NEWSPAPER WORK IN A TIME OF DIGITAL CHANGE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF U.S. AND JAPANESE JOURNALISTS

by

HIROKO MINAMI

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Student: Hiroko Minami

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This dissertation has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the School of Journalism and Communication by:

Dr. John Russial	Chairperson
Dr. Gabriela Martinez	Member
Dr. Janet Wasko	Member
Dr. Jeffery Hanes	Outside Member

and

Kimberly Andrews Espy	Vice President for Research & Innovation/Dean of the Graduate School

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Hiroko Minami

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Approved: _____
Dr. John Russial

This is a qualitative comparative study about perspectives and experiences of contemporary journalists at three newspapers in the United States and Japan. The newspaper industry in both the United States and Japan is going through an unprecedented transitional period driven by economic forces and technological changes. One purpose of the study is to shed light on everyday journalists who are exposed to industry-wide structural changes. Based on interviews with journalists of the three newspapers, this study explores journalists' experiences about economic and technological impacts and their perspectives about their work. Another purpose of this study is to compare and contrast these perspectives and experiences. By doing so, it is possible to examine how the interconnected economies of the countries and globally standardized technology influence the views and behavior of U.S. and Japanese journalists.

Journalists of the three newspapers are confronting a dilemma between their journalistic ideals and increasing economic pressures that limit their activities. They are increasingly feeling insecure about employment in the newspaper industry. They show

different attitudes toward employment with their newspapers. Journalists at the U.S. newspaper think of changing careers for better job security, while Japanese journalists seek solutions within the company, rather than leaving. This indicates that U.S. journalists have more freedom to choose, while Japanese journalists are bound to their company partly because of hiring and training practices specific to Japanese newspapers. Journalists have contradictory views about technological development. While they appreciate increased productivity brought by digital technology, they feel their labor has been cheapened partly because of the same technology.

Similarities in journalists' experiences beyond newspapers and national borders occur as a result of homogeneous impacts of interconnected economies of the two countries and globally standardized technology. However, shared ideas, values and norms specific to the workplace play an important role in determining journalists' perspectives and social behavior. This is why journalists' perspectives and attitudes vary by newspaper.

This study concludes by emphasizing the importance of labor studies of newspaper journalists as information providers who are expected to make democracy function.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Hiroko Minami

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene, OR
Cardiff University, Cardiff, Wales
Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, Kyoto, Japan

DEGREES AWARDED:

Doctor of Philosophy, Communication and Society, 2011, University of Oregon
Master of Arts, Journalism Studies, 2006, Cardiff University
Master of Arts, American Studies, 1997, Kyoto University of Foreign Studies
Bachelor of Arts, English Linguistics, 1993, Kyoto University of Foreign Studies

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Labor and Technology
Technological Globalization
Labor in the Media Industry
Newspaper History
Ethnography

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Freelance Language Coordinator, 2007-present

Reporter/Editor, The Japan Times, 1997-2007

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Graduate Teaching Fellowship, University of Oregon, 2007-2011

Kappa Tau Alpha Membership, Association of College Honor Societies

Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship, Rotary International, 2005-2006

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Page

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Newspapers are dying, some lament. Certainly, recent sales figures of advertising and circulation indicate rapid declines in the newspaper business, especially in the United States (Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2011). The financial crisis in 2008 and its aftermath have brought visible consequences to the world, such as sharp drops in advertising, affecting the newspaper industry. The worst recession since the Great Depression hit newspapers that had already been struggling economically. The years 2008 and 2009 were especially turbulent for U.S. newspapers. The Tribune Company filed for bankruptcy in 2008, and the U.S. newspaper industry lost several local newspapers with long histories and good reputations (e.g., the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, the Rocky Mountain News, the Tucson Citizen). This turbulence is not unique to the U.S. newspaper industry. Because of the interconnectedness of economies, the financial crisis triggered in the United States has had a great impact all over the world, including in Japan. In fact, the Japanese newspaper industry, which had maintained a relatively stable business, compared with the U.S. newspaper industry, started officially acknowledging the economic hardship that it is facing. Some small local newspapers and evening editions have shut down. Advertising revenues sharply dropped after the crisis, and even newspaper giants, such as Asahi Shimbun, reportedly ran a deficit.

The economy is not the only reason for newspapers' troubles. Digital technology has greatly affected the newspaper business in the United States and Japan. Accompanying the penetration of broadband, the Internet rapidly prevailed from the late

1990s to the early 2000s. Instant, and in many cases free, information became ubiquitous, which made newspapers less relevant to time- and cost-sensitive consumers. There is no doubt the Internet is a powerful force. The Internet has changed lifestyles, priorities, consumer mentalities and attention spans. Newspapers in both countries are trying to keep up with such social trends by investing in new technology and establishing multimedia presentations. But newspapers are not sure when, how or whether these investments will be profitable.

Newspapers are going through a transitional period from a single platform to diverse platforms under economic and technological pressure. The print newspaper was the only (or primary[1]) platform for newspaper journalists to work on before the Internet, but today's landscape surrounding newspapers looks different. Newspapers are forced to restructure their business to diversify products, for instance, in the digital world, and seek new revenue streams. As a result, many contemporary newspaper journalists work in print and online (c.f., Quinn & Filak, 2005).

Beside digital diversification, production technology has had a great impact on newspaper workers. Today's newsroom is highly computerized, and computerization since the 1990s has resulted in the elimination of numerous production jobs by consolidating production work on the computer screen in the newsroom. Advanced production technology has contributed to the rationalization of production, expanding the work territory of individual journalists. Because of such changes in the workplace, newspapering may have become more demanding work in a technological sense.

[1] In some cases, Japanese newspaper reporters and editors also write news for their affiliated television stations.

Newspaper journalists today need to have computer skills in addition to their occupational skills, such as reporting and editing (c.f., Pierce & Miller, 2007).

Newspapers were lucrative businesses until the recent past. But given economic challenges and technological pressure, newspapers today are suffering terribly, or at least they are not as profitable as they used to be. Indeed the critical financial conditions of newspapers have found their way into the news. Some even predict the death of newspapers in the near future. Such are the views and analyses of newspapers from outside the profession. This study aims to go inside and explore the views of insiders, namely newspaper workers and more specifically editorial workers[2] who engage in the production of information. How do they see the economic plight and rapid technological changes? Do they think those factors are affecting them and their work practices? What do they think about their work and themselves under such changing circumstances? How are they adjusting themselves to economic challenges and technological advancement? From a consumer point of view, the Internet is an amazing technological innovation because enormous information is available for free for the most part. But how do newspaper workers view the Internet when it is often seen as a strong competitor of newspapers? How about other digital technology, including advanced production technology? Are newspaper workers embracing new technology or resisting, and why? What is the relationship between technology and newspaper workers? Newspapers in the United States and Japan are in downward trends, to a varying degree, but are newspaper workers in both countries experiencing the hardship and changes in a similar way or in a

[2] This study focuses on editorial workers, considering that they may have impact and influence on society through their work. It is meaningful for citizens to understand the realities of their work.

different way? How similarly or differently do they view those changes, their work and themselves? Why are they similar and different from each other?

Purpose of the Study

This study is designed to explore experiences and perspectives of newspaper journalists by answering the questions above. The plight of newspapers has been discussed on many occasions, but experiences of people in that plight have been less emphasized. The focus of this study is on people who are working for a perceived ailing industry in this information-ubiquitous age. Relationships between economic pressure (e.g., declines in revenues) and technological advances (e.g., digital diversification) and the labor of editorial workers will be explored.

Journalists in the United States and Japan are compared. The U.S. and Japanese newspaper industries are both financially suffering, to a varying degree. But they are different in some aspects: revenue structure (advertising-based or circulation-based business model), industrial structure (job market, etc.), cultural structure (perspectives and attitudes toward work, etc.), etc. Details of these differences will be discussed in Chapters II and III. A comparison of journalists in the United States and Japan should give a glimpse of common and different trends. Figures show that U.S. newspapers are more rapidly declining in advertising and circulation revenues and more aggressively developing new platforms than Japanese newspapers. In this regard, U.S. newspapers may be an indication of the future of newspapers in other advanced capitalist societies. Looking at what is happening to U.S. newspaper journalists, it may be possible to predict what comes next to their Japanese counterparts. If newspaper workers in the two

countries share similar experiences and views, it may be considered a consequence of the impact of the interconnectedness of economies of both countries and the global standardization of technology. If they are different, other factors, such as shared ethics and norms, are affecting their behavior rather than, or in addition to, the economy and technology.

The United States and Japan share the same economic system, capitalism in a broad sense, but the two countries are different at the everyday level as well as the corporate level. In fact, the economics of newspapers and the structure of the newspaper industry vary by country. Taking into consideration possibilities that other factors (e.g., shared ideas, values, beliefs, norms, etc.) as well as the economy and technology may be influencing newspaper journalists' perspectives and experiences, three newspapers operating with distinctive groups of people will be examined: The *U.S. Times* (pseudonym), a U.S. local newspaper whose workplace is all American; the *Nippon Herald* (pseudonym), a Japanese local newspaper whose workplace is all Japanese; and the *Japan Observer* (pseudonym), a Japanese specialty newspaper whose workforce is a mixture of Japanese and non-Japanese employees from English-speaking countries. *U.S. Times* journalists are likely to reflect particular values, norms and beliefs, based on their work, socioeconomic context and widely accepted ideology in their society, while the *Nippon Herald* journalists reflect other particulars, based on theirs. And *Japan Observer* journalists, perhaps, will exhibit mixed values, norms and beliefs, given the workplace demographics. With those expected outcomes, a comparison of journalists in the United States and Japan is worth conducting.

Newspaper journalists should be included in labor studies. Studying workers is important, regardless of occupation, nationality and rank, especially today when the power of workers is significantly undermined in advanced capitalist societies. In recent years when the global economy grows in strength, workers have been studied in many fields, such as logistics (c.f., Bonacich & Wilson, 2008), nursing (c.f., Gordon, 2005), and global sweatshops (c.f., McKay, 2006). This study, then, explores the world of newspaper journalists in the interconnected economies of the United States and Japan as one category of workers.

It is worth examining newspaper workers today because their traditional work practices are changing amid an unprecedented reduction in the workforce and industrial and organizational restructuring. Findings will indicate not only how newspaper work is changing but also how much impact economic and restructuring forces have on newspaper workers' experiences, and how newspaper workers are responding to changes in their work.

Newspaper journalism plays a critical role in democracy (Merritt, 2005). Every day, citizens directly or indirectly consume information that newspaper journalists produce. Although an increasing number of people obtain news and information on the Internet, newspapers are still primary news sources for other media, including the Internet and television, even in this digital age (Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2010). Without newspapers and newspaper journalists, there will be less news, in terms of amount and diversity. To maintain democracy intact, it is ideal and important that the public is informed of diverse information. Learning who newspaper journalists are, what affects their performance and perspectives and how they

find meaning in their work, etc., is necessary for democratic citizens to understand the origin of information that they consume.

This study hopes to make an empirical and theoretical contribution to labor studies of the U.S. and the Japanese newspaper industries. Research in the newsroom (c.f., McManus, 1994) and studies on journalists (c.f., Weaver et al., 2007) have often been done in the United States. But studies and surveys of Japanese newspaper workers are scarce. Japanese media scholars are apparently more interested in current issues of media, such as pack journalism and murky media structure. Under such circumstances, labor issues in the newspaper industry barely gather attention. This study marks a first step in media labor studies in Japan.

Organization of the Dissertation

In "Chapter II: Literature Review," I will establish theoretical frameworks for this study, looking at the economics of newspapers and news production, sociological explanations of labor-technology relations, previous studies of newspaper workers and the industrial structure of Japanese newspapers in comparison to that of the United States. "Chapter III: Background" will provide an overview of the U.S. and Japanese newspaper industries, emphasizing economic trends common to the two industries. Chapter III will also discuss details of research sites for this study (i.e., the *U.S. Times*, the *Nippon Herald* and the *Japan Observer*), including economic hardship, technological challenges and the workplace demographics. "Chapter IV: Methodology" will describe the qualitative approach, inspired by grounded theory, that I applied to this study, including detailed descriptions of specific methods used for data collection. It will also explain the

recruiting process of research subjects and the coding process. The chapter will conclude with limitations of the methods. In "Chapter V: Findings," I will present what I found in my fieldwork at the three research sites, in combination with interview excerpts and my observation. Workers' perspectives about their occupation, economic, technological and cultural aspects of newspaper work will be demonstrated separately in four sections. "Chapter VI: Discussion" will analyze the findings by consulting theories and previous studies and including my interpretations. I will first draw a big picture of contemporary newspaper work and then discuss details of the picture by seeking theoretical explanations for newspaper journalists' perspectives and experiences. The final chapter, "Chapter VII: Conclusion," summarizes this study by emphasizing the importance of labor studies in the newspaper industry. I will conclude the chapter with limitations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter conceptually examines the social relations of newspaper workers in the United States and Japan. The review of literature is divided into four sections. The first two sections look at literature related to the economics of newspapers, technology and labor at the macro level. The first section begins with a review of the political economy of newspapers and news production in order to delineate what forces affect or control the performance of newspapers. Next, the review moves to literature about broad technological influences on workers in general to gain a general understanding of relationships between labor and technology. This second section first reviews labor process theories of how technology deskills and devalues human labor. Criticisms of those theories are also reviewed. In the process, the complexity of relationships between technology and labor is brought to light. This section then narrows down to technological transitions in the newspaper industry and examines several views of technological changes. The second section also looks at structural changes in newspaper production in order to understand what impact technology has on newspaper producers. The third section brings discussion to the micro level, shedding light on newsworkers. The section starts with journalists' job satisfaction in relation to the idea of autonomy and ends with journalists' resistance to changes in their work practices. The third section also considers journalists in light of Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and capital in order to understand the construction, reproduction and change in values and beliefs shared among journalists, which affect journalists' perspectives and behavior. The fourth section examines the

structure of the Japanese newspaper industry and Japanese journalists. Discussion of issues specific to the Japanese newspaper industry and empirical studies of Japanese newspaper workers follow. General trends among Japanese newspaper journalists are examined, in comparison to U.S. newspaper journalists. Finally, this chapter concludes with research questions.

Economic Relations of Newspapers

In a press conference at the Toronto International Film Festival in September 2009, documentary filmmaker Michael Moore blamed capitalism for killing U.S. newspapers. Moore asserted that U.S. newspapers are so commercialized—more commercialized than newspapers in any other industrialized country—that they are killing themselves. Moore's condemnation echoes arguments that critical media scholars have made.

Among other critical media scholars, political economists explain newspaper (news) production in relation to social structures (e.g., structural forms of the media) and power relations. McChesney (2003) argues that U.S. newspapers have made themselves powerless before advertisers because of commercialization. Hyper-commercialization is the core problem of not only the U.S. newspaper industry but also the U.S. media system as a whole (McChesney, 2004). Profit-driven news media produce "safe" news stories in order to avoid unnecessary conflict with advertisers, shareholders and parent corporations. McChesney describes this type of news production as the "dig here, not there" journalism, borrowing from media critic Ben Bagdikian. McChesney's observation is too deterministic, given that U.S. publicly held newspapers occasionally

run investigative stories about powerful corporations. But his main point is well taken: that profit-driven journalism does not fulfill the expectations of journalism in democratic society; that is, "to act as a rigorous watchdog of the powerful and those who wish to be powerful; to ferret out truth from lies; and to present a wide range of informed positions on key issues" (McChesney, 2004, p. 57). The fundamental point of McChesney's media criticism is that the excessive commercialization of the media undermines democracy.

Political economic impacts are crucial to understand media performance. To delineate how political economic constraints regulate news production, Herman and Chomsky (1988) developed the propaganda model. This model postulates that five filters—1) ownership, 2) advertising, 3) sourcing, 4) flak[3] and 5) free market ideology (Herman, 2000)—determine media behavior and performance in the process of news production. Only stories that successfully pass the five filters can become news. Stories that may upset the owner, advertisers or information sources (e.g., authorities, powerful corporations and influential people), cause a wave of protest, or lawsuits in the worst case, and stories that oppose the free market ideology are excluded from news selection. The owners, large advertisers and influential information sources occupy powerful positions in society. They have power and access to resources (e.g., wealth) to influence people's lives. Many of them (e.g., profit-oriented giant corporations) benefit from the free market ideology supporting pro-corporate and anti-labor biases. The free market justifies corporate expansion, labor exploitation and environmental destruction. And as the propaganda model shows, news produced by the mainstream media is framed in the

[3] Negative responses to the content, especially from the elite.

interest of organizations and individuals in power. In other words, the mainstream media are not reflecting the public interest.

The propaganda model, however, has been criticized as too deterministic. It contends that the mainstream media cover news only in a way that does not hurt organizations in power. Then, the propaganda model does not explain well, for example, why the mainstream media spared the great amount of airtime and space to cover the BP oil spill in 2010. BP is a giant multinational corporation with great lobbying power, influencing the economy and politics. But in a sense, the propaganda model can be partially applied. The mainstream media covered the environmental disaster anyway. Because disasters always capture people's attention, the news media can expect high readership and viewership, which sets the rate of advertising. The tone of media coverage was much softer than that of environmental critics, and the coverage disappeared from the mainstream media after a few months, even though the devastating aftermath on the environment is an ongoing issue. This suggests that the primary purpose of the news media is to maintain readership and viewership as high as possible for economic reasons, rather than to inform the public or serve the public good.

Schudson (2003) argues that U.S. journalism still maintains diversity in voices, credibility and objectivity, though he acknowledges that there are intentional slants and omissions in the U.S. press. An example of omissions is the failure of the mainstream media to cover the single-payer healthcare bill introduced to Congress by Independent Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Jim McDermott in May 2011. A single-payer system is against the interest of private insurance companies that are major advertising clients of the media and have strong lobbying power in Washington. Schudson claims

that news is always created with political biases and under commercial pressure because human beings select what to present as news and decide how to present it. Thus, "[n]ews is not a mirror of reality. It is representation of the world, and all representations are selective" (p. 33). This raises the question of which political and economic forces affect the subjectivity of news providers and whether journalists are distorting realities by representing the world from their subjective perspectives.

McManus (1994a) coined the term "market-driven journalism" from his fieldwork at U.S. television stations. Examining organizational structures and dynamics of newsroom workers in the production of news, McManus found that news production is strongly affected by internal and external constraints. News organizations compete in markets to attract not only news consumers but also advertisers and investors. News commodities are not significantly different from other industrial products because they are all manufactured as a result of capitalist rationality. Business decisions are made in such a way as to maximize profit and minimize costs. In this environment, costly investigative journalism is marginalized, and this undermines the journalistic mission of informing the public. McManus' research reveals that real-world news production is different from ideal journalism. Information that profit-oriented news media produce is easily distorted by market forces, and journalistic principles thus yield to market forces. McManus (1994b) observes that pursuing the ideal of journalism (maximizing public understanding) conflicts with the business goal of maximizing profit. McManus (1994a) criticizes news for contributing to the maintenance and reproduction of existing power structures. News is shaped under the influence of advertisers, shareholders/investors and owners (i.e., a powerful group in society), reflecting their interests. This kind of news

production indirectly leads to the reproduction of power relations in market-oriented society.

Cranberg, Bezanson, and Soloski (2001, p. 75) claim that "[t]he business of news is business, not news." Cranberg et al. focus on the influence of Wall Street on publicly traded newspapers. Stocks of U.S. newspapers are publicly traded, and therefore, Wall Street investors have a great impact on newspapers' organizational performance, including production and even workers' perspectives about their work. Wall Street puts pressure on newspapers to produce short-term returns. This pressure from investors affects all types of workers in the newspaper industry—from board members and CEOs to editors and reporters. All are driven by the pressure from Wall Street to put emphasis on making profit from their products for the next quarter. The focus of Cranberg et al. is corporate-owned newspapers. The economic situation of different types of ownership may vary. Examining family-owned newspapers, for instance, may lead to different findings on economic pressure on newspaper production.

Bourdieu (Benson & Neveu, 2005) uses the concept of "field" to describe external constraints on journalism. Bourdieu (Benson & Neveu, 2005) argues that the journalistic field is increasingly heteronomous because of pressure from other fields, such as the economy. In interactions with each other, fields get influence from other fields, especially powerful fields. Fields form a hierarchy in which certain fields are subordinate to more powerful fields. Bourdieu observes that the journalistic field is increasingly susceptible to the economic field at a time when news organizations rely more heavily on advertising for income. But U.S. newspapers, for instance, are rapidly losing advertising. Does the shrinkage of advertising liberate newspapers from economic

pressure? Not likely. In the wake of a massive loss of advertising, U.S. newspapers might become more susceptible to market forces to attract scarce advertising. As a result, advertisers increase power over journalism. That is, regardless of the amount of advertising that the news media carry, the journalistic field cannot be completely independent or free from the influence of the economic field as long as journalism is sustained by advertising. Bourdieu also argues that fields are influenced by internal pressure. In a field, a group of particular people constructs objective social relations. Objective relations mean that individuals—or what Bourdieu calls "agents"— take their positions in relation to other agents and struggle for status and domination in the field (Bourdieu, 1998a). The social position of an agent is determined by interactions with rules within a given field and the agent's social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital. Bourdieu explains capital:

> Economic capital is financial. Cultural capital is the competence or understanding of how to decode cultural relations and is related to education and habitus. Social capital is the network of influential people and institutions an agent or institution can draw upon for support. Symbolic capital is the form capital takes when it is known and recognized. Change is most likely to occur through struggles within the field, as agents compete with one another. (Morris 2001:54)

According to Bourdieu, fields are not fixed entities, and therefore, agents can negotiate to change inner rules or to evolve the field from inside. In this regard, it can be said that fields are historically specific and specific to a given group of people.

Critical media scholars argue that news organizations under economic pressure produce news as cheaply as possible because their business purpose is to gain maximum return from their products. One way for news organizations to rationally produce news stories is to use ready-made information, such as public relations materials. Public

relations personnel provide a "news hook" (McChesney, 2004, p. 71) in the form of press releases and newsletters that can be easily churned for news stories (Davies, 2009). The public relations industry is now the fifth estate, as Williams (2010) puts it, meaning that it is one of the major information providers. Newspaper reporting has become more of an office-based activity, while individual journalists have become busier than ever with the increasing amount of space to fill and shorter and tighter deadlines. According to Williams, newsworkers are busier because of digital technology that has enabled newspapers to have multimedia presentations and tighter deadlines. "Not everyone sees this as an unwelcome development that undermines standards of reporting, but it cannot be denied that newspapers are more dependent on PR materials than ever before" (p. 239).

Besides, journalists routinely rely on the government as a news source (Gans, 2003). This has been long practiced not only to efficiently produce news stories (Tuchman, 1973) but also to add a sense of objectivity to news stories (Tuchman, 1972). According to Baldasty (1992), even the beat system is a means of efficiently producing news stories. In the beat system, reporters routinely go places where news is expected on a regular basis, such as courts, police and fire departments. Collecting stories from courts and police is much easier and more efficient because they have already been processed to some degree (e.g., police hold press briefings on ongoing investigations). Some scholars argue that such newsgathering—relying on ready-made information—undermines the quality of newspapers and hurts the principle of democracy because the press may become no more than a mouthpiece of powerful groups (e.g., corporations, political organizations) in society (McChesney & Nichols, 2010; Gans, 2003).

Given that such newswork activities—reliance on ready-made information—have been long practiced, a decline in quality reporting is not a new phenomenon. The current newspaper crisis has not merely stemmed from the advent of new media and the recent economic downturn. McChesney and Nichols (2010) argue that the quality and diversity of newspapers have been eroding since as early as the nineteenth century when corporate ownership came into existence. The quality of newspapers before the nineteenth century is doubtful, though, because there was no standardized journalistic ethics or education back then. It is clear, however, that there was more diversity in newspapers, regardless of the objectivity of information, considering the partisan press in the eighteenth century and the number of independent, mostly family-owned, small newspapers. McChesney and Nichols link the corporatization of newspapers with the decline in quality and the decline in quality with the erosion of consumer confidence in newspapers. Ultimately, this linkage is resulting in the current plight of newspapers. McChesney and Nichols claim that news consumers have abandoned newspapers because of the decline in the quality of information. They doubt the future prosperity of the online edition of newspapers if the online edition keeps publishing the same low quality information as the print edition. Currently, news consumers may be flocking to online newspapers because their information is free. McChesney and Nichols are skeptical that news consumers will keep coming to online newspapers once they start charging fees because their quality is low. Their skepticism will be verified or denied by the success or failure of the website of the New York Times, which introduced paid subscriptions to access more than 20 stories a month in March 2011. The New York Times is widely accepted as a quality newspaper, and the website attracts high traffic, presumably because of the high quality

of information. Theoretically, as long as the New York Times continues to publish quality information online, people will not abandon the website even if the paper charges online access. But if the website cannot maintain the number of paid subscriptions to make profit on it, it implies that economic reasons may be larger forces than the quality of information to determine people's online news consumption behavior.

Boczkowski (2004) argues that newspapers went into the digital world to hedge risks in the Internet age. "Hedging emerged as a response to uncertainty in a volatile operating environment: newspapers spread risks by moving in many and often counterbalancing directions" (p. 51). In the 1990s, newspapers faced the advent of the Internet. Newspapers tried to maintain their presence and reach potential audiences by developing their websites. Newspapers' web presences are an ecological development from a combination of technology, communication and organization. This hedging is not a strategy of individual newspapers but an industry-wide phenomenon as a "multidimensional response to uncertainty in a volatile operating environment" (p. 67). However, multimedia presentations of newspapers do not seem very successful, at least so far. Boczkowski (2010) argues that the newspaper culture prevented newspapers from being a major player in the digital age. He views the newspaper culture as reactive, defensive and pragmatic. By reactive, Boczkowski means that the newspaper industry is slow to move. The industry tends to move only after things (e.g., new technology) are proved relevant and take hold. In other words, the industry is less likely to proactively become the first player in the game. The defensive nature is observed when the industry tries new things as a means of protecting print publishing. According to Boczkowski, newspapers set up electronic and online publishing to protect their editorial and

advertising spaces rather than to develop new markets in the digital domain. Because of this mindset, "[newspapers] have moved more slowly and more conservatively than their competitors, especially those without ties to traditional media enterprises. Therefore, they have lost the commanding position that they once held in the world of news and information" (p. 35).

While some scholars argue that newspapers are not major players in the digital age, studies have found that much, if not most, of the information in other news media originates with newspapers. A study of news outlets in the Baltimore area found that 95 percent of new information came from traditional media, particularly newspapers (Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2010). Other media repeat and repackage previously published news stories. This study indicates even though consumers have more choices of news outlets in the digital age, the origin of information is very limited. In this sense, newspapers on which other news media rely as information sources are increasingly responsible for setting the agenda not only for the public but also other media.

Labor and Technology

The dominant characteristic of the capitalist mode of production is scientific management. Frederick Taylor theorized scientific management as emphasizing the detailed segmentation of work, separating the execution of work tasks from the conception of work (Salaman, 1980). Technology greatly helps implement such compartmentalization of work. Braverman scrutinizes relationships between technology and labor in his seminal work, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (1998). The main point of

his argument is that technology degrades labor by deskilling workers. Technology is introduced into the workplace in order to break up labor power into its simplest elements and to lower labor costs, based on the law of economics: The less knowledge and skills the work requires, the less expensive labor becomes. Technology, such as computer systems, simplifies, routinizes and regulates work and, at the same time, speeds up the production process. Braverman argues that this explanation can be applied not only to production work but also clerical work that is considered white-collar work. Meanwhile, he does not deny the possibility that technology creates new jobs. Some clerical work (e.g., marketing, service, etc.) may increase, while mechanization eliminates much production work.

In line with Braverman's argument, Rifkin (1995) argues that a highly mechanized workplace does not need to hire skilled workers or a large number of workers because machines substitute for human workers. Technology makes work easier so that less skilled, less educated, temporary workers can do that work. Corporations are increasingly hiring temporary workers to replace regular fulltime workers because the labor of temporary workers is less costly. Temporary workers work for cheaper wages without benefits and considerations such as paid holidays. The influx of temporary workers in the workplace threatens the job security of regular workers. Skilled and/or educated fulltime workers end up losing decent jobs and reluctantly take up manual labor with meager wages for sustenance.

The development and introduction of technology in the workplace intensifies work (Green, 2006). Technological change has helped the rise of the lean production system. The major goal of the lean production system is to make the best use of labor.

Technology plays an important role in maximizing the gain from labor. Green argues that computerization and monitoring technology successfully place workers under surveillance. Such technology has altered the balance of power between workers and employers: Employers have greater power over labor with the help of technology. Labor intensification stemming from technological change is observed in industrialized countries across the world and across industries ranging from manufacturing (e.g., clothing factories, auto factories) to service industries (e.g., call centers, nursing).

Chamot (1987) further argues that the portability of information technology devices causes labor abuse. Taking work home is not a new phenomenon, but it has become easier for work to be done anywhere and at any time because of advanced digital and communication technologies. So, work hours are blurred, and workers often work more than their regular work hours without financial compensation. In this regard, the computerization of office work made it much easier to abuse labor. The portability of office work can be observed in journalistic work. Reporters carry cellphones and laptops to the field, write stories in the field and send them to the newsroom from there. This obviously saves reporters' time and labor, but does this also abuse their labor?

Theories of the degradation of labor have been criticized for being unable to explain why some workers maintain autonomy in their work. Burawoy (1979), for instance, contends that workers hold some autonomy because they have skills to operate machines. That is, workers are not completely cogs of machinery, as Braverman argues. Burawoy argues that workers play games while working and these games motivate workers and enhance productivity. Economic incentives are secondary. Games—individual competitions and struggles against other workers—are an effective way to

divert workers' attention from the fact that they are producing surplus value for the capitalist. Games lead to positive consequences: Pressures from colleagues encourage workers to work harder; the sense of accomplishment lessens the boredom of work; workers themselves set the rules of production so they can succeed. Whether Burawoy's argument may or may not be applied to white-collar workers, such as newspaper journalists, needs to be examined. Probably, games may be well played in work whose productivity is measurable. In a retail store, for instance, sales clerks may compete with each other over the number of items they sell. Or in a factory, workers may compete with each other over the number of products they produce. On the other hand, the productivity of individual newspaper workers is hard to measure. But Burawoy suggests an alternative view to labor relations in highly mechanized work environments.

Chamot (1987) points out two aspects of technology: Technology not only devalues but also enhances labor value. Technology enables workers to expand the area of their work performance. However, Chamot adds that this expansion can be either an upgrade for a worker who had been doing low-level work or a downgrade for a high-level worker who used to do the same work. Low-level (less skilled) workers now can take on up upper-level work with the help of technology, but the labor of high-level workers who used to do that upper-level work is devalued because their work can be done by low-level workers. It depends on the standpoint that you take on how to define deskilling and upskilling because of technology.

With the centralization of administrative capabilities, Derber (1982) argues, technology proletarianizes even professionals. This proletarianization of professionals is also known as deprofessionalization. Professionals lose the administrative control of their

work as they are embedded in large corporations in advanced capitalist societies, but they maintain technical autonomy. Lawyers who work for law firms are examples of professionals with technical autonomy but without administrative control. Lawyers have expertise to deal with legal issues. For instance, it depends on lawyers how to handle a given lawsuit, using their expertise and skills, but they may not choose which case they take (the law firm/management decides). Also, if their performance is poor, they may be transferred to a less important position within the firm or fired because they do not have control of their own labor. Derber counters the theory of the professional class by claiming that systematized professionals are placed under management control. At the same time, Derber differentiates his argument from classic Marxist proletarianization theories by saying "unlike industrial workers, professionals maintain their 'craft' skills and their relative autonomy over the technical aspects of their work" (p. 195). Derber elevated the discussion of proletarialization from the era of industrialization (the nineteenth century) to the era of corporation (the twentieth century). Whether his argument may fit the era of digitalization (the twenty-first century) is an open question.

Mills (1967) argues that white-collar (middle-class) workers who are in between capital and labor, regarding property, are in the same situation as those of the working class because neither group has a direct functional tie to the means of production. Both white-collar and working-class people work for those who own the means of production. However, Mills points out that there is a hierarchy in white-collar work. Doctors and lawyers, for example, are in different class positions from clerical workers within the overall white-collar class category. According to Mills, such class positions are measured by the amount of income. Some white-collar workers take part in management or are

closer to management than other workers, but Mills argues that white-collar workers are also merely a tool or cog of the bureaucratic machinery. It is worth pointing out Mills' reference about the prestige of white-collar workers. White-collar workers likely claim prestige because of a derived authority that they exercise in the course of work. This prestige is not permanent but fragile and vague. White-collar workers try to protect vulnerable prestige from being taken away, for instance, by forming professional associations limiting entrance. Because the direct control of the means of production by workers declines in modern society, workers' focus shifted to income, power and status. In other words, work has become a source of income, power and status.

