

Leadership Development in College Newsroom Labs: It Is Transactional

Journalism & Mass Communication Educator
2017, Vol. 72(1) 4–23
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DOI: 10.1177/1077695815612323
<http://journals.sagepub.com/home/jmc>



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Abstract

While men ease their ways into positions of authority, the number of women holding top-level leadership positions in media is declining. This study sought to explore how the professional socialization process found in college newsroom labs contributes to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of female leadership development. Mixed methodology results revealed that both, male and female, students were more comfortable using Transactional leadership skills, developed codependent relationships among their peers, and avoided confrontation and strong leadership opportunities. To better prepare women for top-level positions and feeling comfortable with the power it possesses, a restructuring of the pedagogy is warranted.

Keywords

gender, journalism, leadership, education, newsroom, Transactional, classrooms, labs

The story has not changed in decades. Although female students make up the majority of journalism and mass communication majors (66% from the annual survey out of the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication [J&MC] at the University of Georgia), this show of representation is not found in major leadership positions in the professional industry. Women make up less than half of the numbers of newspaper supervisors (35%), TV news directors (31%), radio news directors (23%), and broadcast general managers (18%; Papper, 2014). Globally, men make up 73% of the top management positions in news media (International Women's Media Foundation [IWMF], 2014). This troubling trend has resulted in a call to both, women and men, to

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make a conscious and concerted effort to investigate the reasons and the solutions: the “why” and “what to do next” elements. In the September issue of the *NiemanReports* (Griffin, 2014), Melanie Sill, vice president of content at KPCC public radio in Southern California, stated that in the way of leadership, women are “slipping, as an industry and maybe as a society, back to a place where women didn’t get the same opportunities and didn’t have the same influence.” Anna Griffin asserted that a woman who wants real power should live in Bulgaria. If you want to be a formidable leader in media today, you have to have the “skin of a rhinoceros,” according to Susan Glasser (2014), editor of *Politico*. Findings from previous studies and reports point to long working hours, less pay, the race of the woman, family obligations, sexual harassment, and bias gender performance, or women are simply not being given fair access to opportunities and advancement as the reasons why we do not see more female leaders. I would add that the effectiveness or ineffectiveness to lead is due to a combination of these factors as well as role congruity. Combined, these factors are part of the infrastructure and the professional socialization process that drive and maintain the organized media culture in which females work and perform. This process can be explained through the theory of Symbolic Interactionism in which the “self and the social environment shape each other through communication” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). In her article, “Said and Done” versus “Saying and Doing,” Patricia Yancey Martin (2003) asserted that

men and women socially construct each other at work by means of a two-sided dynamic of gendering practices and practicing of gender . . . this dynamic significantly affects both women’s and men’s work experiences . . . gendering practices produced through interaction impair women workers’ identities and confidence . . . and attention to the practicing of gender will produce insights into how inequalities are created in the workplace. (p 343)

In other words, it is possible to reproduce social relations of inequality within a particular structure such as an American journalism classroom, newsroom, or news lab. For this study and for clarification, a classroom that also serves as a newsroom should be called a “news lab.” An ongoing newsroom that does not use a grading criterion for assessment is called a “newsroom.”

No matter the reasons or reasoning, the important questions are, what can be done and when should it happen? Because “journalism education does little in the analysis of power, this does a disservice to journalists by not equipping them with the tools needed to analyze their role in the media industries” (Macdonald, 2006, p. 756). I agree and would argue that to make real changes in the profession, we must examine and analyze what we are doing in our classrooms and news labs. Joan Acker (1992) argues that the division of labor, issues of reproduction, and the production of commodities underlie the gendered understructure of our society. If its structure is hegemonic, then gender is constructed to “fit in.” What this means is that females working in a hegemonic society may develop a sense of self that is constructed to function within a hegemonic society rather than a construct that is more suitable to the “I”

aspect of self that may be more liberating. This also means that women potentially and realistically face challenges when attempting to develop individual leadership skills that are located *outside* of the traditional gender construction framework.

The general theoretical question this study sought to explore was as follows:

RQ1: Although men and women tend to have similar leadership and personality attributes, how does professional socialization contribute to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of female leadership development?

Are we training, educating, and building leaders who are prepared to challenge the status quo or maintain the status quo? Addressing the gap that exists between college news labs and professional newsrooms, the results of this study offer a snapshot of the dynamics and challenges involved in producing news in educational working environments. A poststructuralist feminist theoretical approach was used to frame, analyze, and understand how masculinity and femininity are constructed in relation to each other and leadership development (Van Zoonen, 2004). Women engaged in practicing gendered roles outside of the newsroom can mimic itself inside of the newsroom. Commonly, women are seen as the matriarchs or “little girls” of the newsroom, and the men are seen as the patriarchs, regardless of position title. This process can be explained through the theory of Symbolic Interactionism in which the “self and the social environment shape each other through communication” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). These theoretical perspectives, along with the socialization processes in general, teach us not only who we are but also who we are to each other, and what roles we are to play in society. In addition, attention paid to the practicing of gender will “produce insights into how inequalities are created in the workplace” (Martin, 2003, p. 343) even on college campuses.

The findings of this study will not only extend the literature on college newsroom cultures and leadership issues, the recorded data will also assist professors in their pedagogical approach to addressing inequalities within the educational sphere. My hope is by addressing the problem earlier, the future of women in leadership positions in the profession will not be as dim as it is today.

