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Reconstructing Collective Professional Identity: A Case Study of a Women's Journalist
Association in the Post-Second Wave Feminist Movement in the United States

Abstract

This study explores the relationship between social movements and professions by focusing on the development of women journalist associations in the post-feminism era in the United States. The analysis focuses on the case of the U.S.-based organization JAWS (Journalism and Women Symposium), using 41 oral history interviews with JAWS members and archival research. The results illustrate how the members of JAWS defined, contested, and negotiated the collective identity of their organization as well as the meaning of women journalists more broadly.

Keywords: women journalist, journalist association, feminist movement, collective identity, social movement organizations, oral history

One way to understand what it means to be a woman journalist is to consider the gendered professional identity as collectively constructed and historically situated. New social movement theorists have claimed that such identity did not just exist *de facto* on the grounds of individuals sharing the same gender category and work positions but that it was created and recreated in the course of women's movements (Mueller, 1992; Polletta and Jasper, 2001; Taylor, 1989; Taylor and Whittier, 1992). Yet, very few studies have empirically examined the impact of women's movements on women's professional identity, especially "when the marching stops" (Walton, 1988) or, in other words, in the absence of a structured movement. Although numerous studies address the influence of women's movements at the macro-societal and cultural level, regarding legislation and public policy (e.g., Dahlerup, 1986; Haussman and Sauer, 2007; Rosen, 2006), little is known about how these movements have shaped women's professional lives.

This study attempts to explore how the ideas and agenda of the women's movements were carried into professions and empowered women to continue to fight for gender equality *in* and *through* their professions. We use the prime example of the U.S.-based journalism organization JAWS (Journalism and Women Symposium) to analyze how women journalists translated the discourse of the second-wave feminist movement into their profession and redefined their collective professional identity in the post-feminist U.S. Since its inception in the mid-1980s, JAWS has blossomed into a professional organization of more than 700 women journalists whose mission is to support female empowerment and accurate representations of all groups in society (Journalism and Women's Symposium, 2015). Its members include women who have worked for The Associated Press, *The New York Times*, and NBC-TV. For the past 30 years, JAWS has occupied a unique place in American women's history with its vocal emphasis on feminism and equality in journalism (Cramer, 2000).

Women's movements around the world have different historical origins, priorities of issues, structural developments, and compositions of key members (Margolis, 1993). In the U.S., women journalists have played a significant role in women's movements (Beasley and Gibbons, 1993; Carter, Branston, and Stuart, 1998). They organized the first women's group, with the founding of the Women's National Press Association in 1882, and many additional women journalist associations were organized throughout the 20th century (Beasley, 1988; Burt, 2000; Lang, 1999; Voss and Speere, 2008). Scholars argue that these associations were rooted in women's movements, not only sharing the movements' reformist outlook but also promoting their social causes and public awareness (Bradley, 2005; Burt, 1997, 2000). Such arguments, however, tend to treat women journalist associations more or less as social movement organizations (SMOs). By emphasizing the feminist nature of women journalist associations, studies have nonetheless downplayed their construction of professional identity. Moreover, existing scholarship primarily focuses on the rise of women journalist associations during the first and second feminist movements, but little attention has been paid to the associations established beyond the movement years. This analysis of JAWS aims to illuminate the complex relationship between social movements and professions, especially concerning the formation and reformation of collective professional identity.

Literature Review

Bridging SMOs and Professional Associations

Sociologists have traditionally considered social movements and professions as two distinctive organizing structures. Social movements are often characterized as non-routine, abnormal, and unstable entities wherein a collective of alienated and malcontent actors try to challenge the power structure (Kornhauser, 1959; Turner and Killiam, 1987; Zald and Ash,

1966). Professions, on the other hand, are seen as a highly formalized and institutionalized structure with set “rules of the game,” privileged social status, and an emphasis on competition and reward in the context of work (Bucher and Stelling, 1969).

In line with this dichotomic definition, literature in organizational studies often highlights the different goals, functions, and compositions of social movement organizations (SMOs) and professional associations. SMOs are typically founded to achieve movement goals related to political, economic, and social change (Cohn, Barkan, and Halteman, 2003) or are based on gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and other identity markers of a marginalized group (Woodward, 1997). The boundaries of who is included in the group are often fluid (Gerlach and Hine, 1970). Membership growth and decline depends on multiple influences, including members’ values, beliefs, and emotional commitment to the organization. These engagements are encouraged by cultural practices, such as demonstrations, social gatherings, and meetings, which can sustain emotional commitments (Cohn et al., 2003).

