Journalism is a gendered institution. Gendered perceptions shape the practices, norms, routines, and structures of journalism (Iiris & Sinikka, 2018). A vast body of scholarly work has demonstrated how gender perceptions affect the dynamics within and outside the newsroom. Within the newsroom, gender affects story assignments (Byline Blog, 2012; Harp, 2007), newsroom hiring and promotion practices (Engstrom & Ferri, 1998), newsroom management styles (Everbach, 2006), and journalists’ overall satisfaction with the profession (Barnes, 2016). Outside the newsroom, gendered perceptions affect source selection (Craft & Wanta, 2004; Freedman & Fico, 2005), news framing (Correa & Harp, 2011; Meeks, 2013), and audience perceptions of a journalist’s credibility (Armstrong & McAdams, 2009; Brann & Himes, 2010). Given the continued importance of gender in journalism, it is essential to explore “the historical and institutional intertwining of journalism and gender” (Ruoho & Torkkola, 2018, p. 67), with special reference to how women journalists’ conceptions of gender influence their journalistic practices.

Scholars of journalism history have used various resources such as personal papers, autobiographies, news articles, oral histories, and interviews to document
the contribution of women journalists. Historical journalism has explored the development of women journalist associations (Jenkins et al., 2018); gendered practices in newsrooms (Lumsden, 1995); and the contributions of individual women journalists in various contexts such as war (Edy, 2019), civil rights (Broussard, 2003), and the suffragist movement (John, 2003).

The C-SPAN Video Library offers a unique way to extend this work by conducting comparative analyses of women journalists’ experiences through the ages and across various types of media specializations. The Video Library contains oral histories featuring women journalists specializing in various topics such as politics, sports, and photojournalism, where they discuss how gender shaped their identities as journalists. These first-person experiences are important because when we exclude women’s perspectives from journalism history, we create a distorted account of what journalism is and how it has evolved (Nicholson et al., 2009). Drawing connections between the gendered experiences of women and the journalism they produce will help us understand better how journalists’ identities shape their views of the world, and consequently, news coverage.

In this essay I draw from oral history interviews of six women journalists in the C-SPAN Video Library to explore the role of gender in the newsroom. In particular, I examine the following questions: How did women’s lived experiences in the newsroom color their reporting practices? What strategies did the women use to counter gender-based discrimination? How did women adapt to the changing norms of journalism? How did gender norms shape their identities as journalists? How did their perceptions vary depending on the type of journalism they practiced and the era in which they lived?

The six oral histories analyzed in this paper are filled with rich details from the lives of these women. They include information about their childhood; their introduction to journalism; their interactions with hostile editors, sources, and colleagues; descriptions of the kinds of stories they covered; incidents of sexual harassment at the workplace; and their attempts to balance family life with the demands of the workplace. Together, these oral histories present a composite picture of what it meant to be a woman journalist in the 20th century. In the sections below, I begin by describing the data and methods used in this study. I then briefly discuss the history of women in journalism in the early and mid-20th century, followed by a discussion of gender role socialization theory as a framework to explore my research questions. My findings indicate that broader social norms related to gender had a deep impact on women’s professional identities.
DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This study uses the C-SPAN Video Library to examine how six women journalists described the impact of gender on their reporting practices and their identities as journalists. Table 8.1 lists the journalists whose histories were included in this study. Five out of the six interviews used in this study were conducted for the Washington Press Club Foundation as part of its oral history project “Women in Journalism.” Mary Garber, Dorothy Gilliam, Ruth Cowan Nash, Betsy Wade, and Eileen Shanahan were part of the Washington Press Club project. Diana Walker’s interview was conducted by the Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin to mark the occasion of adding her photographs to its archive of photos taken by nationally acclaimed photojournalists.

The Washington Press Club Foundation’s “Women in Journalism” project started in 1986. It includes 57 transcripts and audio- and videotapes of interviews with 60 women journalists whose careers spanned three eras: from 1920 to World War II, from the end of World War II to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and after 1964 when discrimination on the basis of gender and race became illegal. The press club project aimed to “show not only how journalism evolved as more women entered but also how American society evolved—technologically as well as in attitude—and how women adapted to the changes around them” (Fuchs, 2003, p. 192).