Zweig (2000) agrees with Mills that the middle class is in between labor (the working class) and capital (the capitalist class). But he does not include income to distinguish classes. He argues that class is determined by "relative standing in power relations at work and in the larger society" (p. 41). Zweig warns that the working class should not be identified only with blue-collar work because, in reality, blue-collar work accounts for a relatively small percentage of the total workforce in the United States, which leads to the underestimation of the working class. Rather, he includes white-collar nonsupervisory work in the working-class category. His overall argument is that the majority of workers belong to the working class, but this reality is disguised by middle-class ideology. According to Zweig, the U.S. society emphasizes the middle class under the influence of consumerism. People are encouraged to live like the middle class and consume like the middle class.

Kraut (1987) argues that technology is used to maintain the fundamental relationship between capital and labor. There is always someone who controls the mode

of production and someone who is controlled in the mode of production. Technology does not change this work relationship nor upgrade someone who is controlled to a position controlling labor.

Some scholars argue that technology creates new work and skills and, therefore, new classes, rather than simply eliminating jobs and devaluing labor, for instance, in the form of the professional-managerial class (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 1979), technocracy (Galbraith, 1967), the new middle class (Carter, 1985) and the creative class (Florida, 2002). The professional-managerial class includes a wide range of workers from managers and professionals, such as engineers, to liberal professions, such as media producers. Though the level of work autonomy varies by occupation within the professional-managerial class, all professional-managerial-class workers engage in mental labor without the control of means of production. Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich may categorize newspaper journalists as part of the professional-managerial class, though it is doubtful that rank-and-file journalists belong to the "managerial" class. Carter (1985) means by the "new middle class" a class located between capital and labor. New middle-class people are salaried workers (e.g., managers) who are allowed to exert some control and decision-making power but, at the same time, are placed under the control of others with more power—namely, upper management (e.g., board members, CEOs, etc.). New middle-class workers have limited authority and control of the labor of others. Though labor value theories argue negative impacts of technology on labor, Crompton and Reid (1983) point out the possibility that computer systems may help clerical workers recover the oversight of the work process by directly accessing and controlling the data through the computer.

If newspaper journalists are categorized as a class between capital and labor—the professional-managerial class, the new middle class or else—engaging in mental labor without the control of means of production, questions are raised as to relationships between technology (the computer) and the labor of journalists, such as how much autonomy journalists have in their class and how technology affects their class relations.

Focusing on information technology, Zuboff (1984) presents complicated realities of computerization. She says information technology has two types of capacity: to automate and "informate" the production process. The automating aspect of intelligent technology displaces the human presence from the production process, but the informating side creates higher-level demanding jobs, increases the control of work and, therefore, gives greater job satisfaction to workers. Such technology produces new patterns of social relations of workers by blurring the boundary between managers and the managed. Computer-based technology provides opportunities for workers to learn new skills and upscale themselves. Zuboff argues that learning is the new form of labor, but learning opportunities are not equally given to every worker, which creates a (or maintains a traditional) hierarchy among workers. In other words, technology cannot change work relations alone, but it needs humans to design and implement. If those who decide how to use technology do not change the landscape of authority, the hierarchy of labor remains.

This review of literature turns to technology in the newspaper industry. The newspaper business used to be very lucrative. Compared with other retail businesses, many newspapers are still profitable, though their profit margins are shrinking as advertising revenues decline (Meyer, 2009; Jones, 2007). Meyer argues that newspapers

have introduced technology, such as computerization, in an effort to widen profit margins (and to prevent a further shrinkage today), and the technology successfully reduced production costs in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Historically, technology and commercialization promoted the division of labor in the newspaper newsroom (Salcetti, 1995). From the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, newspaper publishers heavily invested in printing and information technology to increase productivity and maximize profit. The number and types of jobs increased, while work was compartmentalized, for instance, separating news gathering (done by reporters) from editing and rewriting (done by editors). Salcetti argues that the standardization and institutionalization of work turned newsroom workers into replaceable cogs in the machinery of the modern newspaper. Hardt (1995) asserts that newspapers became like factories, especially after World War I. The division of labor has turned newsroom work into an assembly line (Solomon, 1995). The compartmentalization of newsroom work created new types of work, such as copyeditors, photographers and, later, designers, paginators and computer operators. But these are just positions filling parts of the assembly line of newspaper production. Fragmented workers are alienated from each other, which weakens their unity and collective power. In return, publishers have more power over newsworkers, taking advantage of the division of labor.

McKercher (2002) similarly argues that technology undermines labor power and allows publishers to have more opportunities and power to trim labor costs. The labor power of newsworkers in the modern work environment is as degraded as that of other wage laborers. Technology results in a decrease of news production skills (Liu, 2006; McKercher, 2002). Though technology has eliminated certain types of work (e.g.,

printing technicians), the same technology has created new types of work with new skills (e.g., the operation of new computer software). McKercher (2002) calls the former phenomenon “deskilling” and the latter “reskilling” or “upskilling.”

The introduction of technology has changed journalistic practices over time. Schudson (2005) briefly describes the transitions of newsroom technology as below:

> Beginning in the 1970s, newspapers saw the introduction of personal computers, pagination (the digital electronic assembly of pages), online and database research, remote transmission and delivery, digital photo transmission and storage. The technologies are generally introduced to reduce labour costs and to provide the technical capability to make the newspaper more ‘user-friendly’, with more interesting and attractive page design ... we know that new technologies have moved elements of newspaper production from the ‘backshop’ to the newsroom, increased the amount of time editors spend on page make-up, and improved spelling (p. 178).

Pagination reduced production work because this computer-assisted composition system was introduced in the newsroom, not in the production area, transferring production work to newsroom workers. Copyeditors and designers who acquired new skills to operate that system appreciated more control of production—pagination allowed copyeditors to participate more in the production process (Russial, 1994). Technology does not always degrade labor because, as in the case of pagination, technology allows newsroom workers to control production. Newsroom workers improve their skills to operate new systems and ultimately increase labor value. However, Russial (1989) found that pagination limited the time copyeditors and designers spent for their traditional jobs of copyediting and headline-writing because they also had to engage in production work. Thus, technology may have expanded the area of control but intensified the labor of newsroom workers. Other scholars also point out similar ambivalence in the labor of

newsworkers with pagination technology (e.g., Stamm & Underwood, 1995; Brill, 1994) and with new technology in general (e.g., Im, 1997).

Technology goes hand in hand with not only deskilling and upskilling but also multiskilling. Bromley (1997) points out six consequences of multiskilling of journalists: 1) the disempowerment of trade unions; 2) the downsizing of editorial departments; 3) the increase in temporary workers; 4) the tight connection with technology; 5) flexibility of job roles (e.g. the organizational/occupational hierarchy flattens, emphasizing transferable skills); and 6) quicker response to consumer needs (consumer orientation). In those consequences, technology-stimulated multiskilling demonstrates both upskilling and deskilling aspects. Nygren (cited in Ornebring, 2010) argues that multiskilling, upskilling and deskilling occur simultaneously. Contemporary journalists are increasingly dealing with technical tasks (e.g., computer operation). As a result, they spend more time for production than for reporting. Because relationships of technology with upskilling, deskilling and multiskilling are complicated, multidimensional perspectives are necessary to comprehensively understand the influence of technology on journalistic practices.

Newspapers today are increasingly establishing digital presences, including websites and blogs, to keep up with Internet-oriented social trends. The expansion of online presences has changed newsroom workers' work practices and skills. One study found that some newsroom skills are in decline, but at the same time, new skills and aptitudes have been brought in (Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2008). According to this study, the most diminishing skill sets are those of copyeditors and photographers. Putting emphasis on quantity over quality, newspapers

do not much appreciate the most experienced and talented editors and photographers. In fact, newspapers have cut the number of copyeditors and photographers. Instead of experienced and talented journalists, newspapers are likely to hire younger, tech-savvy journalists who are able to do multiple tasks and, of course, whose wages are cheaper. For instance, those journalists are armed with new skills, such as video shooting, so that they can work on stories for the print and online editions at the same time. In fact, the study found that videography is one of new skills that newspaper newsrooms appreciate. Another skill set recording a sharp increase in newsrooms is web-only editors. New skills are basically related to the web production of newspapers, reflecting the diversification of newspaper presentations. But those skills do not necessarily add financial value to their labor.

Digital technology is at the center of discussion today, whether it is positive or negative. One may positively say that digital technology gives everyone an opportunity to be successful, possibly referring to dotcom billionaires, but Kapur (2007) dismisses such a statement. Digital technology has not changed the principles of capitalism. The relationship remains the same between the capitalist who owns the means of production and laborers who own nothing but their labor. According to Kapur's argument, workers are alienated and exploited in capitalist societies in the digital age the same as in other ages. Rationalization increases productivity and profit but decreases the number of jobs. The information society based on digital capitalism maintains the same dynamic. Employment is threatened in the work environment where labor is subject to exploitation.

As Brophy and de Peuter (2007) argue, employment stability (e.g., Fordism) may be an exception in capitalist societies. The priority of corporations and business owners is

not to secure employment or create jobs, but to minimize costs by rationalizing work. This is why corporations outsource production to places with cheaper labor. According to this business logic, even media production is outsourced. Mosco and McKercher (2008) point out the complexity of outsourcing of media work. Work is not simply outsourced to overseas countries providing cheap labor, but outsourcing occurs within the developed world (e.g., from the United States to Canada), too, not simply from the First World to the Third World, because not only costs but also education and skills of workers matter. It is especially the case of creative work (e.g., writing, filmmaking, etc.). The outsourcing of writing work—reporting and editing—is still rare (some U.S. and British newspapers have outsourced some reporting and editing work to India) because of economic, geographical, educational and linguistic reasons even in the highly digitalized age when communication is instant and less costly.

These conflicting theories about labor and technology and today's digital-oriented economy raise an interesting question as to the labor value of journalists in developed countries: Whether digital (information) technology is abusing the labor of newspaper journalists or enhancing journalists' value.

Newsworkers

There may be no fully satisfied workers in this world. And journalists are certainly not fully satisfied workers. Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes and Wilholt (2007) found that the level of the autonomy of work affects the job satisfaction of journalists. The problem is the autonomy of journalists has steadily declined over time. Thirty-two percent of respondents in 1971 survey data reported that they were free to

write what they wanted. That figure dropped to 16 percent in 2002. Weaver et al. conclude that it is difficult for newsworkers to maintain job satisfaction as their autonomy and influence in the newsroom decline.

Pollard (1995) found that newspaper journalists are more satisfied with their work when they feel they have autonomy, authority, control and responsibility. Pollard defines these as core elements of professionalism of newswork. Compared with broadcast newsworkers, Pollard argues, newspaper journalists enjoy those elements more because newspaper journalists are more field-bound than their office-bound broadcast counterparts. Hence, by autonomy, control, authority and responsibility, Pollard means work done through journalists' own discretion. When news organizations pursue profit, they try to routinize and standardize work in order to lower costs of production. Routinized and standardized work undermines the core elements of professionalism. Pollard claims that routinization can be a threat to effective work in the newsroom. He additionally argues that job security and income are other key elements that enhance job satisfaction of newspaper journalists.

While autonomy is considered a paramount concept of journalistic work (Merrill, 1974; 1996), McChesney (2004) looks at the autonomy of journalists from a critical perspective. He argues that journalists do not have real autonomy, but they are granted limited autonomy by the media owner so that they will be motivated. Autonomy has another effect. A degree of journalistic autonomy helps give news stories credibility that would win support from audiences. McChesney contends that journalistic autonomy is an illusion even though it contributes to positive attitudes of journalists. McChesney's argument is strong and somewhat deterministic. It is necessary to ask journalists about

their views of autonomy and experiences in the workplace to see whether journalistic autonomy is really an illusion.

Bourdieu (1998b) examines the level of autonomy that news organizations and individual journalists have. He says the autonomy of the news organization is determined by how much advertising and state subsidies[4] account for its total revenue. In other words, the larger the percentage of advertising, the less autonomy the news organization has. Regarding individual journalists, Bourdieu points out four factors affecting journalists' autonomy. First, it depends on the ownership. Consolidated media ownership limits journalistic autonomy. Second, it varies by the type of newspapers, ranging from quality papers to tabloids. Many tabloids (e.g., the New York Post) are more market-oriented, and journalists are more susceptible to consumers' demands. Tabloid journalists end up having less autonomy. This argument is hard to explain for tabloids in the United States and Japan. Journalists may exert their creativity more in tabloids than in fact-based broadsheets. Third, it depends on journalists' positions within the news organization (fulltime reporters, temporary workers, freelancers, etc.). Finally, it is contingent on journalists' capability for autonomous work. For instance, if journalists rely on authorities as news sources, they cannot expect autonomy because the authorities exert power to control reporting by imposing political economic pressures on journalists and news organizations. Bourdieu's observation may not be as appropriate to the press in the United States and Japan; his focus is apparently on the French press. But his overall

[4] State subsidies for media vary by country. European states historically maintain policies to subsidize media, especially newspapers (Picard, 2007). On the other hands, the press of other countries such as the United States and Japan is financially independent from the government. Bourdieu apparently refers to the French press.

argument that today's journalists are struggling for autonomy over their work under increasing political economic pressures (Benson & Neveu, 2005) is worth examining.

Beam (2006) found that journalists' perceptions of their news organizations' journalistic goals affect their job satisfaction. Journalists who think their news organization appreciates good journalism are more likely satisfied because they feel their employer values their journalistic work. On the other hand, the same study did not find significant correlations between journalists' job satisfaction and their perceptions about pursuit of business goals of their news organization. That is, whether journalists think their news organization is profit-focused or not does not affect their job satisfaction. Beam also found that job satisfaction varies by job roles because people in different ranks and positions view business and journalistic goals and priorities of their news organization differently. A study found that copyeditors are less satisfied with their work than reporters because copyeditors are more likely to engage in routinized work with less autonomy and responsibility for decision-making (Cook et al., 1993). Copyeditors are depersonalized in a workplace where they rarely get feedback or appreciation from coworkers and supervisors and hardly get a sense of accomplishment. The study revealed that encouragement and support from bosses improve newsworkers' work performance. Another survey shows that human relationships in the newsroom affect job satisfaction of journalists (McQuarrie, 1999). Journalists tend to expect their supervisors to behave in particular ways. Reporters, for instance, expect their editor to support their reporting work when it is criticized. The survey found that reporters are dissatisfied when their supervisors do not act as they expect.

Low job satisfaction has a negative impact on the morale of journalists. In a nationwide survey of journalists in the United States, 84 percent said low morale prevailed among news producers (Hickey, 2001). The survey indicates a "chance to be creative" as one factor affecting morale. If news producers are given more chance to be creative, their morale tends to be enhanced; if they have fewer chances, their morale drops. Compared with journalists in the nineteenth century, Mosco (2007) argues, journalists today are less creative under increasing control of management and technology. Journalists engage in various types of work, such as copyediting, reporting and designing, so it should be kept in mind that the level of creativity also depends on the position.

Today's journalists are often asked to do additional tasks, rather than to be creative. And this seems a phenomenon observed in the news industry worldwide. Avilés, León, Sanders and Harrison (2004), for instance, found that television journalists are now required to do multiple tasks. They did their comparative research on television journalists in the United Kingdom and Spain. The research found that British and Spanish journalists are exposed to increasing pressures, such as digitalization, the shortage of manpower and economic constraints. Digital technology makes it easier for journalists to perform additional tasks, and journalists increasingly participate in production as well as their traditional reporting work. Journalists are feeling that they are losing journalistic values under digital operation, in which immediacy is prioritized. They are concerned about producing easy stories instead of doing in-depth stories that take time because of the increase in workload and the emphasis on speed. Avilés et al. found that journalists are compromising the quality of stories in exchange for multiple

tasks and immediacy. The scarcity of research on Japanese journalists leaves a question of whether Japanese journalists are also doing multiple tasks like their counterparts in Western countries.

There is no doubt that digital technology has changed journalistic work practices. However, journalists are often not open to change and do not always accept changes in their work environment without resistance. Ryfe (2009) found that newspaper journalists were unwilling to accept changes in their practices through his 18-month ethnographic investigation at a mid-size U.S. newspaper. The professional culture of journalists discourages change. Journalists identify themselves with their daily work practices, such as regularly going to the field and collecting stories from news sources. Ryfe also found that journalists have certain images of "real" reporters in which reporters, for instance, should provide factual stories every day, and try to follow those images. When their daily work practices are disrupted (e.g., journalists are not allowed to go to the field to collect information in person because of tighter budgets), and journalistic images are upset, journalists feel threatened because their journalistic identity is denied. Journalists end up feeling that they are not "real" reporters. Therefore, Ryfe argues, journalists show strong resistance to changes in journalistic activities.

Bourdieu (Benson & Neveu, 2005) would explain that the collective image of "real" reporters is fostered in the habitus of journalists in the journalistic field. Habitus is "a system of predispositions, a matrix of schemes, judgments and behaviours, and thus an organizing principle of practices. Habitus is simultaneously the result of primary and secondary socializations and thus rarely stable and unified" (Neveu, 2007, p. 339). The habitus constructs fundamental characteristics of each agent. From the moment that an

agent is born, the habitus starts to form under the influence of objective structures and available forms of capital, namely economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital. While suggesting a cultural explanation, Bourdieu's interpretation is different from structural functionalism, which argues that social structure is beyond individual control and humans are coerced to follow rules and laws (c.f., Durkheim's social facts). The habitus plays a crucial role in changing the field. The habitus is not just susceptible to objective structures, such as the field, but also is able to influence external forces.

The habitus is not a fixed entity but a continuously transforming entity (Skeggs, 2004). For example, an agent born in the working class grows up in the habitus particular to the working class and in the working-class field. This agent is provided a good education (e.g., going to a college), namely cultural capital, by hard-working parents who hope their child achieves a better life. Then, the habitus of that agent changes due to accumulation of his/her cultural capital. The accumulation of cultural capital (higher education) increases the chance, for instance, that the agent gets a job in journalism. Contemporary corporate journalists, at least in the United States and Japan, need to have a college degree. When the agent gets a job in journalism because of the enhancement of cultural capital (and economic capital) his/her habitus accompanying him/herself shifts to the journalistic field and adjusts itself to fit. Agents learn particular practices, norms, beliefs, etc. in their field through their habitus. The habitus is the individual embodiment of social relations between agents and objective structures and, at the same time, a collective entity, and such identification is widely internalized among agents (e.g., journalists).

Journalists' strong adherence to long, widely accepted journalistic roles is observed in the survey conducted by Weaver et al. (2007). The survey shows that in 2002 U.S. journalists maintained the interpretive function as the strongest perception, among other key functions (the disseminator, adversarial and populist mobilize functions), which trace back to the recommendations of the Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press in 1947 (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947). The interpretive function includes investigation, analysis and interpretation of complicated events, such as international diplomacy and national policy. The recommendations of the Hutchins Commission are specific to U.S. journalism, but it would be interesting to see if U.S. journalists still adhere to this function after about a decade since this survey, how they have learned this function, and whether Japanese journalists have similar adherence.

Japanese Newspapers and Journalists

Because one of the purposes of this study is to compare U.S. and Japanese newspaper newsroom workers, literature related to them needs to be reviewed. It is worth starting by reviewing differences and similarities in industrial structures of the two countries.

The structure of the Japanese newspaper industry is different from that of the United States in several aspects. Fujitake and Yamamoto (1994) list five distinctive systems of the Japanese newspaper industry: 1) The direct home delivery system has contributed to the stability of the newspaper business. 2) The price of newspapers is protected by the no-discount resale system. The same newspapers have to be sold at the same price at any time and anywhere. 3) Newspaper companies circumvent risks of

default in payment by advertisers by selling advertising space through advertising agencies. Outside advertising agencies are responsible and guarantee payment to newspaper companies. 4) For a stable supply of paper, newspaper companies have long-term contracts with paper mills.[5] 5) Newspaper stocks are traded only among related people and corporations to the newspaper company. This inner trading protects newspapers from takeovers by outsiders. Among others, the direct home delivery system is prominent and crucial for Japanese newspapers to sustain high circulations.[6] There are two advantages of the direct home delivery system. First, because subscribers make a long-term contract, such as three-month, six-month or one-year, newspaper companies can stabilize their operation. Second, newspapers can maintain quality because of that system. If they rely on single-copy sales, newspapers may need to resort to sensationalization to catch people's attention, which ultimately degrades the quality of the paper. Fujitake and Yamamoto argue that if the paper is delivered at home, it can focus more on quality and content than on appearance. Despite the advantages, these special systems and structures are now at risk. The decline in manpower because of the bubble economy made it difficult to maintain the direct home delivery system. With the diversification of consumer needs, newspapers are now encouraged to transform themselves to attract segmented audiences. Furthermore, limited trading of stock prevents newspapers from collecting investment and funding widely from the public.

[5] U.S. newspapers are similar in this regard. Some U.S. newspaper chains own paper mills to stabilize paper supply.

[6] There are also home delivery systems of newspapers in the United States. While U.S. national newspapers use postal services and independent distributors to deliver their newspaper to subscribers in remote areas, each Japanese national newspaper establishes its own distributors' network across the country that exclusively delivers its newspaper to subscribers.

Fujitake and Yamanoto suggest going public is one option to make Japanese newspapers more profitable.

Japan had the highest rate of newspaper consumption per capita in the world (Ooi, 2001). However, reader surveys predict a bleak future for Japanese newspapers inasmuch as the large circulation is maintained by readers in their 40s or older; meanwhile, people in their 20s are much less attracted to this traditional print medium and barely read newspapers (Kimura, 2004). Aging readership and indifference of younger generations to physical newspapers is the major concern of the Japanese newspaper industry. Though younger generations are less likely to subscribe to a newspaper, this does not necessarily mean that young people do not consume news. Young Japanese may be accessing news electronically, especially via the cellphone. The cellphone has enabled people to casually access the Internet. It is popularly believed that the Internet has taken the place of newspapers, especially among the younger generations because of this technological development in Japan. Some scholars (Chuma, 2003; Institute for International Socio-Economic Studies, 2003) believe that the Internet is jeopardizing the popularity of print newspapers in Japan. Aging readership and the preference of online news consumption by younger generations are happening in the United States, too.

Kawachi (2007) specifies that social changes affecting the Japanese newspaper business emerged in the 1990s when the bubble economy burst, the Internet prevailed, and the cellphone became an everyday commodity. Each event has had a negative impact on the newspaper industry. Kawachi agrees with other scholars that younger generations do not read newspapers, but he gives a different reason for that trend: It is not because people have abandoned newspapers, but because newspapers have left people. By saying

this, he points out the dishonesty and hypocrisy of newspapers. Taking advantage of being exempted from releasing financial reports to the public, newspapers have clouded the realities of their business and organizational structures. Kawachi criticizes the secrecy of the Japanese newspaper industry, pointing out less well-known problems with newspapers: *oshigami*[7], lawsuits filed by distributors and environmental issues. Wrongdoings similar to *oshigami* can be observed in the United States. Some U.S. newspapers inflated circulation figures to charge excessive advertising fees in the past (Ahrens, 2004). Some of them were sued by advertisers and ordered to compensate their financial loss (Shafer, 2004). *Oshigami* has been brought to light in recent years by some independent investigative journalists in Japan (c.f., Kuroyabu, 2009); however, the other issues have been barely discussed let alone newspapers' acknowledging those problems.

Like Western media critics that this chapter has reviewed, Japanese media watchers generally take a pessimistic view of contemporary newspapers. Yamaguchi (2008) states that the Japanese newspaper industry is now in decline in circulation trends and readership demography. The problem is that the Japanese newspaper industry does not acknowledge its obsolescence. Yamaguchi argues by quoting Hitoshi Mayama, a business novelist, that Japanese newspaper companies are not aware that they are a sunset industry, and therefore, they are not trying to tackle the current newspaper crisis seriously enough. This attitude is different from the attitude at U.S. newspapers. The U.S. newspaper industry openly acknowledges that the newspaper business in the near future

[7] *Oshigami,* or forced papers, are newspapers that publishers force their contract distributors to purchase to maintain circulation figures high on their books. The Japan Audit Bureau of Circulation counts the number of newspapers that newspaper publishers print and deliver to their distributors, and this number is released as the official circulation figure. Even if the distributors discard those forced papers, this does not affect the official circulation figures. The publishers inflate their circulation figures by forcing their distributors to buy extra papers, not by recruiting new subscribers. It is not rare that there is a big discrepancy between the official circulation figures and the real number of paid copies that are consumed by subscribers.

will not be able to remain the same as today. In fact, the publisher of the New York Times announced in 2010 that the company will stop printing the New York Times at some undetermined time in the future (Heald, 2010). An industry-wide trend shows that U.S. newspapers are restructuring the newsroom and infrastructure of print newspapers toward the online news business.

Reflecting the gloomy prospect of the Japanese newspaper industry and media criticisms, a rare survey of unionized newspaper employees conducted by the Japan Federation of Newspaper Workers' Unions (2007)[8] found pessimistic trends in the attitudes of newspaper workers. Eighty-seven percent of respondents answered either that the newspaper industry was going to shrink or face extinction. More than 80 percent answered that they were worried about working for their companies until their retirement. The major reason of this anxiety is attributed to the financial conditions of their companies. More than half of the respondents were either always or sometimes thinking of quitting their jobs. The survey indicates a trend that the longer workers were employed by the same newspaper company, the less the workers found their jobs appealing. The most astonishing result is that one in 70 respondents has a suicidal thought all the time. About 2 percent of editorial workers answered that they were always plagued by suicidal thoughts because of physical and mental anxiety, and about 12 percent said sometimes. Japan has more than 30,000 suicide cases every year (National Police Agency, 2010); that is, nearly 0.02 percent of the total population of about 127 million are killing themselves. Whether or not actually committing suicide, it is relatively significant that 2 percent of newspaper journalists (survey respondents) always think about suicide. The

[8] The survey data are not publicly available. The Japan Federation of Newspaper Workers' Unions gave the author an exceptional permission to refer to the data with special consideration.

Japan Federation of Newspaper Workers' Unions found a correlation between workers' suicidal thoughts and overtime work and unconsumed paid holidays. Respondents with suicidal thoughts are likely to work longer and less likely to use their paid holidays. A similar correlation was also observed in a concern about mental health. About 65 percent of editorial workers were worrying about their mental health, and those are people who regularly work overtime and do not take paid holidays.

The survey above aside, studies and surveys of Japanese journalists have been rarely done or open to the public. Kim (1981) is one of few books discussing who Japanese journalists are and how they see the world. The main focus of his research is political reporters who cover the central government and their relationships with their information sources. This research reflects only perspectives and experiences of elite reporters, not reporters in general. Furthermore, it is quite possible that the data reflect only male reporters, given the time of the research. Newspapers were more male-dominated 30 years ago than today. Though there are some drawbacks, this book is still helpful as a glimpse of the world of Japanese journalists.

Based on interviews with reporters of major national newspapers, Kim (1981) found elitism shared among Japanese journalists.[9] Reporters of the major national newspapers are graduates of prestigious universities, such as Tokyo University. These prestigious educational backgrounds are critical for (political) reporters for networking within their company and with information sources. Managers of major newspapers are also graduates of prestigious universities, and they favor reporters from the same university as theirs. The same thing can be said about their news sources:

[9] Lichter, Rothman, and Lichter (1986) found similar elitism among U.S. journalists working for major newspapers, such as the New York Times, and television networks, such as NBC.

> Reporters with more prestigious educational backgrounds enjoy more advantages in obtaining access because of the respect accorded them by officials. The sense of affinity based on school ties is a factor, since the overwhelming majority of ranking officials are from prestigious public universities such the University of Tokyo (p. 209).

Even though there is fear that such favoritism distorts journalistic activities (e.g., access to information), Japanese reporters strongly believe that they are not under political constraints, and their reporting activities are not limited. Kim also argues that Japanese reporters have strong loyalty to their paper because of very limited (virtual absence of) mobility between news organizations, the lifetime employment system and "the traditional norms concerning 'group orientation' and 'conformity'" (p. 209).

Sakata (1994) points out long employment tenure as one of the characteristics of newspaper labor. His data are 20 years old, and unfortunately, newer statistics of work years of newspaper journalists are not available at this writing. But it seems to be still true today that Japanese journalists are unlikely to move from a newspaper to another. Uesugi (2008), a former NHK[10] and New York Times reporter, critically views the low mobility of Japanese newspaper journalists. He explains that journalists' corporate worker mentality prevents them from changing newspapers/companies and even thinking of doing so. According to Uesugi, Japanese newspaper journalists try not to conflict with their supervisors. Even if they disagree with their supervisors, they quietly put up with it until either their supervisors or they are transferred to a different department in regular personnel shuffles. It is very rare that Japanese journalists leave their newspapers as a result of conflict in the workplace, says Uesugi.

[10] NHK stands for Nippon Hoso Kyokai (Japan Broadcasting Corporation), Japan's national public broadcasting organization.

In the recent deteriorating economic climate, every newspaper, including large-size national newspapers, is conducting various cost-cutting measures. Shigemichi (2010) points out that there are cases in which journalists are transferred to a non-journalistic department, such as sales, advertising or human resources, which can be taken as disrespectful treatment for journalists. But few journalists voluntarily leave their papers, though they are unsatisfied with such unfavorable treatment. Shigemichi explains that they do not quit because the current general employment situation is very weak, and moreover, there is virtually no possible employer in the media market where every news company refrains from hiring experienced journalists. Japanese newspapers prefer to hire new graduates without knowledge of journalism to experienced journalists in the first place (Uesugi, 2008). This is a prominent difference in journalistic employment between Japanese newspapers and U.S. newspapers. U.S. journalists usually start with a small newspaper and climb up the journalistic ladder to a large-size newspaper throughout their career. Because of this mobility, large-size quality newspapers, such as the New York Times and the Washington Post, can collect talented journalists with experience and skills across the country. This is not the case with Japanese newspapers. Uesugi observes that Japanese newspapers intend to develop new hires into their employees, rather than journalists, through their own long-term training on the job. For Japanese newspapers, new graduates without any work experience or knowledge of journalism are more easily shaped into employees than experienced journalists. Uesugi contends that Japanese newspaper journalists are first and foremost corporate workers.

This hiring and training practice of Japanese newspapers may be a reason why journalism education is not as established in Japan as in the United States. Only a small

number of universities (e.g., Waseda, Keio, Nihon, Ryukoku, etc.) teach practical journalistic skills in Japan. On the other hand, the United States has many dozens of journalism schools, and some of them boast quite a long history (e.g., Missouri School of Journalism is the world's oldest journalism school. It was founded in 1908).

Hiring and on-the-job training practices widely applied by Japanese newspapers are well depicted in *Tokyo Vice* (Adelstein, 2009). Applicants (mostly, fourth-year college students) take a standardized entrance examination, which Adelstein calls "a kind of newspaper SAT" (p. 12) for American readers to have a better understanding about the examination. Only those who pass the examination can take interviews. Successful candidates go through several interviews until they gain a "job promise"—an unofficial job offer—from the company. New hires learn journalism on the job from senior reporters in a local branch. Japanese national newspapers conventionally send new hires to local branches for the first few years, and send talented ones back to the head office to assign them to particular beats. Adelstein says, "The first year of life as a reporter in Japan is an elaborate hazing" (p. 36), reflecting the masculine characteristic of the newspaper work environment. In Adelstein's opinion, this is a part of discovering the fundamentals of journalism, not to push new hires to quit. In fact, if you are hired as *seishain*, regular employee, that means employment for life. Lifetime employment has never been a clearly promised contract, but major corporations implicitly offered such hiring at least in the 1990s, says Adelstein.

While journalists are less likely to leave their newspapers, newspapers are seemingly reluctant to fire their employees to reduce labor costs, at least in the direct way that U.S. newspapers do. None of the national newspapers, for instance, has resorted to

layoffs, amid the recent economic hardship, which U.S. newspapers have long practiced. Instead, Japanese national newspapers have tried various other cost-cutting measures, including offering early retirement buyouts, cutting salaries and compensations of directors and manager-class employees, and creating spin-offs with different salary scales to hire new employees at lower wages (Tsukuru, 2009; Shinoda, 2010).[11] This practice of national newspapers seems that they are protecting rank-and-file fulltime employees from economic impact. But Tsukuru and Shinoda predict that national newspapers will soon overhaul the pay and benefit systems for the rank-and-file because the current ones are too expensive to sustain. Analysis and observation of small- and mid-size newspapers are scarce, and whether these types of newspapers may or may not be engaging in the same practices as large-size newspapers needs to be examined. But given that the economic power of small- and mid-size newspapers is weaker than that of large-size newspapers, journalists of smaller newspapers are likely to be exposed to harsher working conditions than their counterparts at large-size newspapers.