Understanding and Defining Transactional Leadership and Gender Performance

In news labs, there are various levels of leadership and “when students are encouraged and expected to assume leadership positions, improvement in their self-confidence and effectiveness as communicators should occur” (Lockheed, Finkelstein, & Harris, 1979; Scott, 1986, p. 246). “It is especially important for girls to have opportunities for leadership as part of the formal curriculum because informally they may experience the secondary status assigned to the female sex role,” according to Kathryn Scott (1986, p. 246). Patricia Yancey Martin (2004) argued that men’s interactions in the workplace bring about gender performances that usually relegate women to a place of

subordination and men to a place of power and domination. This assertion connects with Goffman's argument that the Situated Self in society brings about gender performativity (Charon, 2004). Judith Lorber (2000, 2005) has argued that if we would just eradicate the privileges that divide males and females, then perhaps we could move to an area that challenges gendered institutions. It is a de-gendering of the genders. This study sought to test for representations of these assertions.

The online service of *The Gallup Management Journal* published a question and answer with Robin Gerber (2006), titled, *Why Can't Women Be Leaders Too?* Gerber claims that although women can hold various types of leadership roles from mother to business executive, leadership is somewhat about being at the right place at the right time (Gerber, 2005). For instance, a woman can have effective leadership qualities but not have anywhere to use or develop them. If there was a place where a woman's leadership skills could be utilized (like a college news lab), what would those skills and characteristics be? Findings from previous literature would answer Transactional leadership styles. Women were portrayed as Transactional leaders, and Transactional leadership "represents those exchanges in which both the superior and the subordinate influence one another reciprocally so that each derives something of value" (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987; Yukl, 1981, p. 649). The exchanges can range from vacation days to respect. There is a mutual dependence. This style of leadership supports stereotypical images of women being peacemakers and not wanting to "rock the boat." Interestingly, the Transactional leader does possess a form of control because she has access to commodities that can be used for exchange. However, the *lack* of commodities can weaken the strength of the leader. In society, men are seen more often as Transformational leaders. An individual who uses Transformational leadership styles operates out of his or her personal value system. Burns calls these values *end values* because they cannot be negotiated or exchanged such as justice or integrity. Studying gender performance and construction in a class that produces a daily newscast allowed for an examination and analyses of how a female is *socially* constructed as a leader, including her limitations or probabilities.

A Day at the Office: News Lab Cultures, Hierarchy, and Issues of Power

It is without argument that decision makers in newsroom cultures have the potential of possessing a great deal of autonomy (self-rule). In an attempt to understand autonomy, which is connected to leadership, Liebler (1994) found that "female journalists perceive they have as much autonomy as males while minorities see themselves as having slightly less autonomy" (p. 122), especially minority men. Along the lines of newsroom cultures outside the walls of the professional industry and into the classroom, Lipschultz (1990) asserted that cooperative learning groups such as the ones found in broadcasting classes help students develop positive interdependence, individual accountability, heterogeneous membership, shared leadership, shared responsibility, task emphasis, social skill usage, and instructor observation and intervention. In a timely fashion, Macdonald (2006) conducted a study to assist in answering the question as to what kind of journalism education would better serve the public, especially at a

time when private corporate power and ownership undermines public interest. In addition, technological advancements and the advanced development of the Internet have educators facing a balancing dilemma between public service and convergence. The solutions proposed by Macdonald called for the embracing of a stronger sense of journalism as a profession with strong standards and values. These standards and values include positions and actions of leadership. Supporting a stronger sense of journalism also places college journalists, professors, and practitioners in an advantageous position to compete with other values that undermine the public responsibility of the press found in professional newsrooms, according to Macdonald.

When discussing the important issues of leadership and gender performance, a researcher must also consider how the terms *society* and *socialization* are used and applied in this study. When individuals “interact cooperatively, a society is formed” (Charon, 2004, p. 161). This means interacting, collectively, in a way that not only takes into consideration one’s own motivations and agendas but also the action, motivation, and thoughts of others. “It is through socializing others through [symbolic Interactionism] and symbolic acts that interaction continues over time” (Charon, 2004, p. 160), like in a broadcast journalism lab where students work together to produce a newscast. The socialization process educates an individual on where he or she fits in society and/or a particular culture. For the purpose of this study, the *organized media culture* is the news lab and the *professional socialization process* is the newsgathering and dissemination process involved in producing a newscast.

When we speak of leadership and issues of power in conjunction with organizational behavior, such as the one we find in the location and culture of this milieu, there should also be a discussion of hierarchy. In her article, “Coping With Journalism: Gendered Newsroom Culture,” Margareta Melin-Higgins writes that the journalism newsroom culture can be called a “social field,” borrowing from Pierre Bourdieu. “Journalism, as a social field in Bourdieu’s terms, means that every part of this field embodies meaning, ordered within a hierarchy” (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990, 1991; DeBruin & Ross, 2004, p. 197). The hierarchy is not objective but is actually the result of a symbolic power struggle and social construction, according to Melin-Higgins. Therefore, the emerging leaders of the struggle help define what journalism is, and who they are as journalists within a particular ecosystem.

As the objective of this lab was to produce a newscast each day, the structure and organization of the lab were essential in reaching this goal for logistical reasons. This system comes in the form of seating arrangements of the class as well as speaking orders. In other words, who speaks first by way of a pecking order correlates with the seating arrangements of the class. The professor and student producer sit side by side (Figure 1).

Sitting in the same area as the professor and the student producer are the next set of students who hold positions of importance—the “talent” of the newscast, the main and coanchors. The assistant producer/graphics person also sits in this area. The table next to the main area holds the video producer, sports anchor, sports/news cowriter, and assignment editor. The table behind the main table holds the weather anchor and student reporters and writers, and the final table near the production office holds student reporters and writers.