Oral histories include personal stories as well as stories that are handed down through generations. Thus, they “reveal a group's collective memory and indicate values embedded in the culture” (Yow, 2015, p. 15) The stories are per-

<table>
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<th>Journalist</th>
<th>Specialization</th>
<th>Media organization</th>
<th>Years active</th>
<th>Date interview recorded</th>
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<tr>
<td>Diana Walker</td>
<td>Photojournalist</td>
<td>Time magazine</td>
<td>1979–2004</td>
<td>03/08/2013</td>
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personal narratives of the journalists, but they reflect larger patterns and signify the experiences of women journalists as a group. As Yow explains, “Oral history aims at discovering testimony for understanding a historical time or a present era and for understanding individual lives in society” (p. 16). Thus, the stories of the journalists are invaluable in understanding cultural norms of the times and their effect on newsrooms.

The oral history approach has a number of merits. The interactive nature of the interviews allows the journalists to reflect and comment on the subjects under discussion. It also allows them to recount facts, which helps interpret their experiences in the context of a life review. As Yow (2015) explains, oral histories tend to be authentic as “people tend, with the passage of time, to be more, rather than less, candid” (p. 22). When people are in the midst of an active career, they might think twice about speaking candidly for fear of repercussions, but near the end of one’s professional life, “there is a need to look at things as honestly as possible to make sense of experiences over a lifetime” (p. 22), which grants oral histories a sense of authenticity.

In order to address the research questions, I listened to each interview and took notes, paying special attention to the parts where the interviewees addressed gender and its impact on their career. Out of the six women in this sample, only one was African American; the rest were white. As shown in Table 8.1, the journalists were active in the late 1920s to the mid-2000s. The interviews were conducted in 1990, 1993, and 1994, with the exception of Diana Walker, who was interviewed in 2013. The interviews are of varying length, with the longest being the interview of Mary Garber, which lasted about 2 hours and 10 minutes, and the shortest being the interview of Ruth Cowan Nash, which lasted about 50 minutes. In the next section, I briefly outline how sociopolitical forces shaped the newsrooms of the 20th century.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WOMEN IN THE NEWSROOM

Previous studies have discussed the experiences of women journalists when they entered newsrooms in the early 20th century, after the passage of the 19th amendment that allowed women to vote. These pioneers performed well in men-dominated newsrooms, yet they faced barriers arising from the rigid gender-stereotypical roles assigned to men and women during that era. In order to succeed, women journalists working in the period between the 1920s
and 1940s adopted qualities usually ascribed to men, such as toughness and not showing emotion (Lumsden, 1995). They tried to navigate the line between traditional notions of femininity and the toughness expected of a reporter. As Lumsden (1995) found in her analysis of the lives of women reporters of this era, they labored hard to hide their anger at the instances of sex discrimination at work, continuously tried to prove their excellence, and consciously avoided challenging gender stereotypes lest they lose their tenuous position at their workplace. On one hand, the women faced pay discrimination and exclusion from professional events such as the White House Correspondents’ Association Dinner, but on the other, they used their presence in the newsroom to lobby for more coverage of issues that affected women’s and children’s lives (Lumsden, 1995). In order to succeed in their chosen profession, women of this era favored individualism. They shunned feminist values and avoided forging communities with other women.

At the end of World War II, when the men returned home from the war, American society was overtaken by a new wave of conservatism. Postwar messages of women’s empowerment coexisted with messages that the rightful place of women was in the home. The effects of this conservatism were felt within newsrooms, which had hired women staffers to fill the positions left empty by men correspondents who had been drafted for the war. According to the 1960 U.S. Census, 37% of reporters and editors working in newsrooms during this time were women. However, as Bradley (2005) argues, these numbers did not reflect the reality of women’s position in the newsroom. They were assigned smaller roles and were more likely to be asked to cover stories in women’s weekly magazines and women’s sections of the newspaper than general news assignments. Newsrooms were mostly run by men editors who were hesitant to hire women for more prestigious general reporting assignments. Women in broadcast news seldom saw or heard their voices on air, and women’s salaries remained far below those of men journalists. Overall, the condition of women journalists was similar to that of women in the newsroom at the beginning of the 19th century. African Americans in the newsroom fared even worse. Despite the Kerner Commission report of 1968, which had blamed the country’s race-related riots on the media’s stereotyping coverage of Blacks, African Americans made up only 2.6% of the staff in the newsroom in 1960 (Bradley, 2005).