Similar to SMOs, professional associations allow members to connect through a voluntary commitment to the values and functions of the group. Professional associations focus on uniting practitioners who “judge one another as professionally competent and who have banded together to perform social functions which they cannot perform in their separate capacities as individuals” (Merton, 1958: 50). A key aspect of the development of professional associations is the balance between collective identity, which emphasizes influence on a profession, and services for members, or significant incentives (Bennett, 2000). Therefore, these associations provide key benefits, including social and moral support, advocacy for improved work conditions and salaries, and motivation (Merton, 1958). They also offer networking

opportunities (Forret and Dougherty, 2004) and mentoring, which is a key element because inclusion and role modeling can lead to career advancement (Dansky, 1996).

While the differences between SMOs and professional associations are substantial, some recent scholarship bridges the conceptual differences by examining the “boundary crossing” that occurs when professionals participate in social movements or seek social and cultural changes in existing professions. Sachs (2000) developed the concept of an activist professional in the context of education, connecting professionalism with an inherently political and social focus. Activist professionals emphasize inclusiveness, collective action, effective communication of aims, recognition of the expertise of members, trust and mutual respect, action infused with passion, and pleasure and fun (Sachs, 2000).

We argue that women’s professional associations in general, and women journalist associations in particular, represent hybrid organizations featuring the functions and goals of professional associations while representing the activist ideals of SMOs. To study the complex nature of women journalist associations, we need to consider the concept of collective identity.

Collective Identity: Hybridity and Fluidity

Collective identity is shared among a group of individuals with a characteristic in common that they have acknowledged as contributing to their self-definition, such as ethnicity, gender, political ideology, or profession (Ashmore, Deaux, and McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). In the case of social movements, collective identity may imply political consciousness or a need for collective action (Ashmore et al., 2004). This “politicized collective identity” results from people becoming involved in political protest on behalf of a group, which leads that group to politicize (Simon and Klandermans, 2001). Because social movements often draw strength from acting as a unified group, collective identity is key to this unity (Guenther, Mulligan, and Papp, 2013).

Maintaining boundaries is a key element of collective identity, as group members may engage in “oppositional othering” to identity differences from those who are not part of the group (Guenther et al., 2013: 471). Other key elements of collective identity include self-categorization, or identifying oneself as a member of a group; evaluation, the positive or negative feeling the individual has toward the social category; the degree of importance the individual attributes to group membership; a sense of emotional attachment to a group, including how the individual connects his or her individual fate to the group’s fate; and social embeddedness, or how a collective identity relates to an individual’s social relationships (Ashmore et al., 2004). Therefore, collective identity is significantly influenced by the experiences and feelings of individual members and how they relate to their social category and one another.

The role of ideology, or understanding a group’s beliefs and experiences over time, is also valuable to examine. As Gongaware (2011) suggested, “Even when engaged in completely new activities or pursuing entirely new goals, movement participants will still consider themselves to be part of the same group” (39-40). That is, they work to adjust and adapt their collective identity to reflect existing understandings of what the group is. Continuity may be maintained through drawing on members’ collective memories and narrative commemorations while assessing the possibility of change and aligning with other groups and broader movements (Gongaware, 2011).

To further understand how collective identity is shaped in a hybrid organization such as women journalist associations, it is helpful to consider the concept of organizational identity, or the shared understanding among members of an organization as to “who we are” and what makes the organization distinctive (De Bruin, 2000). Organizational identity also relates to organizational role and function, including its mission and vision (Young, 2001). Building from

Albert and Whetten (1985), Kreutzer and Jäger (2011) suggested that organizational identity consists of attributes members see as “fundamental (central) and uniquely descriptive (distinctive) and that persist in the organization over time (enduring)” (639).

U.S. Women Journalist Associations and the Case of JAWS

The development of women journalist organizations in the U.S. illuminates the convergence between professional associations and social movement organizations. Although women were initially excluded from mainstream press clubs, they began to form their own associations, modeled after the women’s club movement of the 19th century that brought women together for educational and social purposes (Beasley, 1988). By the end of the 1890s, an estimated 700 women had joined women journalist associations in 17 states to claim a legitimate place within the field of journalism and to provide “a sense of power, solidarity, and identity women could rarely have experienced in mixed-sex organizations” (Burt, 2000: XXV). For women journalists, the clubs provided an outlet for professional development, and the women could influence one another’s aspirations and achievements (Beasley, 1988). Women’s press organizations emerged in tandem with women’s rights issues. In fact, many founders and officers of the women’s press associations were also active suffragists and became spokespersons for the suffragist movement (Burt, 1997, 2000). These associations continued to emphasize the professionalism of women journalists (Chambers, Steiner, and Fleming, 2004).

