EXPERIENCES OF BURNOUT AMONG STUDENT-JOURNALISTS
AT A PRIVATE LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

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On my honor I have neither given nor received

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the phenomena of burnout among student-journalists at a small liberal arts college, using 16 structured interviews. Three student-journalists labeled themselves as burnt-out from journalism, and four others described symptoms that indicate they may be approaching burnout. This study found that the most burnt-out subjects were the most passionate in explaining how journalism can fulfill altruistic purposes. Building upon a body of research examining the effects of excessive or incoherent integration and regulation, this paper will argue that burnout occurs when the student-journalists' altruism breaks down into anomie.

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INTRODUCTION

Journalism is one of the most stressful jobs in the United States (Renzulli 2019). In a list of the top 10 most stressful jobs in the country, news reporters and broadcasters join the company of enlisted military personnel, firefighters, airline pilots, and police officers (Renzulli 2019). Because of the frequency with which journalists are exposed to trauma, a growing body of research warns that journalists are at-risk for developing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and emotional distress (Browne, Evangeli, and Greenberg 2012; Hatanaka et al. 2010; Monteiro, Marques-Pinto, and Roberto 2016; Pyevich, Newman, and Daleiden 2003). Though symptoms of PTSD are most commonly associated with war correspondents (Seely 2019), researchers have found that the occupational stress of everyday journalism also takes a toll on reporters' mental, emotional, and psychological well-being, particularly as it leads to occupational burnout (Bossio and Holton 2019; Cook and Banks 1993; Endres 1988; Filak and Reinardy 2011; Nölleke, Maares, and Hanusch 2020; Reinardy 2009; Reinardy 2011).

Research suggests that the most at-risk journalist is a young, entry-level woman working on a general assignment at a small paper (Cook and Banks 1993; Reinardy 2009). These criteria suggest that college journalists theoretically might face the highest burnout rates of anyone. Student reporters are likely just entering the field, working for little to no pay at small student papers, and experiencing role conflict between their responsibilities as students and their responsibilities as reporters. I will build on this body of research by examining the experiences of student-journalists on a small liberal arts campus through qualitative interviews. In this paper, I will argue that three forms of regulation contribute to the burnout of student-journalists: overt regulation from their college, covert regulation from the student body, and self-regulation from their conflicting responsibilities. I will use Durkheim's (1951) framework of suicide to argue that

burnout occurs when a student-journalist's altruism deteriorates into anomie, causing a disruption in their established order.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Burnout in Journalism

Burnout is a widely-recognized occupational phenomenon defined by the World Health Organization (2019) as "a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed." Burnout is marked by increased feelings of exhaustion and cynicism, as well as reduced professional efficacy, and researchers find it to be prevalent among those working in the "helping professions," such as social work, nursing, and teaching (Afshani, Ruhani, and Kiani-Dehkiani 2020; Bunce et al. 2019; Grant, Kinman, and Baker 2015; Lewis and King 2019; McFadden et al. 2019; Singer et al. 2020; Vanheuele and Verhaeghe 2004). Recent surveys have found employee burnout to be on the rise; a 2018 survey of full-time employees reported that 23 percent of respondents felt burned out at work "very often or always," and during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, one survey reported that 69% of employees were experiencing symptoms of burnout while working from home (Fox 2020; Kraft 2018).

Journalism is recognized as a high-stress profession, with one reporter even calling mental health in newsrooms a "silent epidemic" (Davies 2020), but only a slim body of research has formally investigated the prevalence of burnout within the industry. Though burnout in journalism has been conversationally discussed as an issue for decades, during the COVID-19 pandemic, feelings of burnout among professional journalists have become more broadly recognized as an issue of concern. A recent survey of reporters found that 41% were experiencing increased anxiety as a result of the pandemic, and 38% of respondents were experiencing exhaustion and burnout (Posetti, Bell, and Brown 2020). Researchers who have

conducted formal studies on burnout among reporters point to many predictors, including age, years in the field, gender, role, and newspaper size (Cook and Banks 1993; Filak and Reinardy 2011; Hanusch et al. 2015; Reinardy 2009; Reinardy 2011).

Young, entry-level journalists are thought to be the most at-risk for burnout (Cook and Banks 1993; Reinardy 2011). Reinardy (2011) found that 74.5% of journalists aged 34 and younger either planned to leave the journalism industry or said they did not know, as compared to 68.8% of respondents between 35 and 48 years old. In multiple studies, younger journalists reported significantly higher levels of exhaustion than their older peers (Cook and Banks 1993; Reinardy 2011). Cook and Banks (1993) offer two hypotheses for this finding: older journalists are more mature and have thus gotten better at managing their stress, or the older journalists are the "survivors," the only ones who did not leave over the years because of burnout. The youngest journalists in the profession — student-journalists — are infrequently included in these samples, so little is known about how student-journalists experience burnout and whether or not these findings extend to their population. In a study of burnout among college newspaper editors and their faculty advisors, Filak and Reinardy (2011) found that student editors were experiencing significantly higher rates of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than their faculty advisors, with 38.4% of surveyed student editors reporting high rates of exhaustion. Similarly, the longer students have been enrolled in a journalism program, the less likely they are to want to work in journalism (Hanusch et al. 2015).

Gender also plays a role in journalistic burnout, with women reporting significantly higher rates of exhaustion, lower levels of professional efficacy, and a stronger intent to leave the field than their male colleagues (Reinardy 2009). Researchers have also determined that there are significant differences in perceived organizational support, job demands, and role conflict

between women and men (Reinardy 2009; Snyder, Johnson, and Kozimor-King 2019). Women experience more role conflict between their work and personal lives than men, suggesting they may feel overburdened, but "faced with family and childcare issues, sexism, discrimination, and the glass ceiling, it appears women are not receiving the organizational encouragement to contend with these issues" (Reinardy 2009:53). Furthermore, because there are mixed messages regarding how to combat burnout, young female journalists who are facing burnout and experiencing inadequate institutional support may see a career change as the only way out.

Journalists with little institutional power, such as those with entry-level positions or roles at smaller newspapers, similarly face uphill battles with burnout. Lower-level staffers, such as copy editors and page designers, experience significantly higher levels of cynicism and lower levels of professional efficacy than their managers (Reinardy 2011). Cook and Banks (1993) suggest that this is because lower-level staffers might face more job assignments and more ambiguous roles than their higher-level counterparts. Even among reporters, journalists on a "beat," or a targeted subject area they focus on, have lower levels of emotional exhaustion than general-assignment journalists (Cook and Banks 1993). The size of the newspaper also matters, as journalists who work for smaller newspapers report higher levels of emotional exhaustion than journalists at larger, more established papers (Cook and Banks 1993).

