomy. Technological rationality, on the other hand, makes self-interest heteronomous (Marcuse, 1982, 146). In other words, what is in one's self interest is determined by things external to themselves. Technological rationality is instrumental; it is motivated towards efficiency and "the apparatus to which the individual is to adjust and adopt himself is so rational that individual protest and liberation appear not only as hopeless but as utterly irrational" (Marcuse, 1982, 145). This theory conceptualizes technology as a dominating force over the individual, where one's autonomy is eradicated not forcefully, but by identifying with the apparatus, fetishism of the technique. It is precisely this fetishization of technique that allows one to have the illusion of freedom in deciding to participate in/engage with new technology. This certainly applies to many emerging journalists interviewed for this study, who felt that the need to brand themselves on social media for professionalization was problematic but that they were powerless to change the rules.

The way forward for journalists is to have sustainable business models for journalism so they do not have to build audiences and sell themselves to enter the industry. Journalists should not have to become personalities with hot takes on a

plethora of issues to build a financially sustainable career. They should not have to be particularly good at creating viral content. The 'culture of the click' and increasing metrics-based approach to news media leads us further in the direction of commodification of information. The creation of new business models and funding for journalism that is tied to labour should detract from the need for journalists to professionalize in this way.

It is important to consider what will happen to the field of journalism in the context of the current organization of journalistic labour. We are certainly seeing more ideas being disseminated and perhaps more 'journalists' than ever, but for those who are trying to establish paid work in the field, for those trying to make it into a sustainable career, the impediments are numerous. When journalists are required to work for free to work, and the industry is rife with logic that one must 'pay their dues', this creates class barriers for who can pursue a career in journalism. The risk involved in this career path may lend itself to those who come from more privileged backgrounds and can 'afford to work for free', who can afford to dedicate the requisite time to working on becoming visible and establishing audiences. This certainly has dire consequences for the type of media that is and has the potential to be produced.

It is important to be critical of the autonomy of creative workers rather than to praise the digital age of collaboration and prosumption as some theorists have done. If these activities are not considered work and freelancers are constantly struggling to

find paid opportunities, this could present real losses to journalism itself as it becomes a less viable career option and livelihood. On the other hand, it is also problematic to deny contradictions and exceptions to the total commodification of creativity. What is clear is that the work of journalism in fulfilling the role of a social good or that of a 'watchdog', cannot be replaced by an army of enthusiastic citizen journalists or aspiring journalists working for free. There needs to be policy interventions to address this environment. Some of the most convincing solutions that have been proposed include a universal basic income or allowing freelance journalists to unionize (Cohen, 2015), which may set the wheels in motion to improve working conditions across the board. These prospects also shift the focus away from being forced to commodify ones' identity and become a Twitter personality to pay your dues. These solutions may even assist with providing journalists with more autonomy to pursue content that resembles a public good rather than a commodity. However, for any of these solutions to be realized, the activities of journalists who brand themselves online, build a following, promote and creating content and embrace the entrepreneurial spirit, needs to be recognized as work, despite its existence outside of typical wage-labour relations and the fact that it may bring some other kind of intrinsic reward.

Reflections and Future Research

Through the course of this research, it was made apparent that there is a considerable lack of data on Canadian's willingness to pay for news as well as their

preferences and habits. Canada does not have a research centre that is dedicated to studying the media comprehensively on a yearly basis, in the way that the Pew Research Center serves that purpose in the U.S. It is apparent that there is a prescient need to establish a research centre in Canada dedicated to conducting larger scale quantitative and qualitative research on the state of the media in Canada.

This includes conducting more research on digital first news organizations and their business models. Having a sense of the business models of these organizations including their major revenue streams is incredibly important to understand the extent to which the breadth of digital first outlets are challenging traditional business models and to what extent audiences are willing to invest in news media.

Another important trajectory for future research is looking at the gendered dimensions of personal branding in journalism. There appear to be many differences in personal branding amongst men and women in journalism, as well as very different risks and rewards associated with having public personas in this realm. While there is some anecdotal evidence from this research that branding is gendered, a comprehensive research study is needed to understand the complexities of these dynamics.

There were at times great difficulties methodologically in finding participants for this research. Finding journalists to interview without being able to offer them monetary incentives felt troublesome, especially when considering that this research

was studying the levels of unpaid labour they must embark on to have a chance of succeeding in this industry. This study could have been improved by not only being larger scale but also being able to offer better incentives for participation.