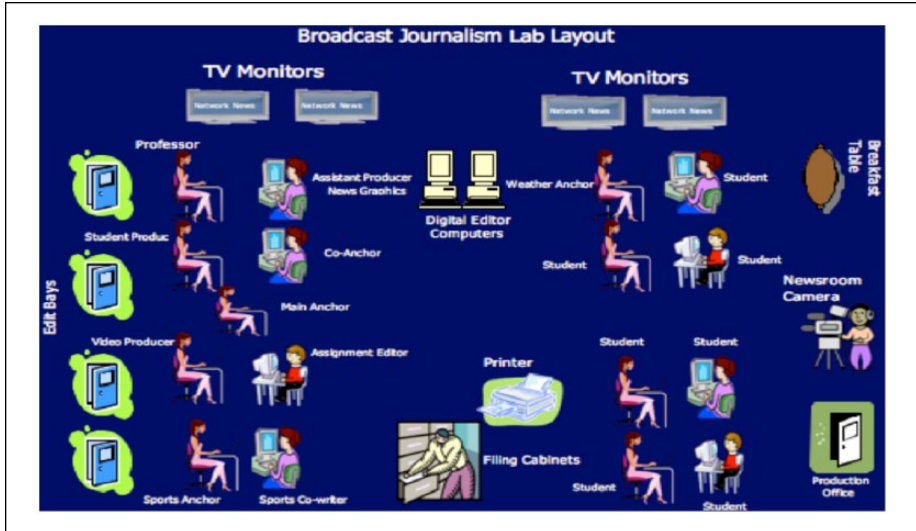


Figure 1. Broadcast journalism lab layout.

The seating arrangement is designed for logistical purposes, and it also establishes a form of hierarchy. The student producer begins each morning having precedence over the other students to speak to the professor as much as he or she needs while putting the newscast together. The professor and student producer work as a team not only before the airing of the newscast but also during and after the show has aired. For example, during the newscast, the professor watches the timing of the show along with the student producer, and after the newscast has aired, the student producer begins the critique followed by the professor. Then, the floor for comments is opened to the rest of the class. In order, after the professor and student producer have had their morning meeting, the professor announces to the class the goals and objectives for that day's newscast. She then calls on the assignment editor, followed by the video producer, the news anchors, sports anchor, weather anchor, reporters, beat reports (other students), and finally the assistant producer/graphics.

Providing the structure and the design of the news lab allows for analyses of the socialization process as well as representations of gender inequalities that may mimic hegemonic relationships and infrastructures of the professional industry and society, and how leaders were selected, either organically or through a particular process.

Method

The Triangulation methodology of this study consisted of four stages. The first stage consisted of a confidential online survey that was distributed at the beginning of a broadcast journalism practicum to 24 journalism students enrolled at a public, medium-sized, predominantly White university in the United States. The results of the survey

were used to assess leadership attributes and characteristics that emerged through self-evaluation and self-perception. The second stage of the study addressed the performativity or performance aspect of leadership and gender through observer-as-participant observation analysis of the same broadcast journalism practicum (newsroom lab) over a 9-week period. With the professor's and students' knowledge, the researcher's participation consisted of getting consent for the study, observing social behaviors in the newsroom as they occurred, and taking notes. At no time, did the researcher interfere or include herself as an active member of this culture during situations of scrutiny or day-to-day operations. This methodology was chosen because the primary agenda was to observe and the researcher can "often describe in advance what kind of information is needed and the amount of time and other resources needed to obtain it" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 149) to the gatekeeper. This also means that the researcher was allowed to evaluate performances that were connected to both the "person" and the "professional" position the student held and operated within. The value of studying performativity within a pedagogical paradigm is reflected in the idea that performativity "accounts for the ways that body, history, and power are doubly articulated in classrooms" (Bell & Blaeuer, 2006, p. 18). This means both marginalized and alternative activities can be explored in their "natural" settings.

The third stage consisted of administering the same online self-perception survey for a second time *at the end* of the broadcast journalism practicum to test for possible variations or changes in the perception of leadership construction and leadership attributes and characteristics that emerged *after* the professional socialization process. Finally, in-depth interviews were conducted to allow the researcher an opportunity to investigate why particular performance events took place as told from the interviewee's perspective, drawing from Standpoint theory and the importance of the narrative process. This part of the process also assisted in filling in gaps and discrepancies found among the quantitative data and the qualitative data.

To assist in answering the general theoretical question, "Although men and women tend to have similar leadership and personality attributes, how does professional socialization contribute to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of female leadership development?" (RQ1), this study sought to answer three additional questions:

RQ2: By way of frequency of representation, will female journalism students rate themselves as having more Transactional leadership styles than male journalism students?

RQ3: Will students prefer following an effective leader?

RQ4: By way of observation analysis, will Transactional leadership skills be represented and will the frequency remain more with the female students versus the male students?