Theoretical Frameworks

Sociologists give several different theories as to why high rates of burnout may emerge in a profession. In the helping professions, researchers suggest that burnout emerges when the workers' purposes for entering a profession and the impact they envisioned having is suffocated by social and institutional structures (Hagan and Kay 2007; Pines and Keinan 2005; Sugrue 2019; Vanheuele and Verhaeghe 2004; Wakefield 1993). Journalism must be profitable to exist

in the capitalist system, causing power dynamics that conflict with the reasons most journalists choose the profession in the first place. When asked how they chose their desired professions, many students say that they want to help people (Wakefield 1993). They express idealistic intentions and envision making a noticeable difference in the communities around them. However, when they actually enter the field, they find their altruistic purposes at odds with institutional forces and "their actions … shaped by immoral systems and structures" (Sugrue 2019:21). Instead of fulfilling what many view as "callings" to help people, workers in the helping professions feel powerless, stifled by the structures supposed to support them (Vanheuele and Verhaeghe 2004). In turn, perceived powerlessness makes the job less satisfying, ultimately leading to burnout (Hagan and Kay 2007).

Similar to the helping professions, altruism has long been a primary motivator for students entering the field of journalism (Coleman et al. 2018; Hanusch et al. 2015; Robinson 2019). Researchers have found that journalism students are not motivated by money (Coleman et al. 2018). Instead, journalism students consistently rank altruism — a desire to improve society through their reporting and to perform a public service — as one of their top reasons for pursuing a career in journalism (Coleman et al. 2018; Hanusch et al. 2015).

Race also factors into journalism students' principal motivations. Coleman et al. (2018) found that white students were significantly less likely to be motivated by altruism than students of other ethnicities, which the researchers attribute to the fact that marginalized students in the sample were more likely to have experienced discrimination and other forms of injustice and therefore had a greater desire to change the status quo. Students also emphasized the role journalism has in maintaining a democratic society and helping marginalized populations tell their stories (Nölleke et al. 2020).

However, as in other professions, young journalists entering the field realize that their ability to change the world or have a social impact on their communities was limited because of institutional structures. Young journalists have expressed that journalism is less autonomous than they expected, making it impossible "for them to regularly implement their own ideas" (Nölleke et al. 2020). In particular, Nölleke et al. (2020) call attention to editorial guidelines, economic constraints, and time pressure as limiting journalists' desires to do good. For example, a journalist's desire to expose a government organization's misuse of funds may be hindered by a steep fine blocking access to public records; an editor of a small newspaper may block a story about a powerful individual if they believe it will act against the paper's economic interests; or a journalist may be forced to rush an investigative piece because they do not have enough time. As a result of these structural constraints and pressures, a young journalist may lose sight of the very thing motivating them to enter into the journalism field in the first place, resulting in burnout and a desire to leave the profession for good.

This conflict is best explained through Emile Durkheim's theory about the social structure of suicide (Bearman 1991; Durkheim 1951). Durkheim argues that suicide, thought of as a highly individual act, is actually impacted by two independent social structures: integration and regulation. In this framework, integration refers to the extent to which a person is socially bound to a group, and regulation refers to the social or moral demands that a person must follow to be a member of that group (Bearman 1991). For example, a person who experiences both integration and regulation in excess would fall into Durkheim's category of being at-risk for "altruistic" suicide. According to this category, people who commit suicide do so because of a code of morality that encourages people to forget about themselves as individuals in favor of a greater good. For example, a soldier is taught to follow orders blindly and to "set little value

upon himself, since he must be prepared to sacrifice himself upon being ordered to do so"
(Durkheim 1951:234). Thus, Durkheim views altruistic suicide as a duty that people believe they
have to follow, rather than an individual right they have.

On the other hand, Durkheim labels "anomic" suicide as what happens when an
individual faces excessive integration but poor or incoherent regulation. Durkheim argues that at
its core, anomic suicide is about two things: passion and order. For example, Durkheim claims
that consistent regulation is important because it limits "overweening ambition" (253). It is
human nature to engage in the pursuit of unattainable goals, and in this framework, coherent
regulation forces these passions into perspective, limiting them so that the individual avoids
perpetual unhappiness. However, if regulation is inconsistent, limiting passion one day and
letting it run wild the next, then this inconsistency is what leads to suicide, according to
Durkheim. Therefore, economic crises are associated with increased suicide rates because they
disrupt the established order of society, and individuals tend toward self-destruction as a result.

Furthermore, structural theories of role strain and deviance help exemplify why student-
journalists might burnout more quickly than their older colleagues or choose to leave journalism
before they formally enter the field. Role strain occurs when someone feels tension from
attempting to fulfil contradictory role obligations (Goode 1960). Conforming adequately to carry
out the specific obligations of one role results in an inability to fulfill the obligations of another.
Role strain theory states that in general, it is human nature to want to fulfill expectations, but
"there are always some persons who cannot conform, by reason of individuality or situation,"
such as lacking sufficient resources or energy (Goode 1960:485). Theories of structural deviance
build upon this theory by arguing that people choose culturally-defined purposes as aspirational
references, but they must follow institutionally-regulated means for achieving those purposes

(Merton 1938). Thus, deviance occurs when people are denied opportunities to institutionally achieve their goals. According to this framework, "deviant" people not only lose their individualism because of excessive integration and regulation, but are also institutionally denied the opportunity to fulfill their purposes.

Journalists face a similar dilemma of excessive integration and regulation that fits into these theories. Many journalists enter into the field for a higher purpose: to improve society. Because of the belief that a strong journalistic presence is fundamental to a strong democracy, journalists are placed at the heart of society and are highly integrated into their communities. However, because of journalism's place at the societal center, journalism is also highly regulated. Journalists are asked to forget about their individualism in attempts to eliminate bias, and thus, to be successful in the field, journalists must sacrifice small parts of themselves — leading to burnout — so that they may achieve their greater, altruistic purpose. Burnout can be seen in two ways: a conforming to the institutionally-approved means with which journalists can achieve their altruistic purpose, or as a form of deviance because they are denied the institutionally-approved means to their end.

Journalists experience role strain and tension between two different and conflicting normative regimes: the world of unbiased, altruistic journalism, and a capitalist system that forces them to turn a profit to stay alive. These normative regimes have opposing purposes, and a journalist cannot follow the regulations set by both regimes. Newspapers that choose to fulfill the norms demanded by the altruistic regime are quickly devastated, and newspapers that choose to fulfill the norms demanded by the capitalist regime lose professional credibility. This tension forces journalists to either make compromises in their well-being and quality of life, or to "sell out," compromising their purposes for entering the journalism field. If a journalist attempts to

fulfill some norms from both regimes, as many are required to, burnout may be an aftereffect of attempting to achieve the impossible task of satisfying the contradictory regimes.

