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LEAVING JOURNALISM: SELF-IDENTITY DURING CAREER TRANSITION
FOR FEMALE FORMER KENTUCKY REPORTERS

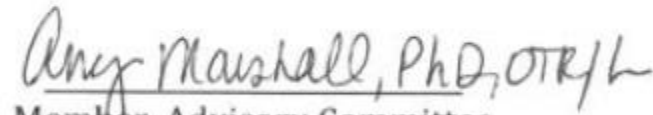
BY

SARAH HEANEY

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LEAVING JOURNALISM: SELF-IDENTITY DURING CAREER TRANSITION
FOR FEMALE FORMER KENTUCKY REPORTERS

BY

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2002

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
Eastern Kentucky University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

August 2018

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DEDICATION

Thank you to my family who supported me in every way possible when I made the decision to return to school and become an occupational therapist. I also wish to thank a group of special women whose daily messages of support and humor have helped me get through this project.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis chair, Dr. Anne Fleischer, for her patience and guidance throughout the research process. I would also like to thank the other committee members, Dr. Amy Marshall and Dr. Julie Baltisberger, for their comments and assistance over the course of this research project. Finally, I would like to thank the three women who chose to share their experiences with me as participants in this study.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This qualitative descriptive study focused on how did leaving the field of journalism affected the life narratives of female former Kentucky reporters.

Method: Three former Kentucky female reporters were interviewed to gather data on their experiences, including how leaving journalism affected their personal and professional self-identities, what about journalism was meaningful to them and what is meaningful in the work they do now, and what values and beliefs did they hold as reporters, and do they still hold them.

Discussion: Thematic data analysis revealed three overarching themes: self-identity as journalists persists after leaving newspaper jobs, other life roles took precedence over journalism when making the choice to leave, and journalism work was meaningful because it affected people personally.

Keywords: journalism, women, newspaper, occupational identity, life course, narrative

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION & LITERATURE REVIEW

A person's identity is made up of two parts: personal and social, which often include a person's current or former vocational occupation (Grubenmann & Meckel, 2015). This is particularly seen within journalism when journalists cannot easily separate their personal life from their professional. Their self-identity is enmeshed with the profession not just because it is a financial means of support, but also because of the essential, public societal role journalists have and continue to play in the United States.

This societal role of a journalist within the United States can be described as many things — a business person, a professional writer, a protector of democracy, or an antagonizer of polite society. The statement “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable” embraces the role journalists play to hold people in charge accountable and give a voice to people who are less powerful in our society (Society of Professional Journalists Ethics, 2014). However, what many don't know is the quote is actually from a fictional character, created by a journalist and column writer at the turn of the century, who was giving a critical opinion of the press (Shedden, 2014).

Th' newspaper does ivrything f'r us. It runs th' polis foorce an' th' banks, commands th' milishy, controls th' ligislachure, baptizes th' young, marries th' foolish, comforts th' afflicted, afflicts th' comfortable, buries th' dead an' roasts thim aafterward.” -- *The Observations of Mr. Dooley* (1902) by Chicago Evening Post journalist and humorist Finley Peter Dunne (as cited by Shedden, 2014).

Women have long struggled to break into the male-dominated world of hyper-masculine print newsrooms. Women journalists have and still do face numerous

challenges including pay discrimination, sexual harassment, and few advancement opportunities. Historically, women reporters also have been “pigeonholed” into “softer” news beats, such as gardening, home, and food topics, instead of breaking news and public affairs reporting beats. Despite these challenges, women journalists have achieved entry and a measure of success in the field by adopting professional norms held by male journalists (Ross & Carter, 2011; Cassidy, 2008), and they now represent more than a third of newspaper journalists today. These norms include putting more of an "emphasis on ‘hard’ news over ‘soft,’ ‘fact’ over opinion, time constrained daily news over human interest features, public vs. private" (Ross & Carter, 2011).

By the time women had more firmly established their roles and gained acceptance into many newsrooms, other news sources emerged to compete with printed newspapers. The success of television, social media, online news aggregators, and citizen bloggers have pulled eyes away from printed pages, causing a decline in print circulation (the number of newspapers purchased per day) (Barthel, 2017a). Newspapers base their advertising rates (price per ad) on circulation numbers, and those advertising dollars in turn fund the costs of the news operation, including employee salaries and printing costs. So a decline in print circulation causes advertising prices to fall, which leads to a decline in the income that supports newsgathering activities. This newspaper business model — advertising revenue supporting news budgets — has become less viable than it was just 15 years ago. Most medium- to large-business advertising dollars are being spent on TV and online ads that reach a far wider audience than print advertisements (Thompson, 2016). Most newspaper companies have made slow (or no) efforts to shift their business delivery model from paper to digital, which has resulted in newspaper companies losing the ability

to financially sustain their newsgathering operations due to the loss of advertising revenue. After rounds of layoffs, buy-outs, and unpaid furloughs for the employees in an attempt to cut costs, newspapers across the nation have been sold, merged with other newspapers, and sometimes closed (Pompeo, 2010; Ember, 2016; Benton, 2016).

Newspaper closures, employed journalists reductions, and decreased wages are more than just numbers on paper. They represent people who are out of work, have lost their roles in the public sphere, and are increasingly finding the training they received rendered obsolete. These swift changes in the newspaper industry have significantly affected women, who have fought so hard to be a part of the newsroom yet face even harsher economic realities of lower pay and often a greater share of personal responsibilities than their male colleagues. With the shrinking and near collapse of the print newspaper industry, female journalists who have left the profession have not only lost a job but have lost a part of their identity.

Journalists' Perceived Roles and Self-identities

Wolfgang Donsbach (2010), in his chapter on journalists' professional identities, states "... probably the most important reason for the existence of journalism is a professional service whose unique selling proposition is the validation of assertions about reality with a high degree of responsibility" (p. 39). Historically, journalists in the United States tend to see their role as providing three things: a professional service (objective, factual information), a public good (reporting on government actions), and an economic tradition (selling a product) (Donsbach, 2010). The ideals of journalism, which fall into line with the services it provides, are often summed up into one-word labels that reporters use to describe themselves -- "watchdogs," "advocates," and "gatekeepers" (Donsbach,

2010). Journalists, especially those in junior roles outside of management, will often place a greater emphasis on the first two purposes, under the same assumption the U.S. founding fathers espoused — “only a free communication structure and the plurality of facts, arguments and values will lead to the best possible results for the whole society” (Donsbach, 2010, p. 39).

Deuze (2005) identifies five core values that make up journalists’ professional ideologies: public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy, and ethics. He states that these ideal traits for journalists also potentially serve as the “social cement of the professional group of journalists” (p. 447). This “social cement” of group membership and shared self-identity created by providing an important public service is illustrated in a 2009 *American Journalism Review* article titled “A eulogy for old-school newsrooms.” The author writes that in the past, journalists could be both cynical and idealistic at the same time about their work (Step, 2009). The old newsrooms were loud, cluttered, energetic, creative, and unpredictable. People who worked there were “misfits,” and often bonded through playing pranks. “You could get away with things partly because of the hard hours and low pay, and partly because of the eventual public service you provided,” (Step, 2009, p. 32), illustrating the atmosphere of the newsroom environment and how the journalists perceived themselves. Another journalist, reflecting on the newsrooms of the past, stated “You felt a ‘glorious smugness’ ... of people united in a mission, underpinned by an earnest faith that the work mattered, and you knew it, and the public knew it. (Step, 2009, p. 32)”

Women in Journalism

Into this primarily male world where the righteous purposes of journalism are enmeshed with the reporters' self-identities came women who didn't simply want to answer phone calls or rewrite copy. They wanted to report the news, and become watchdogs and advocates for the public. Popular culture, starting in the early 1900s, highlighted glamorous and "plucky" representations of fictional female reporters (Kale, 2014). There was the comic strip *Brenda Starr, Reporter* whose titular character was pursued by handsome men desperate to give her a life of wedded domestic bliss. The strip ran in newspapers from 1940 to 2011 (Kale, 2014). Fictional Metropolis reporter Lois Lane debuted in the same comic book as Superman in 1938, and she continues to be depicted as a career-driven woman who is now married to former co-worker Clark Kent, aka. Superman. Moving into the TV era, 1970s' Mary Richards forged her own life as a single woman and news producer at a Minneapolis TV station on the *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. Television also brought us Murphy Brown in the late 1980s and 1990s, a recovering alcoholic and hard-hitting news magazine journalist who also chose to become a single mother during the show's 10-year run.