Women journalist associations continued to grow in number and size during second-wave feminism in the 1960s U.S. (Bradley, 2005), which originally focused on dismantling workplace inequality but soon broadened the scope of fighting gender discrimination to include every aspect of women’s lives (Gilmore, 2008). Prominent figures, such as Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem, led and defined the movement through their media activism. A wide range of women

journalists engaged in micro-activism through community organizing and mobilizing (Chambers et al., 2004: 162). Many of them, including Shirley Christian and Peggy Simpson, put their careers on the line and led the concerted effort for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and filed lawsuits or federal complaints of discrimination to press for equal pay and equal opportunity in news organizations (Beasley and Gibbons, 1993; Chambers et al., 2004). The much-heightened profiles of these activist activities, however, left the impression that women journalist associations served more as SMOs than professional associations.

The late 1970s and early 1980s, however, saw the decline of women journalist organizations, as most previously male-exclusive press organizations began to accept female members (Burt, 2000). The women journalist associations seemed to lose appeal, especially in the midst of the increasingly popular counter-feminist conservative discourse that challenged the accomplishments of second-wave feminism (Bradley, 2005). It was in this context that Journalism and Women's Symposium (JAWS) was established in 1985.

JAWS began when a group of 16 female journalists and educators convened in 1985 in Colorado to begin an organization that would provide "emotional and professional sustenance" (Cramer, 2000: 89). This "camp" spawned the JAWS organization, which was motivated by social connections and recognition that women journalists face professional challenges, particularly lack of advancement and exclusion in news coverage and editorial decision-making.

Most of JAWS' founders and early members were the key journalistic figures of the second-wave movement in the 1960s U.S., such as Peggy Simpson, Betsy Wade, Tad Bartimus, Joy Cook, Kay Mills, Melissa Ludtke, and Linda Deutsch, yet they differed in their views of the aims of the organization, specifically whether the camp should "refresh and replenish" (Cramer, 2000: 89) or engage in collective action. JAWS grew rapidly in the 1990s to more than 300

members and reached more than 700 members in the 2010s. The organization has become a multi-generational organization, also drawing members who are in their 20s and 30s and who ascribe to the third-wave feminist ideology. JAWS thus serves as a prime case to examine how members of this hybrid organization negotiated and redefined their collective identity.

The organization began with a non-hierarchical structure without officers and grew through word of mouth. It eventually moved to a more formal arrangement in which leaders sought nonprofit status and created a mission statement and bylaws. The group continued to focus on increasing diversity and supporting women as journalists and educators, and the annual camps began to focus more on women's issues and job training.

JAWS represents an organization emerging out of the feminist movement. Feminist organizations follow a feminist ideology, guiding values, goals, and outcomes (Martin, 1990). They also represent a "species" of social movement organizations, although using strategies and tactics to pursue feminist goals would be necessary to classify it as a feminist movement organization (Martin, 1990). Feminist organizations also change with time.

Patriarchal approaches to organizing include an emphasis on competitive individualism; cause-effect/linear thinking, which suggests that women adopt traditionally masculine approaches to leading organizations or emphasize the advantages of stereotypical "feminine" behavior and values; and separation or increasing individual autonomy, in which members distinguish themselves as individuals (Buzzanell, 1994). Feminist approaches, however, challenge gendered logics of organization (Acker, 1995) and can reveal the value of collective/democratic and value/rational organizational structures and passive styles of organizing (in contrast to competition) as well as reframe the notion of the "other" as

advantageous rather than separate, excluded, or inferior (Buzzanell, 1994). Collective and personal identities are continually negotiated within these organizations.

Methods and Data

This study investigated how JAWS members, inspired by second-wave feminism, inherited but also negotiated and redefined the collective professional identity of women journalists in the U.S. We first conducted extensive archival research, combing through institutional documents of JAWS, including personal correspondence among key members, official newsletters, programs and video recordings of annual camps, membership directories and biographies, and unpublished manuscripts. These source materials not only provided an authentic and comprehensive picture of JAWS and its members, but they also offered a glimpse of the debates and concerns among members regarding the goals and identity of the organization in its formative years.