Student-journalists face incoherent regulation because they are members of the communities about which they are reporting and are often powerless against higher-ranking members of their college communities, such as professors and administrators. They experience the same tension from contradictory normative regimes that other journalists face, but they also have the added regulation that comes with being a student. They face competing normative purposes within the title "student-journalist" that similarly cannot coexist: be a good journalist and be a good student. To be good journalists, they must hold those in power accountable, but to be good students, they must accept the authority of those in power over their communities. To achieve their altruistic purposes in the journalism field, student-journalists must choose to strip themselves of their individualism while also losing their identities as students. Therefore, similarly to Durkheim's view of altruistic suicide, burnout among student-journalists can be seen similarly as a dutiful sacrifice that they must make, a loss of self that presents itself in the symptoms of increased exhaustion and cynicism. Burnout can also be seen as a form of deviance, the result of being institutionally denied the opportunity to achieve the same results as professional journalists because of the "student" precursor in their job titles.

METHODOLOGY

To examine the experiences of student-journalists with burnout, I interviewed 16 purposely-chosen students studying journalism at a small liberal arts college. For this study's purposes, "student-journalist" can be defined as anyone who has taken journalism classes, written for a student publication, or served as an editor for the student paper. Each interview lasted about an hour on average. Participants were mainly recruited individually based on their

participation in journalism classes or bylines in the student paper, but I also recruited participants in group chats, explaining the purpose of the study and who the desired participants were. The interview guide was based on three main categories: the purpose of journalism, impact of journalism, and experiences with burnout. Interviews were largely conducted over Zoom and recorded using a phone and a second recording device. Interviews were coded based on a scheme with 12 codes related to burnout, regulation, and motivation. (See Appendix A for interview schedule). All interviews used in this paper are anonymous, referenced under a pseudonym if a name is mentioned. I removed identifying details from all transcripts to maintain this anonymity.

I attempted to oversample men and students of color to examine the interactions of gender and race with burnout. At this college, students who participate in journalism are mostly white, and among the higher-level editors of student publications, the majority are women. In total, this sample includes nine women and seven men, with 10 of the 16 participants identifying as white, non-Hispanic. Because this study was limited to a small sample at a small college, findings cannot be generalized to a larger population. Furthermore, because I am a student myself, interviewees may have made assumptions about what I wanted to hear, which could have resulted in interviewer bias. Also, most interviews were conducted over Zoom, which could have impacted what the respondent was willing to say because of privacy concerns or "Zoom fatigue."

This method of interviewing has limitations. What people say is not always a good predictor of what they actually do, and people sometimes provide inaccurate accounts of past experiences because of lapses in memory. Also, interviews are removed from the situations about which the respondent is making claims, making some prefer ethnography to this method of in-depth interviewing (Jerolmack and Khan 2014). However, even if respondents' imagined meanings of events have flaws in accuracy, those imagined meanings are also important for a

researcher's purpose. Interviews are also inexpensive and quick ways to gather data. For this study, the benefits of in-depth interviewing outweighed any potential flaws in the methodology.

ANALYSIS

Passion and Burnout

Of the 16 student-journalists interviewed for this study, three labeled themselves as burnt-out from journalism, and four others described symptoms that indicate they may be at-risk for burnout, such as increased feelings of exhaustion, temporary loss of motivation, and a desire for time away. If a student mentioned several of the aforementioned symptoms, I included them in the "at-risk" category, regardless of whether or not they were fully burnt-out. For the student-journalists in this sample, a loss of motivation was a key contribution to burnout. The most burnt-out subjects were the most passionate in explaining how journalism can fulfill altruistic purposes. Some students admitted that they began writing for their school newspaper because they were bored or wanted to fill a space on their resume. These students may largely avoid burnout because they feel less of a personal duty to the journalism field, or they find it easier to take a break or pivot when they begin to feel exhausted. For example, one student-journalist explained that when he began to grow tired of his reporting beat, he started exploring different topics for his articles. However, some of the student-journalists who were at-risk for burnout were the most passionate about the importance of a free press in society and the role that their student paper plays on campus:

> I've always been really obsessed with the free press and just the concept of information being given to the people. I wrote essays in high school about how I think that the Gutenberg Free Press is the reason for the Reformation, and that changed European history because people had access to information

Though not every subject at-risk for burnout spoke with this level of passion, they all explained how they wanted their journalism to be part of a greater, altruistic purpose. Some of the reporters

described how the paper kept their campus community connected while the pandemic scattered students across the country and world. Others said that the paper acted as a check on their college administration and served as a historical document for the greater community. These answers suggest that to be at-risk for burnout, students must feel a strong sense of duty to achieve an altruistic purpose in the journalism field.

The student-journalists began to experience burnout when they felt like incoherent regulative regimes were preventing them from achieving these altruistic purposes, thus leading to a loss of motivation. Olivia, a student editor for a school newspaper, highlighted this by differentiating between stress and burnout according to her levels of motivation and excitement. When she first joined the paper as an editor, she was stressed because she felt like there was still "so much" that she did not know, but she said she was also excited about "leading the charge" on news investigations and all the good she could do as an editor:

> That's partially how I felt at the beginning of being an editor – really energetic about all the possibilities and everything we could do. And then towards the end, I didn't have that carrying me through. And there's just so much to be done, and it often felt like there weren't enough people taking notice or enough support. It just got exhausting.

As this quote illustrates, burnout for student-journalists not only leads to increased exhaustion, but also a loss of why they love journalism. Journalism becomes a chore instead of a passion or vehicle for altruism, and for many, leaving the journalism field appears to be the only solution.

However, once they have taken time away from journalism, some student-journalists rediscover their motivations and return to the field, only to experience burnout again in the future. Emily, another student editor and former news reporter, described going through cycles of burnout, in which she said she would lose her passion for journalism, quit, and then return to the field after a six-month hiatus. After studying journalism in high school, she quit journalism, explaining that it lost its appeal. Later in college, Emily returned to the field, and now she is back

to feeling burnt-out. "Come back in six months when I've un-quit journalism again," she joked. This cyclical experience indicates that burnout within student-journalism is a structural issue, one that will continue to return for those at-risk because of the intensity of the profession.

Journalism and incessancy. The student-journalists who experience burnout are those who are not allowed breaks and thus must create breaks for themselves, such as by quitting and returning at a later time. At the college paper represented in this study, most writers are paid per article, giving them the freedom to pick and choose how often they want to write. None of the interview subjects in this category seemed to approach burnout. All seven of the journalists who were burnt-out or at-risk for burnout were salaried employees, receiving a set monthly stipend in exchange for their work. These students are either editors for the paper or among a handful of news reporters who receive editor-like stipends in exchange for reporting that requires significant time, such as longform or breaking news pieces. Unlike the other writers, who can come and go as they please, these student-journalists must quit if they want time off, therefore making them more susceptible to burnout.