In reality, the entrance of women into print newspapers was one of multiple hurdles and barriers, but at times acceptance and fame. Nelly Bly and Ida Turnbull took on the social issues of the late 1800s and early 1900s, going undercover to report on psychiatric care, poverty, unsafe labor conditions, and other types of human suffering. They gave birth to the "girl stunt reporters" that were all the rage in the late 1800s (Todd, 2016). Writing under pen names, often masculine ones, these women went undercover in dangerous situations, wrote in first-person, and created sensational prose about social and

moral ills (Todd, 2016). Later, in the golden age of cinema, Hollywood became obsessed with the image of girl reporters, who could be neither a married woman nor a spinster (Kale, 2014).

The “girl stunt reporters” cracked the door for women to enter the newsroom, but they faced barriers that were not depicted on the silver screen. Many help-wanted ads for newspaper editorial positions stated, “men only” (Von Hoffman, 1971). Additionally, press clubs, which provided mentorship and access to news sources and events, were men-only (Von Hoffman, 1971). Women were routinely shut out from press boxes and news conferences. Women were paid significantly less, and sexist, derogatory terms such as “newshen” (“Out of the past: ‘Newshen’,” 2015) were used to refer to female reporters by their male colleagues. Within the pages of the newspaper, the male-centric viewpoint was blatant when female story subjects were described as “mothers” and “grandmothers” before their accomplishments, and describing their appearance was routine (Von Hoffman, 1971).

One of the biggest indicators of women’s lowly status at newspapers was that most were relegated to positions that only covered “soft news,” also called the “women’s pages.” The belief that society news, fashion trends, new recipes, and home management tips were best written by women was an explicit journalistic norm. Hard news, which covers life in the “public/male sphere,” was and still is, given more clout and more prestige than soft news, which covers life in the “private/female sphere” (Meeks, 2017). Ethnographic media studies note that the hard news genre dominates the top stories featured on TV and in newspapers (Schultz, 2007).

... There are notable differences in who does what which are evident from observations: hard news stories are most often made by men, as the traditional hard (prestigious and well-paying) genres like foreign news, political journalism, economy and business journalism will most often be male territory in the newsroom. Likewise, the traditional soft genres such as (the less prestigious, not so well-paid) genres of human interest, family and lifestyle are typical female territory (Schultz, 2007, p. 195).

A 2013 study of the 20 most circulated news organizations provided evidence that this attitude is not a part of the past. The results indicated that men were more likely to cover political, criminal justice, and technology beats while women were more likely to cover education, lifestyle, and health topics (Meeks, 2017). A review of thousands of *New York Times* articles found men were the lead journalists in most articles in 16 sections, while women were lead journalists in five sections: health, travel, home, dining, and fashion (Cohen, 2014, as cited by Meeks). Research based on feminist analysis has demonstrated the inherently gendered nature of news coverage, and the masculine-centric views that have evolved into professional journalistic norms that both men and women journalists accept (Meeks, 2017).

The question of whether women should be in the newsroom went far deeper than just their ability to do the job. People in the late 1800s questioned if women could retain their “femininity” and morals as reporters. Female authors were not uncommon at the time, but they typically wrote books and poems from their homes, remaining “safely ensconced in the home” where they could tend to their families (Mangun, 2011). However, female reporters were out in the world, on the streets, and in the gritty

newsroom surrounded by men. Mangun found in her review of books and articles from 1870 to 1930 about journalism careers for women that the advice fell under three categories -- didactic (how to get an education, how to get employed), cautionary (rough newsrooms, having to sacrifice moral integrity, long hours, no personal life), and celebratory (female journalistic achievements) (Mangun, 2011). Prior to entering journalism, women were advised to go to college to learn how to be punctual and meet deadlines, which differed from the advice to men who were not required to have a college degree. In addition to the concern regarding retaining femininity, male journalists felt women wouldn't be morally safe in the newsroom.

“Young womanhood is too sweet and sacred a thing to couple with the life of careless manner, hasty talk, and unconventional action that seems inevitable in a newspaper office” (Mangun, 2011, p. 71). Mangun also found that male reporters were concerned about the ‘steady decline in that innate sense of refinement, gentleness and womanliness’ that they had observed in female employees” (p. 71).

However, these concerns did not keep women away from journalism; as census data shows employed female journalists increased from 35 in 1870 to 11,924 in 1930 (Mangun, 2011). However, over the past 15 years, the percentage of women in newsrooms has plateaued, even as the size of newsrooms shrank, indicating that the number of women in journalism is on the decline. The American Society of News Editors’ annual census found that in 2012, women made up 36% of all newspaper staff, just one percentage point more than in 1998 (Anderson, 2014).

Today and in the past, one barrier for female journalists is the question about whether they could also fulfill their roles of wives and mothers, especially when taking

on dangerous beats. A *Columbia Journalism Review* article from 1988 asked “Can mothers be journalists?” (Schoonmaker, 1988). A 2004 piece in the same news publication titled “Mothers at War” noted that more women were becoming senior reporters and taking jobs in war zones. These beats are seen as the most prestigious, and as breaking one of the ultimate glass ceilings of journalism (Matloff, 2004). Reporters who are stationed in the Middle East for months or even years sometimes move their families to the relative safety of Israel. The piece goes on to point out that taking family into war areas goes against “all maternal instincts” (Matloff, 2004). However, many of the female war reporters interviewed in the article stated motherhood made them better journalists with more insight into human suffering (Matloff, 2004).

An Industry in Decline

How Americans, and people worldwide, obtain their news has changed since the advent of television and the Internet. The 24/7 news cycle brought about by television, and later cable news channels, created a huge consumer appetite for information immediacy, which is impossible for print newspapers to provide. Newspapers take time to layout and print, then deliver to subscribers, rendering the news therein already hours behind once it’s in the hands of readers. The creation of news content and its distribution became even faster with the creation of the internet. Newspapers were slow to adopt the internet as a form of news distribution because it breaks from their traditional revenue source of print advertising. Bloggers and “citizen journalists” quickly filled the news gap online, turning people away from traditional, but slower, news sources. Finally, social media took the news to a different level. Tweets and Facebook posts have become sources of breaking news. For many, the first time they hear of a celebrity death is on

friends' Facebook statuses. Every day in America the public learns of new foreign and domestic governmental policies first via President Donald Trump's tweets, not the *New York Times*.

The Pew Research Center found in early 2016 that only two out of 10 American adults get their news from print newspapers, a decrease of 27% from 2013 (Mitchell, Gottfried, Barthel, & Shearer, 2016). The age divide on news consumption habits is particularly striking for newspapers. Just 5% of people 18 to 29 years get news information from a print newspaper. That percentage rises to about half for people 65 years and older (Mitchell et al., 2016). These trends have massively impacted newspaper company's profitability, and in turn, their ability to employ print journalists. The U.S. Department of Labor ("Occupational outlook handbook: Reporters, correspondents, and broadcast news analysts," 2017) reports that the job outlook for reporters and correspondents (nonbroadcast) is -11% over the next 10 years with a projected loss of 4,800 more jobs, which will leave 40,000 employed in this job category by 2026. As a whole, The U.S. Department of Labor reports the newspaper publishing industry in January 1990 employed 455,000 people but by March 2016 (last year data is available) the industry employed just 183,200, a 60% decline ("Employment trends in newspaper publishing and other media," June 2016).