In the 1970s, the equal rights legislation derived from the civil rights movements, and the attention garnered by the second wave of the women’s rights movement, marked a change in the attitudes and bargaining powers of women
who worked as reporters, editors, and photographers in newsrooms around the country. They began to organize and fight back against the men-dominated culture that prevented them from achieving professional success. Women journalists became activists, and they worked to diversify the news agenda to include stories on social problems, feminism, and human interest, in addition to stories about politics, scandal, and the government, which was the norm (Mills, 1997). Senior women journalists agitated for equal pay and were willing to file lawsuits to this end. This period was marked by changes in the news agenda: Black women began to be featured in mainstream women's magazines, women were hired as anchors on news programs, and feminist issues such as abortion received in-depth coverage in the news.

**HOW GENDER SHAPES NEWSROOM EXPERIENCES**

The opportunities that the women journalists talked about in this chapter received were shaped by prevalent ideas about gender and social roles. Some of these women described how gender considerations had shaped their relationships with their editors, colleagues, and sources and influenced the issues they wrote about. Existing research on gender in journalism has documented that men and women journalists tend to differ in terms of their newsroom experiences and how they cover the news. Women journalists tend to cite more women in their stories than men (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996). Women journalists also tend to use a greater variety of sources, use fewer stereotypes in their content, emphasize personalization, and frame stories more positively than do men reporters (Correa & Harp, 2011; Rodgers & Thorson, 2003). Women editors are less likely to differentiate between men and women journalists when assigning stories, while men editors have a preference for negative stories (Craft & Wanta, 2004). However, other studies have found that men and women behave in similar ways as journalists (Hanitzsch & Hanusch, 2012) or that external factors such as sociocultural values, the size of the media organization, and the type of ownership affect the gendered patterns in news coverage.

Two models of socialization—the gender model and the job model—have been used to explain these gender-based differences in the newsroom (Rodgers & Thorson, 2003). The gender model posits that women and men socialize differently in professional spaces because they share different values and priorities.
Given the traditional social roles of caregiver and nurturer that women occupy in society, they are associated with traits such as empathy and warmth. Men, on the other hand, are traditionally associated with leadership roles and are perceived as naturally tough and assertive (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993). These gendered perceptions affect men and women's professional lives. Women in the workplace are perceived as prioritizing interdependence, sharing, and nurturing behavior, while men are perceived as valuing independence and assertive behavior. Women also tend to place more value on cooperation and democratic structures at their workplaces than men. In addition, women and men differ in linguistic styles. While women tend to use indirect language and ask questions that invite elaboration and foster cooperation, men tend to be more direct in their language and use directives that could indicate impatience (Mulac et al., 2001). Applied to journalism, the gender model of socialization predicts that as a result of these gender-based differences, women and men will have different approaches to sourcing and framing news stories, and this will result in a difference in the content of news coverage. The gender model as a whole indicates that men and women differ in their level of commitment to work: Due to the differences in their socialization process, women prioritize their families over work, while men value commitment to work.

In contrast, the job model predicts that regardless of one's socialization, men and women will behave similarly if their experiences in the workplace are similar. Thus, workplaces that prioritize a masculine culture, such as networking on weekends or at the end of the workday, or forming informal communication channels that exclude women, tend to create lower levels of attitudinal commitment among women (Dodd-McCue & Wright, 1996). When applied to journalism, the job model predicts that gender differences in values and working styles are mediated by organizational factors such as ownership, size of the newsroom, audience demographics, and composition of the newsroom. In men-dominated newsrooms, women are expected to exhibit masculine behaviors in order to be accepted or promoted, but when the number of women or minorities in the newsroom goes up, expectations change. However, studies on the impact of women and minorities in the newsroom have found that the masculine culture of the newsroom is well-entrenched and difficult to change (Nishikawa et al., 2009).

In the sections below, I apply the gender and job theories of socialization to the oral histories of women journalists to determine the extent to which gender shaped their experiences in the newsroom.
Introduction to Journalism

Almost all journalists in this dataset described working in an overwhelmingly masculine culture. Their initial years were filled with struggles where they worked long hours for low or no pay, and worked hard to establish their journalistic credentials so they would be taken seriously by the men editors. Sportswriter Mary Garber started out as a society editor, covering dances and social events. She got a foothold in the sports section only as a result of World War II, which emptied the newsrooms of the men who were drafted into the war. She described this period as a time of “no discrimination” (C-SPAN, 1990), because women were doing everything at the newspaper. She acknowledged that during the course of her career she faced prejudices from people around her, and these had hurt her confidence. Yet she held herself partially responsible for the hostility she faced from colleagues. She explained her men colleagues’ behavior thus:

> The problem was that neither of us knew quite how to accept the other. All of us had grown up in a male–female segregated society and all of a sudden, this woman comes into a previously male-dominated area and the men just didn’t know what to do. I think I could have helped the situation a whole lot if I had been friendlier and spoken to them and told them who I was. (Browning, 2022a)

Though photojournalist Diana Walker started out in the 1970s—several decades after Garber—she faced a similar situation. As a freelance photographer for a political magazine in Washington, her job was poorly paid, but it gave her press credentials to shoot on Capitol Hill and the White House, and she used this opportunity to photograph events and build her portfolio, which eventually won her a contract at *Time* magazine.

Betsy Wade, who became the first woman copy editor at the *New York Times*, was among the top 10 women in her class of 1960 at Columbia, but she was rejected when she first applied to the *Times*. Her introduction to the newsroom was hostile. She described working in a filthy newsroom filled with scattered cigarette ends and spittoons, and men colleagues who used unprofessional language. In addition to the open hostility, Wade realized that there were double standards with regard to pay. Women journalists were barred from holding editor positions in the newsroom and were hired under the title of researcher. And though they
did a lot of the work that was typically done by editors, they remained confined to the title and low pay of researchers.

Dorothy Gilliam’s initiation into journalism was somewhat different from her white peers. Having grown up as a Black woman in a working-class family, she was unaccustomed to seeing Black people working as doctors or lawyers or occupying positions of power. But journalism made her feel powerful, and she received a lot of affirmation on seeing her name in print. Gilliam started out working as a secretary at a Black women’s magazine, but when she tried to leverage this experience to get a reporting position at mainstream newspapers, she was rejected. So she decided to enroll at Columbia University to get the credentials she needed to be accepted in a mainstream newsroom. Her cohort was representative of real-world newsrooms of the times—it was white, male, and upper class. Gilliam described her experience in journalism school as “traumatic” and recalled trying to be equal to her classmates, who had a wide-ranging knowledge of culture and society, and to excel in her work. The sense that she did not fit in followed her from journalism school and stayed with her throughout her career as a journalist.

These accounts of women who entered journalism decades apart are uncannily similar and reflect how organizational structures affect whether one can enter the profession and be successful. Institutions with masculine structures create implicit signals about who is credible and acceptable as a journalist. These institutions rely on knowledge derived from socially constructed categories of gender to act as gatekeepers of the profession. Women who enter such environments are socialized from the very beginning to adopt the masculine culture or risk being left behind.

**Navigating the Masculine Culture of the Newsroom**

Traditional newsrooms were structured to promote the “man-as-norm and woman-as-interloper structure” (Ross, 2001, p. 535). Such environments encouraged conformity with the masculine norm and questioned behaviors that fell outside the strictly defined boundaries. Ross (2001) explains that women employ a number of strategies to navigate a gendered workplace. These include

*incorporation* (one of the boys), which requires women to take on so-called masculine styles, values and reporting behaviours such as “objectivity”;

feminist, in which journalists make a conscious decision to provide an alternative voice, for example, writing on health in order to expose child abuse and rape; and retreat, where women choose to work as freelancers rather than continue to fight battles in the workplace. (p. 535)

The oral histories of these six women journalists contained several descriptions of each of these types of behaviors. Interestingly, these behaviors varied depending on the era and the nature of the media organization. Women who worked in the early decades of the 20th century were more likely to adopt masculine norms unquestioningly and act as “one of the boys” in order to fit in. But women who worked in larger and urban newsrooms in the mid and latter decades of the century were more likely to exhibit feminist behaviors, or a mix of incorporation and feminist attitudes. Women who wanted to have a family life and children were most likely to exhibit retreat behaviors, as were senior journalists who had spent their careers protesting benevolent sexism and outright hostility from colleagues but seen only incremental change.