There were also considerable challenges to finding an editor from a legacy media organization that was willing to be interviewed for this research despite best efforts to provide assurances of anonymity. Over 10 editors were contacted before one agreed to be interviewed and this involved a great deal of convincing and pleading with respects to the public nature of this research and its utility. Whenever a researcher is dealing with interviewing public facing people working for news organizations or a university, there is the difficulty that what is being presented is the PR or institutionally mediated understanding rather than their genuine perspectives.

There were times during this research when tuning into the news all of the time felt numbing. The constant reporting of the daily horrors and injustices in society without meaningful ways forward can feel very paralyzing in such an individualistic society and in such tumultuous political times. However, audiences appear to be becoming more skeptical of clickbait and sensationalized journalism. Perhaps we are reaching a tipping point and that tipping point could be important for news media organizations that are willing to invest in quality journalism that aims to have a real impact. It is difficult to end in despair that things will never change or improve, but

sometimes the system has to collapse in order for it to be rebuilt into something sustainable.

List of Appendices

1.0– Interview Protocol (Educators)

INVESTING IN ONESELF: ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNALISM IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Journalism Education

- 1) What are the biggest changes you have witnessed to journalism education during your time as an educator?
- 2) What is entrepreneurial journalism?
- 3) When did this term come about? When did you first start hearing this term?
 - a) What is entrepreneurial journalism a response to?
- 4) Why are courses that focus on entrepreneurship being adopted in journalism programs?
- 5) Are they being adopted in the program you are affiliated with?
 - 1) 6) What led to the introduction of these types of courses?
- 6) What is/should be taught in a course on entrepreneurial journalism?
- 7) Should journalism graduates/students be building personal brands?
- 8) If so, what is the reason for this?
 - 2) 10) What does building a brand involve?
- 3) 11) Should journalism students/journalists be using social media? If so, what types of social media? Twitter? Facebook? Maintaining a personal blog?
- 4) 12) Has there been a push back at the institutional level to introduce an entrepreneurial model of education?
- 5) 13) If so, why is that?
- 6) 14) How would you describe your institution's approach to journalism education? (ie. more focused on theory, practice, or a combination of the two? – academic or vocational program?)
- 7) 15) What skills are the graduates of your journalism program equipped with?
 - b) Do journalism students need to understand how to download and analyze data?
 - c) Do journalism students know how to code?
 - d) Do journalism students have business skills?
- 8) 16) Do values of entrepreneurship undermine other professional values associated with journalism? (independence, editorial autonomy, freedom from censorship, advertising influence, and market influence→)
- 9) 17) Given that there used to be a separation of journalist and audience, does the severing of this tie pose problems for the field? (ie. does it favour a more market-based approach to journalism production?)
 - a. b) Is there a weakening of public service journalism occurring?
 - b. c) What is public service journalism?

- 10) 18) Is there a struggle to commensurate values of 'good journalism' with entrepreneurship?
- 11) 19) Is there a disconnect between journalism education and journalism practice in the current moment?
- 12) 20) What are the biggest struggles facing journalism educators at the current moment?
- 13) 21) Are there difficulties in preparing curriculum to train journalists to be entrepreneurs and good journalists?
- 14) 22) What should the future of journalism education look like?
- 15) 22) Can entrepreneurial journalism 'save' journalism? OR Is entrepreneurial journalism the key to journalism's survival?

1.1– Interview Protocol (Editors)

INVESTING IN ONESELF: ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNALISM IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Digital Journalism and Making the News

- 1) What is entrepreneurial journalism? Have you heard of this term? What does it mean to you?
- 2) How important is branding to your digital strategy? What does this mean?
- 3) Why would someone go to your organization for their content rather than another new media organization?
- 4) What struggles does your organization face in a digital context? What are the major challenges?
- 5) What biggest changes have you witnessed in the production of news in a digital context?
- 6) Are there pressures to expand the types of content that is covered by your organization?
- 7) Are there pressures to turn out stories quickly?
- 8) Has there been an expansion or change in what constitutes as journalism in the current moment?
- 9) Has the editorial mandate of your organization changed?
- 10) Does your organization use metrics to track the success of stories/content?
- 11) What metrics softwares does your organization use??
- 12) Is there a culture at your organization to measure the success of individual stories?
- 13) Does it matter what story got the most hits one day for example?
- 14) In the face of increasing competition for audiences attentions in the digital age- what are the biggest challenges for your organization?