From 2014 to 2015 alone, there was a 7% decline in average weekday circulation (Barthel, 2016). From 2015 to 2016, circulation fell another 8% to 35 million on weekdays and 38 million for Sunday editions (Barthel, 2017a). While some newspapers have joined the digital age and have a positive website traffic growth rate (up 21% from 2015 to 2016 at the nation's top 50 papers), the print industry's financial and subscriber

base continues to decline (Barthel, 2017b). The income from digital advertising is increasing at a steady rate for print companies, but not enough to outpace losses in traditional newspaper advertising. The newspaper industry advertising revenue, based on financial reports from publicly traded companies, was estimated in 2016 at \$18 billion (Barthel, 2017a). This is a drop of 10% from 2015, and is just one-third of the industry advertising revenue reported at \$49 billion just 10 years ago (Barthel, 2017a).

How the Decline has Affected Female Journalists

Female newspaper journalists have been particularly hard-hit by these trends. Anna Griffin (2014), writing for industry website Nieman Reports, cites research that women in journalism earn 83% of their male counterparts, which hasn't changed in the past 10 years. Another study, published in 2012, puts the income rate at 87% of what men earn at newspapers, which makes the median income for newspaper women \$5,000 less than men (\$42,857 vs. \$48,037) (Anderson, 2014). It is important to note for the purposes of this study that the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in May 2016 that the mean annual wage for Central Kentucky reporters was just \$26,800 (\$12.88 an hour).

Longevity and experience in a profession often translates into promotions to supervisory positions with more pay. The impact of women leaving journalism is felt in the lack of women in top newspaper positions. The Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media survey of more than 500 media companies in almost 60 countries found that men held 73 percent of the top management jobs (Griffin, 2014). According to the American Society of News Editors, the percentage of women in supervisory positions at newspapers has remained stagnant for more than a decade -- in 1998 it was 34% and in 2012 it was 35% (Anderson, 2014). Workforce reductions in

print media has resulted in the loss of 17,000 to 20,000 jobs lost since 1998, meaning that while the percentage of women in top positions has stayed the same, the actual number of female supervisors is decreasing (Anderson, 2014). Industry surveys have shown that only one-third of journalists with 20 or more years of experience in U.S. newsrooms are women (Griffin, 2014).

In this challenging environment of changing information technology and falling industry profits, men and women are choosing to leave the profession either by choice or following layoffs. However, women are more likely than their male colleagues to leave newspapers (Reinardy, 2009). Women cite higher levels of exhaustion and lower levels of professional efficacy, when compared to men. Reinardy's 2009 study, based on survey data, found 30% of women 27 years and younger said they planned on leaving the field. He also found that sixty-two percent of female journalists surveyed said either "yes" or "don't know" to having any intention of leaving journalism.

The literature is sparse on research about how female journalists perceive their departures from the profession. A 2009 study in the journal *Women's Studies in Communication* analyzed the interviews of 15 women who had left journalism from a feminist analytical viewpoint (Elmore, 2009). Within this study, many of the women expressed regret over unmet professional goals. Several of them still identified themselves as writers and former journalists to other people, holding onto that identity (Elmore, 2009). The women in the study also reported experiencing "turning points" that pushed them to make a decision about whether to keep working in newspapers. Those turning points were: "having children, getting an unsolicited job offer, and having an attainable new full-time goal come to fruition" (Elmore, 2009, p. 238). Many of the

women reported feeling less stress in their current jobs and life roles, although they missed the social connections with their work colleagues.

While this study closely matches the structure of my proposed research thesis, the interviews were conducted in 2003, nearly 15 years ago. The newspaper industry has faced even more turmoil and decline since that time, with major cultural shifts that have affected how media is consumed by the public. My study also examines three female journalists from the same region (central Kentucky) who all worked primarily at small daily and weekly newspapers, which many believe have been more insulated from the financial decline and staff layoffs experienced by larger newspapers (Knolle, 2016).

The experience that I will be describing in this research is leaving journalism from the perspective of female Kentucky print reporters. The grand question I seek to answer through thematic analysis is “how did leaving the field of journalism affect the life narratives of female former Kentucky reporters?” Areas explored in the semi-structured interviews with the participants included how leaving journalism affected their personal and professional self-identities; what about journalism was meaningful to them and what is meaningful in the work they do now; and what values and beliefs did they hold as reporters, and if they hold the same values and beliefs in their lives and work after leaving journalism.

CHAPTER 2
JOURNAL MANUSCRIPT

Introduction

A person's identity is made up of two parts: personal and social, which often include a person's current or former vocational occupation (Grubenmann & Meckel, 2015). This is particularly seen within journalism when journalists cannot easily separate their personal life from their professional. Their self-identity is enmeshed with the profession not just because it is a financial means of support, but also because of the essential, public societal role journalists have and continue to play in the United States.

This societal role of a journalist within the United States can be described as many things -- a business person, a professional writer, a protector of democracy, or an antagonizer of polite society. The statement, "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable," embraces the role journalists play to hold people in charge accountable and give a voice to people who are less powerful in our society (Society of Professional Journalists, 2014).

Women have long struggled to break into the male-dominated world of hyper-masculine print newsrooms. Women journalists have and still do face numerous challenges including pay discrimination, sexual harassment, and few advancement opportunities. Historically, women reporters also have been "pigeonholed" into "softer" news beats, such as gardening, home, and food topics, instead of breaking news and public affairs reporting beats. Despite these challenges, women journalists have achieved entry and a measure of success in the field, and they now represent a little over a third of newspaper journalists today.

By the time women had more firmly established their roles and gained acceptance into many newsrooms, other news sources emerged to compete with printed newspapers. The success of television, social media, online news aggregators, and citizen bloggers have pulled eyes away from printed pages, causing a decline in print circulation (the number of newspapers purchased per day) (Barthel, 2017a). Newspapers base their advertising rates (price per ad) on circulation numbers, and those advertising dollars in turn fund the costs of the news operation, including employee salaries and printing costs. So a decline in print circulation causes advertising prices to fall, which leads to a decline in the income that supports newsgathering activities. This newspaper business model — advertising revenue supporting news budgets — has become less viable. After rounds of layoffs, buy-outs, and unpaid furloughs for the employees in an attempt to cut costs, newspapers are often sold, merged with other newspapers, and sometimes closed (Pompeo, 2010; Ember, 2016; Benton, 2016).

Newspaper closures, employed journalists reduction, and decreased wages are more than just numbers on paper. They represent people who are out of work, have lost their roles in the public sphere, and are increasingly finding the training they received rendered obsolete. These swift changes in the newspaper industry have significantly affected women, who have fought so hard to be a part of the newsroom yet face even harsher economic realities of lower pay and more personal responsibilities than their male colleagues. With the shrinking and near collapse of the print newspaper industry, female journalists who have left the profession have not only lost a job but have lost a part of their identity.

Literature Review

Journalists' Perceived Roles and Self-identities

Wolfgang Donsbach (2010), in his chapter on journalists' professional identities, states "... probably the most important reason for the existence of journalism is a professional service whose unique selling proposition is the validation of assertions about reality with a high degree of responsibility (p. 39)." Historically, journalists in the United States tend to see their role as providing three things: a professional service (objective, factual information), a public good (reporting on government actions), and an economic tradition (selling a product) (Donsbach, 2010). The ideals of journalism, which fall into line with the services it provides, are often summed up into one-word labels that reporters use to describe themselves -- "watchdogs," "advocates," "gatekeepers" (Donsbach, 2010).

Deuze (2005) identifies five core values that make up of journalists' professional ideologies: public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy, and ethics. He states that these ideal traits for journalists also potentially serve as the "social cement of the professional group of journalists" (p. 447). This "social cement" of group membership and shared self-identity created by providing an important public service is illustrated in a 2009 American Journalism Review article titled "A eulogy for old-school newsrooms." The author writes that in the past, journalists could be both cynical and idealistic at the same time about their work (Step, 2009). The old newsrooms were loud, cluttered, energetic, creative, and unpredictable. People who worked there were "misfits," and often bonded through playing pranks. "You could get away with things partly because of the hard hours and low pay, and partly because of the eventual public service you provided"

(Step, 2009, p. 32), illustrating that the atmosphere of the newsroom environment and how they perceived themselves. Another journalist, reflecting on the newsrooms of the past, stated “You felt a ‘glorious smugness’ ... of people united in a mission, underpinned by an earnest faith that the work mattered, and you knew it, and the public knew it” (Step, 2009, p. 32).