Our research team then conducted oral history interviews with JAWS members. Oral history as a research method has been increasingly considered a vital access point to understand the plurality and connectedness of human experiences (Ritchie, 2011; Thomson, 2007). Recently, it has been widely used in studies of social movements and professional organizations (Bosi, 2015). For the current study, we recorded 41 oral histories with JAWS' founders, former presidents, and early members but also more recent members to capture institutional memories. We conducted the first set of interviews at the annual JAWS camp in Vermont in October 2013, followed by visits to the homes and offices of members in Washington, D.C., New York City, and a few Midwest cities in 2014.

The oral history interviews, on average, lasted about three hours, with the longest lasting more than seven hours. The interview questions probed the following topics: 1) their involvement with JAWS and their sense of belonging to the organization; 2) their memories of

the early history and development of JAWS, especially regarding the scope and composition of the membership; 3) their evaluation of the impact of JAWS on their professional and personal lives and on their understanding of journalism as a profession; and 4) their perspectives on the place and value of JAWS compared to professional associations and social movement organizations.

The interviews were video- and audio-recorded and then fully transcribed. The analysis of data involved open coding (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) of more than 1,500 pages of transcripts to formulate the main themes and broader categories emerging from the data, followed by a fine-grained, focused coding to delineate subcategories or variations within the broader themes (Emerson et al., 1995).

Analysis and Findings

“Women” as a Uniting Identity

As JAWS began to coalesce as an organization, members united around their roles as women and more specifically as female journalists. The founders envisioned JAWS serving as an exclusive space to gather and discuss shared experiences. Although JAWS focused on some activist aims, particularly as it grew, members more often focused on their role as “women” over the more politically motivated designation as “feminist.” This discursive strategy was evident in how members talked about the benefits of their involvement. Jane Marshall said JAWS provides members with a “room of their own ... they can go where they can be themselves.” Julie Dunlap described JAWS as a “special place for women who were minorities in newsrooms to be able to come together and talk about these things freely.” Melissa Ludtke said JAWS represents a space where members know “that the people who are surrounding you have dealt with some of the same things that you have.”

Members' emphasis on the continued need for women's-only organizations suggests a second-wave feminist discourse on providing women with opportunities to gather with others like them and discuss strategies for overcoming oppression in traditionally male-oriented spaces – in this case, newsrooms. As Glenda Holste said, "The only kind of controversy around men is whether we have any men speakers or presenters. And for a long time we did not, the premise being that they've had the podium for five thousand years and now it's our turns." This comment reflects JAWS' focus on creating an environment where women have the dominant voices and determine the rules for engagement. Further, members suggested that the fluidity of JAWS indicates a more feminized approach to organizing. Holste said JAWS was "built on the commonality of the female experience rather than how we fit into another reality." Melissa Ludtke emphasized the "one-on-one experience": "JAWS really personalizes things. And I don't mean to stereotype us by gender, but I do think that's something that we think about more." Involving men in the organization would compromise the potential for a space where women could speak openly about their experiences as journalists and change the very nature of the group.

A focus on gender helped JAWS members overcome their professional differences, as they worked for different types of news organizations and fulfilled various functions. JAWS members were initially united by their common professional experiences, with most working as newspaper reporters. In the 1990s, however, the membership began to diversify. As Diana Henriques pointed out, "There are women working in every corner of journalism. What holds us together is that we're women." As other types of journalists became involved in JAWS, members focused on their status as women to dismiss professional divisions among the group and develop collective goals. Judy Miller said, "The level of experience didn't matter. Their level of where they were in life didn't matter. But the shared experience is what mattered." Although JAWS

began as a group of women working in leadership positions at their publications, younger members became involved and looked to these founding members as mentors. Rita Henley Jensen said, “I think the younger crowd is a lot more interested in what we went through and what we can [do to] help them and support them.” Connie Sage said, “Watching their career paths, seeing what they’ve done, knowing how outspoken they are as women, and I never was – that, to me, was the most important.” This commitment to equality and inclusion and the willingness of members to disrupt hierarchical order were inherited from the second-wave discourse. It ensured that the organizing tenets and motivations of JAWS’ founders remained salient for the next generation.