In the interviews analyzed in this chapter, the women journalists mentioned using a variety of tactics to navigate hostility arising from gender differences. Some tried not to make too many waves; instead, they tried their best to get along with colleagues. Others refused outright to acknowledge the hostile work environment. Some women preferred using humor, or not reacting to perceived slights, while others tried doing their best work and working harder than anyone else. Some women also fought the system by building allies among men and persisting despite all odds. These tactics differed depending on the newsroom environment. For example, Mary Garber, who was the only woman in her newsroom, advised women to avoid looking for discrimination in the workplace. She said that women were inevitably going to run into discriminatory behavior, but they should try to roll with the punches and use their sense of humor to work around such situations. Similarly, Dorothy Gilliam, who was among the only women of color in the newsroom, did not share her traumas of reporting while Black with other people in the newsroom. Instead, she maintained a calm outwardly appearance even though she felt a lot of turmoil inside. Betsy Wade, as the first woman copy editor in the newsroom, dressed conservatively to avoid attracting attention to herself. In all these instances, the women realized that as a result of being outnumbered, their voices were unlikely to be heard, pointing yet again to organizational structures that affected their professional identities.
Many women interviewed for the project described facing discrimination when they decided to start a family and being forced to choose between their career and their family life. Most women in newsrooms in the 1940s through the early 1960s did not have children, and the early women reporters examined in this study, such as Ruth Cowan Nash and Mary Garber, decided not to marry or have children. As Nash mentioned, she “was very anxious to be a success in the writing business . . . and in those days the AP didn’t want a married woman.” Similarly, Betsy Wade recalled being fired from her job when she got married and had a child. Dorothy Gilliam, who wanted to work part-time while managing her children at home, was forced to quit her job when her editor complained that her situation was being perceived as unfair by the men journalists. After a hiatus of about seven years, she was hired back by the Washington Post as an editor in the style section, but this was possible only because of the Kerner Commission Report of 1968, which had prompted newspapers to hire more Black staff.

In the absence of a unified support structure that could support and advocate for them, some women created informal structures within and outside the newsroom to counter the masculine culture of the workplace. Women journalists rallied around other women and looked out for one another. Eileen Shanahan mentioned the existence of an informal “pinch list,” an informal list of the names of men who were known for harassing women reporters. Shanahan said that this information circulated informally among women who covered Congress so they would know which men should never be interviewed alone, and would be prepared to tackle them.

Though the increasing number of women in the newsroom was beneficial to women journalists, some perceived a downside to this. As Mary Garber said, the position of young women sports writers is far more difficult today than in her days because people have come to realize that women sportswriters are here to stay. As the only woman in the newsroom, she found that people accommodated themselves to her presence, and she tried her best to fit in with them, but the presence of more women was perceived as a threat to the men-oriented newsroom culture.

Reflecting on her experiences as a woman in the newsroom, Garber said that one of the problems women face in modern newsrooms is the lack of acceptance from men sportswriters. When a school prohibits women journalists from entering the locker room, men dismiss it as the woman’s fault, instead of treating it as a problem for journalists as a whole. Commenting on the situation, she said:
I can’t understand why the men don’t realize this and why they aren’t as willing to fight for our rights as they are for their own rights, but that isn’t the way it works and they don’t seem to realize that if I lose my rights, then they are going to lose theirs too. (Browning, 2022b)

The journalists who adopted activist roles toward the end of their careers were more likely to retreat from mainstream journalism and try to influence change from outside the institution. Dorothy Gilliam recalled that in the late 1970s, she observed an attitudinal change at the Washington Post, particularly a decline in support for civil rights, given the rise of the women’s movement. Realizing that she no longer found fulfillment working at the newspaper, where she felt sidelined, she sought her calling elsewhere. She began teaching journalism, served on the boards of journalism education institutions, and wrote a book about media diversity—all efforts designed to improve the profession she had loved.

How Gender Shapes Reporting Assignments and Newsroom Interactions

Gender roles affect women journalists’ interactions with their men editors, colleagues, and sources. Beasley and Gibbons (2003) found that men editors often perpetuated discrimination against women journalists but also that while this was often the case, there were some men editors who stood up for women staffers. Mary Garber spoke positively about her editors’ contributions toward her career.
She recalled that in 1946, when she was denied entry into the press box because of her gender, her editor wrote to the athletic directors of Duke, Wake Forest, University of North Carolina, and North Carolina State University, saying that if they turned her away, they were turning away a member of the *Winston-Salem Journal-Sentinel* staff and not an individual. Garber recalled that this letter helped her gain acceptance at college sporting events.

Eileen Shanahan, who worked in the newsroom in the 1960s and 1970s, also found allies in some of her male colleagues. She recounted that when a male secretary of the U.S. Treasury had waved her away when she tried to ask a question at a press conference, a male colleague of hers had stepped in and asked that he respond to her question. And though she said she did not cover economics differently from a male reporter, she recounted an incident where she had lobbied to change the manner in which women were presented in unemployment statistics. While the category of “head of the household” included married men, it did not mention working women who supported their families. Shanahan brought this issue to the attention of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and lobbied successfully with other women to have it changed.