Women in Journalism

Into this primarily male world where the righteous purposes of journalism are enmeshed with the reporters’ self-identities came women who didn’t simply want to answer phone calls or rewrite copy. They wanted to report the news, and become watchdogs and advocates for the public. The entrance of women into print newspapers was one of multiple hurdles and barriers, but at times acceptance and fame. Nelly Bly and Ida Turnbull took on the social issues of the late 1800s and early 1900s, going undercover to report on psychiatric care, poverty, unsafe labor conditions, and other types of human suffering. They gave birth to the “girl stunt reporters” that were all the rage in the late 1800s (Todd, 2016). Writing under pen names, often masculine ones, these women went undercover in dangerous situations, wrote in first-person, and created sensational prose about social and moral ills (Todd, 2016).

The “girl stunt reporters” cracked the door for women to enter the newsroom, but they faced barriers that were not depicted on the silver screen. Many help-wanted ads for newspaper editorial positions stated, “men only” (Von Hoffman, 1971). Additionally, press clubs, which provided mentorship and access to news sources and events, were also men-only (Von Hoffman, 1971). Women were routinely shut out from press boxes and news conferences. Women were paid significantly less, and sexist, derogatory terms such

as “newshen” (“Out of the past: ‘Newshen’,” 2015) were used to refer to female reporters by their male colleagues.

One of the biggest indicators of women’s lowly status at newspapers was that most were relegated to positions that only covered “soft news,” also called the “women’s pages.” The belief that society news, fashion trends, new recipes, and home management tips were best written by women was an explicit journalistic norm. Hard news, which covers life in the “public/male sphere,” was and still is, given more clout and more prestige than soft news, which covers life in the “private/female sphere” (Meeks, 2017). Ethnographic media studies note that the hard news genre dominates the top stories feature on TV and in newspapers (Schultz, 2007).

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men. Mangun found in her review of books and articles from 1870 to 1930 about journalism careers for women that the advice fell under three categories — didactic (how to get an education, how to get employed), cautionary (rough newsrooms, having to sacrifice moral integrity, long hours, no personal life), and celebratory (female journalistic achievements) (Mangun, 2011). Prior to entering journalism, women were advised to go to college to learn how to be punctual and meet deadlines, which differed from the advice to men who were not required to have a college degree. In addition to the concern regarding retaining femininity, male journalists felt women wouldn't be morally safe in the newsroom, as seen by the following quote:

“Young womanhood is too sweet and sacred a thing to couple with the life of careless manner, hasty talk, and unconventional action that seems inevitable in a newspaper office” (Mangun, 2011, p. 71). Mangun also found that male reporters were concerned about the ‘steady decline in that innate sense of refinement, gentleness and womanliness’ that they had observed in female employees” (p. 71).

However, these concerns did not keep women away from journalism; as census data shows employed female journalists increased from 35 in 1870 to 11,924 in 1930 (Mangun, 2011). However, over the past 15 years, the percentage of women in newsrooms has plateaued, even as the size of newsrooms shrank, indicating that the number of women in journalism is on the decline. The American Society of News Editors’ annual census found that in 2012, women made up 36% of all newspaper staff, just one percentage point more than in 1998 (Anderson, 2014).

An Industry in Decline

How Americans, and people worldwide, obtain their news has changed since the advent of television and the Internet. The 24/7 news cycle brought about by television, and later cable news channels, created a huge consumer appetite for information immediacy, which is impossible for print newspapers to provide. Newspapers take time to design and print, then deliver to subscribers, rendering the news therein already hours behind once it's in the hands of readers. The creation of news content and its distribution became even faster with the advent of the internet. Newspapers were slow to adopt the internet as a form of news distribution because it broke from their traditional revenue source of print advertising. Bloggers and "citizen journalists" quickly filled the news gap online, turning people away from traditional, but slower, news sources. Finally, social media took the news to a new level. Tweets and Facebook posts have become sources of breaking news across the globe.

The Pew Research Center found in early 2016 that only two out of 10 American adults get their news from print newspapers, a decrease of 27% from 2013 (Mitchell, Gottfried, Barthel, & Shearer, 2016). The age divide on news consumption habits is particularly striking for newspapers. Just 5% of people 18 to 29 years get news information from a print newspaper. That percentage rises to about half for people 65 years and older (Mitchell et al., 2016). These trends have massively impacted newspaper company's profitability, and in turn, their ability to employ print journalists. There are 20,000 less positions in U.S. print newsrooms than there were 20 years ago. The U.S. Department of Labor ("Occupational outlook handbook: Reporters, correspondents, and broadcast news analysts," 2017) reports that the job outlook for reporters and

correspondents (nonbroadcast) is -11% over the next 10 years with a projected loss of 4,800 more jobs, which will leave 40,000 employed in this job category by 2026.

From 2014 to 2015 alone, there was a 7% decline in average weekday circulation (Barthel, 2016). From 2015 to 2016, circulation fell another 8% to 35 million on weekdays and 38 million for Sunday editions (Barthel, 2017a). While some newspapers have joined the digital age and have a positive website traffic growth rate (up 21% from 2015 to 2016 at the nation's top 50 papers), the print industry's financial and subscriber base continues to decline (Barthel, 2017b). The income from digital advertising is increasing at a steady rate for print companies, but not enough to outpace losses in traditional newspaper advertising. The newspaper industry advertising revenue, based on financial reports from publicly traded companies, was estimated in 2016 at \$18 billion (Barthel, 2017a). This is a drop of 10% from 2015, and is just one-third of the industry advertising revenue reported at \$49 billion just 10 years ago (Barthel, 2017a).

How the Decline has Affected Female Journalists

Female newspaper journalists have been particularly hard-hit by these trends. Anna Griffin (2014), writing for industry website *Nieman Reports*, cites research that women in journalism earn 83% of their male counterparts, which hasn't changed in the past 10 years. Another study, published in 2012, puts the income rate at 87% of what men earn at newspapers, which makes the median income for newspaper women \$5,000 less than men (\$42,857 vs. \$48,037) (Anderson, 2014). It is important to note for the purposes of this study that the U.S. Department Labor reported in May 2016 ("Occupational employment and wages, reporters and correspondents") that the mean annual wage for Central Kentucky reporters was just \$26,800 (\$12.88 an hour).

Longevity and experience in a profession often translates into promotions to supervisory positions with more pay. The impact of women leaving journalism is felt in the lack of women in top newspaper positions. The Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media survey of more than 500 media companies in almost 60 countries, and found that men held 73 percent of the top management jobs (Griffin, 2014). According to the American Society of News Editors, the percentage of women in supervisory positions at newspapers has remained stagnant for more than a decade -- in 1998 it was 34% and in 2012 it was 35% (Anderson, 2014). Workforce reductions in print media has resulted in the loss of 17,000 to 20,000 jobs lost since 1998, meaning that while the percentage of women in top positions has stayed the same, the actual number of female supervisors is decreasing (Anderson, 2014). Industry surveys have shown that only one-third of journalists with 20 or more years of experience in newsrooms are women (Griffin, 2014).

In this challenging environment of changing information technology and falling industry profits, men and women are choosing to leave the profession either by choice or following layoffs. However, women are more likely than their male colleagues to leave newspapers (Reinardy, 2009). Women cite higher levels of exhaustion and lower levels of professional efficacy, when compared to men. Reinardy's 2009 study, based on survey data, found 30% of women 27 years and younger said they planned on leaving the field. Sixty-two percent of female journalists surveyed said either "yes" or "don't know" to having any intention of leaving journalism (Reinardy, 2009).

The literature is sparse on research about how female journalists perceive their departures from the profession. A 2009 study in the journal *Women's Studies in*

Communication analyzed the interviews of 15 women who had left journalism from a feminist analytical viewpoint (Elmore, 2009). Within this study, many of the women expressed regret over unmet professional goals. Several of them still identified themselves as writers and former journalists to other people, holding onto that identity (Elmore, 2009). The women in the study also reported experiencing “turning points” that pushed them to make a decision about whether to keep working in newspapers. Those turning points were: “having children, getting an unsolicited job offer, and having an attainable new full-time goal come to fruition” (Elmore, 2009, p. 238). Many of the women reported feeling less stress in their current jobs and life roles, although they missed the social connections with their work colleagues.