Altruism into Anomie

When students first enter the journalism field, they face excessive integration and regulation in their communities. In fact, some student-journalists may even be expecting this regulation, as people label the journalism field as altruistic precisely because of the excessive regulation and resistance that reporters must face on a daily basis. However, using Durkheim's ideas (1951) as a theoretical framework, burnout occurs when the student-journalists' altruism breaks down into anomie, a state of excessive integration but poor or inconsistent regulation. After spending time in an editorial or reporting role, they begin to expect certain normative behaviors from three regulative regimes: their institution, peers, and themselves. Burnout occurs

when regulation in two of these categories starts to shift in a way that is contradictory to the norms that they expect. Durkheim (1951) defines these shifts as "disturbances of the collective order," explaining that people are more at-risk for self-destruction "whenever serious readjustments take place in the social order" (246). For professional journalists, who are not as integrated into the communities they are reporting on, these disturbances may not have as much of an impact. On the other hand, student-journalists are so integrated into their communities that disturbances of the collective order lead to feelings of cynicism and powerlessness.

Incoherent Regulation

Six of the seven students who were burnt-out or at-risk for burnout expressed strong feelings of negative regulation from the college's administration, faculty, and staff. Beyond these six, no other student-journalists described similar tension with the college, indicating that institutional regulation is the most important regulative prerequisite for burnout. Though the majority of these student-journalists did not express feelings of institutional regulation, that does not mean that the regulation is not there, only that they have become comfortable with the normative expectations from their institution. Also, regulation does not have to be overtly negative or contradictory to the students' goals. Some student-journalists may develop a positive relationship with the college administration, and thus face regulative pressure to write in such a way that reinforces the positive relationship. However, the student-journalists who were burnt-out or at-risk for burnout have experienced a shift from this subtle regulation to a form of regulation that is more aggressive and antagonistic. The sudden breakdown of their collective order and transition from altruism to anomie is what leads to their burnout.

Unlike self-regulation or regulation from the student body, aggressive institutional regulation is the most direct, and the only category in which the student-journalists are

hierarchically lower in status than their regulators. Though the student-journalists themselves may not notice the regulation inherent in the collective order of the institution, they begin to experience burnout when the regulation becomes so strong and unexpected that it is impossible for them to miss. When they begin to notice these explicit forms of regulation and their transition from altruism into anomie, they begin to question their agency and sustainability within the journalism field, ultimately leading to burnout.

The student-journalists approaching burnout described a shift from largely positive experiences when reporting on the administration to negative reporting. For example, at public universities, student-journalists can file open records requests to receive information if a member of the administration is ignoring them. As student reporters at a private school, on the other hand, the student-journalists in this sample explained that they must rely on human sources, such as decision-makers within the administration. When many student-journalists are first starting out, largely writing non-controversial pieces, they establish a normative expectation that the administration will consistently respond to their interview requests because of their integration into the college community. After a while, the responses from administrators may become inconsistent, with some answering every request and others refusing to respond, leaving a sense of disillusionment among the student-journalists. For example, one student explained that while administrators generally responded to their interview requests, one department within the administration always refused:

> I'd have writers who'd say, 'Hey [this department] just isn't responding to us at all.' I would email them, and I think I went into talk to them once, and they just totally shut me down – like, 'Nope, we're not doing anything.' And that was just so frustrating.

Professional reporters likely expect to be stonewalled by sources, and that becomes their normative regulation. But administrators may find it harder to stonewall students that attend the tight-knit community they are responsible for, and so the majority of the time, they respond

willingly to the interview requests of student-journalists. When there is suddenly an exception, such as in this quote, it is disruptive to what student-journalists have come to expect from their administration. Because of their excessive integration into the community, the refusal may seem like a personal affront, and the inconsistency inherent within an anomic state may leave the student-journalists confused and disillusioned.

While their excessive integration into the college community is normatively an asset for their reporting, it can also create an automatic power dynamic in their reporting. Student-journalists are often the only journalists reporting on their college and therefore expected to hold college leaders accountable, but they are also still students; as students, they are directly beholden to the administration. James, a news reporter for the student paper, explained that he noticed how student-journalists were treated differently than members of the local press:

> You could probably just call us journalists, but we are still student-journalists. And so, for example, [one administrator] is always deferring us to their No. 2 essentially. … At the same time, they're always available for local reporters. … So that's I guess a disadvantage, the fact that I always have to put the 'student' in front of the 'journalist' when referring to myself.

As this quote demonstrates, the student-journalists maintain that they are among the only journalists reporting on the college every week, but when breaking news hits, the administration reverts back to viewing them as students, giving priority to local reporters instead. Several of the students showing signs of burnout noticed the inconsistency between how the college treated local reporters and how they treated the student-journalists. Several of the student-journalists expressed a yearning to be a professional journalist out of college, envisioning a more even distribution of power and a more coherent regulative regime than they currently experience. Elizabeth, a new news reporter for the paper, explained how she thinks some of her most difficult reporting situations might have gone differently if she were not a student:

> I think being an outside [reporter] would be nice. I mean, I imagine in that situation, I'd
> be an adult, being paid significantly more. And I feel like I would just carry more weight
> because sometimes I feel like some of the higher admin don't take us super seriously.

Similarly to how Elizabeth fears not being taken "super seriously" as a reporter, several student-journalists explained that the administration and other adults sometimes treated them as journalists, but switched to treating them as students first, journalists second, when it was convenient. Though unfriendly sources are common in the broader journalism field, some of these student-journalists told stories of moments when they felt like they did not have control over administrative sources because of their positionalities as students. Some students described feeling antagonized when writing a particularly controversial story or feeling intimidated to let an administrator control the narrative of their reporting. Two student-reporters explained that after they interviewed members of the college faculty, their sources tried to insist on approving the story before publication out of fear that the article would "make them look bad." A different student-journalist said that they felt like leadership was trying to "silence" a story in progress. Another reporter, James, described how during an interview for a controversial story, representatives of the college "did their best to take control of the interview":

> The discomforting part was always the fact that they were just very condescending and
> didn't want to give answers, and seemed like they were pretty intent on just
> delegitimizing the experiences that we were talking about.

This quote illustrates one of the more drastic shifts from altruism to anomie. Student-journalists who experienced this kind of shift — from a positive or neutral relationship with the administration to one that was more antagonistic — were more likely to express feelings of cynicism about their college than other student-journalists.