With growth also came questions about who should be involved, namely male members. Many members said they were not opposed to men becoming involved. However, they also valued having a place where they could feel comfortable and their voices would be heard. Some members suggested that diversifying the membership could offer JAWS more external validity. Jennifer Gavin said that admitting men “might be an indication that it’s getting more mainstream and recognized as a valuable group.” She argued that involving men reinforced the importance and influence of the group while offering men access to women’s perspectives. Some suggested that belief in the group’s overall mission should be the unifying thread of JAWS, rather than gender. Mary Kay Blakely said that when men, such as partners and colleagues, attended JAWS, members assumed that they support women. Mary C. Curtis said JAWS is inclusive but that members should “really believe in the mission and work for the mission.” This description suggests a more activist focus in which membership in JAWS required individuals to act on behalf of its goals for women journalists. These diverging views suggest that as JAWS evolved,

it shifted from a second-wave feminist focus on creating exclusive spaces for women to a third-wave emphasis on uniting diverse members under a common mission.

Redefining Journalistic Identity

Over time, JAWS members also adopted a more fluid definition of “journalist,” reflecting the ongoing boundary work associated with the evolving journalistic field. When JAWS began in the 1980s, most members worked as reporters and editors in print media and covered hard news. The group also included “a smattering of TV reporters,” as Jodi Enda described, as well as a few radio reporters and journalism professors. Many JAWS members also held influential positions in media, according to Betsy Wade, in line with the fact that JAWS began as a “friends group,” as Glenda Holste said, comprising colleagues and friends of its founding members. This homogeneity in professional cadre was evident in the group’s early gatherings and discussions, which Julie Dunlap described as “a lot of veteran women kind of telling war stories.” Mary Kay Blakely referred to this group as “the girls in the balcony,” as it comprised six women who sued *The New York Times* because it overlooked them for promotional opportunities. These founding members shared significant common experiences that provided fodder for early JAWS gatherings, discussions, and action. Professional and experiential exclusivity defined the beginnings of organizational identity.

As the journalism field evolved and the women’s movement transitioned from the second wave to the third wave, JAWS reconsidered its definition of “journalist.” In the 1980s, 45% of JAWS members worked for some type of newspaper, while only 5% worked for a magazine and 5% worked in television or radio. An additional 16% worked for a wire service; 10% worked for an educational institution; 8% worked for a media corporation; less than 1% worked in strategic communications; and 10% worked in “other.” By the 2000s, 13% of members worked for an

educational institution, 5% worked in strategic communications, and 20% worked in “other,” while 44% worked for a newspaper, 5% worked in magazine and 5% worked in television or radio, mirroring earlier JAWS membership. Julia Kagan (Baumann) suggested that JAWS expanded to include women from other fields as well as journalism professors and members who worked in social justice areas involving or appealing to women. Glenda Holste saw the benefits of the new membership patterns, in which the inclusion of women outside journalism allowed JAWS members to receive reporting tips and perspectives from outside the field. Overall, the focus of JAWS moved beyond traditional journalists to others who support journalism’s broader aims and goals, reflecting a more activist approach.

These shifts in membership have raised concerns for members who believe that JAWS should maintain its exclusive journalistic focus and that including new types of members, particularly public relations and advertising professionals, diminishes the group’s impact. Peggy Simpson said JAWS was unique in its continued emphasis on journalists, compared to similar organizations: “We’re one of the very few that actually is growing, and is growing with people who are in the profession.” Jacqui Banaszynski identified potential challenges if the organization defined its boundaries too broadly:

You no longer have maybe enough shared interests and sort of a shared center that allows you to build something and grow. On the other hand, if you leave out people who are from worlds that feel pretty disparate, then you lose that voice. So in that way, the looseness of JAWS to me feels very, very much like the things women do. It’s like oh, yeah, yeah, of course, come join us. We’re not going to leave you out.

This response reflects the tension members faced in determining whether to broaden JAWS’ boundaries. Peggy Sands Orchowski noted a recent trend in the group: “You get everyone

introducing themselves. And they're teachers and they're consultants and, you know, freelancers like me. But not full-time journalists anymore. And that's what we need to talk about, not gender." She suggested that the decline of full-time female journalists represents a concern that JAWS should address as a professional group — namely that the journalism field is changing and women are losing out in this situation.

Decisions about who should be welcomed into membership have remained a salient question as JAWS has expanded. As Joy Cook said, "One of the debates in JAWS was whether we stayed small and supportive, cozy, or whether we expanded to a larger platform and more professional, getting money from outside." The organization prided itself on inclusiveness, with the recognition that exclusiveness defined its roots and identity. Maura Casey emphasized that the group had always welcomed women of color and young women, even providing scholarships to encourage them to join. Merrill Perlman suggested that rather than emphasizing JAWS as a gender-based organization, members should refer to it as an "affinity organization" because "the need for numbers is still there. The need for added knowledge and shared knowledge is still there. More important, the need for the network is still there." This statement reflects members' interest in connecting through gender and shared professional interests, which could enhance its impact.