While this study closely matches the structure of my proposed research thesis, the interviews were conducted in 2003, nearly 15 years ago. The newspaper industry has faced even more turmoil and decline since that time, with major cultural shifts that have affected how media is consumed by the public. My study also examines three female journalists from the same region (central Kentucky) who all worked primarily at small daily and weekly newspapers, which many believe have been more insulated from the financial decline and staff layoffs experienced by larger newspapers (Knolle, 2016).

The experience that I will describe in this research is leaving journalism from the perspective of female Kentucky print reporters. The grand question I seek to answer through thematic analysis is “how did leaving the field of journalism affect the life narratives of female former Kentucky reporters?”

Method

Role of the Researcher

I was a Master's of Occupational Therapy candidate at Eastern Kentucky University when I conducted this research as part of my degree requirements. I obtained a Bachelor's of Arts degree in journalism in 2002 and subsequently worked for 12 years (2002-2014) at weekly and daily newspapers in Kentucky. I served in newsroom positions as editor, reporter, copy editor, page designer, and features editor. During this time, I observed women such as myself leaving journalism to pursue other fields of work or to raise children, which led to my interest in the topic examined in this paper.

This life narrative study includes a collection of oral stories and experiences from former female Kentucky journalists (Creswell, 2013). Prior to recruiting participants, the study procedures were approved by the Eastern Kentucky University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A for approval form).

Participants and Recruitment

The participants in the study were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling. The participants were required to be women who have worked at print newspapers in Kentucky in the past 10 years. Their job duties needed to include reporting, which was the gathering of news through source interviews and document analysis to author articles in print newspapers. Excluded from the study were women who currently work at newspapers, or who have worked at newspapers but did not have reporting duties. Three participants met the inclusion criteria of the study. The demographic characteristics and backgrounds in journalism of the three participants are shown in Table 1.

Data Collection

The researcher used an interview guide to conduct the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B for interview guide) that lasted approximately 40 to 60 minutes each. I recruited two participants who were former newspaper co-workers, and a third participant was recruited upon the suggestion of a journalist currently working in the field. Each participant was emailed a copy of the written IRB-approved consent form (see Appendix C for consent form) to review at least a week prior to their interview. The participants signed the consent forms prior to the interviews. The interviews were conducted between July and September 2017. The interviews took place at the participants' places of employment. They were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and the data was stored on the researcher's password-protected computer.

In order to preserve the confidentiality of the participants they were assigned pseudonyms and any reference to the names of their past and current places of employment, clients, co-workers, supervisors, and family members were removed from the transcripts. All contact information and identifying data were stored on the researcher's password-protected computer.

Table 1

Participant Description

Participant	Age	Children	Marital status	Current job	Race	Full-time years in journalism	Employment history
Delilah	27	0	single	Public relations firm	white	7 years	1 daily newspaper, 1 tri-weekly, and 1 weekly newspapers
Beth	35	1 minor	single	Public relations for college	bi-racial	3 years	1 daily newspaper, freelance for 2 newspapers
Emily	52	2 adult	divorced	Apartment manager	white	12 years	Multiple weekly and daily newspapers

Thematic Analysis

Narrative analysis was used to interpret the three participant interviews.

Czarniawska (2004) defines narrative, when used as a qualitative research design, as “a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected” (as cited by Creswell, 2013). This design was appropriate for this research question because narrative stories, when collected by researcher, often tell of individual experiences and may give insight into people's identities and how they see themselves (Creswell, 2013). Narrative research also pays careful attention to "turning points" in life stories and the context (place or situations) in which the narratives take place (Creswell, 2013).

The transcripts were interpreted using the following thematic analysis method developed by Braun & Clarke (2006).

1. Transcripts were read through once, and general notes about what was in the data were written down.
2. Transcripts were read through a second time and data-driven coding was conducted
3. Codes were sorted into potential themes.
4. Relevant coded data extracts were collated into identified themes and sub-themes.
5. All collated extracts were read for each theme, and considered whether they appeared to form a coherent pattern.
6. Transcripts were re-read to check for validity of the themes.

Trustworthiness of the Analysis

The researcher employed the process of bracketing, in which “investigators set aside their experiences, as much as possible, to take a fresh perspective toward the phenomenon under examination” (Creswell, 2013, p. 80). The researcher began the project by describing her own experiences in journalism during her research class discussion group as well as by reflexive writing and discussions with her thesis adviser. However, she acknowledges that bracketing is seldom done perfectly, and her own perspectives and experiences in journalism have undoubtedly guided some of her data interpretation.

The researcher’s thesis adviser conducted an audit trail. The researcher conducted member checks with each participant, in which she shared the results of the study and asked for the participants’ views on the credibility of the study’s findings and interpretations (Creswell, 2013). All participants confirmed that the themes uncovered

through analysis were consistent with the experiences they shared in their interviews (see Appendix D for member check statements).

Results

Data analysis revealed three overarching themes: self-identity as journalists persists after leaving newspaper jobs, other life roles took precedence over journalism when making the choice to leave, and journalism work was meaningful because it affected people personally.

Theme 1: Self-identity as journalists persists after leaving newspaper jobs

One theme that was apparent in all three of the former female newspaper reporters' narratives is identifying strongly as journalists despite no longer being employed at a newspaper.

Beth felt compelled to give assistance to the campus newspaper at the college where she works, bringing up this topic twice during her interview. She stated that younger journalists aren't following the tenets of "real journalism," and connected this to the poor quality of the campus newspaper, of which she was a staff member when she was a student.

I don't want to this to come out of my mouth but I think young folks nowadays, they can't see, the lines are too blurry between what's real journalism and what's not. ...Like if it was on the internet we pretty much thought it was garbage. If it was printed we thought it was accurate to the T. ... Like nowadays it's too blurry. (Journalists today) think, and I saw this, just in their writing, like, not just the way that they, you know do everything in first person [CHUCKLE] and talk about

“my my my” and “I I I” but just in, you know, the things they choose to cover or not cover ...

Beth continued:

... That was one reason why I really wanted to work with the student newspaper, even though we wouldn't oversee them, I still wanted to help them be good journalists so we could have this very organic news that came from campus that our alums could connect with. But it's too embarrassing to share with (alums), honestly, until we figure out a way to make it better.

Beth acknowledged that she is in a public relations position but asserted she still does journalistic work:

Interviewer: ... But do you feel like when you left the paper was it kind of done with journalism?

Beth: Oh no, I mean, I still do that in my work now, in a lot of ways.

Beth went on to describe how she still uses journalistic principles of authenticity in her work-related photography assignments:

(I want to) capture moments and not create them. That's something that's important to me you know, a lot of our student photographers are really good at controlled environments but not so good at event photography, and that's something that I would prefer to capture it than create it. And it's hard to do that, especially when you're in a field, we're PR, a lot of what we do is PR. I still want things to be very genuine.

Delilah works in a public relations position at a private firm that represents other companies. She also stated that she tries to adhere to journalistic principles of truth-

telling as much as possible even though her new job doesn't place as high a value on them:

If there's something going on that doesn't fit positively for our client, then we won't necessarily talk about it, or we talk about it in a way that seems more positive, which is not what you do at a paper. So that's been different.

Delilah explained that getting client approval of photos taken for social media or online use in advance was a big change for her. In journalism, having a story or photo reviewed in advance by its subject for approval before publishing is seen as a conflict to reporting truthful news. However, Delilah still tries to retain as much journalistic authenticity as possible.

I definitely try to be more like "this is really what happened" and things like that. But, for example, um, [construction company]. So we went to a construction site and we were supposed to cover what was happening when they were installing this new thing. And, so after we had shot the photos we had to send them off to the safety inspector to kind of clear... clear the photos, which was weird for me. And it was like we can't run (photos) four through seven because this guy wasn't tied off. We can't run (photos) eleven and ten because this should have been over here and stuff like that.