Results

The first online survey that was administered at the beginning of the broadcast journalism lab session received 24 respondents (Table 1), and the second survey that was

Table 1. Valid Cases for Survey 1.

| | Frequency | % | Valid % |
|--------|-----------|-----|---------|
| Valid | | | |
| Female | 18 | 75 | 75.0 |
| Male | 6 | 25 | 25.0 |
| Total | 24 | 100 | 100.0 |

Table 2. Valid Cases for Survey 2.

| | Frequency | % | Valid % |
|--------|-----------|-------|---------|
| Valid | | | |
| Female | 18 | 78.3 | 75.0 |
| Male | 5 | 21.7 | 25.0 |
| Total | 23 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

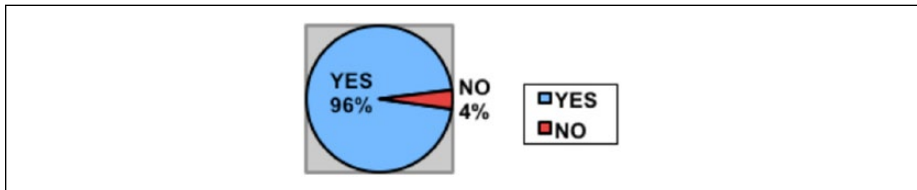


Figure 2. First transactional style.

distributed 9 weeks later, at the end of the lab, received 23 respondents (Table 2). One male from the first survey did not respond.

To assist in answering the research question, “Will female journalism students rate themselves as having more Transactional leadership styles than male journalism students?” (RQ2), several questions and statements representing Transactional leadership characteristics were posed to each student who participated in the online survey. The general question that appeared on the survey was as follows: When solving a problem, do you exchange with others as a means of reaching a goal?

Overall, only one student, a female, said no both times. All of the males responded yes to this question (Figures 2 and 3). This may be an indication that all of the students, in general, think it is appropriate to use the exchange process to reach a goal. From observation, the students appeared to be comfortable with this type of exchange. They would even make promises to each other about what to expect in return for assistance. For example, a student needed to change a day of reporting with someone and found a volunteer. The student who needed the change stated “I owe ya” to the fellow student who was going to help. And that student responded, “oh yeah, for sure you do. I’m

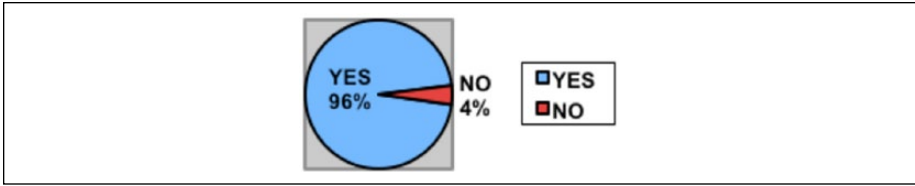


Figure 3. Second transactional style.

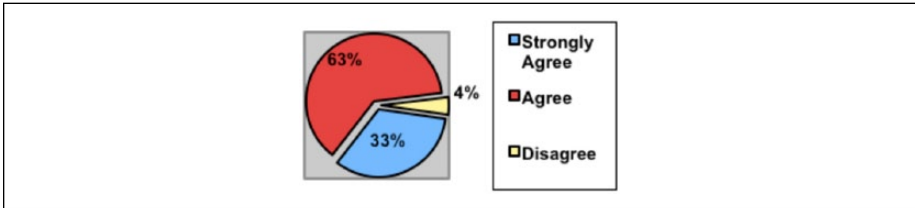


Figure 4. First other people's feelings.

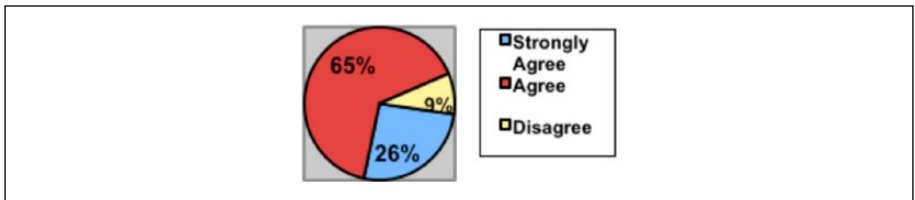


Figure 5. Second other people's feelings.

going to cover you on Saturday but you also owe me a beer.” During the interviewing process, another student claimed that he did not feel that he was an effective leader

or did a good job unless I’m helping someone else better themselves. We all work together. If I want them to do something for me, I need to do something for them to show them that there is not a hierarchy and that we’re all equal. (Student Interview, March 16, 2008)

The results of a 1990 study conducted by Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) found that “although men and women did not differ on task-oriented style, the very small tendency for women to be more interpersonally oriented than men was significant” (p. 788). This form of intelligence is inherently found in the following statement: When solving a problem, other people’s feelings are important. The results revealed little change from the first time the test was administered to the second (see Figures 4 and 5, and Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3. Sex × When Solving a Problem, Other People's Feelings Are Important. Cross-Tabulation.

| Count | When solving a problem, other people's feelings are important | | | Total |
|--------|---|-------|----------|-------|
| | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | |
| Sex | | | | |
| Female | 7 | 10 | 1 | 18 |
| Male | 1 | 5 | 0 | 6 |
| Total | 8 | 15 | 1 | 24 |

Table 4. Sex × When Solving a Problem, Other People's Feelings Are Important. Cross-Tabulation.

| Count | When solving a problem, other people's feelings are important. | | | Total |
|--------|--|-------|----------|-------|
| | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | |
| Sex | | | | |
| Female | 6 | 10 | 2 | 18 |
| Male | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Total | 6 | 15 | 2 | 23 |

What is interesting is the majority of the females strongly agreed versus minimal showing from men in this category. Despite the fact that students who work in task-oriented roles can “succeed” in the newsrooms by just completing a task, the majority of the data collected from in-depth interviews reveal that students cared considerably about the feelings of others just as much, if not more. Responses were commonly heard during the interviewing process such as follows:

I'm the kind of person that cares about what people think about me and that's so important to me, I hate when people are mad at me, Sometimes I try to watch what I say because I don't want people to be mad at me and I don't want to come across as like oh, gosh, she's so mean. (Student Interviews, March 6 and 8, 2008)

There is also a measure of codependency present in these responses as well. Along the lines of Intersectionality that includes race, an African American female journalism student stated that she felt that if she did not use a form of Transactional style of leadership, her fellow classmates “may turn against her” and ruin her newscast. She decided to strongly consider their feelings and remain nonconfrontational because it was too risky to take a chance and ostracize herself. “When I asked White students if they got along with the Black students, the general response was, ‘as long as they get along with us, we get along with them.’” This supports the African American's paranoia. Because this type of response was not mentioned when speaking of male versus female

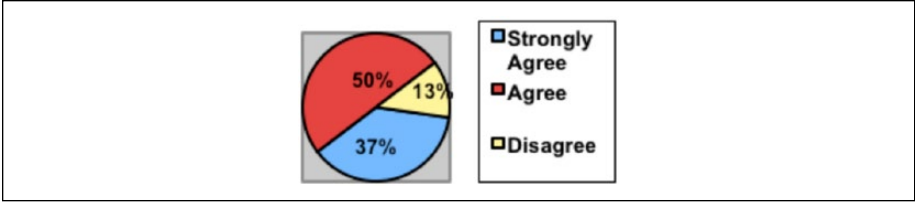


Figure 6. First I like following an effective leader.

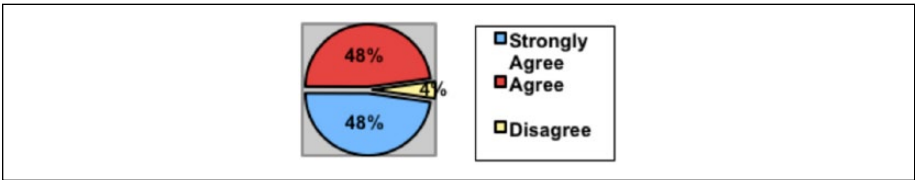


Figure 7. Second I like following an effective leader.

Table 5. Sex × I Like Following an Effective Leader. Cross-Tabulation.

| Count | I like following an effective leader | | | Total |
|--------|--------------------------------------|-------|----------|-------|
| | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | |
| Sex | | | | |
| Female | 5 | 10 | 3 | 18 |
| Male | 4 | 2 | 0 | 6 |
| Total | 9 | 12 | 3 | 24 |

discussions, I propose something more than codependency was involved. It reveals a measure of power being dictated from the majority onto the minority in microaggressive ways. Consequently, I propose that her and two other non-White students’ (who also stated similar feelings) Transformational leadership skills were hindered due to race to some degree.

When it came to the concept of teamwork, the majority of the class agreed that they liked following an effective leader. The second group of data revealed a change. The strongly agreed category jumped from 38% to 48%. The agreed category was 48%, and the disagreed decreased from 13% to 4% (Figures 6 and 7).

A closer look into these data reveals that the major changes occurred in the female aggregate (Tables 5 and 6).

This set of quantifiable data translates into the idea that although students like following effective leaders, observation analysis revealed that they preferred effective leaders who were nonconfrontational. Students also preferred *not* to lead but, ironically, also did not want to follow. Statements such as, “the only time I’ll be a follower

Table 6. Sex × I Like Following an Effective Leader. Cross-Tabulation.

| Count | I like following an effective leader | | | Total |
|--------|--------------------------------------|-------|----------|-------|
| | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | |
| Sex | | | | |
| Female | 8 | 9 | 1 | 18 |
| Male | 3 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| Total | 11 | 11 | 1 | 23 |

is if it's something that I want to do" or "I wouldn't do something because someone said that we should or that it's right" were commonly made by respondents (Student Interviews, March 10, 2008).

When the students were asked to evaluate themselves as far as being a motivator, the first set of test results revealed that 38% strongly agreed that they were motivators, and the second set of data revealed noticeable changes. The 38% who strongly agreed dropped down to 26%. However, the agreed column increased from 49% to 61%, and the values of the disagree column remained the same at 13%. This may indicate a drop in self-confidence, self-esteem, or simply a decrease in the strong belief that they could motivate other students to take some form of action. I also would argue that this change may relate to the idea I mentioned earlier that more of a Transactional form of leadership was both observed and found evident in the interviews. Five women and only one male strongly agreed (vs. six women and three men in the first), 11 females and three males agreed, and the disagree column remained the same with two females and one male. This may be an indication of some males not feeling a sense of power or influence to motivate others. These results may also relate to the mere fact that the men were outnumbered in the newsroom lab, 22 to six. This assessment was supported by data results gathered during the interviewing process. The male respondents stated that in a way, they felt that being the *minority* "allowed the females to really excel in their leadership skills, especially since the professor is a female" (Student Interview, March 8, 2008), and "the professor is a good role model for the males and females in the class and doesn't treat the girls special. At the same time, because we are outnumbered, we kind of band together" (Student Interview, March 11, 2008). "I think we try not to push our leadership too much because we are outnumbered but also because I don't think it's really needed. We all get along really well" (Student Interview, March 13, 2008). At first appearance, the males (all of them White) seemed to have adapted a voice from the margins, narratively speaking, as well as their performance. However, a closer look reveals that they believed that the women were in control or leaders because of *quantifiable reasons* and because the female professor was a good role model, *for the women!* In other words, majority rules rather than leadership styles (remember, no strong leaders were observed), and women can only be good role models to other women. In addition, the males relaxed feeling when saying these sexist types of statements speaks volumes about *their* idea of *accepted* versus effective

leadership from a majority of analyses. This way of thinking and performing may transfer from college to professional newsrooms. More men, more control, more leaders, hence, possibly one of the reasons why inequality toward women in the professional industry still exists. The interpretation and understanding of the presented data dictates, if not demands, a call for Transformational style leadership that is of quality, not numbers. Because of the ubiquitous nature of oppression through sexism, I also assert that this demand should be present within not only this type of milieu as a study but in every classroom, newsroom lab, and newsroom. The sooner the better.