Constituting the Collectiveness

Conversations with members showed that, despite the emotional cohesion and emphasis on a non-hierarchical structure, JAWS carried an implicit hierarchy in which selected members carried elite status based on experience and prestige. Interviewees described members such as Tad Bartimus, Kay Mills, Betsy Wade, and Joan Cook as "fantastic," "icons," "incredible," and "legends in journalism." Julie Dunlap recalled attending a JAWS camp and feeling impressed when meeting the "major women who now have programs named after them." For Maura Casey,

meeting Betsy Wade, who sued *The New York Times* for discrimination in the 1970s, was a significant benefit of joining JAWS. Casey recalled, “She said, ‘I will be available to you. You’re going to have a great career.’ ... And I just thought Betsy was just the cat’s meow.” Katherine Rowlands was traveling to her first JAWS gathering when she met member Edie Lederer on the plane. Rowlands said, “And when I asked what she did for a living, she says, ‘Well, I’m the AP correspondent for the United Nations.’ And I thought, wow, I’m in the presence of royalty here.” Thus, having “big names” in the group and the potential to interact with them was a significant impetus for getting involved. These women embodied not only the level to which women could aspire in the journalism profession but also the collective identity of JAWS as a group that aimed to help other women reach that level of prestige.

Although iconic members defined the group, JAWS aimed to maintain a personal feel. Emotional attachment was a key influence in attracting members. Betsy Wade described early JAWS gatherings as “electrifying and so exciting.” By the time she attended the fourth JAWS meeting in Estes Park, the group had “caught fire” and “there were moments of surpassing satisfaction.” Similarly, Jodi Enda attended a JAWS party in 1996 and said she was “blown away by these great women.” Merrill Perlman recalled attending her first JAWS meeting in Sun Valley, Idaho, and said it was “so energizing to be here.” Melinda Voss said many of her friends had left her newsroom at the time she became involved with JAWS, so when she joined, “I felt that JAWS was home. It felt immediately at home.” These descriptions of JAWS suggested that the women felt a sense of intimacy and reciprocity with the group and immediately identified a strong emotional connection with the women involved.

These responses were likely spurred by the existing multiplexity within JAWS. That is, women often became involved because a friend and/or professional colleague invited them.

Existing members assumed that new members would feel an immediate homophily with JAWS, promoting inclusivity. Glenda Holste said founder Tad Bartimus invited her to the second JAWS gathering, suggesting, “Oh, come on. You’ll enjoy these people.” She said that once she arrived, “there were people I knew already. There were fabulous new women. There were older leaders. It was terrific.” Although Mary C. Curtis had never attended, her friends were involved in JAWS, which eventually paved the way for her involvement. She recalled her initial response to the group: “I was impressed with the mix of women, the caliber of women [...] and everybody was friendly.” These responses suggested that women felt connected to JAWS because of friendships, existing relationships, and eventually networked connections.

This camaraderie allowed members to connect with others whose experience levels, professional backgrounds, and other characteristics differed. Merrill Perlman said that despite the organization’s growth, JAWS aimed for members to feel as if they were on the same level: “We’re not trying to put on airs to anybody else. We’re not trying to impress anybody.” Julia Kagan (Baumann) said, “I think what’s important is to keep the casualness of it and the ability for people to talk to each other and meet people in an informal setting.” Joy Cook suggested that even as meetings became more formal, members sought “personal time” for veterans to connect with one another as well as with new members. However, growth could also serve tangible goals and benefit the organization. Melinda Voss said growth could “give us more credibility. We’d be able to have more impact. We would certainly have more financial stability.” This comment evidences the tensions JAWS members faced in determining what type of group they wanted to become. The challenge for JAWS was to strike the right balance between being small enough to not have the feel of a “stuffy” professional group while large enough to serve tangible goals.

Collective Identification

As the group grew, members translated this fluid identity into practices emphasizing solidarity and real-life problem-solving. Gatherings moved beyond a focus on sharing stories and experiences in a casual, camp-like environment to addressing members' needs and aims. In 1985, at the initial meeting, the founding group of 12 JAWS members discussed the six women who sued *The New York Times*. Mary Kay Blakely said that at the first camp meeting, members decided, 'We've got to do something about this. And we can't do something about it individually. We have to do something about it collectively.'" Challenges women faced in the newsroom remained an emphasis. According to Linda Deutsch, members considered the inclusion of women's perspectives in stories, the number of women's bylines, and the ways women's issues were addressed. Glenda Holste said members also discussed gender equity in newsrooms, including equal pay, promotional opportunities, and story assignments. They identified strategies for navigating these challenges as well, Holste said. Bonnie Rollins argued that JAWS should be "the voice, I think, for women in journalism."