Another form of institutional regulation that student-journalists in this sample expressed is a fear that they could not write articles that included critiques of the college administration or faculty because of their roles as students. A professional journalist may be able to publish

allegations against a college without fear of significant ramifications because they are not integrated into the college community. A student-journalist, on the other hand, is viewed as a student first and foremost, and may face backlash from their community for their articles because of their excessive integration. Michael illustrated this tension by framing it within the contradictory roles of a student and a reporter:

> I feel like they are kind of irritated with us and are like, 'Why are you trying to bring down your own school' sometimes. And we just have to tell people what's going on.

As a student, it is in Michael's best interests to support his college in its endeavors, but as a journalist, his responsibility is to bring information to the public, regardless of how it portrays his college. These roles stand directly in opposition to each other. Michael elaborated on this tension by explaining how what he reports could affect him in the classroom:

> One of my big fears, which I think it could be just an unnecessary fear, is talking to someone and then writing about it and then offending them. Especially when … I could potentially end up having a class under them or interacting with them in some way.

The knowledge that student-journalists may be directly beholden to their article sources in the future may prevent them from fulfilling their whole duties as journalists, thus contributing to burnout if they are powerless to achieve the journalistic impact they envisioned.

Though the most commonly discussed forms of institutional regulation referenced the administration, some student-journalists also discussed how the size of the institution posed additional, indirect regulation. Because the college only has a small, fledgling journalism program, some of the student-journalists said that it made it difficult for them to have a significant impact with their reporting. Two student-journalists compared the feeling to "writing into a void," where an altruistic impact is not as feasible as it might be at an institution with a more established program. The small program size also affected how some of the student-journalists saw themselves, making them feel more like students and less like real journalists:

>This isn't a journalism school, and I guess in the grand scheme of things, everyone's like, 'Oh yeah, if you want to be a journalist, you have to go to Northwestern.' … Like those kids are student-journalists, and we're just students who put together a half-decent newspaper.

This comparison to a more established journalism program emphasizes the difficulties that these students have in making journalism part of their identity. Student-journalists who come into the program eager to get started may burnout quickly if they feel like their work is for nothing. Reporting at a small college, with little support from the institution, leaves student-journalists largely on their own, facing poor, incoherent regulation. Furthermore, a small budget for student publications served as a gatekeeper for those who can participate. Those who were able to participate did so for little pay, with some students needing to work additional jobs to cover expenses, which may speed up the burnout timeline. One student editor explained how the small budget regulated participation in journalism on campus:

>I wish that we could pay the student-journalists more … Those who are able to participate in journalism, that definitely comes from a place of privilege. You're able to give up a couple hours a week that you could be working a work-study job or something to pursue an article. It definitely shapes who is contributing to the conversation.

This quote demonstrates how the size of the journalism program not only impacts the support and reputation of a student paper, but also who is able to pursue journalism. Students who are working multiple jobs in addition to their journalism work may be more likely to burnout and leave the field than students who can afford to choose journalism as their only extracurricular.

Though a young student-journalist may experience tension from trying to fit in both the worlds of journalism and college, burnout emerges when excessive integration combines with a shift from altruistic to anomic regulation. Institutional regulation plays a central role in this tension, leaving reporters unsure what to expect from their superiors in the college community and disrupting both their college and journalism support networks. To relieve themselves of this

uncertainty, they must step away from their roles as journalists and focus on re-integrating themselves into the campus community as a student, where the regulation is more consistent.

Suddenly cynical. Cynicism is one of the central symptoms associated with burnout, and much of the expressed cynicism in these interviews directly related to perceived tension with the college administration. Student-journalists who are reporting on their school receive a different perspective on the institution than other students, and for some, the increased awareness of the behind-the-scenes operations of the college led to a more negative perception of the college than they originally held. For many, this cynicism is a direct response to the incoherent regulation and the sudden breakdown of their regulative expectations. Emily explained that when her parents asked her if she liked her school, her reporting on the college impacted her answer:

> I was sort of like, 'Yeah, I really like it, but they did not handle this [situation] well.' Then when you're in the trenches … there's some silly metaphor of where the sausage gets made. Like sometimes you just don't want to know.

As Emily explained in this quote, some student-journalists associate increased feelings of cynicism with "knowing too much." A Durkheimian (1951) framework can equate this concept of "knowing too much" with receiving information that conflicts with their prior understanding of the school. For example, Emily said that she liked her college as a student, but as a reporter "in the trenches," she witnessed actions from the administration that were incompatible with her normative understanding of what her college does and values. When altruism turns into anomie for student-journalists, they experience increased cynicism, receiving a negative perception of their institution because of the inconsistencies within its regulation.

"News fatigue" also contributes to cynicism among student-journalists. News fatigue is a widely-discussed phenomena associated with stress and hopelessness, and journalists, such as student-reporters in this study, cannot escape the news or its effects. If a student feels exhausted or overwhelmed by the amount of news they are receiving on a daily basis, they can take steps to

combat it by taking a break from the headlines. Journalists, however, are required to constantly

be on-top of the latest breaking news, no matter their exhaustion level or the time of day. One

student admitted that he did not pay much attention to the news before he became a journalist:

> For a lot of my peers, we're not news-conscious people. … Before I started taking
> journalism classes or even up until [my latest class], I would just kind of see the email –
> like, 'Oh, the new [newspaper] issue's out' – and I could just ignore it.

For student-journalists, consuming large quantities of news is part of the job description, and

when the news consists of alarming headlines, they may grow cynical about the state of the

world or their institution. Student-journalists whose personalities naturally tend more toward

cynicism than optimism may be better able to combat news fatigue.

In addition to facing incoherent regulation from their institution, students also face

inconsistent regulation from the student body. Unlike in the examples of institutional regulation,

student-journalists generally hold the same power as their peers. Though intimidation or other

intense encounters are less likely from student-to-student, student-journalists must align

themselves with the student body in their reporting, or else risk alienation from their social

networks. This poses a conflict of interest that may force student-journalists to second-guess all

of their reporting decisions, including what to write about, whom to interview, and how to

approach a story, and these internal dilemmas contribute to burnout. Olivia explained this from

the perspective of an editor for the student newspaper:

> I think as a student newspaper, you're in a weird position because you don't want to get
> students in trouble for the most part. And also everyone in the paper is a student
> themselves, so you know they want to protect certain groups or they don't want to be
> seen as a total outsider from the groups they're a part of.

For students writing for the paper, there is little separation between their lives as students and

their lives as reporters. When they are writing a story, they may have trouble ignoring their

existing social ties for the sake of a story, and when they take off their press badge, their

decisions as a reporter may follow them into their social lives. The students cannot be the

unbiased, third-party observers that journalism demands, causing a tension that may force a

student-journalist to choose between their two worlds. Students may have less institutional

power than the administration, but they have a different kind of power in that they control the

distribution of social capital on campus. Student-journalists who portray a student group in a

negative light risk losing their social capital.