In *Managing Television News: A Handbook for Ethical and Effective Producing*, the authors assert that one of the primary duties of an effective producer is being able to delegate. "Smart producers know they can accomplish more if they spread the workload" (Silcock, Heider, & Rogus, 2007, p. 245). This is true in a lot of instances. Although female students outnumber male students three to one, I witnessed more male student producers delegating than female journalists. This appeared to lessen the work and stress of the male producers. For example, once the story assignments were delegated out by the male student producers, they laughed more and engaged in informal light conversations with their classmates than the female student producers. There was also a sense that the female journalists wanted to be on the side of being "fair and balanced" when it came to sharing the workload, even including themselves as "equals" when distributing work assignments. This was especially true for female students of color. For example, after delegating story assignments, one female student producer took back some of the stories she delegated out to her classmates because they complained. Instead of maintaining her position of power and allowing the students to keep the stories, she said that she would write them herself. Another female student had a similar experience but stated during the interviewing process that she took the stories back because she did not want to be ostracized or be seen as bossy, "since, I'm like the only black, I mean African American in this position," ("Tiffany" Interview, March 11, 2008). As it pertains to leading through collective efforts, she felt powerless.

In most newsrooms, professional or educational, there is a flow of power and an established hierarchy that is used to move content from one point to another. A typical professional newsroom operates much like the model displayed in Figure 8. Normally, information and decision making flows from the producer or executive producer out to everyone else. This model illustrates how the producer is really the gatekeeper of the newscast, the individual who controls which story gets in or is left out of the newscast. From the morning meeting until the end of the newscast, the producer is in charge of the newscast and directly and indirectly, also in charge of key personnel, such as reporters and videographers.

In the news lab observed, the professor's role is one of professor, news director, executive producer, and senior producer. "When I'm in the class, I feel much more like an executive producer than a professor and that's kind of how I see my role" (Professor Interview, April 29, 2008). So, in this case, the gatekeeper is really the professor and not the producer. The student producer, however, does have some power but not a lot of autonomy as to what actually goes into the show. Although the student producer can

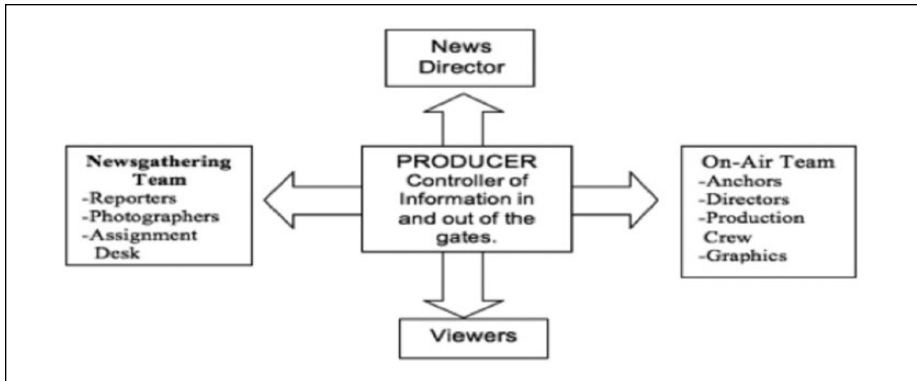


Figure 8. Typical hierarchal flow.

Source. Adapted from www.getmoredone.com (Silcock, Heider, & Rogus, 2007, p. 186).

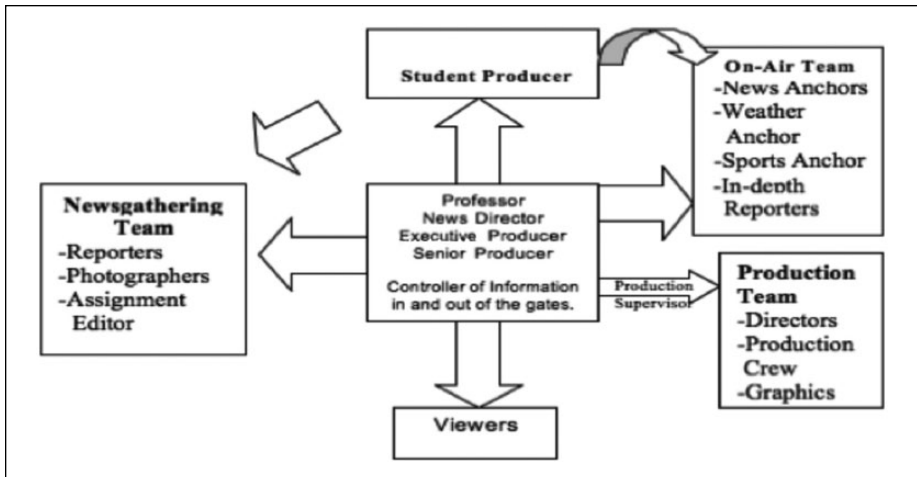


Figure 9. Milieu's flow of power

voice his or her opinion about what stays in the show *once the rundown has been formatted and locked*, because of time purposes, minimum professional experience, and the mere fact of working within an educational environment, there is minimal room or time to make drastic changes. Consequently, the flow of power of the broadcast journalism lab looks much more like Figure 9.