Although these issues were important to the founding members, they differed on whether JAWS should focus on advocacy and take on a feminist identity. Tad Bartimus said that in the early 1990s:

I thought there was a hierarchy. It was becoming quite divided among those who, 'Oh, I walked five miles to school in the snow' in the feminist movement group. And then there were the younger ones coming on who perhaps were not perceived as being appropriately obsequious to the older ones who had gone through so much.

Bartimus said these younger members were trying to define themselves, rather than focusing on reinforcing the ideals of the founding members, suggesting a third-wave feminist influence. Rita Henley Jensen suggested that JAWS was "openly feminist" initially but became "more like a

women's organization, which is different" in whether it emphasizes a goal of advancing women in the media. Peggy Sands Orchowski was attracted to JAWS because the discussions went beyond the topic of gender: "I really wanted, number one, to be in a group where there are a lot of working journalists, women journalists that I can relate to because I'm a woman. Not just because I'm being discriminated against but because we're different than men."

As JAWS grew in size, members discussed the type of organizational structure it would emphasize. Melinda Voss explained the desires of the group: "There was a feeling among many of the members at that point that we wanted to avoid having a lot of stiff organizational rules and policies. It also, then, became apparent pretty early on that we really did need some structure." With that structure came opportunities for members to learn skills that would be useful in the evolving multimedia environment. Katherine Rowlands said the group offered workshops focused on social media, database management, investigative reporting, and other "practical and valuable" skills. These workshops, however, were considered a "safe environment," as Betsy Wade described, where female journalists could hone their technical skills without fear of judgment from male colleagues.

This new focus on training provided benefits beyond preparing JAWS members for the current journalism environment; it also created bridges between younger and older JAWS members. For example, Merrill Perlman said young members with social media skills sought out investigative reporting advice from experienced members who in return could learn about social media and branding from the younger members. Kathy Kiely said these shifting educational emphases reflected the unity of JAWS: "I don't sense that there's a group of women over here who say, 'No, we've still got to wear our suffragette suits' and other people who are saying, 'No, we really need to learn digital.'" Rather, she said these interests transcended generations.

A shift from a fluid organizational structure to a formalized one was also evident in the value members placed on networking. Members discussed how the group's growth led to a growing network of women they could rely on professionally and emotionally. Betsy Wade said that at the beginning of JAWS, the women had "all of the same experiences" related to gender inequalities in the workplace. However, as the organization grew, it became "a network made huge—a national network of women journalists in a period when the gruel was pretty thin." Wade's description shows that at a time when female journalists did not have significant power in their organizations, the founders of JAWS grew their influence and reach. Similarly, Glenda Holste emphasized how JAWS members aimed to "build a network that was based on mutual support from the level you could give support." The lack of a formal organizational hierarchy allowed women to support one another from where they stood, which could contribute to building a more balanced network. A network also helped women reach for higher positions in news organizations, which furthers Gina Setser's support of the JAWS mission: "I would love to see JAWS become an organization that is the kind of network that you see so often with men—where men really take the younger guys and help them move up." This focus, she said, would also bring more stature to JAWS.

Conclusion and Discussions

This study examined the case of JAWS to illustrate how the collective identity of women journalists was contested, negotiated, and reformulated in the post-feminist era in the U.S. Different from the prevailing view that sees the demise of the second-wave feminist movement in the late 1970s, this analysis showed that second-wave feminism continued to shape the years of the 1980s to the 2010s and was revised, adapted, and institutionalized in women's professional associations.

This study does not try to use the experience of JAWS as a gauge against which to measure women's movements and women journalist associations in other countries. Instead, the case study sets out to explore the broader theoretical question regarding the relationship between social movements and professions. That is, how can organizations representing professions, highly formalized and institutionalized structures with established rules (Bucher and Stelling, 1969) operate alongside the non-routine, unstable, alienated nature of social movements (Kornhauser, 1959; Turner and Killiam, 1987; Zald and Ash, 1966). American women's movements are often considered to be more "successful" than Western European women's movements in gaining public support and achieving policy changes (Gelb, 1987). This, according to some scholars, relates to the relative political and cultural autonomy in the U.S. (Gelb, 1987) as well as the less radical approach American feminists took compared with their counterparts in West Europe (Margolis, 1993). We would argue, however, the "success" of American feminism might also be explained by feminists' concerted efforts in adapting and extending the movement's agenda into their professions.