Similarly, because of their integration into the student body, students may view reporters

who print critiques of student groups on campus – even if the critiques are not their own – as

making personal attacks. Integration and regulation cause problems when they are extreme or

inconsistent, and students attending a small college with a tight-knit community face excessive

integration into the student body, and incoherent regulation as a result. On such a small campus,

finding sources to interview for a story is easy because the student-journalists already held weak

ties with many of their peers. However, this excessive integration can cause inconsistent

regulation, such as this dangerous downside:

> I think the other thing I worry about is just – if doing theoretically a controversial story –
> kind of cutting community ties and burning bridges, and I still have to be a student [here].
> It hasn't really happened yet, but definitely a fear, a fear of mine.

Professional journalists are told that they must always act independently to be ethical, but

student-journalists cannot act completely independently because they must also consider the

possible ramifications of every story they publish. Furthermore, a pattern of inconsistent

regulation may leave them more cautious because they do not know what to expect from their

community. If a story may isolate them from the rest of their community, they may be torn

between their integration and their journalistic code of ethics.

In the majority of the interviews, the student-journalists expressed frustration with the

engagement with the paper. Though low-engagement with journalism is consistently touted as a

problem with the industry, professional journalists may expect inconsistent engagement.

Professional journalists likely do not know every one of their readers, so a low or inconsistent

engagement rate – though frustrating – does not feel personal. For student-journalists, however,

the targeted audience consists of their friends, roommates, and classmates. Their excessive

integration into their audience base causes engagement to feel more personal. For example, one

student said it was "demoralizing" to walk around campus and see that all of the news racks were

still full. A student may expect their support network to always be engaged with their work, but

those expectations break down when it comes to their reporting. Another student-reporter

explained that students' engagement with the paper was usually temporary:

> The reality is only so many people are going to read that work. Only so many of those
> people are going to engage with it in any way. And even if there is any engagement for a
> little while, if that engagement goes past, temporary, even performative, that's a miracle.

If student-journalists feel inconsistent support from their peers when it comes to their work, it

can lead to feelings of suspicion, fraying their social ties in the process. A student living on a

college campus needs ties with other students to have a strong support network. However,

because students and journalism have oppositional regulative regimes, student-journalists may

feel conflicting loyalties to their responsibilities as friends and their responsibilities as reporters.

Eventually, the tension may become too much for them to bear.

       In addition to weakening ties with their peers, a lack of readership can also contribute to a

feeling of powerlessness among student-journalists. Student-journalists have the power to put a

sociological imagination to work, highlighting how personal troubles are actually structural

issues, and several students said that they went into journalism to do exactly that (Mills 2000).

Some students explained that they believed "some of the stories could have a real and genuine

impact on people's lives." Others explained how journalism is an avenue for change, a way to

achieve justice, and an important check on the United States' democracy. All of these examples

are altruistic, idealistic purposes for entering the journalism field. However, when they begin

their journalism careers on a college campus, they may quickly begin to realize these goals as

more elusive than they initially envisioned. The interviewees for this project were generally in

agreement that the paper had a small readership and engagement rate, which one student editor

explained in terms of the difference between their envisioned and actual impact:

> I definitely thought there were more people who read the paper. … The first time I
> realized that not as many people read it as I thought definitely made me feel a little
> powerless and question just how much the newspaper is influencing the conversation.

If student-journalists are largely motivated by altruism in their reporting, then they will struggle

to motivate themselves if they cannot see concrete results. The desire to have the power to

highlight structural issues is often what pushes journalists to work long hours, so ending up with

little readership or concrete results on a story can be detrimental to that motivation.

Institutional and social ties make up the majority of a college student's support network,

so facing inconsistency in both of these areas can leave a student-reporter feeling like their

college support network is crumbling. They may begin to wonder whether or not the journalism

field is worth the trouble. When student-journalists experience incoherent social and institutional

regulation, they feel a disturbance within their collective order and begin to experience increased

exhaustion and cynicism as a result. If the reporters feel a great enough sense of anomie, they

may choose to leave the journalism field permanently to regain a sense of stability within their

regulative regimes.

Of the regimes, self-regulation was the most commonly referenced. The majority of

interviewees described some form of self-regulation, regardless of whether or not they also

showed signs of burnout. Self-regulation serves as the first step toward burnout for student-

journalists, though they will not reach full burnout without experiencing inconsistency in at least

one of the other two forms of regulation. When a student first begins to experiment with

journalism, they will face a disruption within their regular schedule, making it difficult to adapt

to the new norms associated with an increased workload. The more regularly they report, the

more trying it will be to try to expend equal effort on their journalism and schoolwork. One day,

their reporting responsibilities may be small, and the next, they may have to devote an entire day

to breaking news. The swiftness with which their responsibilities can change may leave a

student-journalist longing for consistency, and when they experience incoherency within a

second or third form of regulation, they will believe that it is no longer worth it to continue

navigating the ever-changing journalism regime. Generally, editors for the school paper

expressed the most stress about balancing their responsibilities, such as this student editor:

> It's student-journalist – it's not the only thing on your plate. You get something thrown at
> you in class and then another something thrown at you from a writer also being in a bad
> situation, and then kind of at that point, the buck stops with me. … That definitely can be
> overwhelming if I have a test the next day.

If writers for the school paper are feeling particularly overwhelmed one week, they can regain

consistency within their schedule by dropping a story or choosing not to write. However, that

decision then can sometimes leave the paper's editors scrambling to find a new reporter to fill in

the gaps. One editor described it as putting out fires, explaining that if nothing was on fire that

day, they were doing well. While some student-journalists have the flexibility to drop stressors if

their journalism and school responsibilities are becoming too much, student editors and reporters

receiving staff stipends must either find a way to manage amid the inconsistent regulation or

quit, therefore contributing to feelings of burnout.

Editors for the paper also face additional responsibilities that come from being the faces

of the student paper. They self-regulate by adding pressure on themselves to be mentors to

younger students, to serve as examples in their reporting, and to keep writers from getting too

overwhelmed, sometimes at the expense of their own mental health. One student explained that as students become older or rise in the ranks at the paper, this pressure intensifies:

> As we've gotten older, it's turned into more of like – alright, so I have to do my work, and there's pressure that my work has to be good. And I have to do all these other jobs, and also I'm supposed to be a role model and be helping others. … Nobody told me how to do this.