As mentioned earlier, this flow of power is needed for logistical reasons because it is a site of learning. Although the outside design of the organizational culture (Figures 1 and 9) established the professor and student producer as the main and sub-main agents of power, the professor appeared to have the most amount of power because of her exercised

autonomy. Because the student producer had very little observed autonomy, the number of opportunities he or she had to gain experience in decision making and news judgments was also limited and small. What this also means is that the student producers were not forced to face particular consequences; consequences they will no doubt face in the professional industry, such as news value decisions, prioritizing the different roles of the newsgathering process, reflecting on how such processes affect the news message and its effects on society, and gender inequality practices in the newsroom, in general.

Although the observation data were easy to recognize, what was not clear was that whether there would be a shift in power if the student actually *exercised* more power during the decision-making process. This type of power performed would establish two strong leaders (professor and student) on somewhat of an “equal” level in producing the newscast. However, this type of performance was not witnessed during the observation analysis period. So, the questions become, did the student *not have* the power or did they have the power but simply chose not to use it or were they unaware of having the power at all?

To assist in answering these questions, we look to representations of dominance and Transformational leadership. Transformational leadership can be defined as an “influence that goes beyond normal role requirements” (Cleveland, Stockdale, & Murphy, 2000, p. 287; Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992) or “the ability to influence and motivate people beyond what is required of them by their jobs or situations” (Cleveland et al., 2000, p. 319). Because this form of leadership does not *require* the agreement of others, it is Transformational. “Transformational leaders empower their followers to think creatively and act responsibly in both autonomous and cooperative settings” through persuasion and charisma (Cleveland et al., 2000, p. 308). Findings from this study reveal that the students were uncomfortable perceiving themselves or having *others* perceive them as dominant. In the first part of the study, 38% of the students strongly agreed and 33% agreed that they were dominant. In the second set of results 9 weeks later, only 9% strongly agreed with this statement and 56% agreed. The change in data is revealed in the female strongly agree category showing a drop from six to one. There was also a drop in the male respondents’ data from three to one. From the interviewing data, the majority of the female respondents I interviewed did not want to be perceived as being dominant nor aggressive. The female journalists made note that they felt that having these characteristics was a negative. “I think being dominant or at least being called dominant or aggressive comes across as masculine and I don’t really like to be seen that way” (Student Interview, March 11, 2008), and “I think to say I’m dominant is a little conceited and arrogant” (Student Interview, March 13, 2008) are examples of the type of comments made during the interviewing process.

Lacking obvious power partnered with a reluctance to dominate or be perceived as being dominant means that the transformation that is needed to change the landscape of gender inequality is not being addressed, directly. Instead of encouraging student producers to be more authoritative, more direct, and assertive in their leadership and power structure to obtain desired results, the professor usually intervened, taking on the authoritative role. The professor’s decision to intervene may be a result of her

instinctive managerial skills from professional experience in the newsroom: “I try and function as much as possible as if I were an executive producer in a real newsroom because I think they need that role and understand what it is” (Professor Interview, April 29, 2008). As an educator, the professor is also in a position to recognize that these instances of intervention are “teachable” moments or simply, dealing with the logistical nature that comes with producing a live newscast. “Sometimes I’m the task master . . . I have to stand up in the middle of the newsroom and say, hey folks, it’s 15 minutes to air, move your butt! That’s when I really go into executive producer mode” (Professor Interview, April 29, 2008). I submit, however, that because of the lack of power and autonomy in the construction of the position of student producer, the producer is placed in a more passive role, and the classmates expect this performance as well. It is how they are being socialized. If the student producers were allowed to take on more of an authoritative approach, he or she would have more opportunities to learn how to feel comfortable in a position of power and how to lead, even when they stand alone.

In general, the students did not display a level of comfort when it came to confronting or challenging each other about story ideas, the content of the newscast, or positions or responsibilities, which are all major aspects of practicing journalism. Although they voiced a strong opinion about what should be included in the newscast during the in-depth interviews, the students did not feel comfortable *performing* with the same intensity. Furthermore, because the students were allowed to remain in these nonconfrontational spaces, I would argue that they were also being indirectly and perhaps unintentionally *socialized* to conform to maintain these practices as a form of acceptance in a news structure full of their peers. Peer pressure and the need to belong are strong and should not be ignored.

Conclusion

Because “journalism education does little in the analysis of power, this does a disservice to journalists by not equipping them with the tools needed to analyze their role in the media industries” (Macdonald, 2006, p. 756). In addition, attention paid to the practicing of gender will “produce insights into how inequalities are created in the workplace” (Martin, 2003, p 343). This study sought to address both, power and gender, within a socialization process found in a newsroom lab and how leadership development is affected. Combined, these factors make up the infrastructure that drives and maintains the organized media culture.