The mobility of U.S. journalists now will be briefly explored, compared to the general trend of U.S. workers. While Japanese journalists are likely to be bound to their newspapers for their whole career because of the hiring and training practices, U.S. journalists with experience and skills move from one newspaper to another—ideally, from a smaller newspaper to a larger newspaper—to fulfill their journalistic ambition. This trend among U.S. journalists is common to other U.S. corporate workers in general. Lipset (cited in Mount, 1981), for instance, observes that U.S. workers move from one company to another, viewing their company simply as a tool for upward mobility in their

[11] U.S. newspapers also use these cost-cutting measures. A prominent difference between U.S. newspapers and Japanese newspapers is layoffs.

career path. This tendency in the U.S. workforce, including newspaper journalists, may be explained by Fischer's concept of American voluntarism (2008). Dismissing a stereotypical idea of the U.S. society emphasizing individualism[12], Fischer argues that Americans are not individualistic but act on their free will. His argument makes good sense and explains well Americans' commitment to community. For instance, many young Americans volunteered to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is commitment to the country (large community).[13] Soldiers' commitment to the country is difficult to explain by individualism but understandable from a viewpoint of voluntarism. People (soldiers) choose what they do (serve the country) with their own will. Workers (and employers) are the same. They freely choose to work for a company and freely leave the company if they find it is not what they want, while employers freely hire and fire workers within the limits of contracts. Changing companies is not a matter of the level of workers' commitment, but a result of free will of workers. This is the voluntarism that Fisher defines.

Then, questions that this study raises are how much freedom U.S. journalists have on their occupational decisions and what are the similarities and differences between U.S. and Japanese journalists in terms of voluntarism and commitment.

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[12] Overgeneralized and oversimplified American ideas of individualism (e.g., self-reliant, maverick, noncommunal, etc.) have been criticized for a long time. Mount (1981), for instance, does not completely deny the individualistic characteristic of Americans but emphasizes the role of community (individuals' community involvement), such as church and the nation, in the value of individualism. According to Mount, a stereotypical American sense of individualism was developed from narrow interpretations of a variety of historic ideas and events of the United States, such as Puritanism, the American Revolution, and the frontier. Shain (1994) further argues that American culture is more communalistic than individualistic. His argument is convincing, given facts that the great number of Americans go to church, participate in community events, and engage in voluntary associations. The idea of individualism is contradictory, ambivalent and diverse, reflecting individuals' class and socioeconomic context (Kusserow, 2004).

[13] There may be other reasons (e.g., economic reasons) that young Americans volunteered for the military, in addition to patriotism.

Research Questions

This review of literature has examined multiple ways of perceiving newspapers and newspaper workers. Political economy is the foundation to see power relations (e.g., economic and technological pressures) surrounding newspapers and journalists that affect their performance as well as work relations (and ultimately, workplace cultures). News production is under economic pressure, and internal and external constraints affect newspapers and their workers' performance. Newspapering is a business first and foremost, and the fundamental goal of newspaper companies is to maximize profit, as other commodity manufacturers do. In order to gain maximum profit, newspapers produce low-cost stories, rather than pursue costly investigation and analysis. In a sense, newspapers prioritize economic interest over public interest, restricting their own and their workers' performance. These arguments raise questions as to how newspaper journalists today explain what is happening to their work in economic terms; whether they think that their employers and advertisers have increasing power to control workers' performance at a time when newspapers face serious economic challenges; what they think about their work and role in society as news providers at a time when economic interest allegedly receives top priority; whether journalists think they are only reflecting economic interests of particular organizations and groups of people in society, neglecting the public interest, or feel responsible for informing the public; and whether they tend to produce easy stories by relying on packaged materials, as media critics argue.

Literature related to technology and labor has indicated that technological issues and impacts on workers are complicated. On one hand, there are Marxist arguments that

technology devalues labor by compartmentalizing work and taking skills away from workers. Newspaper journalists are cogs of news production machinery like assembly-line workers, losing autonomy under the increasing power of the owner of the means of production. This type of argument has often been criticized for being too deterministic. In fact, some scholars shed light on positive technological impacts on workers. Digital technology, for instance, is actually creating new types of work and new skills that are expected to enhance labor value. This indicates that technological deterministic arguments may be too simplistic to apply to modern workplaces, such as highly computerized newspaper newsrooms. Then, how do today's newspaper journalists explain recent digitalization of newspaper production and its impact on their work life? Are they embracing or resisting recent technological changes? How do they explain changes in work practices because of technology? Do they think that computer technology degrades or upgrades their labor through deskilling or upskilling?

According to the review of literature, autonomy is one factor that motivates journalists and is key to determine their level of job satisfaction. Some argue that the level of journalistic autonomy is in decline, and therefore, the job satisfaction of journalists is also in decline. The low level of job satisfaction leads to low morale in newsrooms. On the other hand, some argue that journalists maintain autonomy over their work. Discussions on autonomy have encouraged this study to ask: How much autonomy do newspaper workers today maintain or feel that they have? If journalists think that they have power to control their work, how is such power affecting their job satisfaction? What factors motivate and do not motivate them? How are U.S. and Japanese journalists different in terms of autonomy?

This review of literature has examined differences in hiring and training processes of Japanese and U.S. newspapers. Because of hiring practices specific to Japanese newspapers, Japanese journalists lack mobility, while U.S. journalists tend to climb up the journalistic ladder by moving from one newspaper to another. This study explores how the differences in such practices affect journalists' perspectives and attitudes toward their work and workplace, and whether U.S. and Japanese journalists have values, norms, beliefs and challenges in common or different from each other.

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the questions above. The questions are sorted and consolidated into four key research questions as follows:

- How do newspaper journalists of the three newspapers think about economic changes?
- How do they think about technological changes?
- How do they view the nature and conditions of their work life under such a changing climate?
- How do they view the role of newspapers in this information-ubiquitous digital age?

Using Bourdieu's field theory as a focus, economic, technological and cultural perspectives and explanations are put together to comprehensively understand newspaper work in a time of digital change.

CHAPTER III

BACKGROUND

This chapter provides overviews of the newspaper industry in the United States and Japan and the research sites for this study. It first discusses how the economics of U.S. and Japanese newspapers have changed in the last decade. The last ten years have been a critical period for the economic condition of newspapers because of the loss of advertising and the rapid spread of broadband Internet connections. Next, research sites—the *U.S. Times* (pseudonym), the *Nippon Herald* (pseudonym) and the *Japan Observer* (pseudonym)—will be individually described. I use pseudonyms for my research sites for confidentiality reasons. The comparability of the three newspapers as research sites will be justified by referring to economic, technological and demographic contexts.

The Economics of the U.S. and the Japanese Newspaper Industries

The U.S. and Japanese newspaper industries have been suffering from declines in circulation and advertising revenues, to a varying degree. The decline in advertising revenue is more severe and critical in the U.S. newspaper industry, where advertising accounts for 73 percent of total revenues of an average U.S. daily newspaper (Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2011a) than in the Japanese newspaper industry, where advertising accounts for 24 percent of revenue of a Japanese daily (Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association, 2011a). Advertising expenditures on U.S. newspapers have recorded year-on-year losses in the 2000s, and the

amount of advertising money has fallen from $48 billion in the peak year 2000 to $22 billion in 2010 (Newspaper Association of America, 2011a. See Figure 1 at the end of this chapter). The primary advertising in U.S. newspapers is for real estate. Advertisers in the real estate industry cut advertising on newspapers in the wake of the burst of the housing bubble. Real estate companies may directly advertise segment properties on their own websites, which is much less costly. Retailers are another major advertiser in U.S. newspapers. Retailers are very susceptible to the economy, and they were hit hard by the financial crisis in 2008. As a result, the U.S. newspaper industry experienced a severe plunge in advertising revenue from 2007 to 2008 (-17.7 percent), from 2008 to 2009 (-28.6 percent) and from 2009 to 2010 (-8.2 percent) (Newspaper Association of America, 2011a). Advertisers are choosing other reasonable and efficient outlets, especially Internet-based ones, to attract attention from potential customers who have disposable income. An increasing number of advertisers have switched to online advertising because "for every dollar advertisers pay to reach a print reader, they pay about five cents, on average, to reach an Internet reader" (Perez-Pena, 2008) in the United States. There is a prediction that the Internet will surpass newspapers in total revenue as an advertising vehicle by 2014 (Goode, 2010).

Advertising expenditures on Japanese newspapers also shrank by nearly half between 2000 and 2010. Advertising revenue recorded its highest year in 2000 with 1.25 trillion yen and dropped to 0.63 trillion yen in 2010 (Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association, 2011b. See Figure 2 at the end of this chapter). Japanese advertisers became more cost-sensitive during the long-term recession in the 1990s. They have

looked for less costly and more effective means of advertising, as U.S. advertisers have done.

"The Internet is perceived as a very good vehicle for classified advertising, so the development of the Internet poses a potential threat to newspaper industry revenues over the medium and longer term" (Doyle, 2002, p. 122). What Doyle predicted in 2002 is actually happening. Classified advertising used to be a cash cow for newspapers in the United States as well as Japan, but it is not as lucrative as it used to be. Classified websites, such as Craigslist, are replacing classified pages of newspapers. The Internet is now the most popular job-hunting arena (e.g., Monster.com in the United States, Rikunabi Next in Japan). A survey of 3,833 people who got a job in 2008 in Japan revealed that more than 80 percent used the Internet to collect job information by accessing either corporate websites or online recruiting services while job hunting (IT Media, 2008).

The Internet has not only drained advertising revenues from newspapers but has also made the transmission of news much faster and less costly than by newspapers. The Internet is often considered the prime suspect in the decline of newspaper circulation. The total print circulation of U.S. daily newspapers has decreased from its high of 63 million in 1990 (Newspaper Association of America, 2011b) to 43 million in 2010 (Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2011b). The downward trend of newspapers had begun before the Internet rapidly prevailed around 2000. But the statistics also show that the decline has worsened since the mid-2000s. Print readership mostly consists of people in their 50s and older, and it is rapidly shrinking, while the

readership is aging and younger generations likely browse news online (Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2010).

The decline in the total circulation of Japanese newspapers is steady but more gradual: 53 million copies in 1999 to 49 million in 2010 (Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association, 2011c). The home-delivery system based on long-term subscription contracts may be forestalling a sharp drop in newspaper circulation in Japan. Major national newspapers have their own network of distributors across the entire country to exclusively deliver their newspapers, and large- and mid-size local and regional newspapers have networks that cover their regions. Most newspaper readers are on a long-term subscription contract ranging from three months to one year or longer. About 95 percent of newspapers are directly delivered to subscribers' homes (Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association, 2011c). However, the Japanese newspaper industry is also concerned that younger generations are less likely to read newspapers than older generations. In a reader survey conducted by Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association (2010), only 32 percent of those in their 20s answered that they read a newspaper every day, while more than 80 percent of those in their 60s did so. It is critical for newspapers to develop the market of young readers in order to prevent sharp declines in circulation after current old readers leave newspapers for various reasons (e.g., death) in the future. Japanese newspapers are trying to make themselves relevant to young generations. They, for instance, promote themselves for educational use, as class materials and examination materials. But their campaigns have not yielded very successful outcomes.

Reflecting these downward trends and the financial trouble that newspapers are experiencing, approximately 11,000 jobs in the newsroom workforce were eliminated in the U.S. daily newspaper industry from 2007 to 2009 (Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2011b. See Figure 3 at the end of this chapter). Four chain newspapers alone—Gannett, GateHouse Media, the Sun-Times Media Group and the Journal Register Company—closed 61 newspapers, mostly weeklies, in 2009 (Dumpala, 2009). In the Japanese newspaper industry, the total workforce has also shrunk from about 60,000 in 2000 to 47,000 in 2010[14] (Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association, 2011d. See Figure 4 at the end of this chapter). The reduction in employment occurred mostly in the printing department. The workforce of the printing department has dropped by almost two-thirds from about 12,000 in 2000 to 4,600 in 2010 (Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association, 2011e). The number of editorial workers leveled off during the same period. It would be ideal to have figures of the total workforce and the production workforce of the U.S. newspaper industry in order to compare those to the Japanese newspaper industry, but unfortunately, U.S. figures are not available (only the figure of newsroom workforce is available). It is still worth noting that the U.S. newspaper industry is rapidly losing its newsroom workforce, while the Japanese newspaper industry has maintained the same level of manpower in the newsroom for the last decade.

The rapid reduction in overall newspaper workforce has been helped by the introduction of new technology, such as computerized page composition systems. Such

[14] These figures include employees of newspapers and news agencies.

technology has rationalized most of the production process, which led to the elimination of numerous production jobs in the United States and Japan.

Research Sites

The *U.S. Times* (the United States), the *Nippon Herald* (Japan), and the *Japan Observer* (Japan) were chosen as research sites. In terms of workforce demographics, the three newspapers are interesting comparisons. The workforce of the *U.S. Times* is all American, and that of the *Nippon Herald* is all Japanese, while the newsroom of the *Japan Observer* is demographically mixed with Japanese and non-Japanese English-speaking journalists. It is expected that workers of the *U.S. Times* will indicate perspectives about their work and experiences that reflect ideas and values particular to their group and workplace, while those of the *Nippon Herald* do theirs. Those of the *Japan Observer* may show mixed ideas and values, or they may indicate that there is more than one value system in the workplace because of the multi-nationalities of the workforce.

The three newspapers are comparable in economic and technological aspects. First, the ownership is similar. The three newspapers are family-owned, union papers. Second, all of the newspapers have a long history in and strong ties with their communities of circulation. The *U.S. Times* and the *Nippon Herald* are local newspapers widely read by local residents. The *Japan Observer* is not a local newspaper geographically rooted in a certain area but a specialty newspaper (an English-language newspaper) circulating nationwide. The *Japan Observer* does not have a geographical community, but the paper has a community of readers who speak or learn English in

Japan, regardless of nationality. The newspaper has strong brand value in that community. Third, advertising revenues of the three newspapers are rapidly shrinking, especially after the financial crisis in 2008. Fourth, the three papers have downsized the workforce by half over the last five to 20 years because of economic difficulties and the computerization of production. Because of the introduction of computerized composition systems since the 1990s, the size of the production workforce of each newspaper has shrunk significantly. The *Japan Observer* outsourced its printing to an outside company in the mid-2000s, while the *Nippon Herald* spun off the printing department to create a subsidiary company. The size of the newsroom workforce is also shrinking at the three newspapers, to a varying degree. Finally, all these newspapers have tried to establish multimedia presences since the mid-1990s. All of them publish an online edition and are currently pondering the further diversification of their products, including the development of editions for tablet devices and smartphones.

More details of the three newspapers will be individually examined next. Because these newspapers are private companies, financial reports and the detailed breakdown of employees are not available to the public. In order to gain overviews of these newspapers, I rely on public relations documents released by the companies and insider information, in addition to data compiled by third parties.

The U.S. Times

The *U.S. Times* is a local newspaper with a history of more than 130 years in the circulating community. The paper has been owned by a family for generations. Several

family members work in the newsroom and other departments, and some are registered as board members.

The *U.S. Times* is a monopoly newspaper in the community, reaching about 60 percent of households in the circulating county in print alone[15], and 75 to 80 percent combining print and online readerships[16]. However, paid circulation has steadily declined for more than ten years, from approximately 78,000 in 1999 to around 60,000 in 2010[17]. More important, advertising revenues are seriously suffering. Because of the struggles in finances, the newspaper is trying to cut expenditures. The total personnel of the newspaper has been reduced by almost half in the last five years to reduce labor costs by early retirement buyouts and layoffs. According to union rules, workers who have less experience with the newspaper are laid off first. As a result, the average age of the newsroom workforce has increased. In addition to cutbacks in labor costs, the newspaper recently shrank the physical size of the print product to reduce newsprint costs.

The *U.S. Times* built a new building (86,000 sq.ft.) on the outskirts of town and moved there in the late 1990s when the paper introduced a new printing press that could not fit into their old building in the downtown. The newsroom is located on the spacious second floor along with offices of executives. The newspaper changed the layout in 2010 and moved the advertising department upstairs. The company is now trying to rent out the space downstairs that the advertising department had used.

The *U.S. Times* has put an emphasis on the automation and digitalization of production by introducing new technology. Currently, the operation of the paper is

[15] According to the *U.S. Times* advertising department.

[16] According to my interviewees' statements.

[17] According to the newspaper association of the state where the *U.S. Times* is operating.

centered on a database-oriented system that allows editors and reporters to efficiently work on both the print and the online editions of the paper. Like other U.S. newspapers, the *U.S. Times* enhances the online edition by frequently updating stories and providing original content, such as photo slideshows or galleries, videos and blogs.

The Nippon Herald

The *Nippon Herald* circulates in two adjacent prefectures in Japan. The paper has a history of more than 130 years in the circulating community in which it has established its strong brand identity. The major competitors of the *Nippon Herald* are national newspapers. National newspapers have strong sales power, taking advantage of their own distribution networks. It is observed across Japan that local newspaper markets are dominated by national newspapers. The *Nippon Herald* is an exception for a local newspaper in this regard. The *Nippon Herald* is the major player in the local newspaper market, fiercely competing with powerful national newspapers. For a large-size local newspaper, the *Nippon Herald* prints about 510,000 copies every day[18], and this figure has not greatly changed in the last 20 years. This leveling-off of circulation is not a good sign, though, given the fact that the population in the circulation area has been growing.

Apart from circulation, advertising is a concern of the *Nippon Herald*. The Japanese newspaper industry witnessed a decline in advertising after the economic bubble burst in the early 1990s. Except when the IT bubble in 2001 briefly boosted advertising expenses in newspapers, the downward trend of advertising did not stop. The

[18] This figure was provided by the Japan Audit Bureau of Circulation upon my personal request.

financial crisis in 2008 worsened newspapers' finances. The *Nippon Herald* is no exception.

In order to offset the loss, the newspaper has cut labor costs by restructuring the company. The newspaper created two spin-offs in 2006 by separating the business departments (sales, advertising, personnel, administration, etc.) and the printing department from the head office. The editorial department remains in the head office. The spin-offs employ a different salary scale, which allows the company to hire new employees for far less money than head-office employees and transferred employees from the head office to the spin-offs. This business strategy is designed to cut labor costs in the long run. The total workforce of the *Nippon Herald* was cut by half in the last 20 years, from more than 1,000 to about 500.[19] The workforce was lost mostly by natural attrition. The company has not resorted to massive layoffs, but it has cut recruitment, while Baby Boomers who account for the large portion of the workforce are retiring. The newspaper offered early retirement buyouts in the recent past, but it did not cause a massive reduction in the workforce.

The *Nippon Herald* has been running a website since the mid-1990s. The website is operated by the media department, and print editors and reporters take no direct part in its operation. Print editors and reporters do not produce original content, such as blogs, for the website, either. The production of the print edition and that of the online edition are clearly separated.

Regarding production technology, the *Nippon Herald* has not introduced a database-oriented system, like the *U.S. Times* has. Technology has not integrated much

[19] According to my interviewees' statements.

newsroom work, such as reporting, editing, page-making, and print and online. Each occupation in the newsroom basically does its conventionally described work in print.

The Japan Observer

The *Japan Observer* is one of two English-language daily newspapers published by Japanese companies with a history of about 115 years. Japan has a very limited population of native English-speaking residents. They account for only 4.8 percent of the total foreign population, which comprises 1.03 percent of the total population of 127 million (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, n.d.). In other words, there are about 1.3 million foreign residents, and only about 62,000 speak English. Given the demographics, the *Japan Observer* is considered a specialty newspaper in such a monolingual country where the overwhelming majority of citizens speak Japanese in their everyday lives. The size of the total English-language newspaper market is estimated at 60,000 copies at most, based on circulation data compiled by the Japan Audit Bureau of Circulation and the latest available public relations materials of the English-language newspaper publishers. The withdrawal of another publisher from the English-language newspaper business in February 2011—three Japanese publishers were producing English-language newspapers until then—shrank the market dramatically. It also suggests that English-language newspapers are not profitable. It is further shrinking in this Internet age when news in English is available online, for the most part for free. As a piece of evidence, the circulation of the *Japan Observer* has shrunk almost by half from 58,000 in 2000 to 30,000 in 2010.[20]

[20] These figures were provided by the Japan Audit Bureau of Circulation upon my personal request.

Other than English-speaking residents, target audiences of the *Japan Observer* are multinational corporations, embassies, hotels, Japanese and non-Japanese businesspeople, educational institutions, and Japanese English-learners. The *Japan Observer* is supported by loyal subscribers such as English-learners, and in fact, the paper enjoys strong recognition in the community of English-learners. Also, before the Internet, the *Japan Observer* was one of a few media outlets providing wide coverage of world news basically compiled from wire stories. People who wanted to obtain information about the world would read the *Japan Observer*.

In addition to the difficulty of selling the product in a foreign language to general audiences, selling advertising space is another problem for the *Japan Observer*. Japanese corporations that sell products for Japanese consumers are unlikely to publish their advertisements in the *Japan Observer* from a cost-effectiveness standpoint. The major advertisers of the *Japan Observer* are carmakers, hotels, airlines, travel agencies and educational institutions that want to appeal to English-speaking consumers as well as Japanese-educated consumers. However, this group of advertisers is also reducing the amount of advertising in the *Japan Observer* for economic reasons.

Historically, the *Japan Observer* set single-copy sales and subscription fees higher than an average Japanese daily because the paper is not well subsidized by advertising. When the newspaper reduced the price of a copy in the early 2000s to compete with other English-language newspapers[21], its finances started deteriorating because the newspaper did not have enough advertising income to compensate for the loss in circulation revenues. What is worse, the price cut failed to curb further decline in

[21] There were three English-language newspapers that were published by Japanese companies in the 2000s. One publisher stopped printing the English-language edition in 2011.

circulation. The newspaper brought the original price back in the late 2000s because its economics had gotten worse by then, recording further declines in circulation and advertising. Currently, the price of single-copy sales of the *Japan Observer* is 180 yen ($2.20), while, for instance, that of the *Nippon Herald* is 130 yen ($1.60). The monthly subscription is 4,500 yen ($55), which is 500 yen ($6) more expensive than the *Nippon Herald*.

The *Japan Observer* reduced the workforce by half by completely outsourcing the printing department in 2007 and offering early retirement buyouts companywide several times in the last several years. The newsroom workforce of the *Japan Observer* is almost equally divided into Japanese and non-Japanese English-speaking workers from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia.

The newspaper used to own half of its 12-story building: the second floor for production, the third and fourth floors for editorial, the fifth floor for business, the sixth floor for an FM station that the paper used to own, and two basement floors for the printing press. Because of the outsourcing of the printing department, the newspaper shut down the basement floors. The newspaper sold the ownership of the building to the parent company and is currently renting the second and third floors from the parent company to accommodate the newsroom and business departments.

The *Japan Observer* has been running its website since the mid-1990s. The website is basically a republication of the print edition, and it does not feature original content, such as photo galleries and blogs. Some stories embed videos, but the number of such stories is limited. The *Japan Observer* has subsidiary weekly publications that sell

digital editions[22] for smartphones and tablet devices, but the *Japan Observer* itself has not launched such distributions yet.

The *Japan Observer* recently introduced a new system, which is similar to the database-oriented system of the *U.S. Times*. The introduction of the new system was originally scheduled at the end of November 2010, but it was delayed for technical reasons. It was rescheduled in mid-March 2011, but it was postponed again until mid-April 2011 because of the chaotic situation caused by the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis in Japan that happened in March 2011.

[22] Digital editions are basically PDFs of the print edition. Some pages, such as movie pages, are removed from the digital edition because of copyright and secondary use issues. The PDF files are converted into readable formats on applications for smartphones and tablet devices by the application provider/seller. Thus, The *Japan Observer* does not directly sell digital editions to customers.

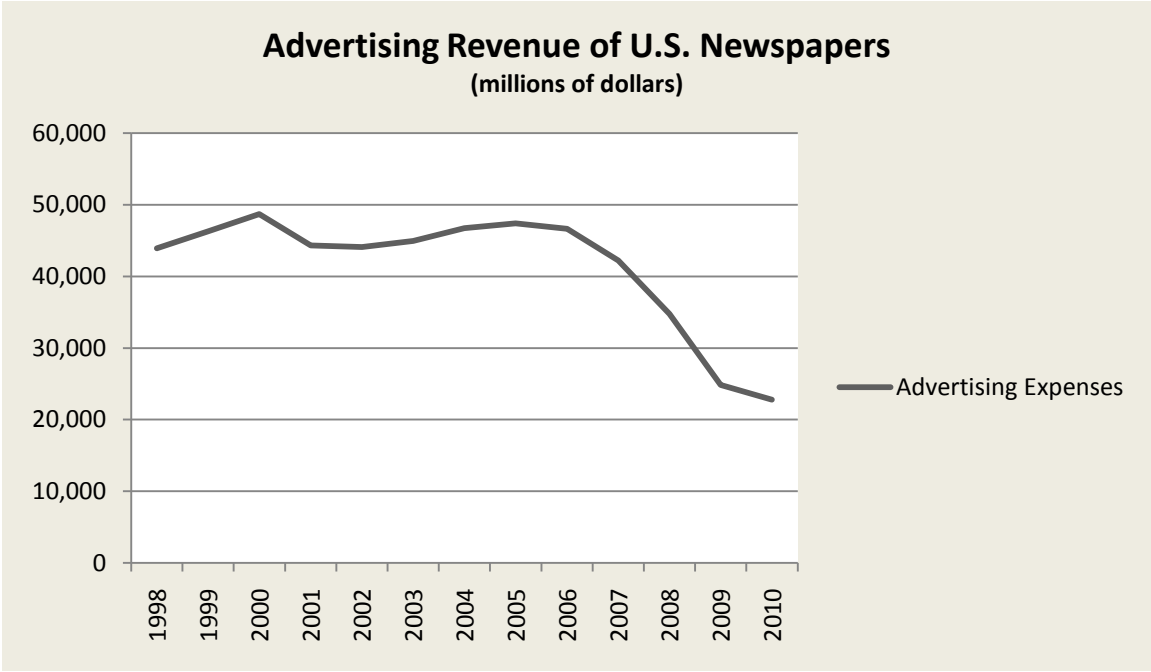

Figure 1. Advertising Revenue of U.S. Newspapers (*Source: Newspaper Association of America*)

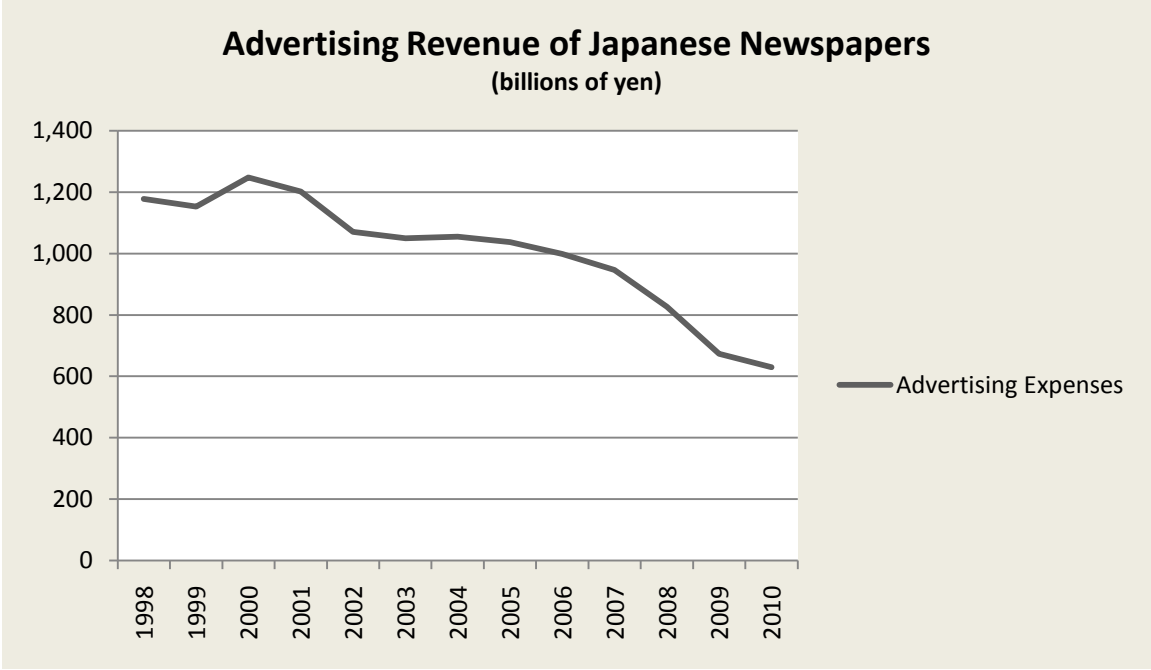

Figure 2. Advertising Revenue of Japanese Newspapers (*Source: Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association*)

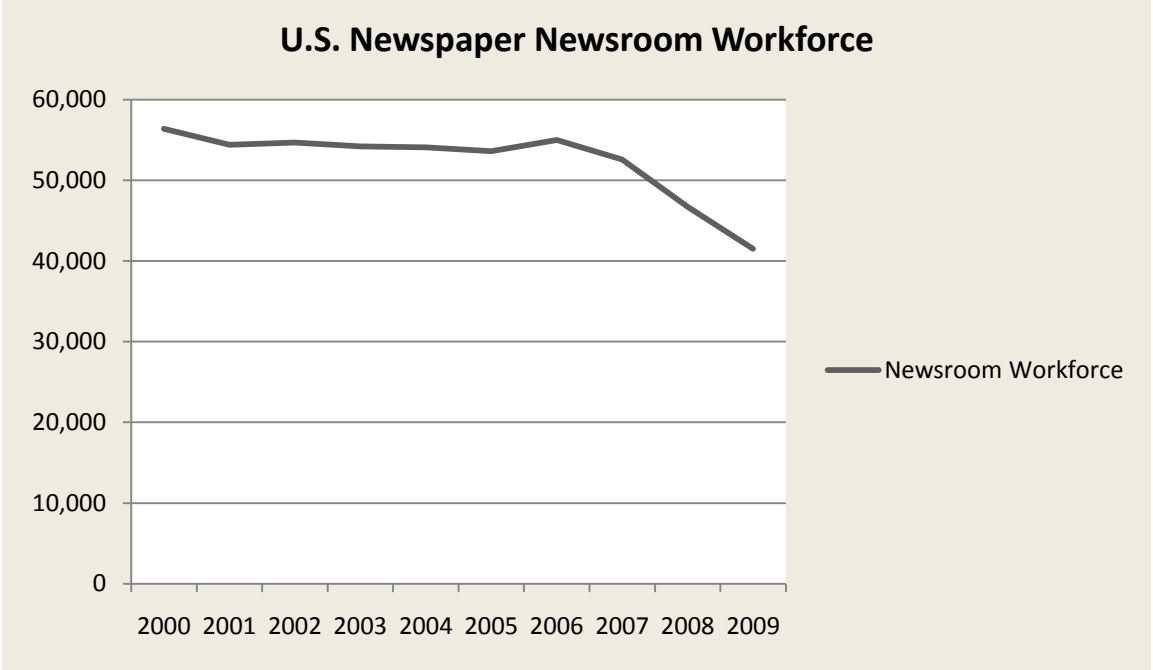

Figure 3. U.S. Newspaper Newsroom Workforce (*Source: Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism*)

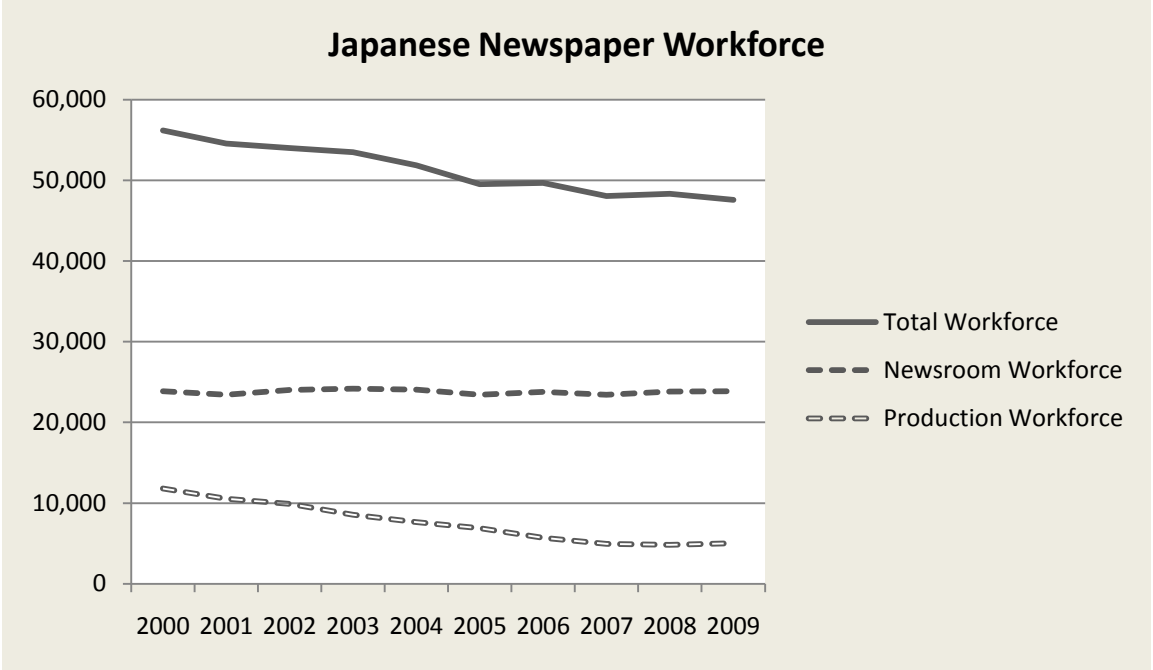

Figure 4. Japanese Newspaper Workforce (*Source: Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association*)

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore newspaper workers' perspectives and provide insights into the relationships between economic and technological challenges and newsroom workers. In order to explore their world, inductive, in-depth data and also my interpretation are necessary. Because qualitative research provides rich, realistic details of research subjects (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), this study decided to employ a qualitative approach. Qualitative research strives to cover the quality and complexity of things (Berg, 2007) that quantitative data may lose because subjects' attitudes and behaviors are boiled down into numbers.