But Delilah goes on to explain, by using her computer to demonstrate, how she is expected to use photo-altering software to make photos more appealing to her firm's customers. She stated that it feels "weird," referring to an internal conflict between the ethics of her old journalism job and the expectations of her new public relations job.

Using Photoshop to change elements of a picture is considered an ethical violation for a journalist, the equivalent to lying to the audience:

So that's been kind of weird, ... so like take a picture of this nice landscape or something and there's like a Coke can in the bottom I can just get rid of it now (remove Coke can with Photoshop tools) and it doesn't matter.

Emily does not have a public relations job, but rather is an apartment complex manager. She identified herself as a journalist still, but as more of a personal, intrinsic trait. She called herself a "clever journalist" in the present tense while telling a story about recently seeing black smoke while waiting in a hospital parking lot to pick up a friend:

I'm a clever journalist, something's on fire. So yeah I was looking and I look and Costco gas station across from the hospital is very close to the black smoke ... and I thought 'well that's not good.' So I got out and went and looked and there was actually flame right sort of to the side. ... And I was going to take a picture. Some security man comes along saying 'ma'am if you're going to film you need to get...!' So I thought I would just move my car to the other side of the building.

Emily also discussed how she still feels that she is a journalist, but not a practicing one:

But there's always going to be a part of me that is interested in journalism, news, writing. I tell myself, whenever I get a little itch or urge, you know a writer can write anytime, anywhere about anything. There are lots of things I can write about. I can do that novel, I can do this, you know. I can freelance something if I see something I really care about...

Theme 2: Other life roles took precedence over journalism when making the choice to leave

For all three women, however, when they chose to leave journalism, it was largely due to identifying with other roles in their lives more strongly than being journalists. For Delilah, it was being a daughter and a friend which led her to desire moving back to her hometown.

Well it was never really my intention to leave journalism first, it was just I wanted to get back to (city). ... This is where I'm from and this is where my friends and my family are and just I've been gone since 2012 and kind of, out there on my own so I think you just, you get lonely after a while."

For Beth, her role as a mother is what led her to find a job with better hours to spend more time with her young child. She related a story of a long day at the newspaper that stood out in her mind:

There was one day (working at the newspaper), I'll never forget, it was like, I was there in the morning, covered stuff, took all the photos for probably two stories, and then was there at night designing all that. It was just a whole blitz of ... you know, I didn't want to do that anymore. ... And I didn't like missing out on my kid, I didn't like missing out on life, you know, I didn't like the uncertainty of, what in the hell are we going to do today?

Finally, Emily chose to leave her last newspaper job mainly because she went through a divorce. Her role as a newly single woman influenced her to find a job that included housing as a benefit, and gave her geographic distance from her ex-husband.

Emily: ... I was going to be getting a divorce and it was like, [ex-husband] came there in the '70s. Everybody in the world knows who he is. Everybody mostly likes him. It just seemed like, you know...

Interviewer: So, maybe a fresh start isn't the right word but-

Emily: Needed to be out of his town, I'd say ... And this [job] came open with like, you know, actually more money, actually less stress, the free apartment aspect.

Theme No. 3: Journalism work was meaningful because it affected people personally

Beth spoke of how it was important for her to share vital news with the rest of her community about the actions of government officials:

I loved, you know, I loved the responsibility of like getting, or being the watchdogs of my community. I felt like we, you know, there was times when I was in fiscal court or school board or different, boring meetings that people don't normally go to that I felt like, if we weren't there to report on what they were doing, what would they do? Especially in super small towns that don't have someone watching all the time.

Beth also found personal pride in a job well-done as a journalist:

...What has always appealed to me, working on a newspaper, is just all the different pieces that we have to, that every person, every story, every picture, all these different pieces are put together to make just this one product that everyone can just be, hopefully be proud of. That's what's always attracted me about

journalism, is not just getting my name out there, but just the whole thing. Just having the whole thing done and everyone being like, this is cool, you know?

Beth's desire to connect with her community and produce high-quality work was frustrated by chronic newsroom understaffing and unrealistic productivity standards at her last reporting job.

... They didn't replace positions when [employees] left. And so basically when [photographer] left, I took over basically full-time photography but then whatever else needed to happen, right? I think at the end there it was just me and [another reporter] for like a month or so, it was awful. ... And obviously the quality of the journalism was affected by the fact that we were all worked to death and had no motivation except for our own desire to be good journalists, to do better. ... We never got raises, had those unpaid furloughs, we were told constantly that what we were doing wasn't enough.

Delilah discussed how important it was when her reporting and photography affected people on a personal level.

Delilah: So I liked making people feel, I don't know, I don't want to say famous, but making them feel something just even if it was just once a day, once three times a week, or you know, whatever that circulation was.

Delilah described an assignment in which an intellectually disabled boy got to be a police officer for a day, which she said was one of her most meaningful experiences as a journalist. Photos from that day adorned her walls at her current office, along with other photos from her newspaper work.

One of my favorite assignments was that one right there in the middle with the four (photos). That boy, his name was [B.], he has Down's Syndrome, and for his birthday he wanted, he's always wanted to be a police officer, so for his birthday they let him be an officer for a day. So I got to follow them as he was an officer. They swore him in, he kind of patrolled downtown, then they did a mock, they pulled over some of the higher figures in town ...

Emily said she also placed value on stories that impacted people's lives on a personal level "even though you can't save the world, I always liked if you did something that seemed to matter a little bit." She added that because of short-staffing at her last newspaper job, she was not able to do these types of stories as much. She went on to describe a story she wrote that stood out to her as an example:

I did a story on this guy who was putting those um, crosses on the side of the road? And I had always wondered about that. ... And I saw somebody weed eating around it, so I stopped to see if they knew who... if they had any information. Well it turns out it was the actual person, and I talked to him. So I ended up doing a feature story on him and he had this major guilty conscience because he had been driving his car, in the rain, and his pregnant wife and toddler had all died in the accident and he had not died, obviously.

Interviewer: Oh gosh, yeah.

Emily: And so he's like 'why am I (alive)?' you, know? So he was very, very... you could see it when he was talking, like, you know, just totally depressed and guilty and sad. And so he... just talking to him I could tell he was going to get something therapeutic out of it, and then when the story ran he got a fair amount

of attention from a lot of people, and he came in to thank me later, so I doubt that solved his problem, but-... I think maybe it helped him realize that not as many people held him as responsible as he imagined.

Discussion

The themes that emerged from the former reporters' interviews about transitioning out of journalism support utilizing a life course perspective and Christiansen's (1999) definition of occupational identity to understand them better. The life course perspective "looks at how chronological age, relationships, common life transitions, and social change shape people's lives from birth to death." (Hutchinson, 2013, p. 8). A person's life course is not a straight path, but is filled with twists and turns made up of transitions, turning points, and role changes, influenced by the person's environment and personal characteristics (Hutchinson, 2013). Christiansen asserts that occupational identity, which is closely related to what we do, is central to coherence, meaning, and well-being in one's evolving personal narrative.

The women's need to self-identify as journalists after leaving the field could be a result of the entrenched public identity that journalists adopt as advocates, watchdogs, storytellers, and gatekeepers of community information. These women gained access to many aspects of their communities by being publicly identified as journalists, which reinforced the public value of their information gathering, interpretation, photography, and writing. On a personal level, when the participants have applied their journalistic beliefs and ethics to their current nonjournalism jobs, they also demonstrate how the norms and ethical beliefs of journalism are adopted as personal characteristics, not just "rules" to follow when working as a journalist. By still ascribing to this identity even

after their career changed, the women are making sense of their evolving life narratives with the belief that being a journalist is one of their core characteristics or part of their personal identity (Christiansen, 1999; Laliberte-Rudman 2002). A person's personal or occupational identity is a "composite" of one's occupations over time, according to Christiansen (1999). For these women, they continued to ascribe journalistic traits as part of their composite even though their current job was not within journalism.