Journalists: Hiring and Expectations

- 1) Do you primarily employ freelancers, full time journalists or part-time journalists at your organization?
- 2) What do you look for in candidates when hiring journalists?
- 3) What skills do you expect they have? J-school?
- 4) How important is it that the journalists you hire have a strong social media presence? Is it important that candidates have a twitter presence/blog, etc?
- 5) Do journalists you hire have to have a brand? Does it help their chances of being hired?
- 6) If so, how do you measure the 'success' of a brand?
- 7) What types of journalistic brands are you looking for?

- 8) Do your freelancers/journalists have to abide by certain rules for social media use- ie. cannot have opinions, etc ?
- 9) What about full time journalists?

Journalistic Values

- 1) What journalistic values are important to your organization?
- 2) Does objectivity and non-partisanship matter in a digital context?
- 3) What does objectivity mean to your organization?
- 4) What kind of journalistic values do your journalists have to employ?
- 5) Are values of the public service ideal imbedded in your mandate: neutrality, credibility, autonomy, and immediacy?
- 6) Independence, editorial autonomy, freedom from censorship, advertising influence, and market influence)-Is it possible for an organization to hold onto these values in the current moment- was that ever possible?
- 7) Does your organization currently produce sponsored content? Native advertising?
- 8) If no, will that ever happen?
- 9) If so, are there examples of how this has been integrated into your business model? Is there editorial influence?

1.2 – Interview Protocol (Journalists)

INVESTING IN ONESELF: ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNALISM IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Background Questions

- 1) When did you graduate from your journalism program?
- 2) When school did you attend?
- 3) Where do you currently live?
- 4) Do you have another job you are currently working?
- 5) What type of journalism would you like to practice?
- 6) What role do you envision yourself working in?

Finding Work

- 1) What type of work are you looking for? (freelance, self-employed, within an organization, etc.)
- 2) What struggles do you face as an emerging journalist in trying to find paid work?
- 3) Have you been on interviews for paid work in the journalism field?
- 4) Have you ever engaged in unpaid work in your field?
- 5) Have you ever pitched a freelance story to an organization?
- 6) What were the employers looking for in a candidate?
- 7) Did you receive feedback from your interview?

Branding Questions

- 1) Are you currently trying to build a brand as an emerging journalist?
 - a. If not, why not?
- 2) What does it mean to build a brand as an emerging journalist?
- 3) Why do you build a brand?
- 4) Do you use social media to build your brand?
- 5) If so, what types of social media do you use to build your brand?
- 6) If not, do you employ other types of branding? What does that look like?
- 7) What type of brand are you trying to establish?
- 8) Are certain brands easier to develop? Are certain brands more likely to lead to paid work?
- 9) How much time do you spend working on your brand? Daily? Weekly?
- 10) Are you building a brand to work at a particular type of organization? For yourself? Freelance?
- 11) If you are trying to work for a particular organization, does this impact the type of brand you are trying to create?
- 12) How do you know that your brand is succeeding?
- 13) How important is it to engage with your audience?

- 14) How are you able to leverage your following/brand into paid work? Have you successfully leveraged your brand into paid work?
- 15) As you develop your brand do you feel the need to embody the public service ideal, neutrality, credibility, autonomy, and immediacy?
- 16) Do you have control over your work?
- 17) Are you able to stray from your brand?

Journalistic identity and values

- 1) What journalistic values did you learn in journalism school?
- 2) What skills were you taught in journalism school?
- 3) Are there skills you feel you need in the profession that you were not taught in journalism school?
- 4) What values do you bring to your journalistic practice?
- 5) What does it mean to be a journalist in the digital age?
- 6) How are you different from anyone else producing content on the internet?
- 7) What does autonomy as a journalist mean to you?
- 8) What values do you bring in to your journalistic practice?
- 9) How important is the notion of 'objectivity' as an emerging journalist?
- 10) What does 'objectivity' mean?

2.0 – Qualitative Analysis

In utilizing NVivo's qualitative data analysis software I was able to easily calculate how many times a theme emerged and was able to discuss the most significant findings that were common in the responses as well as addressing some of the outlier phenomenon that were not common but were nevertheless noteworthy. Rather than indicating exactly how many respondents reported a particular thing to be true, the researcher utilized words like 'all', 'some', 'many', and 'few' to denote the quantitative significance of the responses. Please reference the chart below to see what this language represents quantitatively.

Words denoting quantitative significance of responses	Quantitative Measure
All	18 respondents
Most	12 + respondents
Many	9-11 respondents
Some	7-9 respondents
Several	4-6 respondents
Few	2-3 respondents
One	One respondent

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