This study consists of observations, interviews, coding, and primary and secondary research, inspired by grounded theory techniques consisting of "systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2). Grounded theory, in which data come first (theories come later), was qualified to conduct this study. There were some theoretical ideas before fieldwork (data collection) to set focal points for this research project, but the theoretical ideas and focus were adjusted and amended during data collection. In this regard, conceptualization (interpretation and analysis) coincided with data collection.

The reflexivity of my experience is included. I was a former insider in the Japanese newspaper industry, and therefore, my experiences and values might have been reflected in my observations, interviews and interpretations (Emerson et al., 1995).

For confidentiality reasons, I use pseudonyms for my research sites. My interviewees provided confidential information that may damage the reputation and the business of their companies if it becomes public with real company names. I also use pseudonyms for my interviewees. I promised my interviewees that I would not reveal their identifying information in my writing in order to draw out their candid thoughts and views of their work. Because this study intensively deals with people's personal perspectives and feelings, I obtained approval from the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects/Institutional Review Board (CPHS/IRB) at the University of Oregon before I started going to the research sites.

Observation

Observation is a useful means of obtaining insights into the everyday practices of people and organizations. Researchers can observe organizational routines to learn the meaning of insider language and to, thereby, better understand corporate and workplace culture, power relationships, constraints, pressures, norms and the roles of actors in organizations. In this respect, when done well, observation is a powerful technique because it can provide some insights that are not available by any other research methods. In other words, the observation method makes the invisible visible (Hansen et al., 1998). Observation can also be used for exploratory research because it helps researchers collect basic information to frame focused hypotheses and research questions (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000).

To begin with, I periodically visited the newsroom of the *U.S. Times* in April, May and September 2008 as exploratory research. At that moment, I did not have

specific research questions in mind. Rather, I tried to be open-minded to learn what was going on in the newsroom. With permission from the managing editor, I observed daily news meetings and weekly features meetings of editors. Before and after the meetings, I observed activities and interactions among people in the newsroom and its atmosphere. I took notes while I was attending the meetings and observing the newsroom interactions. I jotted down what I saw and heard as well as what I thought and felt. I also sketched the layout of the newsroom and diagrams of people in the meetings. As soon as I went home, I typed detailed fieldnotes into my computer based on my notes and memory from observation.

Though I tried to observe the newsroom in an unobtrusive manner, I may have stood out. My presence caught people's attention mainly because I was the only Asian in a newsroom of all Caucasian workers, and also because I was observing, standing and walking with a notebook and a pen in my hands. Some newsroom workers spoke to me, realizing my presence. They seemed to be more curious than suspicious about me, so I explained my status to seek their understanding.

During the summer break of 2008, I visited the newsroom of the *Japan Observer* for a week for additional exploratory research. One purpose of my trip was to examine the possibilities to compare newspaper newsroom workers in the United States and those in Japan for my dissertation. I obtained official permission from the company president, taking advantage of my personal connections. With the permission, I stayed in the *Japan Observer* newsroom from 10 in the morning to 6 in the evening, when most newsroom workers were on duty. I walked around in the newsroom and occasionally talked with people. I was not racially conspicuous in the *Japan Observer* newsroom, which had

Japanese and non-Japanese staff; however, my presence still caught the attention of newsroom workers because the newsroom is so small that a stranger stands out. Much like newsroom workers of the *U.S. Times*, those who spoke to me in the *Japan Observer* seemed more curious than hostile. I explained my research project and also asked them for interviews. For the *Japan Observer*, I basically recruited potential interviewees in person, while observing the newsroom. Regarding fieldnotes, I used the same technique as I did in the *U.S. Times* newsroom.

Concerning the observation of the *Nippon Herald*, I was only invited to the newsroom once—in the summer of 2009. I knew as a former insider that the Japanese newspaper industry was off-limits to outsiders. My research requests, for instance, had been rejected by other Japanese newspapers.[23] Because of my failed attempts, I had to take a different approach to the *Nippon Herald*. I used a personal contact, a reporter of the *Nippon Herald*, to access the newsroom instead of seeking official permission from the company. My personal contact introduced me to his managers and colleagues and explained that I was a student researcher who wanted to talk with them. After the introduction, he gave me a brief tour of the newsroom to give me a glimpse of its layout and atmosphere. He explained the workflow of news production during the tour. However, he refused further tours in the newsroom lest personal information of *Nippon Herald* workers accidentally leak out of the office.

After my preliminary research, I observed the *Japan Observer* newsroom again in June 2010 to see if there were any changes in its layout and atmosphere. Because my time was limited, I focused more on data collection through interviews than through

[23] I sent my research requests to three major national newspapers through email and personal connections. All of them were either rejected or ignored. The *Japan Observer* is an exception in this regard because I have strong connections to that paper.

observation this time. Also, I needed to manage my limited time for effectively collecting other data and materials outside the company, such as library searches and meetings with people outside. I ended up spending some time observing the newsroom before and after the interview when it took place in the company building.

After collecting data in Japan, I returned to the newsroom of the *U.S. Times* in September and October 2010. I toured the whole building from the newsroom to the printing press with the deputy managing editor as a guide. I did not observe regular meetings this time. I observed meetings for my preliminary research to examine human interactions over news selection and page layout, but I had excluded such human interactions from my research and decided to focus on newsroom workers' perspectives about technological and economic challenges by the fall of 2010. In addition, I realized a gap among the research sites in terms of the amount of time spent for observation because of time constraints and differences in the openness of the newspapers: I spent more time in the *U.S. Times* newsroom than the others. Besides, I did not want to distract people with my presence in the newsroom. Establishing hostile relationships with research subjects was the last thing I wanted because such relationships would have negative impacts on the progress of my research. Observations in the *U.S. Times* and the *Japan Observer* in the early stage of my research and ongoing literature research enabled me to narrow my focus and frame interview questions.

Though observation is a useful method to find out people's interactions, behaviors and routines in a natural setting, it does not give researchers insights into people's thoughts and feelings about things (Darlington & Scott, 2002). Furthermore, observation may not be able to explain why people behave in a particular way or what

particular things mean to them. This study needed an additional method to fill this vacuum. Hence, I chose the interview method to obtain insights into newspaper journalists' perspectives and feelings.

Interviews

Intensive interviews are expected to produce rich, in-depth data. In-depth interviews provide deeper information and knowledge of research subjects and events than other methods, such as observations, surveys and focus groups (Johnson, 2001; Darlington & Scott, 2002). Interviewing is a powerful data collection method when the researcher explores perspectives and feelings of people about things and events related to research topics (Darlington & Scott, 2002). Interviewing is a site for not only human interactions but also knowledge-production. Knowledge is produced between the interviewer and the interviewee, who share mutual interests through interviews (Kvale, 1996; Holstein & Gubrium, 1997; Hermanns, 2004). Because the purpose of this study is to explore firsthand perspectives and experiences of newspaper journalists, interviewing is appropriate.

I conducted 76 semi-structured interviews between April 2008 and October 2010. Several interviewees took more than one interview, participating in both an initial interview in my preliminary research and a follow-up interview after a period of time. I reframed interview questions after my exploratory research with the *U.S. Times* and the *Japan Observer* in 2008 (for the list of interview questions for English speakers, see Appendix A; for Japanese speakers, see Appendix B).

I interviewed 14 *U.S. Times* employees in April, May and September 2008, while periodically visiting the newsroom. I talked with two out of the 14 interviewees twice in this period so that the accumulated total is 16. I recruited interviewees via email. I sent emails asking for participation to about 20 journalists whose names I found in bylines. When I revisited the *U.S. Times* in September and October 2010, I conducted 17 more interviews (two interviewees participated in interviews in 2008). Three of my previous interviewees had left for other papers or occupations by September 2010. I used the staff directory on the paper's website to send recruitment emails in 2010. I sent 34 emails and got responses from 18 people. Two out of 18 turned down my request, saying they were not comfortable being interviewed. Another respondent agreed with my interview request, but she could not find a time slot for an interview in her tight schedule. In addition to random email recruitment, I recruited two editors in person while I was observing the newsroom.

My interviewees at the *U.S. Times* include reporters, copyeditors, editors, web developers, a computer programmer, a photographer, a graphic designer, the managing editor, the deputy managing editor and the chief operating officer. Their career lengths range from less than a year to more than 20 years. Most have either a bachelor's degree or master's degree in journalism, and a few have degrees in non-journalistic fields, including physics, religion and English. All my interviewees except one had work experience with other newspapers or publications before the *U.S. Times*.

I obtained verbal consent from my interviewees before interviews (for the verbal consent form in English, see Appendix C). Interviews lasted about an hour or sometimes longer. Subjects participated in my interviews before, during or after their work shift. I

talked with them at the company's cafeteria, conference room, interviewee's offices, a coffee shop and a bar in town, and I once joined a photo shooting trip to interview a photographer in the car on the way and way back.

Regarding the *Nippon Herald*, I intensively visited the head office in June, July and December 2009 for interviews, using the summer and winter breaks from my school. I spent one week for each of my trips (two weeks in total). My personal contact, a reporter of the *Nippon Herald*, helped recruit interviewees and organize interviews. I stayed at a hotel in the city where the *Nippon Herald* is based, and I rushed to the head office whenever he called me for interview arrangements. My personal contact also participated in an interview. Using a snowball sampling technique, I interviewed 11 *Nippon Herald* employees, including reporters, photographers and editors in a week in the summer of 2009, and eight, including reporters, photographers and makeup editors in a week in the winter of the same year. Five interviewees participated in my interviews twice in the summer and winter.

I explained my research purpose to my interviewees to win verbal consent before the interviews (for the verbal consent form in Japanese, see Appendix D). Most interviews were conducted in the lobby of the head office building. I once visited the press room of the city hall, where one of my interviewees was stationed. All interviews with *Nippon Herald* employees were conducted in Japanese because Japanese is their everyday language. Interview participants joined the interview during their work hours. In order to minimize their work time loss, each interview was conducted in an hour or less.

The *Nippon Herald* is the first and only job for my interviewees, except one. All of my interviewees are college graduates; however, none has a degree in journalism. Their degrees include English, sociology, literature and law. Photographers have either a college degree in photo or experience working for a photo studio part-time during college years.

In regard to the *Japan Observer*, I interviewed 14 employees in the newsroom in July 2008 and 12 in June 2010, including reporters, editors, managers, composition workers, a graphic designer, a photographer and the company president. Four participants were interviewed twice in 2008 and 2010. Five are non-Japanese staff from the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. They consist of reporters, copyeditors and a manager. Two interviewees in 2008 had left before I revisited the *Japan Observer* in 2010, and another interviewee left the newspaper for a non-newspaper job after my interview in 2010.

I stayed at a hotel in the city where the *Japan Observer* is based for a week in 2008 and two weeks in 2010 for interviews. Because I obtained official permission from the company president to freely visit the newsroom during these periods of time, I could recruit potential interviewees in person, while observing the newsroom. I also tried to reach reporters who were stationed outside. I asked my interviewees to contact those field reporters first for an interview. After obtaining an indirect acceptance from them through my interviewees, I either emailed or called them to set up an interview.

Interviews were conducted at participants' desks, the lobby, in the company's conference room, a coffee shop, parks and a restaurant. My interviewees mostly spared

their time for the interview during their work hours. I once joined a couple of interviewees for lunch and another couple of interviewees for dinner to do interviews.

I spoke with Japanese interviewees in Japanese and with non-Japanese interviewees in English. The newsroom of the *Japan Observer* is a bilingual workplace of Japanese and English. Japanese newsroom staff members are basically fluent in English because all of them had English education and many of them have spent some time in an English-speaking country either in their childhood or during their college years. Non-Japanese staff members understand Japanese, but they do not necessarily speak Japanese. Some are fluent in Japanese, but not many. Composition workers and designers are Japanese, and they do not speak English but understand English.

In terms of educational backgrounds, my interviewees, except composition workers and a graphic designer, are college graduates, though their degrees are not necessarily in journalism. Two non-Japanese interviewees have a journalism degree from their home countries; namely, the United States and Australia. The composition workers and graphic designer were educated in vocational schools specialized in computer engineering, arts or design. One Japanese interviewee has a college degree in communication. The rest have degrees, such as comparative cultural studies, English language and other social sciences.

All interviews were audio-recorded with permission. The audio data were downloaded from the audio device and stored in my computer. I transcribed all recordings. Interview transcripts were printed one-side and filed in binders by newspaper for coding and analysis.

I kept close contact with some interviewees of the three newspapers via email and Skype, while coding and writing, to update my data and verify patterns, contradictions and nuances in what they said. Because those correspondences were short, unstructured and occasional, I excluded them from the total number of interviews. But I stored emails and Skype histories in my interview file for analysis.

Coding/Analysis

I organized an analyzing process, based on Charmaz's strategy of grounded theory: "Seek data, describe observed events, answer fundamental questions about what is happening, then develop theoretical categories to understand it" (2006, p. 25). The data—interview transcripts and fieldnotes—were coded for analysis by reference to Emerson et al. (1995). The data went through two phases of coding. First, I read the interview transcripts and fieldnotes line by line, which is often called open coding (Emerson et al., 1995), to identify all ideas, themes and issues. I used colored ink pens to mark those ideas, themes and issues. After several revisions of the coding scheme, I used green lines to represent "relations to newspapers," orange lines "beliefs and doubts in journalism," pink lines "privileges of newspapers (and/or their particular newspaper) and newspaper workers," red lines "the devaluation of newspapers (and/or their particular newspaper) and newsworkers," purple lines "changes in work practices," and blue lines "technology." Because the six colors were not enough to cover all ideas, themes and issues that interviewees suggested, I also used sticky notes (e.g., Post-it) to give temporary codes to pertinent lines. Some examples of those temporary codes are "apathy," "occupational status," mobility," "job security," "gap between news people and real

people," "rational decision," "corporate culture" and "speed." In addition, I took notes on blank pages of printed transcripts to retain my thoughts and questions, while open coding.

During open coding, codes were not focused yet, and each code covered broad areas. For instance, the code "technology" covered production technology, the Internet, technological changes, technological influences on newswork, interviewees' attitudes toward technology and other things related to technology in a broad sense. Because each code covers a broad area, they often overlapped. In that case, I double underlined applicable lines with pertinent colored ink pens. Purple lines and blue lines in particular often overlapped because purple lines included technological changes in addition to economic and social changes that my interviewees felt affected their work practices.

Next, the marked excerpts were sorted into focused themes (for lists of themes, see Appendix E-G) by newspaper. I compared the sorted excerpts to identify patterns and variations by asking why and how my interviewees saw and described things similarly and/or differently. I made analytical memos (Charmaz, 2001) and diagrammed the data (Creswell, 2007) to discover and make sense of relationships and contradictions among those patterns and variations at this phase of focused coding (Emerson et al., 1995). The focused coding process allowed me to refine ideas obtained from open coding and narrow down to particular themes to make analytic sense (Charmaz, 2001). During this analytic process, I used the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Creswell, 2007), constantly moving back and forth between the data collection—including the existing data and follow-up interviews—and my codes to compare them, find new relations and discrepancies, create more codes and re-sort if necessary. That is, my data collection and analysis bore a cyclical relationship (Creswell, 2007; Berg, 2007),

rather than a linear one. Repeatedly going back to the original data gave me a better understanding and allowed me to capture ideas and interpretations that I might have missed.

After focused coding, I described journalists' views and experiences by newspaper and along coded themes in a narrative form to put what I found in the field together in a big picture (for detailed descriptions by newspaper, see Appendix H for the *U.S. Times*; Appendix I for the *Nippon Herald*; and Appendix J for the *Japan Observer*). This process helped me not only assimilate my findings but also develop deeper insights on similarities and differences among journalists within each newsroom and among the newsrooms.

I interpreted discovered relationships and contradictions, based on Wolcott's argument (2008) that ethnography includes mindwork (interpretation) and deskwork (description). I will compare and contrast my findings, interweaving my observation in Chapter V. Theoretical interpretations and empirical implications in my findings will be discussed in the discussion chapter (Chapter VI).

Primary and Secondary Sources Research

In addition to fieldwork, I scrutinized documents related to my research sites. In order to have changes in circulation figures of the three newspapers, I consulted the data compiled by the state newspaper publishers association for the *U.S. Times* and the Japan Audit Bureau of Circulation for the *Nippon Herald* and the *Japan Observer*. I also looked through public relations materials published by competing newspaper companies

of the *Japan Observer* to help provide an overview of the English-language newspaper market.

The three newspapers do not release financial reports to the public because they are not publicly traded companies and do not have such an obligation. I asked the managing editor of the *U.S. Times* for financial reports, but my request was rejected on the spot. Because the *U.S. Times* also runs a real estate business in town, I interviewed a couple of businesspeople who are familiar with real estate and the properties of the *U.S. Times* to get a glimpse of the business climate of the *U.S. Times*. Regarding the workforce, the human resources department of the *U.S. Times* gave me the total number of employees between 1998 and 2008. However, when I asked the department for the latest data in 2010, it did not respond to my request. In terms of the workforce of the other newspapers, I consulted *the Japan Newspaper Annual 2009-2010* (Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association, 2009) for the latest figures of employees of the *Nippon Herald* and the *Japan Observer*.

I asked my personal contact at the *Nippon Herald* to provide me corporate information, including changes in sales and employees. He told me that the paper did not provide that kind of information even in public relations materials because the *Nippon Herald* is an unlisted company. The *Japan Observer* is not a listed company, either. Both newspapers, however, must release quarterly reports to their shareholders, who are mostly insiders. I asked one shareholder of the *Japan Observer* for the reports, but he refused my request. He was an insider, and he may have been afraid of accidentally leaking the reports to the public. I looked through investor relations materials of the parent company of the *Japan Observer* to grasp business conditions of the *Japan*

Observer. The parent company, a listed company, releases quarterly financial statements, including for subsidiary companies in its investor relations materials posted on its website. I could not obtain such reports from the *Nippon Herald* because I did not have access to its shareholders at all. The *Nippon Herald* does not prepare investor relations materials because its stock is not publicly traded.

To obtain an overview of the Japanese newspaper industry, I sought information from three managers of major national newspapers through my personal connections. These newspapers are number one and two newspapers in Japan in circulation. Because they circulate in the entire nation, these newspapers are expected to be familiar with nationwide trends in the industry and newspaper consumers. The managers talked about the economics of newspapers, technological changes, media structure and possible directions of newspapers. I do not reveal their identifying information because they agreed to be interviewed on the condition of anonymity.

In addition to industry insiders' perspectives, I sought academic interviews about the Japanese newspaper industry. I acquired knowledge from Professor Syunya Yoshimi of the Interfaculty Initiative in Information Studies at the University of Tokyo, Professor Yuga Suzuki of newspaper studies at Sophia University, and Hideo Takeichi, a professor emeritus of newspaper studies at Sophia University. They provided information about the Japanese newspaper industry, offered me written documents, related journals and books, and gave me access to university libraries. I also asked the professors for literature suggestions about research similar to mine. They told me that fieldwork in the Japanese media industry had not been done before, and therefore, there was no such literature in Japan.

As secondary sources, I obtained history books of the *U.S. Times* and the *Japan Observer*. The book about the *U.S. Times* was written by a university professor and published in the late 1970s, and the one about the *Japan Observer* was written by a former board member and was published in the mid-1960s. These books are far from covering recent economic and technological changes because they were published at least 40 years ago. However, the books are still helpful to understand how these newspapers established their presence in their communities and how they evolved over time by getting over hardships at the time. I also obtained a DVD of a history of the *Nippon Herald* that the public relations department produced for the 130th anniversary of the company in 2009. I do not refer to the exact titles of the books and the DVD for confidentiality reasons because the titles include the real names of these newspapers.

Regarding general data of the U.S. and Japanese newspaper industries, I referred mainly to the data compiled by the Newspaper Association of America, Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism and the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association.

Limitations

My scarce funding and the barrier of access limited my research and led to the different number of interviews among the three newspapers. Compared with the *U.S. Times*, I could spend only a few weeks with the Japanese newspapers because of the costs of travel and accommodation. Consequently, the number of interviews at the *Nippon Herald* and the *Japan Observer* ended up being smaller than that in the *U.S. Times*. In terms of the barrier of access, while the *U.S. Times* is quite open to researchers

like me, the *Nippon Herald* is closed, which is common to Japanese media corporations in general. The openness of the *Japan Observer* is in between. My observation method was also limited to direct observation. Another approach, participant observation, would have been impractical because of time, the barrier of access and other concerns.

Though it might be desirable, it was not possible to talk with everyone in the three newsrooms. Newsworkers tend to work in shifts, and reporters do not always stay in the newsroom. Besides, some people do not feel comfortable being interviewed. Interviews were voluntary. Nevertheless, in qualitative research, the sample size is not necessarily important (Alasuutari, 1995). The quality of the sample is more important than the quantity of interviews. If interviews are conducted with people who provide rich information, the number of respondents can be small (Priest, 1996). In this study, I had interviews with staff members in every profession in the newsroom, including reporters, editors, managers, photographers and executives. I was able to obtain multiple perspectives and ideas about economic and technological changes and newspaper work from different professions.

Interviewing is an insightful research method, but it has limitations. Adler and Adler (2001) point out that people try to prevent themselves from revealing information related to sensitive topics, such as their personal lives and true inner thoughts, for fear of detection. Consequently, establishing good rapport with interviewees is important (Darlington & Scott, 2002). To appease subjects' fear, I thoroughly explained my research project before the interview and promised that I would not reveal their identifying information in my writing. I also told them that participating in my interview was voluntary, and therefore, they were able to withdraw from the interviews if they felt

uncomfortable. Journalists are very familiar with interviewing because many use the approach daily. They are rational professionals in this sense, and they are not sensitive subjects like children.

Language differences between English and Japanese may cause problems in this study. Some meaning may be lost in translation from Japanese to English. There are some words and expressions that do not have exact translations. Besides, the Japanese and the Japanese language tend to include nuances and subtleties in their speech to avoid direct reference. Consequently, I needed to interpret their nuances and subtleties, while translating interview excerpts from Japanese to English, reflecting my values and experience (Johnson, 2001). I understand the nuances better than other researchers might as a native Japanese and former insider of the Japanese newspaper industry. Also, interpretation is a necessary process in qualitative research. Qualitative research consists of mindwork (Wolcott, 2008) and interpretations (Emerson et al, 1995; Rubin & Rubin, 2005) in addition to fieldwork and description.

One may argue that social conditions at the micro level are expressions of the macro or the general, and therefore, the micro (particular) coincides with the macro (general) (c.f., Gubrium & Holstein, 2001). However, generalizing findings is not a purpose of this study. Rather, this study bears in mind that the research sites may be particular cases. This study focused on exploring particular workers' particular ways to view their particular social behavior that is affected by their particular work and workplace. Some may call this "culture." Culture is an ambiguous entity in the first place. Culture only provides a way of seeing that particular social behavior and never explains it thoroughly (Wolcott, 2008). This study tried to comprehensively understand newspaper

journalists, including both microscopic viewpoints (e.g., values, ethics, ideas and norms particular to the workplace shared among journalists) and macroscopic viewpoints (e.g., economic and technological contexts).

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

Interviews with newspaper journalists delineate their views about work. Their views are two dimensional—journalists think they are both workers with privileges and at the same time simply paid employees. The economic situation and technology have impacts on this duality in journalists' views. In addition, cultures—shared ideas, values and norms—are fundamental factors that construct workplace relations specific to each newsroom. Journalists' views about their work in relation to those three forces—economic, technological and cultural—will be explored, including my observations and interpretations.

Privileged Paid Workers

Newspaper journalist is the occupation that my interviewees dreamed of since they were young. Some journalists (jokingly) say they entered the newspaper business by accident, such as they happened to join their school newspaper staff and were fascinated by newspaper work. And now, they say they still love their work. Journalists of the three newspapers see themselves as professionals with privileges that make their work special, influential and, therefore, enjoyable.

Privileges that differentiate journalists from other occupations exist in two layers of journalistic work: in journalists' everyday practices and in social roles of journalists. As previous studies and surveys suggest (c.f., Weaver et al., 2007; Pollard, 1995; Merrill, 1974; 1996), one of the privileges of journalistic practice is autonomy. Journalists of the

three newspapers point out autonomy as the most significant aspect of newspaper work that they enjoy. "One of the reasons why I like my job so much is because I do have quite a bit of autonomy," says Anthony, a *U.S. Times* reporter. By autonomy, Anthony means discretion in choosing topics and events to write about. Newspaper production is somewhat like an assembly line. Reporters write stories, photographers take photos, editors edit them, and makeup editors/composition workers assemble all materials into pages and send them to printing. Newspapers are produced in such a linear fashion, and journalists work along that line. But journalists are not exactly like assembly-line workers in factories because they have some autonomy in their work practices. Reporters enjoy freedom to choose topics to report, people to interview, how to write, etc. Takuya, a *Nippon Herald* reporter with 15 years of experience, believes that he is in the best stage of his career: "[My bosses] let me do things on my own. If I come up with a project idea and say, 'I'll do it,' they'd mostly allow me to do it." Meanwhile, editors enjoy their ability to make stories readable and choose news stories from wire services. Walter, a *Japan Observer* editor, says, "I enjoy my work most when I'm choosing stories. It's pretty fun to choose stories from a bunch, edit and compile them." Photographers feel similarly. They go to the field and take photos, using their creativity.

While factory workers and even many other corporate workers are under surveillance (e.g., computers monitor their productivity), newspaper journalists have more leeway to manage their time and labor while pursuing their interests to a certain degree. Contemporary journalists need computers to do their work, but the computer does not determine what journalists report or how they present it. Technology has not eliminated autonomy in everyday practices of journalists. But journalistic autonomy has

been partly lost for economic reasons. Costly journalistic activities, such as business trips, are restricted, which means journalists cannot fully exert their autonomy over work because of tighter budgets.

Another privilege in everyday practices distinguishing journalists from other assembly-line workers is that journalistic work is full of variety. The "daily-ness" of the work reflects that variety. Newspapers are daily products. "Every day is a brand new day. Past is past. You can start over. It's a wonderful thing about newspapers," says Eric, a graphic designer of the *U.S. Times*. The basic workflow is always the same. Journalists report, write and edit stories for publication. But the content that they deal with on a daily basis is different. Reporters meet different people, attend different events, and report different things. Photographers take photos of different people, events and things. Experiencing something different, even if not every day, provides newness and excitement to journalists and designers like Eric. This constant change distracts curious journalists from negative thoughts about their occupation and the financial condition surrounding the newspaper business and helps them avoid burnout or exhaustion. For *U.S. Times* journalists, "attorneys" are worn out at work, and "accountants, construction workers, janitors or whatever" just do their jobs to pay the bills. Kenzo, an editor of the *Japan Observer*, says, "I may not think what I'm doing is work. I've never thought like, 'Heck, I have to sit to work again!'"

In addition to the things that they enjoy in work practices, journalists find privileges in their social roles. Playing an agenda-setting role for the public is a privilege that gives meaning to journalists of the three newspapers. The *U.S. Times* and the *Nippon Herald* are popularly read newspapers in their local communities, and the *Japan*

Observer historically boasts the largest circulation of English-language newspapers in Japan, though the market itself is very small. When journalists report something that may matter to their communities, they often get responses from readers through letters to the editor, phone calls to customer service, direct emails or conversations with people in town. This gives journalists a sense of influence. They know that readers respond if they report something that matters to the community. Nancy, a *U.S. Times* reporter, remembers that her stories created a sensation in the community when she wrote a series about a scandal in a local nonprofit organization. She recalls, "I would write a story, and there would be a public outcry. I would write another story, and there would be more public outcry." The impact that the three newspapers may have is limited, compared with large-size or national newspapers. But Nancy's experience shows that small-size, local newspapers may set the agenda for the public, telling people what to think about.

Journalists of the *U.S. Times* and the *Nippon Herald* tend to think journalistic work should be investigative. *U.S. Times* journalists obtained this idea from the Watergate scandal. Older journalists were inspired by the work of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein when it was actually happening, in the era when "the press was hero," in their words. Even young reporters in their 20s and 30s were impressed by the investigation of Woodward and Bernstein, reading books and watching movies and television programs, such as *All the President's Men*. The impact of the investigative work of Woodward and Bernstein goes beyond national borders. A manager of the *Japan Observer* from Australia says their work influenced his educational and occupational decisions. He went to an Australian university for a journalism degree and became a newspaper journalist.

None of Japanese journalists in the *Nippon Herald* and the *Japan Observer*, however, mentioned the impact of the Watergate scandal on their occupational choice. Instead, *Nippon Herald* journalists got their impression from Japanese investigative journalists, such as Ryotaro Shiba, Katsuichi Honda and Satoshi Kamata,[24] when they were younger. They read books written by those authors and obtained images of journalistic work from their investigative work.

Investigation is not necessarily a universal role that all journalists keep in mind. In fact, some journalists find meaning in journalistic work in different roles. Michael, a *U.S. Times* reporter, says:

> I was graduated from college right after Watergate. Naturally, I started off doing investigative style stories, but I realized quickly that I hated it. Sometimes, I found people I was writing about how terrible they were actually pretty fascinating and charming. They are crooks; so what? So, I stopped doing that and started doing more long stories about stuff that I thought interesting. Pretty quickly, I found myself as a features writer and stayed that way almost for my entire career.

Junko, a *Nippon Herald* reporter, does not see her role as investigative reporting in politics, economy or crimes, either. She says, "My focus is on offbeat but interesting or empathetic stories in town. I talk with people in town for a few hours, pick up something interesting from there, and write about it." Both Michael and Junko are more interested in "discovery" than in investigation. But like investigation, their work of discovery may set the agenda for the public. Stories about different aspects of a "crook,"

[24] All of these authors are former newspaper journalists. Ryotaro Shiba was a former Sankei Shimbun reporter and famous for historic (nonfiction) novels. His novels on the theme of historic character around the end of the Edo period, such as *Ryoma ga Yuku*, are especially famous. Katsuichi Honda is a former Asahi Shimbun reporter and currently freelance journalist with numerous books ranging from war coverage to anthropological reportage. Satoshi Kamata is a former reporter of a steel-related trade paper. He is a freelance journalist with strength in the coverage of the working class.

in Michael's word, may change public opinion about the crook. That is, both investigation and discovery in journalistic work share the same role as agenda-setter.

Japan Observer journalists do not place a journalistic priority on investigation, either. Rather, they emphasize playing the role of cultural bridge between Japanese-speaking and English-speaking populations, given the characteristics of the English-language newspaper. It is important journalistic work for them to represent Japan from unique perspectives different from either Japanese-language newspapers or Western news agencies. Hiroki, a *Japan Observer* editor, says, "Our paper is the only medium that Japanese journalists put out news in English from Japanese standpoints to people living in Japan."[25] *Japan Observer* journalists believe they can provide information that is neither too nationalist nor too foreign to the public. Rento, a *Japan Observer* reporter, says:

> Japanese media likely view things from nationalistic perspectives, but the *Japan Observer* is covering things from different perspectives that Japanese-language newspapers don't have. There are quite a few foreign residents who can't read Japanese. They rely on English-language newspapers. While Japanese-language newspapers treat foreigners as "guests," our paper responds to expectations of foreign residents and reflects their voices.

According to their statements, *Japan Observer* journalists are also finding meaning not through investigation but in setting the agenda—what readers should think about—in unique areas and perspectives that other media are missing.