We found that women journalists in JAWS selectively translated the gains of the second-wave movement into their career development and appropriated the second-wave rhetoric such as "empowerment," "agency," and "sisterhood" to define their collective professional identity, approaches evident in social movement organizations' emphasis on achieving political, economic, and social goals (Cohn et al., 2003). On one hand, they used the categories of "women" and "sisterhood" to highlight the collectiveness of their identity and to justify JAWS as a gender-exclusive space to share their professional experiences and expand their professional skills. This understanding reflected the importance of belonging and emotional attachment within the group, reinforcing social embeddedness and the connection of individuals' fate to the group's

fate (Ashmore et al., 2004). On the other hand, they eschewed overt radical feminist activities in their efforts to build the professional dimension of JAWS, sustaining emotional commitments through social gatherings and meetings rather than demonstrations or protests (Cohn et al., 2003). Therefore, the group reflected the fluid boundaries of SMOs, which are shaped by members' values, beliefs, and emotional connections to the cause (Gerlach and Hine, 1970).

Some JAWS members reinforced the need for political consciousness or collective action (Ashmore et al., 2004), suggesting a "politicized collective identity" in which members become involved in a particular cause (Simon and Klandermans, 2001), while others resisted the need to label the group and focused instead on their connections as women and professionals. The group demonstrated a collective identity that was not fixed but changed in response to members' ideals and shifts in the wider environment (De Bruin, 2000). Because social movements draw strength from collective identity and unification among supporters (Guenther et al., 2013), JAWS faced challenges in determining shared motives and goals for engaging in the feminist cause as it related to their profession.

Members also differed in their approaches to "oppositional othering" (Guenther et al., 2013), or determining who should be part of the group, with some desiring to include women working in public relations, advertising, and other fields and others reinforcing the journalistic emphasis of the group's roots. Members also differed in their perceptions of the value of including male members. Some desired a women's-only space, and others suggested that male members could be included if they supported JAWS' mission. These negotiations emphasized the hybrid professional/SMO nature of the group in that members differed on whether gender or mission constituted the key uniting factor. Members, then, worked to adjust to change while also considering themselves members of the original group from the early years of JAWS. JAWS

members maintained continuity in their collective identity (Gongaware, 2011) through sharing memories and discussing the impact of the organization personally and professionally while also recognizing how the organization has changed and adapted to the changing social environment.

Similarly, influenced by the second-wave idea of egalitarianism, JAWS founders initially preferred an informal, non-hierarchical, “camp-like” structure as a way to differentiate from the male-led professional associations that often emphasized individualism, competition, and differentiation (Buzzanell, 1994). As the organization grew in response to developments in the media industry, JAWS members realized the importance of “professionalizing” and hammered out a formal structure to better orchestrate opportunities for professional training. In doing so, the organization reflected the challenge professional associations face in balancing their collective, profession-focused identity with benefits for members (Bennett, 2000). JAWS negotiated its interest in enacting second-wave feminist tenets, such as enhancing opportunities for women in the journalism field, alongside providing members with individual benefits, such as mentorship, networking opportunities, and professional development, characteristics typical of professional associations (Dansky, 1996; Forret and Dougherty, 2004). These goals also reflected women journalists’ association’s historical focus on offering members outlets to improve their skills and influence one another’s goals and achievements (Beasley, 1988) while also providing them a sense of power and solidarity through their shared identity as women journalists (Burt, 2000).

This study challenges scholarship regarding women journalist associations merely as an extension and agency of women’s movements. Rather than emphasize ideological divisions, this study illustrates the fluid boundaries between professional associations and SMOs. Although early women’s press organizations featured leaders who engaged in the suffragist movement (Burt, 1997, 2000) and later who advocated for women’s rights issues, many other women’s

professional organizations, including JAWS, represent a special kind of hybrid organization combining structures, elements and functions of both professional associations and SMOs, and this idea might extend to studies of many other women's organizations. Some members might also reflect the concept of activist professionals, or individuals who bring together others like them to engage in collective action with an emphasis on enhancing the profession (Sachs, 2000). Such hybridity defines in a unique way the collective identity for the members, but the potentially conflicting goals between activism and professionalism may also dilute the logic and potency of collective action.

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