In addressing the general theoretical question this study sought to explore, although men and women tend to have similar leadership and personality attributes, how does professional socialization contribute to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of female leadership development (**RQ1**), the results reveal that both, male and female student journalists, were more comfortable being nonconfrontational leaders and men were more comfortable delegating. It was also found that a Transactional style of leadership was preferred in this newsroom setting. Because this style of leadership existed among peers who have to interact with each other inside and outside of the newsroom lab, a

codependent relationship developed that enabled and hindered further development of other styles of leadership, that is, Transformational. *None* of the students said that there was one, individual student who stood out as a definitive leader with autonomy. Most were comfortable with this assessment. In most instances, the students chose a Transactional style of leadership as a way of conforming. I use the word “chose” cautiously because some of the students stated that they really did not feel that they had a choice in their leadership style and felt pressured to use a Transactional style of leadership so they would not be ostracized. Using a Transformational style of leadership carried the possible threat and consequence of not only placing a student in the “out-group” rather than the “in-group,” the students feared that a rejection such as this could affect the production and quality aspects of the newsroom and the newscast.

Although students voiced strong opinions about what should be included in the newscast during the in-depth interviews, the students did not feel comfortable performing with that same intensity. When the students said that they *actually liked to lead*, their reasons related more to self-serving reasons such as getting the task completed *correctly*, the need to control, wanting to motivate others, and the desire to correct people. None of the responses related to news judgment issues like balance, fairness, or content such as the inclusion of more diversity in their product, a topic that some students felt strongly about. Using more of a Transactional style leadership also means that the end result of the students’ leadership development enables the status quo to be maintained, indirectly and perhaps, subconsciously, in this particular milieu. Furthermore, this also means that sexist beliefs underlying some student’s perceptions may continue to develop if not challenged, supporting previous findings from earlier research. “Typical female socialization does less to promote leadership ability in the workforce, involving instead only preparation for domestic roles as wife and mother or lower level traditional jobs in the workforce” (Denmark, 1993, p. 345).

When analyzing leadership development, attention must also be given to its relation to the inherent structure and organization of the newsroom lab, itself. This includes managerial execution, autonomy existence and distribution, *expected* decision making, and its relation to power. Although students exercised a clear line of communication and exchange, they did not appear to carry a clear sense of power or autonomy to *transform* movement, action, or content. This includes elements such as news story selection, rectifying solutions during disagreements, delegating responsibilities and accountability, and class participation. I propose that the omission of such performance was due to the obvious power and autonomy exercised and held by the professor. However, I draw this conclusion with some caution because it was not clear whether or not the students had the power and autonomy to transform and simply chose not to engage, or whether, because of the operating pecking order and hierarchal infrastructure, representations of power merely existed only in theory. Another reason for the absence of representations of “real” power may point to what is inherited within an academic learning environment such as a college newsroom lab. Ultimately, it is the professor’s responsibility to guard against liability and slander of its news program and content. This makes it understandable as to why a professor may want to have full autonomy in this type of setting. However, I would still argue that there is room for

students to learn to exercise their Transformational voice with proper guidance and monitoring. Before this can happen, students, especially females, must be encouraged to lead in transformational ways. As students become more effective and proficient in using this voice, their judgment will improve and the professors' confidence, as well as their own self-confidence and confidence from their peers, will follow.

If we analyze the findings of this study by the numbers, female students outnumbered male students three to one in this study. From one perspective, drawing conclusions with such a disparity can be challenging. However, the data of this study are still valid due to the fact that the demographic makeup of this milieu mirrors today's newsrooms and labs across campuses nationwide. Although female students make up the majority of journalism and mass communication majors (66% from the annual survey out of the Grady College of J&MC at the University of Georgia), this show of representation is not found in major leadership positions in the professional industry. Women make up less than half of the numbers of newspaper supervisors (35%), TV news directors (31%), radio news directors (23%), and broadcast general managers (18%; Papper, 2014). Globally, men make up 73% of the top management positions in news media (IWMF, 2014). This troubling trend has resulted in a call to both, women and men, to make a conscious and concerted effort to investigate the reasons and the solutions: the "why" and "what to do next" elements. This trend is gaining speed. So, although the numbers may be imbalanced along the lines of gender representation in this study, the quantifiable elements and qualitative findings may offer valuable opportunities to study possible evidence tied to this disturbing phenomenon *before* it occurs. In the future, when we look at the dismal numbers of women in Transformational leadership positions in the professional industry, we should also review our curriculum as well as our own pedagogical approach that addresses this problem of inequality. If we want young aspiring female journalism students to be prepared to lead in Transformational ways and if we want males *and* females, both, to be prepared to interact, professionally, with this form of leadership, then we must encourage and support Transformational leadership style training as well as Transactional in our college newsrooms and labs.

I posit, a newsroom powered predominantly by Transactional Leadership does more to *maintain* rather than challenge the inequities. My hope is that the findings of this study will not only extend the literature on newsroom cultures and leadership issues but also assist professors in their pedagogical approach to addressing such inequities as a measure of prevention. If journalism students were encouraged and socialized to challenge one another, the newsgathering processes, news judgments and decisions, partnered with partial autonomy, then individual leadership would develop more effectively, freely, and in Transformational ways. Being unafraid to lead, even if leading solo, may increase self-confidence among students and their peers within a college newsroom. Phillips (1991) argued that this type of training should be conducted in classrooms that serve as newsrooms so the consequences do not constitute losing a job. Losing one's job was not a viable threat for these students because the professor's assessment only involved a grading system of consequences. If we want real change in the professional industry and we truly want to prepare our students for the future that awaits them, perhaps, future studies may find that applying the real threat of losing a

position may be the catalyst needed in a college news labs. Bringing real-life consequences to real-life scenarios forces students to make real choices led by solid news judgment and values rather than peer acceptance. It is a process of real preparation for the real world that needs real change. It is an exciting opportunity.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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