Journalists are glad to have feedback from readers because they can feel their work is actually read by people and, moreover, appreciated. This feeling gives value to

[25] Hiroki distinguishes the *Japan Observer* from other English-language newspapers in Japan because news stories about Japan in other English-language newspapers are basically translations (that is, reflection) of their Japanese-language editions. Also, he minimized the impact of English news broadcasting, such as NHK World, on the grounds that television news programs in general lack the amount of information.

their work and motivates journalists. Though the amount of actual feedback from readers is limited, journalists assume that their stories and photos are viewed by tens of thousands of people, taking into consideration circulation figures of their papers. Ryo, a *Nippon Herald* photographer, says, "Many journalists would tell you this, but I feel great when my work is published. I'm thrilled by imagining my work is delivered to 50,000 homes." The circulation of the *Nippon Herald* is ten times larger than the other two. But news reporting is still extraordinary for any type of work in that its results (stories and photos) are exposed to at least 30,000 (in the case of the *Japan Observer*) to 60,000 people (in the case of the *U.S. Times*) every day, based on their circulation figures. Having such a big audience differentiates journalistic work from other types of corporate work and, therefore, makes journalists feel special and influential.

Some journalists of the three newspapers see themselves as gatekeepers, believing that they are providing well-balanced and accurate information to the public. Gatekeepers are people who cut down the amount of information to deliver it to a given person on a given day. And gatekeepers have influence on information selection, presentation, control and transmission (Shoemaker, 1997). The idea of gatekeeper, as well as that of agenda-setter, is based on the social responsibility theory of the press to fulfill the obligations of serving the public. One of the obligations of the press is to keep the public informed with accurate information, distinguishing between fact and opinion (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947). The recommendations of the Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press are more than 60 years old, but numerous journalistic associations and news organizations have adopted the recommendations to set up their own codes of ethics.

Some journalists of the three newspapers think that gatekeepers are needed more than ever in this information society. Today, information is ubiquitous. News can be consumed in conventional media outlets as well as various digital forms, such as blogs, news feeds, emails, Twitter, Facebook, etc. Some journalists think that everyday people are not media-literate enough to distinguish accurate information from inaccurate information, and therefore, people need gatekeepers (and agenda-setters) who sort and provide information that the public should consume. This role is in fact described in the code of ethics of the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association (2011). Suguru, a *Nippon Herald* manager, says:

> Thanks to the Internet, our readers are well informed. It is often said that information on the Internet lacks credibility. The majority of our readers are not well trained, so they easily believe information on the Internet is always right. Furthermore, they get the wrong idea that they know more than newspapers do, exposed to gossip and stuff on the Internet. I think newspapers are getting more important to dispel their misconception about the Internet.

Ironically, such mentality and attitude of journalists often causes a gap between their work focus and reader needs. What journalists think important does not necessarily go along with what everyday people think important. Michael at the *U.S. Times* says:

> We don't actually use the language in the way which people use it. We don't reflect the concerns in the community. Our political coverage is so stultifying because it pretends people care about the city government. We cover local issues that are only of concern to a few businesspeople and a few activists. And we ignore other stuff that's going on.

Newspaper journalists may not be taking into consideration social and economic gaps between the general public and themselves. Journalists are all college graduates and fulltime workers with social status. But people in the circulating communities of the three newspapers engage in different jobs, ranging from executive work to white-collar and

blue-collar work. Many of them may be less educated, given that college education is a privilege. Social, economic and cultural environments are different between newspaper journalists and everyday people. This causes a distance between them and may develop a sense of elitism among journalists. Some journalists, in fact, warn themselves not to be arrogant or too proud of being a privileged professional. Hiroki, an editor of the *Japan Observer*, says, looking back himself at an earlier stage in his career, "I was supercilious. Journalists are not greater than others or anything, and I feel bad that I belittled ordinary corporations back then. I was conceited." Remembering 15 years ago when he got a job with the *Nippon Herald*, Shota says, "I was a bighead in the beginning. I was proud of myself getting a competitive job. People in town treat you well, and you get it wrong. That's why I became arrogant, probably. I think I'm better, humbler [now]."

Journalists regard themselves as professionals with privileges, but at the same time, they do not forget that they are paid corporate workers. Their labor is controlled by their employers, who have fundamental business decision-making rights. This is nothing new or unique to journalists of the three newspapers; it is the basic labor-management relationship in capitalism. However, journalists of the three newspapers think that the employers and management have intensified their power over employees in recent years as economic conditions have deteriorated. When the *U.S. Times* had a four-year-long labor dispute in the early 2000s, management hired a union buster to stage anti-union campaigns. The four-year-long dispute ended with compromises made by both sides, and employees who led the dispute left the company. This dispute left deep scars between the employer and employees. *U.S. Times* journalists remember this dispute as a traumatic

incident in labor-management relationships. A former *U.S. Times* employee and union representative[26] recalls:

> The biggest consequence was that the company lost the undying loyalty of so many employees. When I first started bargaining [in 1999], people liked the company, the owner family. They thought it was a respectful company. They thought it was a company of integrity. They were proud to work for the *U.S. Times*. They believed the owner family would do the right thing. By the end of the four years, pretty much a lot of that was gone. The company, in my estimation, didn't really realize what they lost. They lost so much institutional history of people who had been, people who knew people all over this county.

Weakening union power is not unique to the *U.S. Times*. Kenta, a *Nippon Herald* reporter, says, "Management has come to take a tough stance about labor issues. For instance, they don't provide us convincing and satisfactory information anymore during labor-management negotiations."

Weakening union power needs to be considered in combination with the spread of the neoliberal ideology since the 1970s. In the case of Japan, it became obvious around the 1980s when various state-run enterprises (e.g., Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Public Corporation, Japan Tobacco and Salt Public Corporation, Japanese National Railways) were privatized under the name of deregulation. Neoliberalism emphasizes personal responsibility and market forces (i.e., the market regulates itself), and in turn, denies the social net, such as labor unions, government intervention and regulations that supposedly serve equality and fairness to the public (Harvey, 2007). Neoliberalism forces everyday people into a vulnerable position in society, while the rich become richer. Journalists are everyday people who do not benefit from a neoliberal social system. Journalists of the three newspapers were not exposed to neoliberal business strategies

[26] This interviewee is not included in the total number of interviews because I talked with this person during another project.

until relatively recently, given that neoliberalism spread as early as the 1970s or the 1980s. A reason that journalists started facing weakening workers' power must be related to other forces, such as changes in the economics of their newspapers. The economic condition of the three newspapers started deteriorating in the 2000s, and simultaneously, journalists started feeling their power was weakening, while the employer was concentrating power over labor. Stronger neoliberal impact is observed in employment in the *U.S. Times*, given the fact that the paper conducted layoffs. According to journalists' observations, managers of the Japanese newspapers have changed their attitude toward employees by intensifying neoliberal business strategies, but the papers have not yet resorted to casual firing of employees.

Increasing economic pressures have changed the work environment of journalists: Unions have been further undermined by reductions in workforce, business structures have changed in an unfavorable way for workers, labor has been intensified by blurring boundaries between job descriptions, etc. Journalists are more susceptible to hard-line business decisions of the employers and management. Layoffs in the *U.S. Times*, frequent personnel shuffles in the *Nippon Herald*, and the outsourcing of the printing department in the *Japan Observer* are examples that workers do not have a say in companies' business decisions.

Journalists say that the privileges that make them feel special and influential are diminishing under the recent changing circumstances. Journalists in this study apparently do not have the slightest idea of exploiting their power or manipulating public opinion through their work. The aspect of newspaper work that motivates many journalists is to inform the public about what is going on in their communities. Journalists are concerned

that the area of leeway (labor and time) to do satisfactory work is narrowing because of forces out of their control.

Economic Declines and Job Insecurity

Economic pressure is the strongest driving force changing the work practices of journalists. Because of dramatic declines in advertising revenues, and also circulation revenues in the case of the *U.S. Times* and the *Japan Observer*, the three newspapers have no choice but to cut costs in order to offset the losses and stay in business. In light of the shrinkage of advertising, the three newspapers reduced the number of pages, and the *U.S. Times* even trimmed the physical size of the paper. The amount of information that the newspapers publish and ultimately readers consume diminished. The *Japan Observer* is "eight pages thinner than before," according to Hana, a *Japan Observer* webmaster. Anthony, a *U.S. Times* reporter, says, "When I first started working here, the newspaper was wider than it is now. There are fewer pages than there used to be. I assume that the newshole[27] is smaller than it used to be. It's all connected to declining advertising." The *Nippon Herald* introduced a new printing press several years ago for the purpose of printing more color pages. But the paper realized that printing more pages in color cost more than it had expected. What was worse, the paper's financial performance was getting poorer. As a result, the paper ended up reducing the number of color pages, instead of increasing it. Moreover, the total number of pages was reduced to trim newsprint costs. This is an example of how much impact advertising has on the amount of information that newspapers produce, not on the content of information.

[27] The newshole is the amount of the paper that is used for news and editorial content.

In addition to newsprint, the three newspapers have slashed labor costs. The workforce of the three newspapers shrank at the same rate, by half. Each newspaper uses different approaches to downsize the workforce, ranging from natural attrition to early retirement buyouts and layoffs, according to their financial conditions and preferences in cost-cutting measures. The newspapers basically have left less important positions dark after people left.

Cost-cutting measures that affect labor have made journalists worried about their employment. The *Nippon Herald* offered early retirement buyouts a few years ago, but they did not lead to massive reductions in the workforce. Rather, the paper is trying to shrink the workforce by natural attrition in the long term. While Baby Boomers are retiring, the paper is reducing the number of new hires. The shrinkage of the workforce in combination with early retirement buyouts is shocking enough to make *Nippon Herald* journalists skeptical about the economic condition of the paper. Akihiko, a *Nippon Herald* photographer, for instance, expressed his uncertainty by answering, "The future ... I hope there will be a future," when asked about the future of the paper.

The *Japan Observer* is more urgently trimming labor costs. Reflecting the general reluctance of Japanese corporations to resort to layoffs—U.S. businesses are more likely to use layoffs than Japanese businesses, the *Japan Observer* has not conducted layoffs. But the paper offered early retirement buyouts companywide several times in the 2000s. As a result, many employees in every department left, and the workforce rapidly shrank.

In the three newspapers, the *U.S. Times* has been the most aggressive about cutting labor costs by laying off employees. *U.S. Times* journalists who experienced consecutive rounds of layoffs feel their employment is more threatened than their

Japanese counterparts do. “One of the biggest changes is job security,” says Jason, a *U.S. Times* copyeditor. Job security used to be one of the appealing aspects of newspaper work. *U.S. Times* employees who have been in the newspaper business for a long time say that newspaper workers never dreamed of being laid off in the past. Today, it is not the case anymore. “There’s literally a sense that any day you come in, you might find out your job is on the line. It’s very hard,” says Michael. The *U.S. Times* is a later adopter of layoffs than many other U.S. newspapers. The newspaper had offered early retirement buyouts a few years prior to layoffs. The fact that the *U.S. Times* is a family-owned newspaper contributed to the belief shared among *U.S. Times* journalists that the newspaper cared about employees. However, when the *U.S. Times* resorted to layoffs, that belief collapsed. Matthew, a reporter, says, “I guess I used to have more loyalty to the *U.S. Times* than I do now. I’ve kind of seen a lot of different things that make me not embrace the company wholeheartedly at all times.” *U.S. Times* journalists realized that their situation was not different from that of their fellow journalists at other newspapers in the United States. They lost confidence in the employer and their belief that their jobs would be secure.

The shrinkage in the workforce has brought similar consequences to journalists of the three newspapers. In order to produce the newspapers with less manpower, individual journalists have to cover the work of unfilled positions. Journalists end up doing more tasks than their traditionally assigned work (e.g., reporting, editing). Reporters do editing work on the side, while editors do reporting when necessary in the case of the *U.S. Times* and the *Japan Observer*. The area of coverage for which individual *U.S. Times* reporters are responsible is widening, and “One way we notice and we joke about is everyone is

responsible for more areas of coverage ... Almost all of us now are essentially general assignment reporters," says Kevin, a *U.S. Times* editor. The *Nippon Herald* photographers are encouraged to be photojournalists who take photos and, at the same time, write stories. The current work environment does not allow journalists to acquire expertise in the area of their specialty because of the lack of time. The amount of time that journalists can spend on a story is diminishing, as the speed of production is accelerated by economic forces. One common complaint among reporters is that they cannot spend enough time to dig into complicated issues deeply. Being able to do a little bit of many things has become a required skill for contemporary journalists.

In addition to working across editorial work boundaries, some journalists are increasingly engaging in production work. This phenomenon is more clearly observed at the *U.S. Times*, where newspaper editorial and production work is more integrated than in the other two. In the *U.S. Times*, newsroom workers work across the editorial-production boundary and the print-online boundary. William, a *U.S. Times* copyeditor, says, "I'd say half of your time is spent working on the computer that is doing the layout and placing all the pieces and arranging them. And maybe, half of your time spent editing, actually editing stories." James, another copyeditor, says, "A part of our jobs as copyeditors is to post stories on the web and make sure that looks good."

Working beyond traditional job descriptions was also observed among *Nippon Herald* and *Japan Observer* newsroom workers, but the number of workers who do integrated work is still limited. Such workers tend to be those who are close to production work, including editors and makeup editors. "I have to operate machines, and I have to organize headlines and layouts. I have to do two jobs at the same time," says

Tadashi, a *Nippon Herald* makeup editor. Journalists of the *Nippon Herald* and *Japan Observer* do not work across print and online platforms because the newspapers do not put much emphasis on online production. Online work (e.g., converting the print edition into the online edition) is done by the web department. Print and online labor are clearly divided and assigned to different workers. Print journalists of the *Nippon Herald* and the *Japan Observer* have nothing to do directly with the online edition.

Engaging in multiple tasks—doing tasks journalists traditionally did not do—is happening because of deteriorating economic conditions of the papers as well as technological development. User-friendly, sophisticated technology has enabled journalists to do multiple tasks. The latest computer-assisted composition systems, including InDesign, are easy enough to operate without much computer knowledge. Newsroom workers can do composition work that used to be done by workers specializing in composition thanks to these easy-to-use systems. These systems are fast to process pages so newsroom workers do not have to spend all of their work hours composing pages. In other words, they can do composition work on the side. Doing multiple tasks does not always require journalists to work longer hours. In fact, newsroom workers try to have their traditional and additional work done in their regular work hours. This is especially true for journalists of the *Japan Observer*, which capped the payment of overtime and for the *U.S. Times*, which does not allow hourly paid employees to work overtime. "I think what has happened is that the actual editing part has been squeezed a little bit," says William. *Japan Observer* and *U.S. Times* employees say they do not think they should spend extra time to do a job in a satisfactory manner because their overtime labor is not financially compensated and, more important, because

journalists feel that their companies do not appreciate their work however hard they work. Financial compensation is a measurement of the employer's appreciation. Given the current economic climate, it is difficult for the employers to express their appreciation through financial compensation. Or, the employers may have no intention to compensate journalistic labor more than is necessary in the first place. The problem is the employers are also missing verbal appreciation, which discourages some journalists from making extra efforts to do a better job.

Because journalists are doing more work in a limited time, the volume of work has been intensified. Reduction in time spent for traditional work is not a new phenomenon. A similar trend was observed when pagination was introduced in U.S. newsrooms in the 1980s (Russial, 1989). However, today's newsroom workers may be spending less time on traditional work than in the age of earlier pagination when newspapers basically produced only print products. Contemporary newspapers have multiple presences in both print and electronic forms, and some journalists have to work for both types of platforms and do production work.

The combination of reductions in workforce and technology has diversified work that individual journalists engage in, and journalists became busier. But not all journalists view cutbacks in labor in a negative light. Some feel good about being more efficient and able to produce newspapers faster than before. "I think I'm much more productive in terms of the body of work that I have to produce in an eight-hour period," says Paul, a *U.S. Times* photographer. Some journalists even question the size of the workforce that they used to have. "I can't imagine what those ten people were doing. I just wonder if there were that many things to take photos," says Ryo, a *Nippon Herald* photographer.

The *Nippon Herald* used to have ten photographers and currently has four or five. Ryo thinks four or five photographers are enough. Some journalists think leaner production today is necessary in this period in newspaper history when the economics of newspapers are weak and newspapers cannot afford to keep surplus manpower. Of course, journalists lament that they could do more creative work if they had more people. But they accept that leaner production is what they have to engage in, given the economics of the newspapers. The mode of newspaper production is historically specific, dictated by economic conditions and technological development of the time. Workers' perspectives also change, based on economic and technological conditions of the time. Journalists who have known a different labor process (with more manpower and with more time) do not necessarily feel comfortable about the current leaner production. Kenji, a *Nippon Herald* reporter, says, "I've heard a lot about eccentric journalists in the past. And I think we'd benefit more from that type of journalist who no one knows where they are and what they do every day, but who write great stories."

The major concern common to journalists of the three newspapers, regarding the shortage of manpower and labor intensification, is a decline in the quality of work. Journalists are annoyed by the tendency of their newspapers to value quantity more than quality of work. "Management prioritizes quantity over quality. They say both quantity and quality, but as a matter of fact, quantity over quality," says Yusaku, a *Nippon Herald* reporter. Takuya, another reporter, adds, "Those who produce a lot and do a lot of work every day are appreciated." Editorial workers with a journalistic mindset are proud of producing quality information, believing their information matters to the public, but they think their labor is less valuable because of the lack of appreciation from management.

Journalists think that management underestimates the importance of relationships with employees, while management pays attention only to the economics of the newspaper. The lack of appreciation (and even communication) from management is a common phenomenon at the three newspapers. Human interactions (appreciation and communication) are incentives to encourage journalists to do quality work. Hideki, a *Japan Observer* editor, says:

> They are [Management is] invisible. "Thank you," "Good job" or whatever small appreciation from management would help. We don't feel what we are doing is appreciated. They may think paying us is enough, but work is not all about money.

U.S. Times journalists are concerned that too much emphasis on local news with a small staff is lowering the quality of work. Focusing on local news itself is not a problem, and they believe local news helps add value to the newspaper. The problem stems from the combination of reductions in the workforce, increases in the workload of individual journalists and the lack of time. Because the newspaper needs a specific amount of local copy each day—to fill the paper, that creates pressure on a small staff. Journalists acknowledge that they are reporting, writing and editing stories in a rush. They believe that such speed hurts quality. *Japan Observer* journalists also say they are concerned that the lack of time hurts the quality of information. Journalists are frustrated about not having enough time to polish their stories because of the shortage of manpower and accompanying work doing multiple tasks. Many journalists of the three newspapers tend to link the length of time with the level of quality. In their understanding, the more time they spend on a story, the better the story will be.

Nippon Herald and *Japan Observer* journalists are concerned about increasing reliance on wire stories in the wake of cutbacks in labor. *U.S. Times* journalists did not

mention the paper's use of wire stories, but the paper also uses wire stories for national, international and some sports news. The *U.S. Times* publishes local news stories on the front page and in the region, sports and features sections, and the rest of the paper is filled with wire stories. The *Nippon Herald* is the same. The *Nippon Herald* also puts emphasis on local news as a local newspaper, but the whole paper cannot be filled with staff reporting because of the small workforce. The *Japan Observer* publishes a large amount of world news that the paper buys from international news agencies, such as the Associated Press. Wire stories also fill the political and business pages because the paper thinks special perspectives are not necessary to cover (straight) political and business news. The quality of wire stories itself is not a problem, but the heavy use of wire stories undermines the originality of the newspaper because wire stories can be read in other news outlets. There is no reason for readers to buy a newspaper that publishes stories that are available somewhere else, maybe for free on the Internet. Journalists are worried that their newspapers will eventually lose their sales points, such as local perspectives rooted in the community. Kyoko, a *Nippon Herald* reporter, says:

> The amount of original content is decreasing. We can use wire stories from Kyodo[28] to fill the paper, but then we can't distinguish our paper from others. I'm very concerned that we are making a regrettable move.

In order to fill the newspapers every day with smaller staffs, journalists are producing an increasing number of easy stories. By easy stories, they mean stories that they write from ready-made information, such as public relations materials. Michael, a *U.S. Times* reporter, remembers a colleague whining, "We are not reporters. We are stenographers." He adds, "I feel that way sometimes. We're just constantly taking

[28] Kyodo News is a nonprofit cooperative news agency in Japan.

releases and rewriting them." For journalists, writing stories from ready-made information is not real reporting work because the information is not collected by their own labor.

Producing lower-quality products (in this case, information) ultimately devalues the labor of the producer, which further causes lower wages and less job security, because lower-quality work can be done by less-skilled workers whose labor is cheaper than skilled workers and easily replaced. Actually, the three newspapers are using temporary workers, including student interns, and fulltime workers of the three newspapers say that the number of temporary workers is increasing. "Any new names you may have seen are freelancers being hired on a piecework basis or interns," explains Michael, when asked about recently observed unfamiliar names in bylines in the *U.S. Times*. Peter, a *Japan Observer* editor, observes, "They [Management] are not hiring fulltime staff. If they have a vacancy somewhere, they tend to put a temporary staff, temporary editor. There're so many temporary people in the *Japan Observer*. They come and go each day."

Economic conditions of the newspapers have an impact on the ethics of journalists. Ideal journalism would require journalists to focus on producing information useful to the public. From an American journalistic standpoint, news and advertising should be separated. Advertising is an area that management and the advertising department care about, not journalists. But advertising is now one of the things that journalists are concerned about. When the newspapers were valuable advertising vehicles, advertising rolled in on its own, recall veteran journalists of the three newspapers. That was then. Today, with the economy suffering, advertising has moved to cheaper and

more effective media, and newspapers that have lost value as advertising vehicles result in chasing down scarcer advertising and begging advertisers. “We used to turn down department stores’ requests for advertising because of space limitations, but now, I heard we are asking department stores to publish advertisements with us,” says Saori, a *Nippon Herald* reporter. In such circumstances, journalists of the three newspapers say the power relations between their medium and advertisers had changed. As one of consequences of these changes, journalists are working in a more mixed environment of news content and advertising. *U.S. Times* journalists get more involved in advertising-focused special sections. Larry, a *U.S. Times* manager, says:

> I’m never worked more closely with the advertising department, in terms of planning special sections, understanding reasons why we’re doing this is that the section is trying to generate revenue, and trying to develop special things that have advertising content. I think everybody is definitely sensitive to the fact that the advertising revenue is important.

Nippon Herald and *Japan Observer* photographers take photos as a favor to their advertising clients. They are not necessarily comfortable doing such work because working with advertising is against journalistic principles to which some journalists adhere. In the first place, doing a favor for advertising is considered a violation of the NSK (Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association) Code of Ethics in Japan as well as the SPJ (Society of Professional Journalists) Code of Ethics in the United States. Some journalists believe that the news side should be separated from the advertising department in order to avoid the influence of advertising on news content. But at the same time, they understand that pursuing journalistic principles does not help their companies out of economic trouble. Akihiko, a *Nippon Herald* photographer, gives an example:

> There are a bunch of things under taboo in this city. Community newspapers like ours not only cover local events and accidents every day but also need to take into consideration relationships with local businesses and advertisers. So, when something happens to those advertisers, you know, when they do something wrong, we can't investigate or press the issue hard. I feel frustrated with that.

Economic concerns about advertising are more severe among *U.S. Times* journalists because advertising accounts for 80 percent of the total revenues of the paper.[29] The *Nippon Herald* may rely on about 25 percent of the total income from advertising, given the average advertising ratio of Japanese newspapers. Classified advertising used to be a cash cow, especially for the *U.S. Times* and the *Japan Observer*, but the newspapers have lost classified advertising to the Internet. "Craigslist, that's a huge thing to newspapers. Probably like 25 percent of the newspaper revenue" has been taken by classified sites on the Internet, says William, a *U.S. Times* copyeditor. Journalists believe that classified advertising will never come back to the newspapers because of advertising costs and a greater ability to reach audiences for specific products on the Internet. They also doubt that display advertising will come back when the economy picks up. Journalists understand that the conventional business model based on advertising does not work in the digital age. They are uncertain and anxious about the future of newspapers and their own future because none of the newspapers has figured out an alternative profitable business model to replace the old one.

Ambivalence over Advanced Technology and Digital Diversification

A potential financial resource would be digital distribution. In fact, some journalists of the three newspapers place their hopes for financial recovery on the

[29] According to the managing editor of the *U.S. Times*.

Internet. This tendency is strongly observed in the *U.S. Times*, reflecting the general trends of the U.S. newspaper industry, which is more inclined to digitalization than the Japanese industry. *U.S. Times* journalists believe that the future of newspapers will be online. Without a profitable online business model, the *U.S. Times* is trying to expand digital presentation to keep up with the industry-wide trend. The online edition is frequently updated, features some original content (e.g., videos, photo galleries), and links to Facebook and Twitter to disseminate news further. Several reporters do blogs in addition to their regular print work. The current goal of the *U.S. Times* website is to "bring in as many readers as we can, make our stuff relevant, timely, quality, you know, to the point people want to come to us every day or multiple times a day," says James, a *U.S. Times* copyeditor, because, "We don't have any choice because everybody else is online. If we are not online, we are not a part of the conversation," says Charles, another copyeditor.

On the other hand, journalists of the Japanese newspapers think the print edition is the primary product and downgrade the online edition because the print edition generates money to keep the business going, while the online edition hardly brings in revenue. The economics of the *U.S. Times* is the same. The sales of the print edition, including advertising and circulation, are sustaining the business of the *U.S. Times*. But the *U.S. Times* has emphasized digital diversification, believing digitalization will replace the current business model in the (near) future. "If we don't figure out a way to monetize the technology with the web or whatever else, it's going to be scary because the trend line of paid circulation, expenses, ad revenues, all of these, at a certain point, is going to go underneath the you-can-stay-in-business line," says Joseph, the deputy

managing editor of the *U.S. Times*. Amid sharp declines in advertising, which accounts for 80 percent of the total income, it is urgent for the *U.S. Times* to look for alternative sources and other types of revenues. "We are desperately trying to increase the ad revenue in any ways we can do it," says Michael, a *U.S. Times* reporter.

This causes a difference in attitudes of journalists toward the digitalization of the product between the *U.S. Times* and the Japanese newspapers. The *Nippon Herald* has not experienced declines in circulation, which leads many journalists to believe that the hardcopy newspaper will survive even in the Internet age, though they think the size of the company will shrink in the long run because of changes in readership demographics (e.g., aging population). They assume that the circulation of the print edition will remain the same for another 20 years, judging from the current readership. People in their 50s and older account for a large portion of *Nippon Herald* readership. A big question among *Nippon Herald* journalists is what the newspaper business will be like when readers now in their 50s hit 70 in 20 years and start leaving the newspaper for a variety of reasons, such as disease and death.

None of the three newspapers charges viewers for access to its online edition, and they are taking a wait-and-see stance about charging for online access. Rather than the online edition, journalists look hopefully at digital editions for portable devices, such as iPhones and iPads. There is a general economic understanding about online information behind their attitude. Journalists agree that the newspapers should not charge viewers for online access because information consumers take it for granted that information on the Internet is free. But digital editions for portable devices are different. Everyday digital consumers understand a subscription to the digital edition costs, though it is a smaller

amount of fees than a subscription to the print edition. Consumers expect digital editions of portable devices to be reasonable and cheaper than the print edition because the distribution of the digital edition costs little labor, newsprint or transportation, like that of the print edition. Journalists tend to think those editions would not cost much in terms of their time and labor. They simply think that their stories and photos will be reused for those editions. Actually, iPad editions that the *Japan Observer* is publishing for its weeklies are "basically PDFs of the print editions without special features, like audio or movie," says Hana, a *Japan Observer* webmaster. The *Japan Observer* sends the PDFs to an application company, and the company converts the PDFs into a readable format on iPads and sells the iPad editions on its website. In this way, the production of digital editions does not cost journalists extra labor or time. Editions for portable devices are easier byproducts of the print edition, in their perception. This is why journalists are relatively happy and hopeful about applications and digital editions.

Though digital editions are a ray of hope for journalists and the newspapers, some point out realistic limitations of the production and sales of multimedia products. The secondary use of wire stories in print is one issue. The three newspapers use wire stories in the print edition. If the newspaper reuses wire stories published in print for digital editions, news agencies will charge fees for secondary use that may offset profits of digital editions. Between hope and limitations, some journalists do not know where they should devote their time and labor, though they want to devote themselves to doing something hopeful. Hana shows her frustration:

> We lack original content. That's why we cannot pin our hope on digital editions. The paper would have only five pages if we don't use wire stories. You may say, "Why don't you increase original content?" It costs money. The paper doesn't have money. Currently, we publish wire

> stories on the website, but wire services have begun to say not to do that. Then I think we'd better stop the online edition.

From an economic view, the online edition is not worth spending journalists' time and labor on because they know their online labor does not turn into money. Their labor is not financially compensated, and their online products barely generate income to the newspapers. But from a journalistic point of view, journalists obtain satisfaction from the online edition. The online edition provides unlimited space, which journalists can use to publish their stories and more photos than fit into the newspaper. The online edition is also free from geographical limitations, while the print edition circulates only in limited areas. Journalists are happy that their stories and photos are published online, believing that wider audiences beyond the circulating area of the print edition may see their work.

U.S. Times journalists have direct access to the online edition to upload and change content via the integrated publishing system. The *U.S. Times* website carries the same stories as the print edition, but journalists update the website with new information, while developing stories. When reporters do this by themselves, their stories do not go through editors' review. In this regard, the online edition does not have the same type of editing filters that the print edition does. When the final edition of a story (printed story) is uploaded, however, it has been through editors' checking. Bloggers of the *U.S. Times* enjoy great freedom from editors' surveillance of the content, though they are responsible for using their own discretion to make sure the content fits public decency. George, a political reporter, is one of bloggers on the paper's website. He says:

> It's personally satisfying because it's for a narrow, niche readership, you know, political junkies, people who love politics. I can write things that wouldn't fit so well in the newspaper for a broad general readership. Another reason that I like doing this is just because I can write with a different voice. The readers' expectation for the newspaper is very

> objective and facts only. But for the blog, it's more punchy and opinionated. So, I have a little opinion, not very much, but just enough to have fun.

Because of capacity, freedom and control, journalists view the online edition as a feature that satisfies their journalistic ego.

Journalists say they are not opposed to working for the online edition if their newspapers find a way to make money on it. The major factor that causes skepticism about digitalization among journalists is the current unprofitable online model. Kenneth, a *U.S. Times* computer programmer, points out differences between advertising in print and online:

> We don't get much revenue for ads on that thing [the website]. It's less than 10 cents on a dollar of what it is for printed. A print ad might cost you $400, and a web ad might cost you $30, roughly like that. That's not a viable profit model.

Thus, journalists are concerned about digital diversification, not because of issues of copyright or plagiarism but because of economics. The type of platform does not matter to journalists as long as whatever platform they work for generates enough money to compensate them for their labor and stabilizes the finances of their companies, which eventually leads to better job security for them.

For journalists as workers and breadwinners, especially those who have dependents or growing families, financial compensation is important. But many journalists of the three newspapers say that money is not the major incentive to do their job. In fact, they are motivated by their occupational privileges, such as autonomy of everyday work practices and agenda-setting and gate-keeping roles. But it is hard to fully motivate corporate journalists to do digital work (i.e., extra work), in addition to their traditional print work, unless the newspapers make them feel their labor is compensated.

The last thing that professional journalists want to do is offer their labor for free. Most journalists believe that their labor costs and therefore their work (stories and photos) need to be paid for. They think journalistic work needs patient, intelligent human labor, even in the Internet age. Sakura, a *Japan Observer* manager, says:

> I don't like the web because it distributes my stories for free. It doesn't make sense to me because my stories cost. I spend time and money to write a story. If the online edition can charge, I'm OK with it. That's it.

The Internet is a double-edged sword for journalists. As consumers, journalists view the Internet in a positive light. The major revolutionary aspects of the Internet are the speed and amount of information. "Wikipedia is a great thing. There's so much information available just immediately. There's just a vast amount of information. And it's great to be able to do work from your desk. It's good," says Jason, a *U.S. Times* copyeditor. The Internet is an indispensable tool for contemporary journalists. Journalists appreciate the convenience and efficiency of the Internet as a means of gathering information—the Internet has freed journalists from bureaucratic processes[30] to access information, if not completely—and enabled them to electronically submit stories and photos.

The Internet, at the same time, creates pressures for print journalists. As information producers, journalists think that the Internet undermines the value of newspapers. Journalists are overwhelmed by the speed of information flow on the Internet, which has shortened the cycle of news consumption, and newspapers cannot

[30] Japanese journalists especially appreciate this liberation from bureaucratic processes in information gathering. Some *Nippon Herald* reporters, for instance, say that the Internet makes it easy to access governmental data and statistics. Before the Internet, they had to go to government offices and archives in person, find the right officials to help them, fill out forms and wait a long time to finally obtain information. But today, government offices post public information on their websites, which journalists can access without going through time-consuming, official processes.

compete with the new medium in terms of immediacy. “Technology has made everything in a 24-hour cycle. It’s constant, it’s like no dead time. It’s really made newspapers have to compete more with all other media that are more tailored toward 24-hour audiences,” says Charles. Journalists of the *U.S. Times* who emphasize the online edition under the philosophy of “first online, better in print,” as the chief operating officer puts it, are obsessed with frequent updates of information on the website. The Internet has created an environment in which news consumers do not expect newspapers to deliver breaking news that they can find on the Internet before newspapers are published, say *Japan Observer* journalists. Because newspapers cannot compete with the Internet (and other electric media) for immediacy, *Japan Observer* and *Nippon Herald* journalists think newspapers should shift from their traditional focus on breaking news to longer, more analytical or more in-depth stories to stay relevant in the Internet age. But the shortage in the workforce restricts journalists from doing such stories. Furthermore, journalists know such work would not be appreciated by a management emphasizing quantity over quality of work.

