

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

Female Journalists in New Zealand Daily Newspapers:
From Early Career to Gender Gap in Editorship

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD in

Department of Communication, Journalism and Marketing

Massey University

Palmerston North, New Zealand

Catherine Robinson Strong

2011

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors Associate Professor Margie Comrie and Dr. Nikki Hessel from the Department of Communication, Journalism and Marketing at Massey University and Dr. David Palfreyman from Zayed University for their professional and cheerful guidance and support to complete this project.

Also, I thank Massey University in general for its support in facilities and administration that are crucial for a longer term study like this. Many faculty and staff members have gone out of their way to create a learning atmosphere for me, or to devote time to let me discuss issues I confronted along the way.

This research was able to be completed only because of the goodwill and cooperation of hundreds of journalists in New Zealand who gave their time to fill out surveys, provide contacts of other journalists, answer questions, attend interview sessions, give feedback, and discuss newsroom practices and issues. I am particularly indebted to the nine female daily newspaper editors who devoted time to this project and also openly shared their experiences and viewpoints for me to include.

A very warm thank you is extended to my three daughters, Rebecca, Penelope and Amanda, plus long time colleague Karen Barnsley, who were extremely helpful on a week-to-week basis by keeping me focused on the project.

Abstract

This thesis looks at the gender power imbalance in New Zealand newspaper journalism. The balance between male and female journalists in news media has been under the research spotlight for almost four decades. Earlier New Zealand studies showed female journalists lagged well behind their male colleagues in jobs, pay, and seniority. More recent studies, however, concluded that women dominate journalism, meaning the majority of employees were women. Despite the large number of female journalists in the industry, a different picture emerged from detailed studies, particularly of the daily newspaper industry, which suggest women are relegated to lower career levels, and are almost invisible at the editorial and executive level. The same imbalance is well-documented in overseas studies of daily newspaper industries. However, the studies do not identify specific reasons to explain it.

The vexing question of WHY women seem to be scarce at the top level of daily newspaper journalism led to my interest in examining the state of female journalists in New Zealand's daily newspaper industry. Previous research overseas identified a specific culture in journalism newsrooms, a hegemonically masculine culture that seems to transcend national borders. The global nature of the journalism culture was a testing point for my study, and the conclusions indicate New Zealand is similar to other countries in supporting a daily newspaper culture that presents ingrained barriers for women to climb the career ladder.

My study firstly identified the gender imbalance in authorship of metropolitan newspaper news articles; secondly, examined what factors influence young journalists to remain in or depart daily newspaper careers; and thirdly explored the barriers and enticers for female

journalists going into management careers. This is the first study of those rare female journalists who do become daily newspaper editors, with in-depth interviews of all nine women who have been daily newspaper editors from 2000 through 2009. The interviews are buttressed with interviews of highly-skilled and experienced female journalists who remained long-term in the industry, but shunned the top position of editor. The interviews also include two male executives who were responsible for hiring and promoting editors.

This study is also the first to examine the other side – New Zealand female journalists who left the industry. An attitudinal survey of early-career journalists revealed that there is a large group of female journalists who exit newspaper jobs early in their career and some of their reasons for departure are due to the gendered nature of the newsroom culture.

This study concludes with recommendations to industry to help retain female journalists. These recommendations are based on three models developed by this research: the Funnel Shaped Career Path model that describes female journalists' career flow in newspaper journalism, the Glass Bubble model based on the enticers for female journalists to leave the industry early in their career, and the Collegial Wilderness model that demonstrates a major barrier for female journalists to remain as an editor long term.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Tables.....	xii
List of Figures.....	xiii
Chapter One: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 International Context.....	4
1.3 Personal Position in Relation to this Research.....	6
1.4 Gender and Daily Newspaper Foci.....	9
1.5 Research Questions.....	13
1.6 Overview of the Chapters.....	15
1.7 Summary.....	17
Chapter Two: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	19
2.1 Introduction.....	19
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	20
2.2.1 Journalism Culture Theory.....	21

2.2.2 Management Theory	26
2.2.3 Feminist Theory	28
2.3 Gender Equality in the News Media	33
2.3.1 Global Studies on Gender Equality in the News Media	33
2.3.2 New Zealand Studies on Gender Equality in the News Media.....	42
2.3.3 Lack of Female Sports Journalists	46
2.4 Growing Focus on Lack of Female Editors	51
2.5 Summary	60
Chapter Three: METHODS	63
3.1 Introduction.....	63
3.2 Qualitative vs. Quantitative Debate	64
3.3 Census	67
3.3.1 Census Spread of Female Daily Newspaper Editors	68
3.3.2 Census Spread of Journalism School Gender Ratio	68
3.4 Content Analysis Method	70
3.5 Attitudinal Survey Method	74
3.5.1 Internet Generated Survey	78
3.5.2 Survey Questions	80
3.5.3 Sample's Contact Details	81
3.5.4 Maximising Responses	82

3.5.5 Limitations	84
3.6 In-Depth Interviews Method.....	85
3.6.1 Interview Type	85
3.6.2 Researcher/Participant Relationship	90
3.6.3 Theory Construction	94
3.6.4 Interview Sample	94
3.6.5 Interview Questions	97
3.6.6 Interview Transcription.....	101
3.6.7 Interview Ethics Considerations	102
3.7 Summary	103
Chapter Four: RESULTS of CONTENT ANALYSIS	104
4.1 Introduction.....	104
4.2 The Collection Sample.....	105
4.3 Data Coding	107
4.4 Overall Results.....	108
4.5 Disaggregation by Newspaper Topic Section.....	110
4.6 Editors' Comments on the Observed Figures	114
4.7 Summary	116
Chapter Five: RESULTS OF ATTITUDINAL SURVEY	119
5.1 Introduction.....	119