Each woman in the study chose to prioritize other life roles over that of a reporter when making the decision to leave journalism. Beth, who is a mother, wanted to be able to spend more time with her child and have a stable schedule; Delilah, who is a daughter and friend, wanted to move back home to be closer to her parents and peer group; and Emily, a newly single woman, wanted to move to a different home and town following her divorce. This is an interesting contrast to the history of journalism, in which women struggled to break out of traditional feminine roles at home to join the public sphere of the newsroom. It could almost be seen as a step back for women's advancement from a feminist viewpoint when women choose to prioritize personal life roles when leaving a career that was historically difficult for women to achieve (Chambers & Steiner, 2010). However, it is impossible to ignore the temporal and economic context of the newspaper industry's decline in the participants' decisions to leave journalism (Barthel, 2017a). While it wasn't the primary driver of their decisions to take new jobs, all of the women expressed appreciation of their higher salaries. Emily and Beth both said they weren't able to perform the meaningful and high-quality journalism they wanted to do because of newsroom understaffing and unrealistic corporate productivity standards, which is directly connected to the financial decline of the industry.

The difference for these women, as compared to the early female journalists, is they had the freedom to choose to examine their roles, re-prioritize them, and seek new jobs that better fit the needs of their personal lives. Leaving a role, and recreating an occupational identity, has the potential to be a negative event depending on the circumstances. However, Laliberte-Rudman (2002) found in her research on caregivers that having control over one's occupations is key to realizing the positive benefits of occupation, and in turn, the identity derived from performing that occupation or occupations. This is supported by the life course perspective, of which human agency is an important component. Hutchinson (2013) states that the "use of personal power to achieve one's goals" is a positive element of the life course perspective that helps people develop their "future self." The participants in the study expressed they were able to control their career choices and prioritize roles, despite the contextual circumstances of the newspapers' economic decline, which they were not able to control.

Rowles (2008), as he examined life course perspective and environmental context, stated that being able to choose one's course of action is an important domain for well-being. He named three additional, overlapping life course domains: (a) achieving a sense of worth through occupation; (b) experiencing fulfillment through interpersonal relationships; and (c) experiencing the process of simply "being" by developing understanding and acceptance of one's place in the cosmos (Rowles, 2008). He also stated that at different stages in people's lives, they choose which of these domains to prioritize. For the women in the study, they all found that journalism was meaningful because their stories and involvement in the community affected other people personally, which is a type of fulfillment through interpersonal relationships.. The occupations of

attending public events, writing down other people's words and/or taking their pictures, sifting through the information and developing it into a written story, and then publishing it to a wider audience creates a powerful interpersonal connection with other people. This is the part of the participants' jobs as reporters that elicited rich descriptions and anecdotal stories during their interviews. The inability to achieve that connection, due to newspaper understaffing and unrealistic productivity standards that limited the reporters' time to write meaningful stories, may have led them to reprioritize and pursue that interpersonal connectedness in other, nonprofessional aspects of their lives. For Delilah it was moving back home to family and friends, for Beth it was having more time with her child, and for Emily it may have influenced her decision to end an unhappy marriage and move.

Implications for Practice

Understanding how vocational occupations affect self-identity and the meaningfulness of people's work during times of transition is an important element of client-centered care in occupational therapy. A key part of the occupational therapy process is therapeutic use of self, during which therapists "develop and manage their therapeutic relationship with clients by using narrative and clinical reasoning; empathy; and a client-centered, collaborative approach to service delivery" (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2014, p. S12). This study supports the use of narrative reasoning in occupational therapy to understand clients' occupational needs, and provide evidence-based health care to them (Hamilton, 2008). The interviews with the women in this study uncovered how much their previous careers as journalists still influence them. The skills, values, and beliefs these women developed as journalists

could be overlooked if one simply identified the women by their current vocational occupations. The skilled use of narrative reasoning by an occupational therapist should not just examine a client's present occupational performance and participation, but also uncover past occupations that developed the person into who they are in the present. Narrative reasoning that explores a client's present and past allows an occupational therapist and client to tap into a pool of experiences, strengths, and skills to discover the many facets of the client's occupational self-identity. This process will help the therapist and client collaboratively develop a shared picture of life post-transition, and what goals need to be accomplished to get there (Hamilton, 2008).

Limitations and Further Research

Limitations of this study include the small sample size, which did not achieve saturation. Two of the three participants were known to the researcher as former co-workers, and their shared experiences as reporters at the same newspapers may have influenced the participants' responses. Because this study focused on women who had been employed at Kentucky newspapers, the themes may not be generalizable in other parts of the United States where journalist working conditions may vary. The women also worked at small-town weekly and daily newspapers, with circulations under 10,000, so their experiences may be different than those of women working at larger, metropolitan newspapers.

Further research includes examining the life narratives of former Kentucky male reporters and comparing themes extracted from their interview data to those of the women in this study. Exploring the life narratives and occupational identities of people

who work in other declining industries, such as coal mining and in some regions, manufacturing, is also another area of potential research.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval



EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
Serving Kentuckians Since 1906

Graduate Education and Research
Division of Sponsored Programs
Institutional Review Board

Jones 414, Coates CPO 20
321 Lancaster Avenue
Richmond, Kentucky 40475-3102
(859) 622-3636; Fax (859) 622-6610
<http://www.sponsoredprograms.eku.edu>

NOTICE OF IRB APPROVAL
Protocol Number: 000780

Institutional Review Board IRB00002836, DHHS FWA00003332

Review Type: Full Expedited

Approval Type: New Extension of Time Revision Continuing Review

Principal Investigator: Sarah Heaney Faculty Advisor: Dr. Anne Fleischer

Project Title: Leaving journalism: Self-identity during career transition for former female Kentucky reporters

Approval Date: 6/19/17 Expiration Date: 2/28/18

Approved by: Dr. Jim Gleason, IRB Member

This document confirms that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved the above referenced research project as outlined in the application submitted for IRB review with an immediate effective date.

Principal Investigator Responsibilities: It is the responsibility of the principal investigator to ensure that all investigators and staff associated with this study meet the training requirements for conducting research involving human subjects, follow the approved protocol, use only the approved forms, keep appropriate research records, and comply with applicable University policies and state and federal regulations.

Consent Forms: All subjects must receive a copy of the consent form as approved with the EKU IRB approval stamp. You may access your stamped consent forms by logging into your [InfoReady Review](#) account and selecting your approved application. Copies of the signed consent forms must be kept on file unless a waiver has been granted by the IRB.

Adverse Events: Any adverse or unexpected events that occur in conjunction with this study must be reported to the IRB within ten calendar days of the occurrence.

Research Records: Accurate and detailed research records must be maintained for a minimum of three years following the completion of the research and are subject to audit.

Changes to Approved Research Protocol: If changes to the approved research protocol become necessary, a description of those changes must be submitted for IRB review and approval prior to implementation. Some changes may be approved by expedited review while others may require full IRB review. Changes include, but are not limited to, those involving study personnel, consent forms, subjects, and procedures.

Annual IRB Continuing Review: This approval is valid through the expiration date noted above and is subject to continuing IRB review on an annual basis for as long as the study is active. It is the responsibility of the principal investigator to submit the annual continuing review request and receive approval prior to the anniversary date of the approval. Continuing reviews may be used to continue a project for up to three years from the original approval date, after which time a new application must be filed for IRB review and approval.

Final Report: Within 30 days from the expiration of the project, a final report must be filed with the IRB. A copy of the research results or an abstract from a resulting publication or presentation must be attached. If copies of significant new findings are provided to the research subjects, a copy must be also be provided to the IRB with the final report. Please log in to your [InfoReady Review](#) account, access your approved application, and click the option to submit a final report.

Other Provisions of Approval, if applicable: None

Please contact Sponsored Programs at 859-622-3636 or send email to lisa.royalty@eku.edu with questions about this approval or reporting requirements.



Eastern Kentucky University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer and Educational Institution

APPENDIX B
IRB Approved Consent Form



Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Leaving journalism: Self-identity during career transition for former female Kentucky reporters

Why am I being asked to participate in this research?

You are being invited to take part in a research study about former female Kentucky newspaper reporters and their life narratives surrounding their career transition. You are being invited to participate because you were a newspaper reporter who has left the field at some point in the past 10 years. If you take part in this study, you will be one of about 5 people to do so.