The journalists in this sample described a range of direct and indirect impacts of gender on their profession in terms of the content they produced and the assignments they received. Mary Garber mentioned that she was so grateful to her editor for facing negative comments, and taking a risk by having a woman on the staff as a sportswriter, that she developed a reputation for always saying good things about people and never being too critical.
Others, such as Betsy Wade, were slow to be promoted, despite being stellar workers. Their career trajectories were slowed down by men editors who doubted their journalistic skills, despite evidence to the contrary. Wade was paid below the prevailing scale at the time; however, due to the lack of precedent in the newsroom, and lack of data on women’s employment, she was unable to advocate for herself. Having done a lot of difficult, sensitive work on the foreign copy desk where she edited stories on the Vietnam War, and handled high profile obituaries, she had made a reputation for herself as a hardworking, reliable, impartial editor. Yet no one considered her for the assistant editor position when it became available. When she expressed her interest in the position, the senior editor asked her if she was willing to give up her weekends for the job. Wade said she realized that the masculine culture of the newsroom did not leave room for family life, and the only way up the ladder was through working the late shift. However, she found another barrier in her way when the city editor declined to give her the late shift. He was unwilling to trust her because of a previous negative experience he had with a woman colleague. He also considered Wade unfit for the position as it involved exercising news judgment and deciding on the layout of stories—skills he felt women journalists lacked. She found few allies in the masculine culture of the newsroom, and for 20 years she was the only woman covering economic issues at the paper.

Photojournalist Diana Walker and reporter Ruth Cowan Nash described adapting so-called stereotypical feminine qualities to their advantage. Walker developed a specialty in being unobtrusive and taking “behind the scenes” photos, which were valued for their candid nature and authenticity. Referring to herself as “a stealth weapon,” she said she perfected the art of blending into the background and never intruding upon her subjects. Nash, who covered World War II from the battlefield, said that though she would be present in the room while soldiers discussed their strategy, she made it a point to never intrude, because she didn’t see much of a woman’s angle in these stories. Since she was assigned to cover war stories from a woman’s angle, she stuck to covering stories about nurses, hospitals, food, and civilian issues.

Gender also affected the women journalists’ relationship with their sources. Mary Garber described being treated as a novelty as she was often the only woman sportswriter at a game. Since she was not allowed to enter the men players’ dressing rooms, she had to make advance arrangements to speak to players and rely on coaches to hold their postgame conferences outside the dressing
room. Garber recounted several instances of benevolent sexism in her interactions with sources. For example, she was once asked to sew a basketball player’s ripped pants. On another occasion, a player sought her advice for asking a girl out on a date, and yet another sought encouragement from her when he was drafted to go to Vietnam.

As a Black woman, Dorothy Gilliam described being treated differently by Black sources. Some of the politicians she covered during her early days as a reporter expected her to give them special treatment, which made her uncomfortable as a journalist. She also described being assigned specifically to cover poverty and welfare stories. Though she enjoyed doing these stories, she was conscious that her career might be stifled if she was pigeonholed. Later in her career at the *Washington Post*, when she was hired to edit the style section, she focused on using that section to portray Black culture in a coherent manner.

**CONCLUSION**

The C-SPAN Video Library offers a great source of primary research material to answer questions about the evolution of journalism over time from women’s perspectives. This study used an oral history approach to examine how gender affected the professional identities of women. Though the sample analyzed in this study offered rich details, it suffered from a lack of diversity. Only one Black woman’s interview was available. The inclusion of interviews with more women of color will help answer additional questions about the intersectional nature of women journalists’ experiences in the newsroom.

The findings in this essay show that the job model of socialization has a huge impact on shaping women journalists’ identities and careers. These women’s lived experiences in the newsroom affected the type of stories they produced. The masculine culture in which they were socialized left little room for questioning the norms, but despite that, these women succeeded in diversifying the news agenda, incorporating marginalized voices, and promoting issues that were traditionally not considered newsworthy. In doing this, these women were instrumental in changing the norms of journalism. Their perceptions of gender roles and the strategies they used to counter gender discrimination were influenced to a great extent by the prevailing sociopolitical forces, which acted as a powerful tool to cause significant shifts in the masculine newsroom culture.
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