Regarding the delivery speed of news, the advent and popularization of television in the 1950s and 1960s (and even radio earlier in the 1920s) helped eliminate the role of newspapers as providers of breaking news. But *Japan Observer* and *Nippon Herald* journalists attribute the change in consumers’ expectation to the Internet. This is because the total circulation of newspapers did not fall, even when television came into existence, up until recently in Japan, while that of U.S. newspapers has been in decline since the 1960s.

In addition to the Internet, advanced technology in newspaper production leads to some ambivalence among journalists. Digital composition systems integrate newspaper production, blurring traditional work boundaries between editorial and production work, and increasingly do so as they become more sophisticated and user-friendly. Paul, a *U.S. Times* photographer, explains how newswork became more integrated because of technology, referring to his online work:

> If you think about that from a traditional point of view, it used to be a reporter would do a story, and a photographer might come onboard and do the pictures, and copyeditors would look at the piece, and photo editors would look at the images, and all that's going to get put together by a copy desk editor, and it's handed off to the production people who ultimately put it in the paper. On the Internet package, video package, that's all compressed in one person's job description now.

The level of technological adaptation varies by newspaper. The *U.S. Times* has been using an integrated publishing system since 2007, the *Japan Observer* has just started using a similar system, and the *Nippon Herald* has not introduced such a system. Depending on technological adaptation, newspaper production in the *U.S. Times* is the most integrated, and that in the *Nippon Herald* is the least. The *Japan Observer* is in between. Consequently, job descriptions that individual journalists engage in vary by newspaper.

Technology has brought not only high productivity and efficiency but also more control to journalists. Editors especially enjoy more control over the production process. Computer-assisted composition systems allow news editors and makeup editors to edit and assemble materials into pages on the screen, though the latter may be considered extra work from a traditional standpoint of editors' work. "Now, editors do everything. Stories come online. I edit on screen. I design the page on screen. I produce the page on

screen. I put photographs on screen," says Peter, a *Japan Observer* editor. Editors used to control only content, but now, they often have the control of layout and design as well as content. Technology has given journalists more control of their work time, too, because they can work almost on their own without being interrupted by someone else. The integration of work leads to a degree of control over production that editors enjoy, a new type of control for them.

Journalists, however, do not easily accept new technology when it comes to their workplace. Many journalists show their resistance and reluctance against adapting to changes in technology, but they gradually adjust themselves to the new work environment. Even *U.S. Times* journalists say that there was strong resistance when the new system was introduced. But they accepted the system, however reluctantly, and now they appreciate it. Journalists' resistance to technology is not a unique phenomenon to the *U.S. Times*. *Japan Observer* journalists are currently resisting the new system by arguing that it would increase their work. Jack, a copyeditor, complains about the new system in a follow-up interview via Skype by saying, "I was hoping it would make life easier, but so far it hasn't." He adds, "I don't really know who's doing what [in terms of the operation of the system]. It's rather a mess right now." But Jack has already found at least one advantage in the new system. "One nice thing is that we can edit on the page at a late stage," he says. He is happy about the extension of his content control. Journalists may be hostile to new technology and changes in their work practices in the beginning. But once technology settles in, journalists may find better productivity and efficiency in it and enjoy using it.

Journalists indicate that the integration of work also has disadvantages. Quality control is one area that journalists are concerned about. Editors, for instance, could spend their workday doing their traditional editing work before computer-assisted composition systems, but now they have to balance their work hours to do multiple types of jobs. They feel that their traditional work is compromised under such circumstances. Editors realize that both the quality of editing and the quality of composition (layout, design, etc.) are suffering.

The integration of work is happening at a rapid clip, which bewilders some journalists. Miho, a *Japan Observer* editor, says, "I can do my work without the help of production people. That's good. But that blurred the distinction between their work and my work. I'm not sure how much work I'm responsible for." The expansion of the area that one job covers—or the obscuring of work distinctions—is occurring in such a short period of time that journalists, even those with shorter careers, think that their work has been rapidly intensified and their labor is cheapened, while their wages have stagnated. "We had to do more with less. We might not be as expensive as we might have been," says Joseph of the *U.S. Times*.

Some journalists think that the newspapers are using technology to downsize the workforce. The rationalization and partial integration of production are coinciding with economic declines in the newspaper business and reductions in the workforce. Shota, a *Nippon Herald* makeup editor, criticizes the management's overestimation of the capability of technology:

> The promotion of streamlining now directly leads to staff downsizing. Are machines capable enough of doing with fewer people? Yes, maybe. But machines still need people to operate. Mechanization rationalizes

> work, far fewer people take up that work, and a burden shouldered by the individual worker becomes greater. I don't think this is good.

The relationship between technology and cuts in labor is more obvious to *Japan Observer* employees. The *Japan Observer* got a loan from the parent company to introduce the multimedia publishing system in 2010. Hana explains that the parent company made the paper promise further labor cutbacks as a condition for financing. The *Japan Observer* started fully operating the system in April 2011 and has not announced any labor-cutting measures yet. Hana is skeptical about the possibility of further labor cuts in the near future, considering the current resistance and the unfamiliarity with the system among editors. But it is a fact that the *Japan Observer* is responsible to the parent company for the loan. How the *Japan Observer* will trim labor because of this technology and how journalists might oppose further downsizing of the workplace remain to be seen.

Journalists of the three newspapers agree that technology has made newspaper work more impersonal. They increasingly collect information via computer-mediated communication easily and quickly. Governments and organizations nowadays post public data online. "It is convenient. But I can't see who my information sources are. I wonder if this kind of relationship with information sources is OK," says Taro, a *Nippon Herald* reporter. Journalists emphasize the importance of collecting information through human interactions and face-to-face communication with information sources. They feel they can get new and different insights on issues and things from small talk and informal conversations with information sources.

The newsroom itself is also increasingly impersonal. Editorial workers spend most of their work hours in front of the computer. Suguru, a *Nippon Herald* manager,

explains changes stemming from computerization in the workplace, using the metaphor of automatic teller machines (ATMs):

> In the old days, we went to the bank all the way to withdraw money and waited in a long line for a teller's assistance to fill out the form or something. But now, we can withdraw money from ATMs without a teller's assistance. This kind of thing is happening in the newsroom.

The newsroom is like an "insurance office," *U.S. Times* journalists jokingly say, where only keypunching noise can be heard. And "It's very boxy. Everybody is in their box," says Eric, a *U.S. Times* graphic designer. Journalists realize they communicate less at work, while they have all kinds of efficient and/or less costly communication technologies, such as cellphones and email, to use. Ryan, a *Japan Observer* manager, says, "What I've observed about the company is that different departments are essentially like silos. And they are not actually connected to each other at all, really." Even within a department, communication among workers happens less. Miho, a *Japan Observer* editor, says, "I guess they communicate person to person, but department-wide communication is rare. I sometimes spend a day without talking with my boss or colleagues in my department. My colleagues prefer email to send out messages." Less communication causes shallower and narrower social ties among them. And digital, one-sided communication like email sometimes causes unnecessary hostility between workers. Peter of the *Japan Observer* says, "It's quite offensive getting email from someone three desks away, you know. 'Come down, and tell me!'"

Technology that provides more control to workers, as editors have gotten from computer-assisted composition systems, may not degrade human labor, but it is contributing to awkward relationships with workers and among workers. Journalists are increasingly working in an isolated environment with technology and digital

communication. The dehumanized newsroom is a less enjoyable workplace for journalists.

Exceptions are the sports department of the *U.S. Times* and the photography department of the *Nippon Herald*. When asked about relationships and communication in the workplace, only people in those departments answered that they had close ties with their colleagues in the department. Larry from the *U.S. Times* says, "I feel I've worked with my friends. Guys are going on vacation, and I miss them. That's the kind of relationship we have." The *Nippon Herald* photography department is also closer than other departments. Photographers often go for a drink after work to have informal conversations.

While other newsworkers think they are missing communication with colleagues partly because of increasingly computer-bound work, people in the two departments say they maintain human interactions. All workers of the two departments use the same technology as other workers in the newsroom do. That is, technology is not the only thing that diminishes communication among workers. Whether workers have close ties with colleagues seems to depend on the characteristics of different departments. The two departments in question are common in three aspects: they are male-only, small and isolated workplaces. The departments consist of male workers, and the number of workers is smaller than the news side. Individual departments, such as business and arts, may be smaller than the sports department, but reporters of the news side sit together around the reporter desk area in the newsroom, while the sports department has desks for its reporters and copyeditors. In fact, before it was absorbed into the newsroom during a layout change in 2010, the sports department was located across the hallway from the

news side. The sports department was physically isolated in a section that my interviewee calls the "island." The physical location of the *Nippon Herald* photography department is similar. The department is isolated from the newsroom, located on the third floor, while the newsroom occupies the fourth floor. Journalists in the two departments even socialize outside of work. Robert of the *U.S. Times* says, "A lot of people in the sports department play the sports league together, so that brings people close together." "We're currently working on a project together. All of us sit around the table to choose photos to be published. When we're done, we go for a drink together," says Ryo of the *Nippon Herald*. Such circumstances—apart from larger groups of people, with a small number of colleagues—apparently help male workers who have time and money to develop close ties among themselves.

The two exceptions aside, increasing economic pressure on journalists exacerbates the lack of workplace communication. As a consequence of increased workload, editorial workers spend their work hours just to finish their work for the day. Young reporters with less experience may need help and guidance from editors and/or veteran reporters. Contemporary U.S. journalists tend to have formal journalism education before they enter the newspaper business, but this is not the case for Japanese journalists. New reporters learn work through on-the-job training after they are hired by a newspaper. Economic changes in the workforce have led to a system in which experienced reporters and editors cannot fully take care of new reporters. Shallower human relationships in the workplace have negative impacts on journalists, especially inexperienced ones. Yusaku, a *Nippon Herald* reporter, gives an example:

> The number of reporters who fall ill with depression or other psychiatric diseases is definitely increasing. In the past, if we had a case a year, we

> would go like, "What?! Really?!" But now, we're not surprised anymore because we have a case almost every year. Mind you, the total number of reporters is decreasing.

Nippon Herald journalists are no longer surprised to hear that a young reporter or two has developed depression and taken a leave from work every year. *Nippon Herald* employees in general feel less close to their colleagues and the workplace than before, while they have their hands full with their own work. Some of them blame the lack of human communication—they have computer-mediated communication, though—for some employees developing mental illness. When vulnerable employees want support, help or encouragement from their colleagues, their colleagues are not always available because of economic conditions. Some *Nippon Herald* journalists have less time to develop close ties with their colleagues to share things more than work. They are alienated from each other and from the workplace.

Developing mental illness is not unique to *Nippon Herald* employees. When I revisited the *Japan Observer* in 2010, I was told that one of my interviewees was taking a long-term leave for the treatment of depression. *Japan Observer* employees additionally told me that there were a few more cases in the past. Incidentally, those who developed mental illness are Japanese.

None of my interviewees at the *U.S. Times* mentions mental illness in the workplace. *U.S. Times* employees are also working under great stress, like their Japanese counterparts. If there is no case of mental illness among *U.S. Times* employees, it may mean that they have stronger mental strength or better support possibly from their family and community. And more likely, they may leave the paper before they fall sick.

Workplace-Specific Work Relations

Economically and technologically, journalists of the three newspapers are experiencing similar positive and negative changes in their work practices, to a varying degree, depending on the economics and the level of technological adaptation of the paper. But regarding workplace relations, the three newspapers demonstrate distinctive characteristics.

U.S. Times journalists are faithful to their work and proud to be journalists, but they do not identify themselves with their employer (newspaper). They think that they are journalists before they are employees of the *U.S. Times*. The *U.S. Times* is simply a place where they use their professional skills, one of a number of workplaces in their career. Some *U.S. Times* journalists are eager to learn universal skills, such as computer software and web knowledge, to fulfill their curiosity and, more important, to make themselves marketable in the external labor market. In this regard, they are independent, career-oriented and skill-focused.

Japanese employees of the *Nippon Herald* and the *Japan Observer*, on the other hand, identify themselves with their companies, demonstrating a strong consciousness of corporate workers. They use the Japanese term, "salaryman," to identify themselves. "I don't hesitate to identify myself as salaryman. You are obligated to do whatever your company asks you as long as you work for it," says Yoko, a *Japan Observer* reporter. "Salaryman" means a white-collar corporate worker, and it sometimes includes negative connotations, such as the lack of individuality and being a company slave. The salaryman consciousness is derived from Japanese tendency to emphasize corporate affiliation. Japanese corporate workers, like Yoko, tend to believe in labor-firm relationships in

which corporations develop employees and bind them to the employer with employment security, and employees are in turn expected to commit themselves to the prosperity of the employer.

Interviews with Japanese journalists revealed that they share an almost stereotypical organization-oriented disposition of Japanese corporate workers. Such a disposition needs to be considered along with economic relations of Japanese journalists. Fulltime Japanese journalists of the two newspapers work for their newspapers under the premise that their employment is permanent unless they engage in unjustifiable behavior. This form of employment seems to be common to Japanese newspaper companies, according to Adelstein (2009). Non-Japanese employees of the *Japan Observer*, on the other hand, are on yearly contracts because of work visa regulations. They are automatically renewed almost without exception, but they are not in permanent employment. *U.S. Times* journalists are covered by a collective union contract that sets the level of pay and benefits. After a six-month probation period, *U.S. Times* employees cannot be fired without reasonable cause, which guarantees employment as long as an employee does not do anything wrong and offensive. The union contract is renegotiated every three years. In a sense, employment security depends on the power of the union. "The newspaper publisher here hates the contract. Now, though, with the incredible decline of newspapers, reporters and photographers and editors are being laid off. The contract cannot prevent layoffs," says Michael, a *U.S. Times* reporter. That is, weakening union power is a serious issue for *U.S. Times* employees.

Japanese journalists must feel more secure about employment than their English-speaking counterparts under the implicit premise of lifetime employment. Japanese

journalists supposedly commit themselves to their employer, trying to make a contribution to their companies in exchange for secure employment. One drawback of overconfidence in implicit but permanent employment and salaryman consciousness is that some workers may be lazy because they know they are not easily fired. Junko, a *Nippon Herald* journalist, says, "Some people are goofing off during work. Some people are working hard. Some do the minimum amount of work, thinking they are just salaryman."

Japanese journalists care about their companies as their primary lifetime income source. They try to protect the company from mismanagement or anything that hurts the company because the company is the provider of employment and income. Grilling management about responsibility is one of the core agendas of the labor union of the *Nippon Herald* and the Japanese union of the *Japan Observer*. Tadashi, a *Nippon Herald* makeup editor, says, "Our union is stubbornly working hard. We are even suing the company over termination for unduly dismissed employees." "Though the power of the union is consistently weakening, our union is still strong," says Yusaku, a *Nippon Herald* reporter. Non-Japanese employees of the *Japan Observer* from English-speaking countries have their own union, separate from the Japanese union because of differences in employment contracts. The non-Japanese union fights for better working conditions for union members, but it does not place priority on pursuing management accountability or the replacement of management. Non-Japanese journalists regard the *Japan Observer* as one of the companies where they have worked at some point in their career, while the newspaper is the first and only company for the majority of Japanese employees.

Yasuhiro, a Japanese photographer of the *Japan Observer*, observes differences in Japanese and non-Japanese employees:

> Non-Japanese employees quit whenever they want to quit. The sustainability of the paper doesn't matter to them. They won't live in Japan forever, anyway. We hope the company manages to stay in business to sustain our living even at the lowest standard. But non-Japanese employees easily get upset when they think their labor is undercompensated. Their union aggressively demands compensation by saying that they will go on strike. But we [Japanese employees] don't because we know that the paper fails to be published if we go on strike.

Thus, the *Japan Observer* has the two types of workers within the newsroom: company-bound Japanese workers, and independent non-Japanese employees. Unlike their Japanese counterparts, non-Japanese employees do not expect the *Japan Observer* to take care of them for the rest of their work life. In this respect, non-Japanese *Japan Observer* employees are similar to *U.S. Times* employees. English-speaking journalists of the *U.S. Times* and the *Japan Observer* are more flexible about changing companies and careers than the Japanese journalists are. They think about other occupational options for better job security and/or a new environment, though whether they actually move is a different story because the economic situation of the time can limit their mobility.

A difference in the level of commitment to the company is observed even among Japanese journalists. Some *Nippon Herald* employees more strongly believe that they are committing themselves to the newspaper throughout their whole work life than some Japanese employees of the *Japan Observer*. Takuya, a *Nippon Herald* reporter, says, "I'm proud of myself doing a better job in this economic hardship. I'm contributing much more to my company." "As long as the company exists, I will stay. I will work for this company until my retirement," says Yusaku, another *Nippon Herald* employee. Some Japanese employees of the *Japan Observer*, on the other hand, are skeptical about

spending their lives working for the newspaper. “I thought I didn’t want to waste my energy for this company. I do my best for people who spare time to meet me and read my stories, not for the company,” says Mai, a *Japan Observer* reporter. Mai said she has been disappointed and burned out by consecutive problems in management (e.g., reckless price cut and price hike of a subscription, mishandling of scandals, lack of appreciation for employees’ labor, etc.) and lost loyalty to the employer.

The economic condition of the newspapers may be influencing the level of commitment of Japanese employees. The confidence and commitment of Japanese employees to the *Japan Observer* is waning amid economic hardship. The *Japan Observer* is more severely suffering from the financial downturn than the *Nippon Herald*. Given the demise of the raison d’être of English-language newspapers in the Internet age—world news and news in English are available on the Internet, in many cases for free, *Japan Observer* employees feel threatened about their future with the newspaper. The Japanese labor union still negotiates and fights for better working conditions, but employees know that the power of the union is undermined as the workforce shrinks and the economics of the paper worsens. Workers’ requests and demands are less accepted by the company, and the Japanese union makes compromises more easily because Japanese employees reluctantly understand that their company is not economically healthy enough to respond to their demands. As Yasuhiro said, the primary and collective hope of Japanese employees (the Japanese union) is that the company stays in business as their lifetime income sources. Better working conditions (e.g., pay raise) fall to second place in their priority list. Giving up on expecting the newspaper to take care of them, many employees think of options other than staying with the *Japan Observer*. Securing

employment and an income source is a more immediate problem because journalists have their lives to sustain, rather than committing themselves to fix the long-term economic problems of the *Japan Observer*. On the other hand, there is no reason for *Nippon Herald* employees, whose income is not threatened at the same level, to think of changing companies for better job security because they have good job security with the newspaper for now.

Though they may want to change careers or companies, there are various reasons that hinder *U.S. Times* and *Japan Observer* journalists from moving, regardless of nationality. Some journalists choose to keep working for their current newspaper. They are waiting until the right opportunity to move comes up. While with the current newspaper, they try to make themselves more marketable and employable by acquiring new skills. A *U.S. Times* photographer, for instance, is learning video production, including shooting, editing and uploading video online. He believes his production skills, supported by computer software knowledge, will help when he moves. On the other hand, some other journalists stick with their current employment because of barriers that limit their mobility, though they might want to move for economic reasons. The lack of education and professional experience and family reasons are the major issues. Career change to public relations is the most popular option among *U.S. Times* journalists because public relations practices are familiar to them, and both professions share similar skills, such as news writing. But it is not easy for people who do not have education or professional experience in public relations to get a job in that field, especially when the market is saturated. Going back to school to earn a degree in public relations would be a

great economic burden. Workers who have family obligations cannot take that risk. George, a *U.S. Times* reporter, says:

> Because newspapers pay so badly, I think I could go do a job like public relations, right? That makes me think, "That's good. I could easily get a better job that pays more money." But then other times, I think I'm too old. I'm in my 40s. If I started making changes, I would be late in my 40s by the time when I came out of school. Then I'll become more uncertain. It would be expensive to go to college, go get a master's degree.

Moving from one newspaper to another is apparently not easy for Japanese journalists. Japanese newspapers prefer to hire new college graduates rather than experienced journalists, though there are exceptions. Newspapers give the new hires training on the job to make them their company's journalists. Journalistic skills acquired on the job may be too specific to be taken to other news organizations. Skills that English-language newspapers require are more specific (i.e., it does not necessarily mean that journalists who write readable stories in English can write readable stories in Japanese), which may make it difficult for English-language journalists move to a Japanese-language newspaper. Some former *Japan Observer* employees left for international news agencies, such as the Associated Press and Reuters. Some chose to be self-employed as a translator, and some moved to non-journalistic occupations. Journalists whose mobility is blocked for whatever reason cannot help but ask themselves, regularly or occasionally, "What am I doing here?" without finding a purpose of being with their newspapers. The lack of motivation leads to low morale in the newsroom.

Low morale also stems from the routinization of work. Though one of the attractive aspects of newspaper work is its "daily-ness," basic work practices are the

same. Reporters collect information and write stories. Editors edit stories and compile them into pages. They repeat this day in, day out, though the content that they handle is different every day. The longer journalists engage in the same job, the more routinized their work practices become. Hideki, with ten years of experience at the *Japan Observer*, is one journalist who cannot find meaning in work:

> I would say my work has become routine. Honestly, I feel like I'm working for my work. I may be too accustomed to it. I have been in the same department for too long. The conditions of the company may be affecting this. I'm physically and emotionally tired. I have a difficulty to maintain positive feelings toward my work.

The strong salaryman consciousness makes *Nippon Herald* employees susceptible to political economic constraints at work. *Nippon Herald* journalists are unlikely to do something that may hurt the company. Or they likely face pressure from inside and/or outside not to do risky things and succumb to the pressure. This practice is not healthy, given the expected role of newspapers in democratic society. Takuya, a *Nippon Herald* reporter, says:

> I understand the newspaper is also a business bound with various ties and constraints with the community, so it can't always chant justice. We should not be compromised by pressure, but I know we change our tones more or less, depending on who we are writing about. I mean, people at my level don't, but people above us do.

There is another example of internal political pressure that *Nippon Herald* employees experienced several years ago. A *Nippon Herald* employee, who happens to be a member of the owner family, got involved in a drug scandal, and the company tried to cover it up. Two reporters with strong journalistic values, according to my interviewees, openly accused the company of mishandling the scandal. The reporters were transferred to less important position in the next personnel shuffles. *Nippon Herald*

employees who know about this scandal believe that the reporters will never be able to return to important positions because of company politics. Political and economic constraints tie their hands, and journalists often feel as though their work and labor are out of their control. Alienated journalists hardly find meaning in their work and look for it outside work. One example is family. Kenji, a *Nippon Herald* reporter, says, "It's OK if I can make my family happy by doing what I'm doing, even though I'm blamed at work every day or I can't find meaning in myself."

Japanese employees of the *Japan Observer* also indicate a salaryman consciousness, but interestingly, none of my interviewees says that their everyday practices are influenced by political constraints. As an example of external pressure on the newspaper, some of them talk about a controversial incident in the past. In 2002, an English-speaking sports reporter wrote a story about a controversial aspect of South Korean culture. The South Korean embassy got upset by that story and demanded the *Japan Observer* take action. That reporter was fired for misconduct, and he filed a legal case against the company for unfair dismissal. Employees believe that the company "took action" because of economic reasons rather than political pressure (but in reality, because of both economic and political pressure). Back then, South Korean corporations, such as Korean Airlines and Samsung, were important advertising clients of the *Japan Observer*. And 2002 was an important year for advertising because FIFA World Cup was held in South Korea and Japan that year, and the *Japan Observer* expected advertising from South Korean corporations. The newspaper did not want to lose the advertising for those corporations rather than be concerned about political pressure from the South Korean government. Other than this example, *Japan Observer* employees say that they

do not feel political pressure on their work. *Japan Observer* employees do not experience internal politics, either. "There's no sectionalism, no company politics within the *Japan Observer*, unlike large corporations. I like that," says Sakura, a *Japan Observer* manager.

Gender relations are another factor that characterizes the workplace. It may be a surprise for someone who is not familiar with male-dominated corporate culture to know about work relations of female journalists of the *Nippon Herald*. Whether it is in the United States or Japan, the newsroom is historically a male-dominated workplace because of characteristics of journalistic work, such as long work hours, irregular shifts and days off. The *Nippon Herald* newsroom is still dominated by males, though the number of female journalists is larger than before the Equal Employment Opportunity Act was enforced in the late 1980s. Because of the act, it became illegal for the company to treat employees differently based on their sex. But *Nippon Herald* female employees still experience covert and overt discrimination from male employees (and the company) at work. "Positions and work to which women are assigned are limited," says Kyoko, a *Nippon Herald* reporter. By saying this, Kyoko implies that there is the glass ceiling above female employees. When she got married 15 years ago, Saori, another female reporter, was told by her supervisor, "Give up your job when you are married." Compared with the past, Saori says, male supervisors do not make such discriminatory remarks against female workers today, at least openly. While all my female interviewees of the *Nippon Herald* voluntarily talked about their experiences related to gender discrimination,[31] gender discrimination never came up as a topic in interviews with male employees. This suggests that male employees take for granted a work environment in

[31] Questions related to gender discrimination are not included in the interview protocol for this study. When I planned this study, I had no idea about gender discrimination in the newsroom. Gender discrimination was a topic that my female interviewees voluntarily brought to our conversations.

which female employees are treated differently. Old discriminatory practices and behaviors may be difficult to remove, especially at companies like the *Nippon Herald*, which have been dominated by males for a long time.

The number of male employees also surpasses that of females in the U.S Times newsroom, but both male and female employees treat each other equally, regardless of gender. Given that female journalists of the *U.S. Times* did not mention gender discrimination at work in the interviews, gender discrimination is apparently not a concern for them. For some *U.S. Times* journalists, regardless of gender, racial diversity in the newsroom is more an issue. Even though the community has a growing Latino population, the all-Caucasian *U.S. Times* newsroom does not reflect the demographics of the community. Some *U.S. Times* journalists recognize that the homogeneity of newsroom demographics may not represent voices of minorities well. This discrepancy between newsroom demographics and the general population may cause a gap between what journalists produce and what the public wants.

The *Japan Observer* newsroom is almost equally divided along gender lines. *Japan Observer* female employees enjoy a gender-free work environment, which may be unusual for a Japanese corporation. Sakura, a *Japan Observer* manager, says, "The greatest strength of the *Japan Observer* is gender equality. Men and women are absolutely equal." Like Sakura, female employees of the *Japan Observer* and the *U.S. Times* occupy some important positions, such as managers. In terms of gender discrimination, these two newspapers are quite different from the *Nippon Herald*. One of the reasons that the *Japan Observer* is more open to gender equality than the *Nippon Herald* is Western influence. The *Japan Observer* newsroom is almost equally divided

into not only male and female employees but also Japanese and non-Japanese employees from Western countries. Furthermore, "We have a lot of *kikokushijo* (returnee children) and people [Japanese] with experience living in an English-speaking country. They are considerate of gender relations," says Sakura. These employees have brought the liberal idea of gender equality to their workplace and constructed a gender-free work environment.

Gender relations also affect the labor structure of each newsroom. The labor structure of the male-oriented *Nippon Herald* newsroom is hierarchical, creating gaps between genders as well as between seniors and juniors. Not only gender but also age, the length of career and job position affect human relationships in Japanese corporations. People tend to expect someone who is a certain gender at certain age with a certain length of career to behave in a certain way. To look at it differently, this hierarchy in the workplace may provide opportunities for senior employees to exert leadership. The union may also benefit from hierarchy because more senior members can lead younger members. This may be a reason that the *Nippon Herald* labor union is strong.

The labor structure of the gender-equal newsroom of the *U.S. Times* and the *Japan Observer*, on the other hand, is horizontal. A positive aspect of horizontal human relationships among employees is that employees work efficiently because they do not worry about an evaluation, based on gender, age, the length of career and job position that may limit their performance. But horizontal human relationships also cause negative effects. The major issue among *Japan Observer* employees is the lack of leadership. No one wants to take the initiative for doing new things that may be risky but could potentially save the paper. As a result, employees feel stagnated by repeating the same

old work practices, clinging to the conventional business model. Miho says, "When the circulation continues to drop, the paper should change the focus to a different niche market, changing the name to the "Senior" Observer or something. But no one takes the initiative in discussing and changing business strategies." Employees are concerned that they cannot find a way out of economic trouble if they keep doing the same work over and over again. This leads to their disappointment in their direct supervisors and management and ultimately uncertainty about their future with the newspaper.

The mixture of Japanese and Western cultural backgrounds is a prominent characteristic of the *Japan Observer* newsroom. The mixed culture leads to positive consequences in the work environment. "People from different cultures get together and jazz up the workplace. It is fun to discuss and search interesting things together with people with different values and backgrounds," says Kaori, a reporter. The flip side of the mixed culture is that it causes conflicts between employees with different cultural backgrounds. They do not accept each other's differences in attitude toward work. Ami, a *Japan Observer* reporter, compares non-Japanese and Japanese employees:

> Non-Japanese employees are more aware of their rights, and they complain a lot. I shout in my mind, "Shut up, and work!" but they believe that they have to demand their work rights. The workplace where someone is always complaining is uncomfortable. Japanese employees are quiet and not as aggressive as non-Japanese employees.

For some Japanese employees, some English-speaking employees are self-centered in demanding more compensation without committing themselves to the company or considering the economics of the newspaper. Meanwhile, for non-Japanese workers, Japanese workplace culture is difficult to understand and accept. "I come from a different culture. So, I don't ... fully appreciate how Japanese managers communicate

with each other, from one culture to the next," says Ryan, a manager from Australia. Workers with different cultural backgrounds locate themselves in the binary (we or they) relationship. The distinction makes employees who claim superiority alienated from others who they think are less driven (Bourdieu, 1984). Differences in attitudes of Japanese and non-Japanese employees may cause polarization and alienation among themselves. It may ultimately undermine employees' unity and power to fight for better work rights together. Japanese and non-Japanese journalists of the *Japan Observer* are constructing work cultures different from those of the *U.S. Times* and the *Nippon Herald* by partially accepting each other's values and partially conflicting with each other's values.

In sum, workplace relations specific to the newsroom are constructed by the economic situation of the newspaper in combination with gender relations and employees' values acquired throughout their upbringing and work life. And workplace relations shape employees' behavior and perspectives about work, workplace and themselves.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

This chapter first draws the big picture of perspectives and experiences of journalists of the three newspapers to present a comprehensive portrait of what is happening to newspaper work and editorial workers. Then, this chapter analyzes the picture from theoretical perspectives, questioning how well existing theories address current economic, technological and labor conditions in the three newspapers and looking for alternative explanations if the existing theories do not explain journalistic experiences well.

Contemporary Newspaper Work at a Glance

The big picture that emerges from comparing and contrasting journalists' views at the three newspapers is that economic and technological forces have a homogenizing impact on newspaper work, as well as on some of the views and experiences of the journalists in the United States and Japan. Journalists partially accept and resist those forces by clinging to shared occupational ideals (e.g., to serve the public good). Journalists are using shared values, ideas and norms—provisionally called "culture" in this study—as a tool to maintain what they think newspaper work is. Their cultures vary by newspaper because culture is a set of shared beliefs, values, norms and ideas held by a group of particular people, reflecting the economics of the newspaper and collective behavior of workers, which lead to differences in perspectives and values of journalists at each newspaper.