As this quote illustrates, this spotlight on older student-journalists can lead them to doubt themselves and their own abilities. Self-doubt can cause a reporter to try to regulate every part of the journalism process for themselves, such as what stories they believe they have enough experience to write and who they are prepared enough to interview. However, this form of regulation is unestablished and therefore unreliable. If they are lacking coherent regulation, students may face imposter's syndrome in the journalism field:

> When I first joined [the paper], I had a little bit of imposter syndrome. I was like, oh, do I think I'm good enough to actually do this and report on stuff efficiently? Sometimes I still get it. Even about my own major, I'm like, am I even supposed to be here?

For this student, imposter's syndrome occurred in the classroom, as well as in the journalism field. However, the incoherency of the institutional and social regulation that are prominent in student-journalism can intensify any feelings of inadequacy. When combined together, burnout can occur for even the most well-prepared student-journalists.

Reframing Burnout

During the interviews, several student-journalists described symptoms of burnout but then backtracked, saying that they are not burnt-out yet or did not view it as burnout. Because these student-journalists still expressed feelings associated with burnout, I included them in the "at-risk" category, which had four students total. One student editor explained that during her time at the paper, a low level of anxiety was always present. Another student explained that he viewed this sort of feeling as just part of a journalist's job:

> What's been helpful is, is not thinking of it as burnout and just kind of thinking of it as what comes with the job. And that as much as I feel the burnout in a specific moment, it's going to get – I mean, I'm going to be able to do it.

In this example, reframing burnout was a successful coping strategy for staying passionate about the journalism field. Student-reporters who view stress and poor work-life balance as "what comes with the job" may feel greater control over their situations and greater confidence in their abilities to come out on top. This sense of control is key, as the inconsistency of anomie causes burnout precisely because it leaves student-journalists feeling out-of-control. Instead of feeling powerless because of regulation, some student-journalists who expect resistance in the journalism field may welcome tension because of their longing for consistency. For example, one student-reporter said that institutional regulation motivated her in her work:

> It's so important to have journalism as a check on those in power, like a fourth estate. … the reason people try and fight getting stories published is because they've done something wrong, and it's going to hold them accountable. And so just having that ability to be a check on people in power I think keeps me hopeful. I feel like it's kind of the flip side of that coin. People are going to try and silence you, but I feel like that in and of itself motivates me.

As this quote demonstrates, some students see fighting regulation as part of the altruism and glamour of the journalism world. Through this lens, signs of burnout are badges of honor, and institutional regulation reinforces the duty of a journalist to hold leaders accountable. Student-journalists who are able to view burnout as something else entirely may be better able to cope with regulative obstacles as they arise.

For other students, reframing burnout is less about altruism and more about enjoying busyness. Some students described journalism as an obsessive profession, where reporters go through cycles of intense enjoyment, then extreme exhaustion:

> It has really fluctuated for me between feeling like, 'Yes, there's a motor in me; I want to get this done; I love doing this; I don't care if I lose sleep.' And then every three weeks, I'm like, 'I can't do this.' And just cycles of exhaustion and stuff. It hasn't really – it's

> better than I thought it would be. I honestly like the busyness, and I haven't really approached burnout.

Despite describing signs of burnout, this student similarly was able to view them as parts of a journalist's job description. This student not only was able to reframe burnout as being busy, but her description of "cycles" of exhaustion indicates that she views it as temporary. If a student is able to view burnout as only a passing period, then they know that a period of excitement about journalism is around the corner. Therefore, they may be able to avoid long-term burnout.

Gender

Of the seven students who expressed signs of burnout, only two identified as men. There may be a couple reasons for this. First, women have largely dominated student publications at this college in recent years. The majority of student-editors on the newspaper staff identify as women, and at the time of this study, all student publications except for one were run solely by women. Because of this fact, the student-journalists in positions that are the most at-risk for burnout – namely, editors and writers who receive monthly stipends – are mostly women.

Another hypothesis is that women face additional regulation because of their gender and therefore burnout more quickly than their male colleagues. Past research has found that female journalists experience burnout at significantly higher rates than their male colleagues, and this may be true for student-journalists, as well (Reinardy 2009). One student-journalist said that in interviews with men in particular, she not only needed to overcome power dynamics related to her age and role as a student, but also her gender:

> I think the fact that we are student-journalists still in college, definitely there's just an automatic power dynamic there. … it's just a reminder that there are people higher up than you, and people won't try and communicate with you directly because of your age and honestly my gender, too. It all feels very patronizing.

As this quote illustrates, female student-journalists may face antagonism in interviews because of their gender that their male peers do not have to worry about. Even the possibility of such an

interview may make female student-journalists more stressed and on-edge. Also, a female

student-journalist may face stereotype threat in the journalism field or perceive differences in the

organizational support, job demands, and role conflict between men and women (Snyder,

Johnson, and Kozimor-King 2019). All of these possibilities could lead to women burning out

more quickly than men. Future research should examine the different experiences of male and

female student-journalists with burnout, in addition to investigating the resilience of female

student-journalists versus male student-journalists.

Race and Ethnicity

There were not enough students of color in this sample to draw any conclusions about the

interaction of burnout with race and ethnicity. Though Coleman et al. (2018) found that

journalists of color were more likely to be motivated by altruistic purposes than their white peers,

in this sample there were no clear patterns about race and motivations. As a predominantly white

campus, the student publications also are largely dominated by white students, and among those

in leadership, the representation of students of color is even slimmer. Low payment may pose a

barrier to access, and experiences of racism in the field may lead students of color to burnout

more quickly, thus affecting makeup of student publications. Future research should examine the

experiences of students of color with journalism and burnout on a larger, more diverse campus.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of student-journalists with

burnout on a small liberal arts campus. Some of the findings of this thesis replicate those of

previous studies, in which female-identifying journalists reported higher rates of burnout than

their male colleagues (Reinardy 2009). As I have argued in this thesis, student-journalists in this

sample experienced burnout once their altruism broke down into anomie. Student-journalists

experienced regulation and integration in excess when starting their careers, but for some, regulation from their institution, student body, and themselves quickly became poor and incoherent. This shift in regulative norms led to feelings of exhaustion and cynicism, causing burnout. The student-journalists who described symptoms of burnout were the most likely to express strong opinions about the role of journalism in society and the importance of a free press, indicating that these student-journalists maintained some of the most altruistic motivations of the reporters in this sample. The students who experienced burnout also worked some of the longest hours for their journalism roles and had the most around-the-clock schedules. Some of the students who had the most success in coping with burnout were able to reframe it, viewing the exhaustion as part of their job or as a sign that they were fulfilling an important role.