5.2 Survey Response Rate and Profile of Respondents	120
5.3 Reasons for Originally Entering Journalism.....	125
5.4 Reasons for Remaining in Journalism	127
5.5 Reasons for Remaining in Daily Newspapers	129
5.6 Gender Difference in Duration of Daily Newspaper Career	131
5.7 Reasons for Leaving Journalism.....	133
5.8 Family Commitment and Journalism.....	136
5.9 What Would Attract Respondents Back To Journalism	137
5.10 What Would Attract Respondents Back to Daily Newspapers.....	138
5.11 Where Respondents Go After Leaving Daily Newspapers.....	139
5.12 Respondents on Overseas Experience	142
5.13 Summary	143
Chapter Six: RESULTS of IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS.....	147
6.1 Introduction.....	147
6.2 Interviews of Female Editors	149
6.2.1 The Participants	151
6.2.2 What Helped Their Career	157
6.2.3 How Participants Rose to Editor Level.....	161
6.2.4 Short Duration of Editor Career.....	165
6.2.5 Overall Assessment of the Editor Experience	167

6.2.6 Positive Aspects of the Position.....	169
6.2.7 Negative Aspects of the Position	171
6.2.8 Perceived Gender Difference in Management Styles	176
6.2.9 Ways to Encourage More Women to be Editors	180
6.2.10 Intuitive Leadership	183
6.2.11 Viewpoint on Gender Coping Theories	186
6.3 Interviews of Media Company Executives	187
6.3.1 Benefits of Additional Female Editors	188
6.3.2 Encouragers for Female Editors.....	189
6.3.3 Characteristics Required for an Editor.....	190
6.3.4 Balancing Family Life and Editorship.....	192
6.3.5 Short Duration of Editor Career.....	195
6.4 Interviews of Non-Editor Female Journalists	196
6.4.1 Profile of Female Non-editors	197
6.4.2 The Participants	198
6.4.3 Daily Newspaper vs. Weekly Newspaper Deadlines.....	200
6.4.4 Positive Aspects of Remaining in Newspaper Journalism	201
6.4.5 Encouragers to Aim for an Editor Job	202
6.4.6 Negative Aspects of Daily Newspaper Editorship.....	204
6.4.7 Intuitive Leadership	210

6.4.8 Forecast for Balanced Gender Leadership	211
6.4.9 Viewpoint on Gender Coping Theory.....	213
6.4.10 Male Editors' Coping Tactics	213
6.5 Summary	214
Chapter Seven: DISCUSSION	221
7.1 Introduction.....	221
7.2 Research Question One:.....	225
7.3 Research Question Two:.....	231
7.4 Research Question Three:.....	242
7.4.1 Masculine Culture	248
7.4.2 Negative and Positive Aspects of Being an Editor	252
7.4.3 Lack of Resources (General Disadvantages)	254
7.4.4 Lack of Preparation (Tacit Management).....	255
7.4.5 Lack of Professional Collegiality.....	263
7.4.6 Lack of Balance with Family Life	266
7.5 Glass Ceiling Questioned.....	269
7.6 Summary	271
Chapter Eight: CONCLUSION	276
8.1 This Study's Contributions and Limitations	276
8.2 Funnel-Shaped Career Model	280

8.3 Glass Ceiling vs. Glass Bubble Model	282
8.4 Collegial Wilderness Model	286
8.5 Five Recommendations to Increase Female Leadership.....	293
8.6 Further Research	296
8.7 Final Thoughts	297
REFERENCES	299
APPENDICES	315
Appendix 1 Authorship Coding Sheet	315
Appendix 2 Reference Group	316
Appendix 3 Attitudinal Survey Questions	317
Appendix 4 In-depth Interview Question Line	325
Appendix 5 Checklist One	327
Appendix 6 Checklist Two	328
Appendix 7 Information Sheet.....	329

List of Tables

Table 4.1 Female Bylines by Newspaper and Topic Section	113
Table 5.1 Survey Respondents Profile.....	122
Table 5.2 Respondents' Current Journalism Position.....	124
Table 5.3 Reasons For Originally Entering Journalism.....	126
Table 5.4 Reasons Current Journalists Remained In the Career.....	128
Table 5.5 Exodus from Daily Newspaper Career	133
Table 5.6 Reasons for Leaving Journalism.....	135
Table 5.7 What Would Attract Respondents Back To Journalism	137
Table 5.8 What Would Attract Respondents Back To Daily Newspapers	139
Table 5.9 Where Respondents Went after Leaving Daily Newspapers.....	140
Table 6.1 Female Editors Interviewed	151
Table 6.2 Profile of Female Editors Interviewed.....	154
Table 6.3 Factors That Helped NZ Female Editors' Careers.....	158
Table 6.4 Key Events Prior to Becoming an Editor.....	161
Table 6.5 Themes that Emerged from the Interviews.....	216
Table 7.1 Female Editors' View of the Job	252
Table 8.1 Female Editors at New Zealand Daily Newspapers	280

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Research Questions and Method	14
Figure 2.1 Authorship of Sports Articles	50
Figure 4.1 Gender Bylines at Each Newspaper	109
Figure 4.2 Gender Bylines by Newspaper Topic Section.....	111
Figure 5.1 Duration of Newspaper Career	132
Figure 6.1 Duration of Career for Female Editors	166
Figure 7.1 Family Structure of Female Editors	267
Figure 8.1 Funnel-Shaped Path for Female Newspaper Journalists	281
Figure 8.2 Collegial Wilderness	290