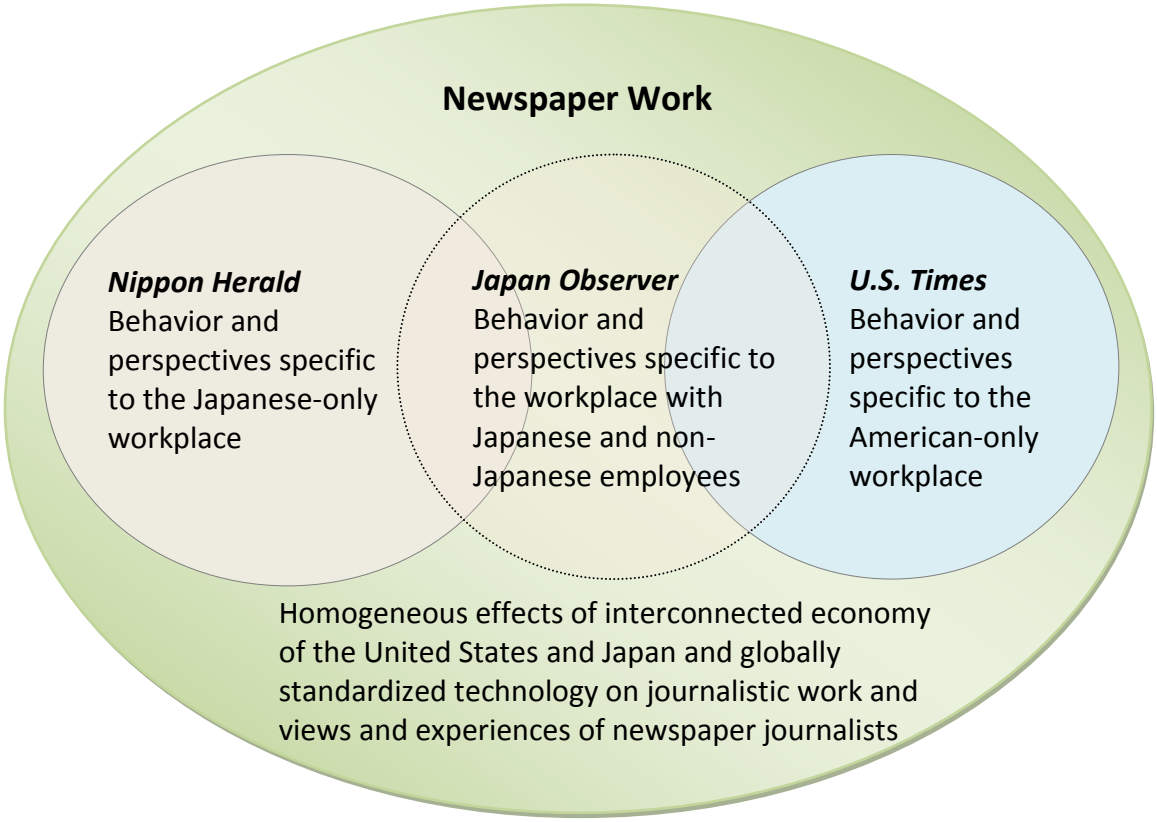

Figure 5. Newspaper Work at a Glance

Marx's infrastructure-superstructure metaphor explains that culture is a part of superstructure, affected and determined by the infrastructure (the economy). As the economy changes, culture changes to accommodate it. The findings of this study, however, show that journalists' perspectives about their work, based on their workplace cultures, are not necessarily changed by the economy, though their performance is susceptible to economic changes (e.g., producing easy stories as budgets are tightened). This is why journalists manage to maintain journalistic values and norms (e.g., respect for investigative reporting), descended from the Hutchins Commission in the 1940s in the case of *U.S. Times* journalists, in an age of economic hardship.

Journalists at the three newspapers say that they love their work because they see meaning in it. Their belief that they are serving people and the community makes newspaper work special. The impact that journalists may have is limited because the three newspapers are circulating in small communities, such as a county, prefectures and a group of people with a special interest (English-related). But even such imagined limited impact and responsibility for the small communities give meaning to journalists and their work. A strong ethic of social responsibility differentiates journalistic work from many other types of corporate work. The journalistic norm to serve the community by informing the public comes from journalism education[32], images created by mass media or a journalist's work experience.

In addition to social responsibility, autonomy, control and daily variety make newspaper work enjoyable. Journalists enjoy autonomy in everyday practices (e.g., discretion to choose topics), the control of content and partly production, and the fact that they can experience different things (almost) every day. Journalists understand that these aspects of newspaper work are occupational privileges. Thus, at the individual level, journalists of the three newspapers find common meaning and enjoyable aspects in their work.

Newspaper work, however, does not seem meaningful or fully enjoyable from an economic perspective. The three newspapers are experiencing declines in revenue. Economic forces have led to a substantial shrinkage of the workforce, labor intensification, poorer quality of work and shallower human relationships at work. This

[32] Many *U.S. Times* journalists and English-speaking employees of the *Japan Observer* have a journalism degree. They learned the role of journalists and journalistic ethics in college. On the other hand, none of the Japanese journalists in this study has formal journalism education. This is because journalism education is not as established in Japan as in the United States and other Western countries.

can be understood in part as a consequence of interconnected economies of the United States and Japan. If something happens to either country's economy, it will affect the other one. A recession in the United States reduces car sales, for example, which affects the Japanese economy because Japan is the largest car manufacturer in the world, and the United States is an important buyer of Japanese cars. Car makers and dealers are major advertising clients of newspapers. Newspapers of both countries end up suffering from the decline in advertising when financially troubled car makers and dealers withdraw their advertisements from newspapers.

The impact of technological changes is also similar in the three newspapers. Digital technology (computerization) has brought high productivity and efficiency. The newspapers took advantage of highly productive technology to trim labor costs, though downsizing the workforce may not be the primary purpose of the introduction of new technology and systems. Technology has led to intensification of journalistic work and upset human relationships much as economic forces have done. Technology by itself is not an enemy of journalists, and in fact, journalists appreciate better productivity and efficiency of advanced technology. However, technology in combination with the ailing economies of the newspapers is causing negative consequences for journalists. Depending on the economic condition, management uses technology as a tool to trim costs.

The economics of the newspaper is affecting the level of digitalization. The *U.S. Times* emphasizes digitalization most, and the *Nippon Herald* does least. The *Japan Observer* is in between. This coincides with differences in the economics of the three newspapers. The *U.S. Times* installed an infrastructure of digital production out of the

necessity of looking for alternative income sources, thinking that digitalization is the future. The newspaper is facing the limitation of the conventional newspaper business model in the Internet age, and is placing hopes in digital distribution for future profit by continuing to develop its website and further digital diversification. The *Nippon Herald*, on the other hand, clings to print, which generates money to sustain business from circulation and advertising.[33] Because print economics is still valid, the newspaper takes a cautious stance toward digital publications, skeptical about the profitability of digitalization. The *Nippon Herald* runs the online edition, which is merely a reflection of the print edition with a very limited amount of web-only content, such as photo galleries, in order to indicate its presence in the digital world, which almost all newspapers do online. The *Japan Observer* cannot afford to rely only on print because of the worsening financial condition of the paper. The *Japan Observer* is trying to expand its market into the digital world, thinking of the publication of digital editions for smartphones and tablet devices. The *Japan Observer* is selling iPad editions of its weeklies. It is taking more time for the *Japan Observer* to solve issues related to the digital diversification of the daily, the primary product of the *Japan Observer*, such as the secondary use of wire stories. In order to deal with further digitalization, the *Japan Observer* introduced a multimedia publishing system similar to that of the *U.S. Times*. A difference in business strategies of the *U.S. Times* and the *Japan Observer* is that the *Japan Observer* is looking for ways to sell digital products, while the *U.S. Times* is trying to sell advertising space in the digital world.

[33] The other two newspapers are also sustained by sales of the print edition. But because the amount of money the print edition generates is rapidly shrinking, and there is no prospect that sales will increase, the two newspapers are more frantically looking for alternative income sources (their focus is on the digital world) than the *Nippon Herald*.

In light of the level of digitalization and infrastructure, journalists' work practices vary by newspaper, too. Technology has been used to highly computerize and streamline production work and has led to the integration of production work with editorial work. People who are close to production result in doing integrated work as job descriptions have been blurred because of advanced technology. Editors and makeup professionals, for instance, edit copy and write headlines as well as do page composition. While many *U.S. Times* journalists engage in more integrated work, *Nippon Herald* journalists still focus on their traditional work[34]. Again, the *Japan Observer* is in between. Some work is integrated, and some is not in the *Japan Observer*. Editors are more likely to do integrated work that was enabled by technology. Some reporters and editors are doing both reporting and editing jobs, but they do so far for economic reasons (e.g., reductions in the workforce), rather than for technological reasons. Because the *Japan Observer* has introduced a multimedia publishing system, *Japan Observer* journalists likely will engage in more integrated work in the near future beyond editorial-production and print-online boundaries if issues related to digitalization that the *Japan Observer* currently has are solved, as *U.S. Times* journalists are doing now.

Though the level of technology varies, journalists at the three newspapers are experiencing similar effects because of the overall computerization of newspaper production and digitalization in everyday work practices. The three newspapers are using standardized systems and software, including computer-assisted page makeup systems in a broad sense, the Internet, Microsoft Office, InDesign, Photoshop, etc. Journalists of the three newspapers agree that they have less (face-to-face) communication at work, while

[34] Some workers do more integrated work than others within the *Nippon Herald*, though the number of such workers is still limited.

increasingly working in front of the computer and using digital devices. It can be concluded that globally standardized technology has brought homogenous effects—integration of work, labor intensification and diminishing human interactions—to newspaper work in combination with the ailing economic condition of the papers.

But economic and technological forces have not turned journalists into mindless workers, as labor process theories argue, though these forces have changed their work practices and their attitudes toward their work. In fact, journalists maintain (or they believe they do) autonomy, responsibility and control of work. And technology has helped increase control for some workers, though it is labor intensification from a different perspective. That is, journalists manage to hold onto journalistic ideals under powerful economic and technological forces. In this regard, labor process theories (c.f., Braverman, 1998) that mostly discuss production work (e.g., shop floor work) are not well applied to journalists in this study, though some journalists are doing production work. Production work covers a wide range of activities, and some require more mental labor. Newspaper journalists engage in production work that requires mental labor. They do not manufacture industrial products but compose pages, which is considered production work in the newspaper business.

This study argues that cultures (i.e., shared ideas, values and norms) rooted in the workplace and journalists help journalists resist some potential impacts of the interconnected economies and globalized technology. Journalists' common belief that newspaper work has social responsibility and prestige and is, therefore, meaningful and enjoyable is embedded in their cultures. With the help of cultures, journalists try to do what they are supposed to do as newspaper journalists—a universal idea is to inform the

public, regardless of the type of stories, protecting journalistic ideals from economic and technological forces.

But their cultures are not immune to or independent from economic and technological forces. They are susceptible to these forces and may change. Also, different groups of journalists share different ideas, values and norms in relation to economic and technological forces. That is why journalists of the three newspapers show different perspectives and attitudes toward workplace relations. *U.S. Times* journalists are likely independent and skill-focused. They tend to identify themselves with newspaper work but not with the newspaper. Therefore, they voluntarily leave (or think of leaving) the paper, for instance, because of economic reasons. Their voluntary attitude is also related to the employment policy of the newspaper. They are under union protection, but they know even the union cannot protect them from layoffs, which the *U.S. Times*, as well as many other U.S. papers, engaged in as revenues for circulation and advertising declined. Employment is won by self-responsibility for *U.S. Times* journalists (not a thing guaranteed by an employer), which makes them independent and likely to focus on skill development for the next move in their career. Many *U.S. Times* journalists have a journalism education (universal journalistic skills: reporting, editing, photojournalism and software application that are used across the country) and work experiences before the *U.S. Times*. This enables them to sell their labor in the external labor market. As a result of selling and being bought in the external labor market, they settled with the *U.S. Times*. And they may leave the paper of their own will when they come across a good job opportunity, unless they are laid off.

Journalists of the Japanese newspapers also voluntarily got a job at their newspaper. But there is a prominent difference between *U.S. Times* journalists and the Japanese journalists. For instance, *Nippon Herald* journalists tend to identify themselves with the company. Believing the paper guarantees lifetime employment[35] because the finances of the newspaper are relatively stable—advertising revenue is shrinking, but circulation generates enough money to keep the newspaper afloat—*Nippon Herald* journalists think they will stay with the newspaper until their retirement. In other words, they rely on the newspaper as their lifetime income source. Because of economic interest, *Nippon Herald* journalists try to protect the company from mismanagement through union activities. Their company-oriented mentality also stems from the lack of mobility. The lack of mobility is not unique to the *Nippon Herald*. Kim (1981) and Adelstein (2009) observed the same phenomenon in the Japanese newspaper industry in the 1980s and 1990s. Thus, it can be said that the lack of mobility of Japanese journalists is a long-term trend. *Nippon Herald* journalists acquire journalistic skills on the job after they are hired. Such skills may be too specific to the *Nippon Herald* and therefore not transferrable to other news organizations. Under such circumstances, *Nippon Herald* journalists develop a stronger sense of being an employee than a journalist. They are trained within the company to do journalistic work and, more important, to be corporate employees.

The *Japan Observer*, a mixture of Japanese and non-Japanese employees, reflects both aspects of the other two newspapers and journalists. Japanese workers demonstrate an organization-oriented ethic like *Nippon Herald* journalists, while English-speaking

[35] Jackson's definition of "lifetime employment" is borrowed here. Jackson (2001) explains Japanese lifetime employment as institutionalized practices for fulltime corporate workers, including seniority-related pay, firm-specific skill formation, and high job security.

employees from Western countries demonstrate an independent and voluntary ethic like *U.S. Times* journalists. While most Japanese journalists are trained on the job for journalistic skills in the *Japan Observer*, many non-Japanese journalists have journalism education and experience before the *Japan Observer*, which differentiates their attitudes toward labor relations and also their mentality of occupational mobility. This suggests that Japanese employees and non-Japanese employees do not share some ideas, values and norms—especially about labor relations, and therefore, they do not mingle together. This is because values, ideas and norms that people have acquired through their upbringing are more strongly reflected than those that they have acquired in this particular workplace, the *Japan Observer*.

Though *Nippon Herald* journalists and Japanese journalists of the *Japan Observer* demonstrate similar perspectives and values in work relations, they are also different. One prominent difference is the commitment level of Japanese journalists to the company. Though Japanese journalists of both newspapers are organization-oriented in general, *Japan Observer* employees are a little more independent from the company, while their *Nippon Herald* counterparts identify with the newspaper. One likely reason is the difference in economic condition of each newspaper. The healthier the economics of the paper, the more secure employees feel about the paper, and as a result, employees feel comfortable and confident in committing to the paper. According to this logic, the weak economic situation of the *Japan Observer* is reflected in weaker social ties of its journalists to the newspaper. Because of a severe financial decline and the demise of the raison d'être of English-language newspapers in the Internet age, some *Japan Observer* employees have discarded the belief that the newspaper guarantees lifetime employment.

Another possible reason may be emotional ties between workers and the workplace. The more loyal the employer is to employees, the more employees commit to their company. Ailing economic conditions lead companies to be less loyal to employees, which can be seen in layoffs and wage and benefit cuts. The *Japan Observer* resorted to wage, benefit and bonus cuts and offered early retirement buyouts several times because of economic hardship. The *Nippon Herald* also cut bonuses and offered early retirement buyouts, but the scale was not comparable to that of the *Japan Observer*. In fact, their income level remains "larger than an average income of other corporate workers" as *Nippon Herald* journalists describe in a humble manner. *Japan Observer* employees may take this economic conduct as a breach of employee confidence. *Japan Observer* employees (Japanese) have lost confidence in their employer, and the level of their commitment to the company's prosperity has declined.

Economies, technology and workplace-specific cultures are tightly intertwined and make newspaper work and journalists what they are today. Contemporary newspaper work is operating in an economically and technologically (increasingly) homogenized environment in which different workplaces are constructing different values, ideas, beliefs and norms specific to their workplace, though there are some ideas common to all the workplaces, such as respect for the public good.

Given the findings about current economic, technological and labor conditions of the three newspapers, do theoretical considerations help shed light on economic impact on journalists' behavior, journalistic work in relation to class, the value of journalistic labor and skills and the maintenance of journalistic values?

Economic Forces and Journalists' Resistance

The findings of this study support arguments and findings of previous studies that newspaper journalism is strongly influenced by external and internal economic forces (c.f., McChensey, 2003; 2004; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Schudson, 2003; Bourdieu, 1998a; McManus, 1994; Davies, 2009). None of the newspapers in this study answers to Wall Street or Kabuto-cho[36], as publicly held corporations do. But the newspapers still experience economic pressure from outside that is different from pressure from shareholders. Advertisers have more say in newspapers as newspapers are experiencing massive reductions in advertising. The newspapers are asking advertisers to buy advertising space (e.g., the *Nippon Herald*), journalists work for advertising-focused publications (e.g., the *U.S. Times*) and do favors for advertisers (e.g., the *Nippon Herald* and the *Japan Observer*). Increases in outside economic power certainly affect journalistic activities. Budgets are tightened because of pressure outside the newspapers. Tighter budgets lead to reductions in resources and eventually limits on journalistic activities. The three newspapers are increasingly limiting their budgets, and journalists are aware that the scope of journalistic activities is narrowing.

Fast and easy stories tend to be prioritized over costly investigative reporting. Corporate journalists are not volunteers who devote their free labor to the public good. They work for newspapers to support themselves and their families. Therefore, there is no reason for them to provide labor to their newspapers for free. Journalists realistically

[36] Kabuto-cho is the financial center of Japan, equivalent to Wall Street in the United States. Stocks of Japanese newspapers are not publicly traded, unlike those of most U.S. newspapers. Stocks of newspapers are usually held by the owner family, employees and affiliated corporations and individuals. Large- and mid-size newspapers tend to form (media) conglomerates, affiliated with television stations, book publishers, and other corporations through shareholding. Consequently, mergers and takeovers of newspapers hardly occur in Japan.

adopt easier ways of doing their jobs when their pay is capped, while their journalistic belief that they are working for the public good is marginalized in such circumstances. There is a struggle between journalists' economic reality and journalistic beliefs. That is why many journalists demonstrate frustration in their powerlessness in the face of economic reality. Their frustration and struggle indicate that journalists try to maintain their values in journalism under increasing economic pressure.

Ready-made information makes journalists' work easier. Journalists rely on public relations materials and press releases from authorities and organizations. This is not a new phenomenon, according to previous studies (e.g., Williams, 2010; Davies, 2009; McChesney, 2004). Journalists have conventionally used that type of information to save their time and labor as well as give stories credibility (e.g., Gans, 2003; Tuchman, 1973; 1972). But the reliance on such information today is increasingly driven by economic forces.

This study supports the argument that economic forces compromise journalistic work (e.g., McChesney, 2003; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; McManus, 1994). But the relationship between journalistic work and economic pressure is more complicated; Journalists do not simply succumb to economic forces. Journalists are not mindless robots doing whatever economic conditions dictate. Journalists maintain some autonomy, control and creativity in their everyday practices. Reporters are allowed to pursue their interests, editors have control of stories, and editorial workers in general enjoy creativity in how to present stories and photos. Those aspects of newspaper work continue to differentiate newspaper work from other corporate work and, moreover, make it satisfactory.

However, increasing economic pressure makes journalistic work less meaningful and enjoyable. The area of autonomy, control and creativity that journalists can exert may shrink as economic hardship further intensifies. Opportunities for the journalists at these three papers to engage in satisfactory work are decreasing, given current trends of journalistic activities under increasing economic pressure that prioritizes quantity (e.g., the number of stories journalists produce) over quality of work. Journalists who cannot find meaning in what they are doing have a hard time motivating themselves, in the worst scenario developing mental illness, such as depression. In fact, the *Nippon Herald* and the *Japan Observer* have employees who suffer from such illness almost every year.

Contemporary journalists are concerned about having less job security, an aspect of newspaper work that used to be attractive. Journalists who are concerned about job insecurity are distracted from journalistic activities by losing motivation, looking for other job options outside journalism, etc. Because of job insecurity in combination with other economic pressure, it is increasingly difficult for them to pursue what they are supposed to do: to inform the public with diverse, accurate information. This naturally hurts the quality of information that they produce. Newspapers might be creating a vicious cycle in which the decline in revenues makes journalists concerned about job insecurity, concerned journalists cannot fully motivate themselves to serve the public or produce quality information that the public appreciates, people who are not satisfied with information in newspapers abandon them, and economic conditions of newspapers get worse. Newspapers are devalued by external forces as well as internal (organizational) deterioration.

Newspaper Labor in Shrinking Middle Class

Do theories of social class shed light on the findings of this study? Class has been used by different theorists to explain what happens in the workplace. It is worth discussing journalistic work in relation to class. There are multiple definitions of class, which are not in agreement. If we suppose a class is a group of people (workers) categorized by type of work they engage in, economic power and cultural backgrounds (e.g., education), there are roughly four types of class: the capitalist/owner class (e.g., Marx), management class (e.g., Galbraith, 2004; Carter, 1985), middle/white-collar class (e.g., Mills, 1967; Carter, 1985; Zweig, 2000[37]) and working/blue-collar class (e.g., Marx). The capitalist/owner class is distinguished from the others because this group of people owns the means of production. The management class controls the means of production. Sometimes these lines blur. For instance, the owner family of the *U.S. Times* owns the newspaper, and at the same time, some family members take management positions. Both the middle class and the working class use the means of production to work for the capitalist/owner class and the management class. What distinguishes the middle class from the working class is type of work and cultural backgrounds of workers. Middle-class workers are educated and likely engage in white-collar work (e.g., Weber), while working-class employees are less educated and engage in blue-collar work. Regarding economic power, there is no clear distinction between the middle class and the working class (Zweig, 2000). Depending on types of jobs, some workers make more money than workers of the other class. The monthly earning of an offshore oil rig worker, for instance, is far higher than that of a college professor.

[37] Zweig does not distinguish classes by "collar."

According to this categorization, newspaper journalists fall into the middle/white-collar class, given their educational backgrounds and the type of their work. They have economic, social and educational resources to be journalists. And being journalists, they generate symbolic capital, such as the occupational privileges that this study found. Journalists in this study have some autonomy and control at work, which differentiates them from working-class workers or even some other middle-class workers (e.g., clerical workers) who theoretically do not have much autonomy.

Assuming that journalists belong to the middle class, the middle class is a quite broad and vague concept to describe a social group of people, as sociologists have long discussed. If the middle class is categorized as a group whose members have work autonomy but are placed under the control of a more powerful group (e.g., management) class (e.g., Mills, 1967; Carter, 1985; Eichar, 1989), middle-class workers range from people who are very close to the management class to people who are very close to the working class, depending on what job they do. There is no doubt that newspaper journalists belong to the middle class, but where are they in this broad categorization?

Newspaper journalists are professional mental laborers engaging in cultural production and reproduction (e.g., information, social values and norms). In this regard, newspaper journalists may be categorized as part of the professional-managerial class in the middle class, based on Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich's criteria (1979). Newspaper journalists who do not have the right to make business decisions at all are not close to management. There are some journalists who become managers and participate in the business decision-making process, but the number of such journalists is very limited. As this study found, journalists are susceptible to business decisions that someone else has

made, such as layoffs, personnel shuffles and wage cuts. Journalists who are not technical experts or artists, though their work exhibits some technical and artistic aspects, are different from technocrats and creative workers. They have computer skills, but those skills do not directly elevate their social and/or economic status. Though the importance of computer skills is increasing in journalistic work, they are necessary skills rather than something that adds value to journalistic labor. Newspaper journalists are professionals with particular skills and expertise but do not hold the status as lawyers and doctors.

Professionals in general protect their occupational prestige by limiting their numbers. The logic is that once the number of a profession increases, the professionals lose occupational prestige. Licensing is an example of a barrier to entry. In this regard, the barrier to entry to journalistic work is low because being a journalist does not require a license in either the United States or Japan. Would-be corporate journalists may need to have a college degree in both countries, but they are not required to have specific expertise or licenses as lawyers and doctors are. The barriers to entry to journalism have become even lower because of the Internet and the accompanying advent of citizen journalism. The Internet has enabled theoretically anyone who has access and a limited knowledge of web creation and writes readable stories to be a journalist (e.g., news bloggers). Even a college degree does not matter any more if one works online without corporate affiliation.

Most online journalists devote their free labor to produce information. For instance, after the Huffington Post was sold to AOL, unpaid bloggers sued the founder of the online newspaper and AOL. The lawsuit reads that the online paper unfairly pocketed at least $105 million from those unpaid bloggers (Reuters, 2011). The increase of free

labor in the journalistic labor market has negative impacts on fulltime corporate journalists, diminishing the value of paid journalistic labor. Because of the rise of amateur photographers (videographers) armed with a cellphone or digital camera, for instance, it is getting difficult for professional photojournalists to make a living by taking news photos (Jolly, 2009; Gillmor, 2006).Through competition with free labor, paid journalistic labor cheapens, and employment becomes insecure. Wages are held down, economic pressure piles on paid journalists, work privileges are eliminated, and eventually work autonomy succumbs to economic pressure. If the amount of income determines social position of white-collar workers in the middle class, as Mills (1967) argues, that of corporate journalists is dropping because this study found their wages are in a downward trend. Given what is happening to journalists, the portion of the professional-managerial class to which corporate journalists may belong is being pushed toward the lower class.

Journalists occupy a notable occupation in the Internet age. One of the fundamentals that distinguishes the capitalist class—bourgeoisie in Marx's term—from the others is access to the means of production. Because workers in both the middle class and working class do not have the means of production, though they work with it, they are under the control of management, which has control of the means of production. However, the Internet has enabled journalists to gain access to the means of production. Corporate journalists are excluded in this discussion because the means of production is still in the hands of management. The Internet allows self-proclaimed journalists to access resources (information and people) and provides them venues to present their stories and networks to distribute them. Numerous news bloggers and quite a few news

entrepreneurs (e.g., Arianna Huffington[38], Matt Drudge[39], Julian Assange[40], Sakai Tanaka[41]) have emerged, taking advantage of the Internet. The Huffington Post, Drudge Report and WikiLeaks, to name a few, became popular because they provide different perspectives from mainstream media and publish stories that mainstream media do not cover.[42] Furthermore, they have shown some impact on society. In this respect, the Internet contributes to the people's right to know and helps democracy function. Their existence, however, is a threat to established newspapers and corporate journalists. Prestige that newspapers and their journalists have long enjoyed (e.g., agenda-setting role, gate-keeping role) is undermined by new types of news providers offering different views from mainstream media. Or, they finally realized that they had lost prestige much earlier, thanks to the advent of new types of news media on the Internet. Long-term downward trends in circulation in the U.S. newspaper industry show that newspapers started losing audience confidence far earlier than the advent of the Internet.

In terms of circulation trends, the Japanese newspaper industry is different from its U.S. counterpart because newspaper consumption per capita is much higher, and the official total circulation figures show that Japanese newspapers are not losing readership at the speed of the loss of U.S. newspapers. The decline of Japanese newspapers remains

[38] The founder of the Huffington Post, an online newspaper. Arianna Huffington was criticized for making $315 million from taking advantage of the unpaid labor of bloggers when she sold the newspaper to AOL in February 2011.

[39] The founder of Drudge Report, a news aggregator. The website became famous when it scooped the Monica Lewinsky scandal during the Clinton administration.

[40] The founder of WikiLeaks, an online publisher of whistle-blowing documents. The website gathered attention when it released documents, videos, and diplomatic cables related to Afghan and Iraq wars.

[41] The founder of Kokusai News Kaisetsu (International News Analysis), an analytical news site.

[42] While publishing original content, both the Huffington Post and Drudge Report link to many mainstream news sources. Thus, they are aggregators of news stories. Their original content made those websites famous and popular.

gradual. Newspapers have served educational and symbolic purposes in Japan. Reading a quality newspaper itself is kind of a status, implying readers' intelligence level. Not only businesspeople but also young students are encouraged to read newspapers to inform and educate themselves about society. For instance, news articles in newspapers are often used in entrance examinations for universities and standardized examinations, based on a socially disseminated and accepted idea that newspaper stories are logically and well written and reflect current society (Asahi.com, 2006). In turn, some newspapers have been selling that image to the public to enhance readership. The role of educator may be a reason that newspapers have been able to maintain a respectful social status and therefore high circulation beyond the social and economic systems of newspaper distribution. This brings back discussions of class. Newspapers are tools of reproducing social positioning of educated middle-class people. Social and cultural values of the middle class drive (or drove) people to consume newspapers.

However, the Japanese newspaper industry is also seeing a downward trend today as readership demographics and people's priorities change. The majority of readership is people in their 50s and older, who are familiar with the idea that newspaper are educational, informative and authoritative. Younger generations have different views about newspapers, growing up in the multimedia environment. For them, newspapers are simply one of several media and a less important one. To understand this difference between younger and older generations, economic backgrounds need to be taken into consideration. People in their 50s and older experienced economic growth in their work life, and mostly established a financially stable life. In their generations, if you were a corporate worker with implicit guarantee of lifetime employment, you could buy a house,

support your family, send your children to college and have peaceful retirement on a good pension. This is not the case for younger generations. People in their 20s and 30s (and younger) have gone through consecutive economic downturns since they were born. An economic reality today is that three out of ten cannot get a job even if they have a college degree (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2010). Under such circumstances, it is difficult for them to expect a financially stable life as their parents do. They cannot help being cost-conscious by prioritizing their money. A subscription to a newspaper is not worth it for them, while they can obtain the same and more information online for free if they want. Young generations do not hesitate to spend money on communication, such as the cellphone and Internet connections. The trend that younger generations are less likely to subscribe to a newspaper implies a decline in social status of newspapers and the shift of people's priority in consumption.

Journalists in this study are aware that there is a gap between their newspapers and everyday people. Suppose journalists are educated middle class, and everyday people are members of various classes. The gap that journalists are realizing is partly rooted in a gap between classes. Journalists from an educated middle class represent their class perspectives, based on social, economic and cultural values, in their work, which may not fit well with views of other classes. For instance, both U.S. and Japanese newspapers ignore labor issues that are more related to the lower class (Shaw, 2010; Nakano, 2003). Some journalists in this study realize that there is a gap between their newspaper (the focus, priorities and language used in stories) and readers. This gap may be a reflection of class difference between journalists (and their newspapers) and readers, and this class difference may hinder journalists from responding well to consumer needs.

Some journalists also know there is a gap in opinion between management and themselves. Regarding class, management is higher than journalists and the majority of middle-class and working-class consumers, in terms of social status and economic power. In addition to class, journalists are physically close to readers, meeting and talking with them in the field, on the phone or via email. Through interactions with readers, journalists more likely have some ideas of what audiences need. But management is far removed from readers—and from journalists and newspaper production. The most important thing for management is business, not news content or the quality of the product (e.g., Cranberg et al., 2001). There is not a great difference in this goal between Wall Street and management of family-owned newspapers (e.g., the three newspapers have members of the owner family as major shareholders), though the degree may vary. The problem is that management makes fundamental business decisions. Journalists are not happy about those decisions, as many of my interviewees said, thinking those decisions would hurt the quality of work and product and would not respond to consumer needs well. And decisions made by management determine and limit journalistic performance. Corporate journalists do not have the means of production (capital) because they are not the capitalist class. Management that wants to maximize profit (or make ends meet) provides a limited budget for journalistic activities. Accordingly, what journalists can do with that budget is limited. This leads to the frequent use of ready-made information and wire stories, and the prioritization of fast and easy stories over costly investigative reporting.

Labor Value and Technology

Digital technology has a great impact on newspaper work, and relationships between labor and technology will be discussed in light of labor theories.

The current technological change in the newspaper industry (multimedia diversification, advances in composition systems, etc.) should be understood as one of many historical stages of continuous technological innovation. The newspaper industry has adopted technology for better productivity and efficiency throughout its history, from faster printing presses to the latest publishing systems. Newspaper production is historically specific, reflecting technological development (and economic conditions) of the time. Because newspapers now have better productivity and efficiency, the number of workers engaging in newspaper work has shrunk. Computers have replaced human labor, mostly in the production area. Cutting labor may not be the primary purpose of all technological introduction to the newsroom, but there is no doubt that advanced technology has helped management trim labor costs in today's economic hardship. Some journalists of the three newspapers partially attribute the rapid contraction of the workforce to technology. Technology has enabled journalists to work across the print-online boundary and the editorial-production boundary by blurring job distinctions. Journalists are aware that technology intensifies labor because they increasingly do work beyond their traditional work descriptions.

However, journalists at the three newspapers do not see technology as the only reason for reductions in manpower. They said that reductions occurred more because of the ailing economy of their newspapers than because of technology. Journalists of the three newspapers even appreciate the level of productivity and efficiency that advanced

technology has made possible, believing that they cannot handle an increasing amount of work with a shrinking workforce. This attitude of journalists contradicts labor theories (e.g., Braverman, 1998; Rifkin, 1995; Green, 2006; Kraut, 1987; Derber, 1982) to a degree. The focus of those theories is mainly on shop-floor labor (e.g., assembly-line work), though some try to explain professional work (Derber, 1982) and white-collar work, such as clerical work (Braverman, 1998), call centers and nursing (Green 2006). Those theories argue that a highly mechanized workplace generates hostile attitudes toward machines because the labor of workers is increasingly controlled by machines. Some journalists in this study show somewhat hostile, or critical, views about technological adaptation, as labor process theories explain, thinking technology is being used to downsize the workforce and intensify labor. But many believe labor cuts are necessary when machines make work more efficient. In labor theories, mechanization results in compartmentalizing work, removing skills from workers. Workers in the highly mechanized workplace are deskilled and forced to take up segmented work. Workers lose the control of work in this segmenting, deskilling process and end up being simply cogs in machinery. This deskilling process does not fit well with the condition of journalists because digital technology requires journalists to acquire new computer skills and has brought them more control over the work. The computer integrated some phases of newspaper production; the fact that editors are doing multiple tasks is a piece of evidence. This integration leads to a level of control of production that journalists enjoy. In the newsroom, reskilling (upskilling) and multiskilling are occurring simultaneously (Ornebring, 2010). In a sense, deskilling is also happening. Some editors in this study are concerned that they cannot focus on actual editing as much as before because their work

territory has been expanded by technology (and economic reasons) and they are also obligated to do some production work now. Reskilling (upskilling) and multiskilling are not adding value to journalists' labor because they are considered necessary (not additional valuable) skills to contemporary journalists.