This study builds on previous research by extending the phenomena of burnout in the journalism field to a student population. Furthermore, while a body of research has established the prominence of burnout among journalists, there is a gap in the literature when it comes to examining possible causes for the burnout. This study attempts to examine not only how burnout manifests in student-journalists, but also why it occurs in the first place. To explain the contributing factors to burnout, this thesis repurposes an older theoretical framework, demonstrating its continued relevance in the world today (Durkheim 1951).

Because this study took place at a small, private liberal arts college with a fledgling journalism program and predominantly white student body, it was limited in its ability to examine the intersectional factors that might contribute to burnout. Future research should investigate the experiences of burnout among student-journalists at a larger institution with a more established program to determine if the findings of this study apply to an institution with more coherent regulation. Future research should further examine the impact of gender identity

on feelings of burnout, in addition to investigating the experiences of burnout among students of color in a way that this study could not. Also, future research should explore the differences between student-journalists and professional journalists in their experiences with burnout.

This thesis has important implications for the field of journalism. First, this study establishes that burnout starts young, and some reporters may be entering the journalism field after college already burnt out, making it likely that some will choose to leave the profession after a few years. Also, this study shows that some student-journalists in this sample experienced the same motivations for their work as many professionals, as well as the same feelings of burnout. Therefore, an argument can be made that there are fewer differences between student-journalists and professional journalists than the term "student-journalist" leads people to believe.

This thesis also has important implications for the broader field of sociology. First, the finding that the most burnt-out subjects also showed the most passion for journalism illuminates the idea that burnout is not voluntary. These students were the ones who believed the most in the purpose of journalism, but external factors, such as incoherent regulative regimes, left them feeling unable to fulfill that purpose. In this lens, burnout can be seen as a manifestation of an individual's sudden awareness about the institutional and social factors acting upon them. For example, I argue that student-journalists only became burnt-out once their altruism shifted to anomie, indicating that the shift itself made them aware of the factors outside of their control and left them feeling powerless. Furthermore, the link between passion and burnout illuminates the ways in which social life occurs in the extremes. In other words, a person must first feel empowered in order to later feel powerless. This may be applicable to other professions, relationships, and aspects of social life such that more passion leaves a longer way to fall.

Also, the findings of this study illuminate people's inherent need for consistency. Instead of excessive regulation and integration causing the most problems in this sample, it was the breakdown of norms that ultimately lead to burnout. Therefore, this finding may indicate that the consistency of regulative norms in social lives is more important than the type of regulation or the norms themselves. For some, these regulative norms may be nearly invisible in everyday life, and it is only once they witness a norm that is out-of-the-ordinary that they develop awareness. Consistency can hide extreme or excessive regulation because people need structure in their social lives, and thus need institutional norms and regulation to follow. If the deterioration of social structures is what leads to burnout for student-journalists, then this finding may illuminate other aspects of social life, and future research should examine the impact of consistency's breaking down into inconsistency in a larger societal context.

APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I. Meanings of Journalism

- Tell me about the first story you ever reported.

    o At that time, what most interested you about journalism?

        ▪ How did you envision your future as a journalist?

        ▪ What did you understand to be the role of a journalist in society?

    o What challenges did you run into when reporting on this story?

    o How did you feel during the reporting process?

    o What was the reaction from your community?

- *If that first story wasn't at college:* Tell me about the moment you first decided to get

    involved with student journalism here.

    o Why did you decide to get involved?

    o What did you hope to do as a student-journalist here?

        ▪ Do you feel like you've accomplished that?

            • Has there ever been a time when something's stood in the way of

                that goal?

        ▪ What did you understand to be the role of a journalist in this community?

    o Have you taken any journalism classes here?

    o To what extent did you feel supported by the Journalism Institute?

    o To what extent did you feel supported by other students?

- Tell me about your favorite story you've ever written.

    o Why is it your favorite?

    o How did you feel writing it?

- How did you feel once it was published?

    o What was the reaction from the community?

II. *Impact of Journalism*

- Walk me through a time when a story you published had a significant impact.

    o What was the story about?

    o What sort of impact did you expect to have when starting this story?

    o What impact did the story end up having?

    o What sort of reactions did you receive from your community?

    o How did that make you feel?

- Walk me through a time when a story you published didn't have a significant impact.

    o What was the story about?

    o What sort of impact did you expect to have when starting this story?

    o How did the community react to the story once it ran?

    o How did that make you feel?

- Tell me about a time that an interview went wrong.

    o How were you expecting the interview to go?

    o How did the source react to your presence? To your questions?

        - Why do you think they reacted that way?

    o How did the source make you feel during the interview?

    o How did you feel after the interview?

- Tell me about a time when you felt powerful because of your role as a student-journalist.

    o What were you doing?

    o How did people react?

- o How did you feel?

- Tell me about a time when you felt powerless because of your role as a student-journalist.

  - o What were you doing?

  - o How did people react?

  - o How did you feel?

- Tell me about a time when your role as a student gave you an advantage when reporting on a story.

  - o How did your membership in this community help you with your story?

- Tell me about a time when you felt like your role as a student put you at a disadvantage for your reporting.

  - o What were the challenges of reporting on this story?

  - o To what extent do you think your reporting would've been easier if you weren't also a student?

    - ▪ Have you ever felt that way before or since that happened?

III. Emotional Burnout and/or Exhaustion

- What are your responsibilities as a student-journalist?

  - o What would you say your biggest challenges are as a reporter?

  - o How do you think your responsibilities as a student-journalist here are similar or different to those of student-journalists at other colleges and universities?

- Describe a time when you felt stressed or overwhelmed because your responsibilities as a student-journalist.

  - o Who did you turn to for support?

  - o How often do you feel this way?

- Can you give me another example?

- Tell me about a time when your job as a student-journalist gave you hope.

    - What did it give you hope about?

    - To what extent did those hopeful feelings linger after the story was done?

- Tell me about a time when your job as a student-journalist made you feel cynical.

    - What did it make you cynical about?

    - To what extent did those cynical feelings linger after the story was done?

Ending Questions:

- How do you think student-journalists are viewed here?

    - How do you think student-journalists are viewed by the general public?

- What does the term "student-journalist" mean to you?

    - When you introduce yourself to sources within the college, do you introduce yourself as a "journalist" or a "student-journalist"?

        - What about for sources outside of the college?

- Is there anything we didn't talk about related to student-journalism that you think I should know?

- Do you have any questions for me?

Short Answer Questions

Since many sociological studies involve large data sets and many respondents, we usually ask some general questions at the end just so that I ensure that I have some general information about you to make sure that we end up interviewing people from different backgrounds.

1. Demographic information: Would you be willing to share how you identify in the following categories?

    a. Race and ethnicity

    b. Gender

       i. Pronouns

2. What's your major? Any minors?

3. What year are you?

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