Who is doing the study?

The person in charge of this study is Sarah Heaney at Eastern Kentucky University. She is being guided in this research by ECU professor Dr. Anne Fleischer, PhD, OT/L. There may be other people on the research team assisting at different times during the study.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to hear and understand the stories of former female Kentucky print reporters who have left journalism.

By doing this study, we hope to learn through your narrative about how your career transition did or did not affect your occupational participation and self-identity.

Where is the study going to take place and how long will it last?

The research procedures will be conducted at a private location of your choosing. The study is being conducted as part of the principal investigator's master's of occupational therapy thesis requirement, which will culminate with a written academic paper, thesis defense, and presentation at the department's research day in December 2017.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to draw a life timeline on paper, which will include personal and career life events that you feel are significant and meaningful to you. Next, you will take part in a semi-structured interview that will last approximately 1 hour. There will be a possible follow-up interview to be conducted in person or over the phone if distance prohibits another in-person interview. The interviews will be audio recorded and include a set of questions we will follow but not be limited to. You will tell about your experiences as a newspaper reporter, during your transition out of the field, and in your current occupational pursuits. We are not looking for a right answer, but you will be given opportunities to share your experiences. We will do our best to ensure you are treated with honesty and respect at all times.

Are there reasons why I should not take part in this study? What are the possible risks and discomforts?

It is understood that discussing your life experiences may bring back some memories and trigger thoughts that cause distress. Although we have made every effort to minimize this, you may find some questions we ask you (or some procedures we ask you to do) to be upsetting or stressful. If so, we can tell you about some people who may be able to help you with these feelings.

You may, however, experience a previously unknown risk or side effect.

Will I benefit from taking part in this study?

There is no guarantee that you will get any benefit from taking part in this study. However, some people have experienced a therapeutic release from discussing about their life experiences. We cannot and do not guarantee that you will receive any benefits from this study.

Do I have to take part in this study?

If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering.

What will it cost me to participate?

There are no costs associated with taking part in this study.

Will I receive any payment or rewards for taking part in the study?

There is no compensation for taking part in this study.

Who will see the information I give?

Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write up the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about this combined information. You will not be identified in these written materials.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. For example, your name will be kept separate from the information you give, and these two things will be stored in different places under lock and key. After three years, the audio recordings and transcripts will be destroyed.

However, there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court. We will be required to tell authorities if we believe you have abused a child or are a danger to yourself or someone else. Also, we may be required to show information that identifies you to people who need to be sure we have done the research correctly; these would be people from such organizations as Eastern Kentucky University

Can my taking part in the study end early?

If you decide to take part in the study, you still have the right to decide at any time that you no longer want to participate. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study.

The individuals conducting the study may need to end your participation in the study. They may do this if you are not able to follow the directions they give you, if they find that your being in the study is more risk than benefit to you, or if the agency funding the study decides to stop the study early for a variety of scientific reasons.

What happens if I get hurt or sick during the study?

If you believe you are hurt or if you get sick because of something that is done during the study, you should call Sarah Heaney at 859-779-4997 immediately. Thesis mentor Dr. Anne Fleischer also can be contacted at 859-622-6319. It is important for you to understand that Eastern Kentucky University will not pay for the cost of any care or treatment that might be necessary because you get hurt or sick while taking part in this study. That cost will be your responsibility. Also, Eastern Kentucky University will not pay for any wages you may lose if you are harmed by this study.

Usually, medical costs that result from research-related harm cannot be included as regular medical costs. You should ask your insurer if you have any questions about your insurer's willingness to pay under these circumstances.

What if I have questions?

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Sarah Heaney, at 859-779-4997. If you have any questions about your rights as a research volunteer, contact the staff in the Division of Sponsored Programs at Eastern Kentucky University at 859-622-3636. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

What else do I need to know?

You will be told if any new information is learned which may affect your condition or influence your willingness to continue taking part in this study.

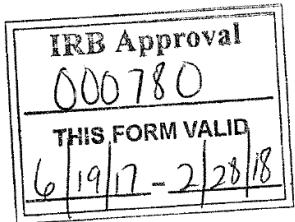
I have thoroughly read this document, understand its contents, have been given an opportunity to have my questions answered, and agree to participate in this research study.

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

Date

Printed name of person taking part in the study

Name of person providing information to subject



APPENDIX C

IRB Approved Interview Guide

Female reporters self-identity interview guide

Primary researcher: Sarah Heaney

1. Background questions:

- a. What was your educational training in journalism?
- b. What was your work history within the profession?
Probing questions: How long did you work as a journalist?
What job positions did you hold?
What were your job duties?

2. What about being a reporter was meaningful to you?

- Probing questions:
- Why did you choose to go into journalism?
What was a good day on the job like?
Did you have friendships with your co-workers? What was that like? Was the newsroom warm or more businesslike?
Which of your job duties did you like the most? Why?
What story (or stories) did you work on that had the most impact on you personally?

**3. Can you tell me about some of the reasons you chose to leave journalism?
How did you go about leaving your last reporter position?**

- Probing questions:
- Were family responsibilities a factor? Money? Travel? Work hours? Job insecurity? Poor bosses? Pursue a different career?
Tell me what it was like when you resigned. Did you give two weeks notice? Did you get fed up and walk out? Was there a goodbye dinner/party?

4. What was it like to go from your job role as a reporter to (professional/stay-at-home parent role currently held by interviewee)?

- Probing questions:
- What was the biggest change to your daily life after leaving journalism?
Did you wait a while before finding a new job or career?

5. How did leaving journalism affect or change your sense of belonging to your community? With our work peers? With your family?

6. Did you hold any specific beliefs or values that guided you in your job as a reporter? Do they still guide you in your current profession and personal life, or have they changed some?

7. How did you make sense of this major life change?

APPENDIX D

Member Checks

Beth member check

Active 31m ago


SAT 8:20PM

Hi! I'm going to be presenting my research results this coming Friday, and I need to conduct what's called a "member check." After analyzing your interview and the two other interviews from former female journalists, I was able to determine three main themes that you all had in common. I wanted to check to see if you agree that these themes are accurate representations of your experience:

Theme 1: Self-identity as journalists persists after leaving newspaper jobs

Theme 2: Other life roles took precedence over journalism when making the choice to leave

Theme No. 3: Journalism work was meaningful because it affected people personally

 Yes. I agree! Good luck

SAT 8:11PM

Hi! I'm going to be presenting my research results this coming Friday, and I need to conduct what's called a "member check." After analyzing your interview and the two other interviews from former female journalists, I was able to determine three main themes that you all had in common. I wanted to check to see if you agree that these themes are accurate representations of your experience:

Theme 1: Self-identity as journalists persists after leaving newspaper jobs

Theme 2: Other life roles took precedence over journalism when making the choice to leave

Theme No. 3: Journalism work was meaningful because it affected people personally



Yes

Awesome! Thank you!



Sarah Heaney <sarahmayh98@gmail.com>

Member check for journalism study

3 messages

Sarah Heaney <sarahmayh98@gmail.com>

Sat, Nov 25, 2017 at 8:32 PM

Hi, I hope you are doing well. I will be presenting the results of the study you participated in on Friday at the annual ECU Occupational Therapy Research Day. I appreciate your participation, and as part of the study I need your help to conduct a "member check." After analyzing your interview and two other interviews from two former female journalists, I was able to determine three main themes that you all had in common. Would you agree that these themes are accurate representations of your experience?

Theme 1: Self-identity as journalists persists after leaving newspaper jobs**Theme 2: Other life roles took precedence over journalism when making the choice to leave****Theme 3: Journalism work was meaningful because it affected people personally**[REDACTED]
to: Sarah Heaney <sarahmayh98@gmail.com>

Sun, Nov 26, 2017 at 8:59 AM

Hi Sarah,
I would definitely agree!

[Quoted text hidden]

Sarah Heaney <sarahmayh98@gmail.com>

Sun, Nov 26, 2017 at 11:13 AM

Thank you so much!
[Quoted text hidden]