Discussion of reskilling, deskilling and multiskilling leads to the argument that technology cheapens labor. While the productivity of journalists increases (more work is done by fewer journalists), their wages are stagnating or going down. To understand this mechanism, it is helpful to consult the Marxist logic of necessary labor (time) and surplus labor (time) (Marx, 1990; 1991). For the owner of labor, a key to maximize profit is to squeeze necessary labor because necessary labor is the paid part of labor. The same owner of labor would love surplus labor and surplus labor time because they are unpaid. That is, shortening necessary labor time and increasing surplus labor time are a paramount goal of the owner of labor who pursues higher profit.

If necessary labor time of the work day shrinks, surplus labor time for a given worker expands because the total work hours do not change. Technological development contributes to the contraction of necessary labor time by speeding up production. This logic explains well the labor intensification of manufacturing work. Suppose people work eight hours a day to produce products. It may be enough to produce ten items in eight hours in order to sustain workers' lives (fair wages for labor). This is necessary labor and necessary labor time. However, the company that wants to maximize profit tries to squeeze necessary labor time, for instance, from eight hours to five hours by speeding up production. Then, three hours become surplus labor time to produce extra items. Now, workers may produce 15 items instead of ten in the same eight hours. Because work

hours are the same, wages remain the same (unless workers are working in a piecework or incentive-based system). That is, these extra five items become additional profit for the owner of labor because the labor that produces extra items is workers' surplus labor for which the owner of labor does not pay extra.

This explanation of necessary and surplus labor seems relevant even to newsroom workers today. The amount of work journalists do is difficult to measure because they are not necessarily making tangible items, as factory workers do. Reporters produce stories, which are countable. Stories go through many stages (editing, headline-writing, layout, composition, etc.) which different journalists engage in until stories are published. Work at those stages is not easily measured. However, given that journalists are doing multiple tasks (traditionally described work and new types of work), it can be understood that journalists are using surplus labor (time) to do extra work, such as production work that used to be done by production workers. Journalists appreciate the unprecedented increase in their productivity, but technology that brought better efficiency and productivity is actually cheapening the labor of newsroom workers by forcing them to produce faster and more, squeezing their necessary labor time. If they work overtime, and their overtime work is financially compensated, it would be a different story. But the *U.S. Times* and the *Japan Observer*, for instance, do not pay overtime. The speedup of production for better productivity is not necessarily something to celebrate, given anticipated negative consequences on journalists.

One condition for this explanation is that journalistic job descriptions do not change rapidly. In reality, they change over time, depending on economic and technological resources of the time. As this study found, the idea of "traditional work" of

journalists is changing. Journalists of the three newspapers are representing well the range of this transition. Many *Nippon Herald* journalists are doing "traditional work" (necessary labor), while the work territory (the area of necessary labor) of *U.S. Times* journalists is widening. Many *U.S. Times* journalists are doing more than what they used to do. For instance, reporters are responsible for more than one beat area, editors do production work as well as editing work, and some of both do online work on the side. The work of *Japan Observer* journalists is somewhere in between. Given that journalistic "traditional work" is still being practiced in the *Nippon Herald* as the necessary labor of journalists, the necessary labor of *U.S. Times* journalists is squeezed for surplus labor (work in the expanded area). Then, the labor of *U.S. Times* journalists has been cheapened, cheaper than that of *Nippon Herald* journalists.

According to labor process theories, workers engaging in segmented work are alienated in the workplace, detached from their own labor and colleagues. This study argues that partial alienation is occurring to journalists who engage in integrated work. Journalists of the three newspapers feel that the workplace is increasingly dehumanized as it is highly computerized, and work that used to be compartmentalized and done by different workers is concentrated on the computer screen. The computer expanded work territory that individual journalists manage. While journalists do more integrated work with the computer, they have lost human interactions with their colleagues. They end up feeling that they have shallower and narrower social ties in the workplace. Journalists are also alienated from their own labor. Journalists' concern about declines in quality is an indicator of this. Journalists gained more control over the production process, thanks to technology, but they are losing control of their work. They say they cannot spend enough

time to take care of the quality of work because they have gotten busier than ever as the speed of production has been accelerated. Technology is alienating journalists from their labor and colleagues, but economic circumstances of journalists need to be taken into consideration in discussions of alienation in integrated work because the economic condition determines technological performance. That is, phenomena causing alienation to journalists—integration of work, multiple tasks, lack of time and human interactions, etc.—are related to technology and more important to the economic condition.

Construction of Journalistic Fields

Economic pressure (e.g., reductions in the workforce, labor intensification) and technological adaptation (e.g., work concentration on the computer) alienate journalists in the increasingly dehumanized workplace where human interactions and face-to-face communication occur less and less. There are two exceptions to this alienation in this study: the sports department at the *U.S. Times* and the photography department at the *Nippon Herald*. These are small, isolated departments dominated by male workers. And sports journalists of the *U.S. Times*[43] and photographers of the *Nippon Herald* stay in their department throughout their career with the papers, while journalists in the news side are transferred to different departments. Because they are a small group of people in an isolated situation for a long term, they know one another better than their counterparts in larger groups in the newsroom. As a result, more intimate work relations are facilitated.

These examples show the possibility of creating close ties among workers even under increasing economic and technological forces. But generally speaking, it is getting

[43] Sports journalists of the *U.S. Times* may be an exception. At some U.S. newspapers, journalists, especially editors, are transferred between sports and news.

more difficult for journalists to have close ties with their colleagues as their work environment becomes more impersonal. Except for the journalists in the two departments, employees of the three newspapers lack communication with their colleagues and supervisors. Even journalists in the two departments say that they do not communicate well with people in different departments. This is a consequence of reductions in workforce and accompanying labor intensification. Workers have become busier than ever and lost leeway to socialize with colleagues. Technological development also causes a lack of communication among workers. Contemporary journalists increasingly work on computers. A computer-based work environment reduces face-to-face communication and human interactions, which leads to the dehumanization of the workplace. It is a contradictory effect of advanced technology. While journalists have instant, universal and less costly communication technology (e.g., email, cellphones, social media), they feel they have less communication. Journalists may send hundreds of emails and make dozens of phone calls, but they still feel communication is missing. Face-to-face communication and actual human interactions are lost in impersonal digital communication.

Though economic and technological forces change and/or upset human relationships at work, each newsroom and each group of journalists maintains shared ideas, values and norms of newspaper journalism, specific to the workplace, that helps shape the way they are. Journalists of the three newspapers agree with the journalistic mission of informing the public, and have different journalistic ideals, reflecting characteristics of their papers and their educational, social and cultural backgrounds. Journalists construct different workplace relations to produce and reproduce what they

think newspaper work is, in relation to their economic realities and cultural backgrounds (e.g., ideologies).

Bourdieu's concepts of capital, field and habitus (Bourdieu, 1998a; 1998b; Benson & Neveu, 2005; Morris, 2001; Neveu, 2007) help explain the construction of workplace relations and differences in them. The habitus constructs fundamental characteristics for individuals, depending on available capital (economic, cultural, social and symbolic). *U.S. Times* and *Nippon Herald* employees and Japanese and non-Japanese employees of the *Japan Observer* are in different types of habitus because of differences in capital, especially cultural capital. Economic capital varies by newspaper, according to the amount of money journalists earn. Differences in economic capital are causing differences in perspectives and behavior of Japanese employees of the *Nippon Herald* (who are more highly paid) and the *Japan Observer*. Journalists of the three newspapers share similar social and symbolic capital on the grounds that social norms and occupational privileges are common to them, as this study found. Here, cultural capital is taken into account to view differences between English-speaking and Japanese journalists. *U.S. Times* employees and English-speaking employees of the *Japan Observer* are more similar to each other than to Japanese workers, reflecting their upbringing in Western environments and ideologies (e.g., voluntarism, Fischer, 2008). The habitus of Japanese employees of the *Nippon Herald* and the *Japan Observer* is based on values and ethics developed in the Japanese middle class emphasizing corporate affiliation.

The field is another key element to shape the character of individuals. Journalists maintain ethics, values and norms that are constructed and nurtured in the field. That is

why journalists in this study demonstrated similar role models and ideal work of journalists. The journalistic field exists in relation to other fields. In other words, it is not independent but susceptible to other fields, especially the economic field. And it is increasingly heteronomous. The journalistic field is changing because of economic impacts from outside. Economic impact on the journalistic field affects journalists by changing values and norms shared in the field. Values, beliefs, ideas and norms in the field are not fixed but changeable, and furthermore, a variety of them, even contradictory ideas, exist at the same time, depending on the strength of the impact.

Journalists may lose passion about their work for economic reasons, but they may not completely give up their subjective beliefs, such as "Journalism is important to serve the public." Such values and beliefs fostered among journalists serve as deterrent power to changes. This leads to journalists' uncomfortable feeling about declines in quality, working too close with advertising and working beyond traditional job distinctions. Complexity of the field indicates that journalists are torn by increasing alienation from their work (because of economic and technological forces) and lingering allegiance to the principles of journalism.

The journalistic field is not identical in the three newspapers because of its strength and relations with outer fields. Each newspaper (its journalistic workforce) is resisting influence from outer fields, especially the economic field, with available capital that varies by newspaper. Available capital to *U.S. Times* journalists may be symbolic (e.g., recognition) and cultural because the paper is well known in the community and journalists hold a sense of what newspaper work should be. The availability of free information and new types of journalism (on the Internet), however, may be weakening

the capital *U.S. Times* journalists have. Economic and social capital is too scarce to resist economic impact from outside. In the case of the *Nippon Herald*, economic capital is still valid because the paper manages to generate enough money to keep the business afloat largely and give journalists a sense of job security by print sales. *Nippon Herald* journalists may also hold symbolic capital as the paper maintains strong brand value in the community. The field of *Nippon Herald* journalists is resisting economic impact from outside, but as this study found, the impact that the paper and journalists have is not only economic but also political. Journalistic value and activities succumb to political influence. The *Japan Observer* and journalists may be in the most difficult situation in terms of field and capital. The *Japan Observer* used to have a prestigious status in the market, but it is undermined as the raison d'être of English-language newspapers is threatened by the Internet. Under such circumstances, the symbolic capital that journalists gain from the *Japan Observer* may be reduced. The financial condition is bleak, and journalists are divided by the boundary between Japanese and Western value systems.

The habitus is individual but at the same time collective (the habitus is shared among people in the field). The stronger beliefs become, the more power they gain to move the habitus and eventually the field. Theoretically, it depends on journalists (agents) how newspaper journalism (the journalistic field) will change in the future. But this expectation may be too optimistic. Journalists maintain their journalistic ideals, but this study found their practices based on these ideals sometimes succumb to economic forces. How power relations between their journalistic values and beliefs and the

increasing power of outer fields change remains to be seen. Such power relations are historically specific, reflecting economic and technological conditions of the time.

Values and norms that some journalists maintain, though they vary by newspaper and journalists with different backgrounds, may be the only thing that journalists use to resist the homogenizing impacts of increasing economic and technological forces beyond national borders in a time of digital change. Economic and technological forces are likely to increase in power over newspaper production, given unstable economies and the speed of technological development. The work environment of journalists may become bleaker in such circumstances. The combination of economic pressure and lower morale of journalists causes further declines in the quality of information, which ultimately undermines democracy because citizens have fewer opportunities to be informed of accurate and diverse information. All things considered, this study emphasizes how journalistic values and norms are maintained, adjusted and transformed in changing circumstances needs to be studied now and in the future because they are elements that support democracy.

The combination of Marxist theories of labor value in relation to economic and technological impact in the workplace and Bourdieu's field theory gives a better understanding of what is happening in the workplace of newspaper journalists. Marxist theories explain external forces surrounding journalistic work, and the field theory covers internal (collective) forces of journalistic work and journalists who resist and succumb to the external forces. By understanding both external and internal forces, realities and the complexity of contemporary journalistic work are better understood.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Restatement of Aims

This study is designed to shed light on workers who are experiencing economic challenges and technological changes in the newspaper industry firsthand. Studying newspaper journalists, as one category of workers, is important when the power of labor is undermined in advanced capitalist society. Newspaper journalists are workers like other white-collar workers, and at the same time, journalistic work is different from most other kinds of white-collar work because it has a potential to enable democracy to function. People who engage in journalistic work have the ability to set the agenda for the public. Journalists determine and tell the public what is important and what to think about. Even local newspaper journalists exert power and influence as agenda-setters, as this study found. It is vital for democratic citizens to understand who produces the information on which citizens rely, and who sets the agenda for them and under what circumstances.

Media scholars and economists have discussed and analyzed the recent decline (and long-term decline in the U.S. case) of newspapers in terms of circulation and advertising from structural and economic standpoints. Such views help capture the big picture of newspapers: how newspapers are produced, distributed and consumed, and what issues and constraints exist in each phase of the newspaper business. Politics (laws and regulations), economy and technology are all intertwined and have constructed what newspapers are today. But newspapers do not function without the people who work for

them. People should be included in discussions about the decline of newspapers for a better understanding of the reality of newspaper work.

The focus of this study was everyday journalists who represent the majority of the workforce of the newspaper industry of both countries. Examining their perspectives rather than looking at those of prominent journalists provides more insights into realities of newspaper work. Everyday journalists talked about their experiences related to economic challenges and technological changes and their perspectives about newspaper work in the current uncertainty.

The United States and Japan were chosen to examine the impact of interconnected economies of the two countries and globally standardized technology on newspaper work. And the three newspapers were selected for comparison of workplace relations that supposedly reflect the economic condition of the paper, journalists' collective behavior and values, and the economic (and cultural) system in their society. The three different newspapers helped us understand how the economic condition is affecting the level of technological adaptation of each newspaper (e.g., the integration of journalistic work because of technology varied by newspaper), which changes work practices of journalists (e.g., journalists work beyond the editorial-production boundary and/or the print-online boundary). The economy is also affecting workplace relations differently at the three newspapers. All these aspects are influencing journalists' perspectives and behavior about newspaper work (e.g., occupational mobility, career change, commitment, etc.).

Another aim was to assess similarities and differences among journalists in the three newspapers in the two different countries. Though the three newspapers are

experiencing declines in circulation and advertising and diversifying their products in the digital world, the degree of decline and digitalization varies by newspaper. Declines and the transformation from print-only to multimedia/online distribution are progressing much faster in the United States than Japan. What is happening to the U.S. newspaper may happen to the Japanese newspapers if the three newspapers are following a similar path, simply given homogenous effects of the interconnectedness of U.S. and Japanese economies and the globalization of technology. Currently, the Japanese newspapers and their journalists are reluctant to diversify their products because of economic reasons. If the Japanese newspapers are moving in the direction of the U.S. newspaper, they may need to more seriously think about digital distribution. If the Japanese newspapers further lose advertising and circulation, they may want to consider alternative business models or restructuring for survival as soon as possible. There must be something for U.S. and Japanese newspapers and journalists to learn from each other for better employment and future.

Significance of the Study

It is important to include both outside and inside observations to have a better understanding of newspaper work. This study mainly borrowed perspectives of theories of labor value and economic arguments to conceptually and critically understand newspaper production from outside at a macro level, at first. In-depth interviews with newspaper journalists (inside views) added details and insights to the theoretical understanding. Inspired by grounded theory, the theoretical understanding was questioned and amended throughout the process of fieldwork, analyzing and writing,

according to constant comparative method, which allows the data to speak for themselves (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Creswell, 2007). This inside-outside combination helped provide a comprehensive picture of contemporary newspaper work.

Also, significant is the study's rarity. No comparative study of newspaper in the United States and Japan as workplace has been done, let alone a study of a Japanese newspaper as a workplace. No fieldwork had been done in the newsroom or the media industry in Japan, partly because of the lack of access and partly because of indifference to labor issues in Japanese media studies. This is a big step in media and labor studies in Japan. But it is only one case study. Because labor relations may vary by workplace, more case studies are necessary to understand newspaper work industry-wide. Additional media, labor and ethnographic studies in Japan should follow.

Comparison of the United States and Japan is necessary when economies of both countries are more interconnected than ever, causing immediate impacts from one economy to another. This comparative research found that newspaper journalists of the two countries are experiencing similar economic hardship because of negative consequences of the interconnected economies. Comparison and learning from each other may help make the situation better and help newspapers predict and prepare for the future.

Exploring technological changes and impact is a purpose of this study. It is less meaningful to discuss only technological impacts on labor and more important to capture labor in combination with technology and economic forces because technological performance is determined by economic forces. Technology-labor relationships are historically specific, reflecting economic conditions of the time. The degradation of labor

occurs not only because of technology but also because of economic forces. Furthermore, the combination of the economy and technology make labor relations complicated. Economic and technological forces do not only cheapen labor and take power away from workers but also grant more control to some journalists. Such control does not necessarily add value to journalistic labor when economic pressure increases. Relationships between technology and labor in combination with the economy are multidimensional, and therefore, they need to be examined from various perspectives. Technology, economy and labor (work relations) are all complicatedly intertwined.

There is no doubt that economic and technological forces have great impact on newspaper work and journalists. But journalists were found not simply succumbing to those forces. They hold journalistic ideals under increasing economic and technological pressure. Investigative work is one of ideals, but journalists have different opinions on this. Instead, journalists in this study agree that their work mission is to inform the public, regardless of the type of story (investigative, feature, peculiar, etc.). They do not necessarily emphasize the naïve journalistic ideal of objectivity because they know the selection and presentation of information reflect their subjectivity. Journalists agree with and maintain such a work ideal because of shared ideas, values and norms created and kept among journalists. But in other ways shared ideas, values and norms are specific to the workplace in a particular economic system. This specificity explains why journalists show different views and attitudes from one newsroom to another. Even the *Japan Observer* is more diverse, reflecting Japanese-Western mixed demographics of the workforce with different backgrounds related to economic systems and social values with which they grew up.

This study hopes to be a steppingstone to further research on labor in the newspaper industry, especially when the value of journalists' labor is in decline. The labor of the middle class, such as journalists, is less and less appreciated and labor power is undermined in advanced capitalism. Scholars need to keep examining labor issues.

Limitations

Several limitations need to be acknowledged. First, one criticism may be that the number of research sites (newspapers) is too small. It is certainly not large enough to discuss journalists' experiences at a transnational level. If the research purpose was to generalize trends in the newspaper industry, surveys would have been appropriate. But the purpose was to explore the complexity of journalists' perspectives and experiences. Thus, this study required inductive, in-depth data rather than a broad-based quantity of data. Though the number of newspapers was limited, balanced data were successfully collected at the three research sites.

The lack of access to Japanese newspapers limited the area of research. This is rather an industry-wide issue of Japanese newspapers than a problem of my research approach. In fact, little research similar to mine has been done in the Japanese newspaper industry, which made even literature search difficult. But thanks to my personal connections and their cooperation, this study successfully gained access to two Japanese newspapers that made for a reasonable comparison.

The diversity of newspaper ownership may be an issue. The three newspapers are owned by families. Such ownership is rare in the United States, where chain-owned papers dominate the market. What this study found may be very specific to family-owned

newspapers. Experiences of journalists at chain newspapers (in the United States) may be different, anecdotally assuming the cutbacks might have been more dramatic under more profit-driven ownership. Thus, the findings and arguments of this study may not explain well journalists and workplace relations in different types of ownership. In the case of Japan, newspapers are privately owned, not publicly traded. The owner family may not obviously occupy executive positions of the company, but it is the major shareholder, in many cases. In order to compare with Japanese family-owned newspapers, it can be justified to choose a family-owned newspaper of the United States.

My insider-outsider position may be problematic. I was more familiar with the Japanese newsrooms than the *U.S. Times* newsroom because of my ten years of work experience with a Japanese newspaper. I have insider views and understandings of the Japanese newspaper industry, but I am an outsider of the U.S. newspaper industry. Because of this, my position was not consistent (varied by newspaper) throughout research. However, my journalistic background was a strength to do research both in Japan and the United States. I had a better understanding of newspaper work, technology, economic structure, values and norms than complete outsiders would have. By spending more time at the *U.S. Times*, I argue that I could have a better understanding of the U.S. newspaper industry, though it was far from having an insider view of the industry. My upbringing in Japanese society also helped interpret the subtlety and nuance that Japanese journalists included in their statements.

Future Research

Future research could expand from a glimpse of the current reality of newspaper journalists in the United States and Japan. Economic and technological forces are certainly affecting newspaper work and journalists' perspective. They need to be closely watched because economic conditions and technology are constantly and rapidly changing and evolving. Even research in the very near future may indicate great changes in newspaper journalists. It is worth searching out and specifying what kind of impact causes changes in newspaper work of the time to understand relationships between work environment and journalists over time. Hopefully, by identifying causes, future research, based on historical data, will help improve work relations of newspaper journalists.

More newspapers should be examined, covering journalists from newspapers of different size and different ownership (corporate-owned, family-owned, employee-owned, etc.). A larger number of research sites may lead to more diverse findings. Then, findings will expand discussion on relationships between ownership and newspaper work. Or, it may verify that journalists, regardless of ownership and business size, are experiencing economically and technologically similar trends and phenomena at work and that they are responding to their circumstances in similar ways. Then, it could be more strongly argued that economic and technological forces have homogenous effects on newspaper work.

Another possibility is an international comparison of newspapers in different social systems (e.g., capitalism, social democracy, and communism). This comparison will identify political impacts on newspaper work. There may be prominent models of the newspaper business in a particular social system (e.g., the advertising model of the

U.S. press, the government subsidiary model of the French press, etc.). A comparison of business models from different social systems might offer valuable lessons for newspapers struggling for survival. It is important to examine economic as well as social systems that newspapers are embedded in order to fully understand perspectives and behavior of newspaper workers.

It would be good if future research employs additional research methods to triangulate findings through interviews. Long-term observation and/or quantitative content analysis are plausible options. Observation will provide deeper insights on work cultures in the newsroom. Content analysis will support or find discrepancies in interviewees' statements, such as their complaints about having to do too many easy stories. Content analysis will show how frequently journalists publish information that makes them concerned about the decline in the quality and value of the newspaper. In combination with other research methods, interview data could be verified.

Future research could help improve work conditions of newspaper journalists. Work conditions include not only wages and benefits but also the work environment in which journalists have confidence and can maintain high motivation. In order to let them focus on journalistic work, employment security is critical. Having job security benefits journalists, of course, but it does democratic citizens, too. Information that journalists produce is a tool for democratic citizens to inform themselves.

By comparing the three newspapers, this study revealed similarities and differences in journalistic work. Similarities and differences stem from the economic condition of the paper that affects the level of technological adaptation and collective values and norms of journalists. Reflecting differences in workplace relations, journalists

have different ideas about newspaper journalism. That is, all journalists do not necessarily share identical beliefs, norms and values because of economic and cultural differences. But one universal norm of journalistic work shared by journalists of the three newspapers is to inform the public (the community), regardless of the type of stories—investigation, discovery, human interests and others. Even though economic pressure is piling on journalists, and the level of economic pressure varies by newspaper, many journalists find value in this norm. Generalization is not a purpose of this study, but this study believes that this norm is the core of newspaper journalism. To keep journalists motivated and heighten their work morale, this norm should be maintained, enhanced and internalized, in addition to improvements in their working conditions.

This study also suggested a comprehensive view of newspaper work in relation to external (i.e., economic and technological impact) and internal forces (i.e., beliefs and values shared among journalists). As newspaper work becomes increasingly complicated (e.g., because of multiple platforms and presentations, the expansion of job descriptions, etc.), examining newspaper work in a comprehensive way is necessary to understand what is really happening to newspaper journalists and their practices. This study hopes that it provided one way to see the complexity of newspaper work.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Thank you very much for your time today. I would like to ask you several questions to understand your experiences with the *U.S. Times/*the *Japan Observer* and your perspective of your work. Before we start, I need to make sure that your participation is voluntary. At any point when you feel uncomfortable, you may stop the interview. I will keep your identity confidential in all of my work. I need to record this interview for transcription if it is OK with you. The interview audio and transcription will be kept confidential under my care.

To begin with, please state your name and position and your agreement on the conditions of this interview.

1 I'd like to ask you about your profession.
   - 1.1 When and how did you begin as a newspaper journalist?
   - 1.2 In your view, what is a good reporter?
   - 1.3 Tell me about what is your current work as a journalist.

2 I'd like to ask you about your company.
   - 2.1 Besides working for, how do you relate to the company?
   - 2.2 In your view, what is a good newspaper?
   - 2.3 Tell me about the strengths and weaknesses of the *U.S. Times/*the *Japan Observer*.

3 I'd like to ask you about changes you've experienced.
   - 3.1 What are economic and technological changes in your work, and what consequences do you see?
   - 3.2 How has the workforce and workload changed in your years with the *U.S. Times/*the *Japan Observer*?
   - 3.3 Based on your descriptions of economic and technological changes, how would you say human relationships within the newsroom changed?
   - 3.4 How often do you communicate for work purposes, and how often do you socialize with your colleagues and supervisors?
   - 3.5 Would you say that you have changed in your work life and outside your work?

4 Now I'd like to ask you some questions about the future.
   - 4.1 What do you think of the future of the *U.S. Times/*the *Japan Observer*?
   - 4.2 What do you think of the future of the newspaper industry?
   - 4.3 What do you think of your future as a journalist?

I've asked you all of the questions that I wanted to ask you today. Is there anything else that you would like to add? But if I come up more questions, may I contact you? Thank you for your time again.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN JAPANESE

本日はお忙しい中、インタビューにご協力いただきありがとうございます。日本ヘラルド紙／ジャパン・オブザーバー紙でのご経験と、お仕事をどうとらえられているかについていくつか質問させてください。インタビューを始める前に、このインタビューへの参加は任意であることをご確認ください。不愉快に感じられた場合、即刻インタビューをやめてくださって結構です。いかなる執筆においても身元が分かるような情報は出しません。差し支えなければ、このインタビューを録音させてください。音源はほかに漏れることのないよう厳密に管理します。

はじめに、お名前とお仕事、それに、以上の条件に同意する旨をおっしゃっていただけますか。

1 お仕事について教えてください。
   1.1 いつ、どういういきさつで新聞ジャーナリストになられましたか。
   1.2 個人的な意見として、いい記者の条件とは何ですか。
   1.3 ジャーナリストとしての今の仕事の内容を教えてください。
2 お勤め先について教えてください。
   2.1 お勤めされている以外に、ご自分をどう会社に関連付けますか。
   2.2 個人的な意見として、いい新聞の条件とは何ですか。
   2.3 日本ヘラルド紙／ジャパン・オブザーバー紙の長所と短所を教えてください。
3 ご経験された変化について教えてください。
   3.1 お仕事において、どんな経済的、技術的な変化を経験されていますか。また、その変化にはどんな影響が認められますか。
   3.2 こちらにお勤めの間に、従業員数、仕事量においてどのような変化がありましたか。
   3.3 経済的、技術的な変化をご説明いただきましたが、そうした変化のために、編集局内の人間関係に変わったということはありますか。
   3.4 仕事関係でどれくらい頻繁にコミュニケーションをとられますか。また、ご同僚、上司の方とどれくらい頻繁に付き合いをされますか。
   3.5 仕事や仕事以外の生活に変化はありますか。
4 将来についてうかがいます。
   4.1 日本ヘラルド紙／ジャパン・オブザーバー紙の将来をどう考えられますか。
   4.2 新聞業界の将来をどう考えられますか。
   4.3 ご自身のジャーナリストとしての将来をどう考えられますか。

うかがいたい質問は以上です。何か付け足しておっしゃりたいことはございませんか。もう少しうかがいたいことが出てきましたら、ご連絡差し上げてよろしいですか。本日は貴重なお時間をありがとうございました。

APPENDIX C

VERBAL CONSENT FORM

I am Hiroko Minami, a doctoral student of School of Journalism at the University of Oregon. Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research project. The research will help me understand what is happening in the newsroom and to journalists and how newspaper journalists view their work in this transitional period of newspapers.

Today you will be participating in individual interview, which should take approximately 1 hour. It would not last more than one hour. Responses will be anonymous. I will not use your identifying information in my final write up. Your participation is voluntary. Taking part in this interview is your agreement to participate. If you do not wish to participate, you may stop at any time.

This interview will be audio recorded with you permission. Do you agree to be audio recorded for this interview?

If you would like a copy of this letter for your records, please let me know and I will email you. If you have any questions regarding the research, contact me at 541-346-3551, the GTF office of School of Journalism, 319 Allen Hall, or Professor John Russial, my advisor for this project, at 541-346-3750. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the Office for Protection of Human Subjects at the University of Oregon, (541) 346-2510. This Office oversees the review of the research to protect your rights and is not involved with this study.

Thank you again for your help.

APPENDIX D

VERBAL CONSENT FORM IN JAPANESE

オレゴン大学コミュニケーション学部博士課程所属の南ひろ子です。今回はリサーチにご協力いただきありがとうございます。このリサーチは新聞編集とそこで働く人たちに何が起こっているか、また、そうした新聞の転換期に、新聞ジャーナリストたちは自分たちの仕事をどう見ているかについての理解に役立てます。

本日は個別インタビューにご協力いただきます。所要時間はおよそ 1 時間を予定しています。執筆において、実名は使いません。身元が分かるような情報にも言及しません。参加は任意です。インタビューは同意のもとに行われます。中断されたいときはいつでもおっしゃってください。

ご同意いただければ、このインタビューを録音したいのですが、よろしいでしょうか？

この同意文のコピーをご希望であれば、おっしゃってください。のちほどメールでお送りします。このリサーチに関してご質問があれば、私のオフィス（541-346-3551）、あるいは、指導教員のジョン・ルシアル教授（541-346-3750）までご連絡ください。被験者としての権利についてお知りになりたい場合は、オレゴン大学のヒューマンサブジェクトオフィス（541-346-2510）にお問い合わせください。

ご理解、ありがとうございます。

APPENDIX E

FOCUSED CODING—*U.S. TIMES*

How do they think about economic changes?

I. Fewer Resources
II. Less Time
III. Increase in the Workload/No Extra Compensation
IV. Low Morale
V. Lower Quality/Less Information Produced
VI. Distrust in Management
VII. Anxiety/Uncertainty
VIII. Thoughts of Career Change

How do they think about technological changes?

I. Technological Transition as Social Pressure
II. Embracing It
    i. Control
    ii. Efficient Information Gathering
    iii. Potentials of Digital Platforms
    iv. Better Communication
    v. Better Productivity
    vi. Reader Benefit
III. Resisting It
    i. Devaluation of Newspapers/Information
    ii. Allegiance to Print/Newspaper Journalism
    iii. Multitasking/Constant Work
    iv. Squeeze on Traditional Work
    v. Devaluation of Labor
    vi. Cost-Cutting Tool
    vii. Speed Focus/Indifference to Quality
    viii. No Business Model
    ix. Financial Drain
    x. Impersonalization
IV. Ambiguous Views

How do they view the nature and conditions of their work life?

I. Privileged Profession
    i. Autonomy/Freedom
    ii. Fun, Exciting, Challenging, Rewarding Job
    iii. Calling
    iv. Competitive Job
    v. Something New Every Day
    vi. Power and Influence through Work
    vii. Belief in Journalism

II. Corporate Employee
    i. Controlled
    ii. Alienation
    iii. Political Economy

How do they view the role of newspapers?

I. Public Role
    i. To Be a Watchdog
    ii. To Be an Agenda-Setter
    iii. To Serve the Community
    iv. To Entertain People
II. Corporate Role
    i. To Pursue Profit
    ii. To Be Self-Satisfied

Characteristics of the Workplace

I. Lack of Communication
II. Belief in the Ownership
III. Intimacy
IV. Individual Focus
V. Resistance to Change

APPENDIX F

FOCUSED CODING—*NIPPON HERALD*

How do they think about economic changes?

- I. Fewer Workers
- II. Tighter Budget/Smaller Income
- III. Speedup/Less Time
- IV. Increase in the Workload
- V. Multitasking/Generalist
- VI. Lower Quality
- VII. Alienation/Undermined Workers
- VIII. Distrust in Management
- IX. Anxiety/Uncertainty

How do they think about technological changes?

- I. Embracing It
  - i. Efficiency
  - ii. Convenience
  - iii. Speedup
  - iv. Potentials of Digital Platforms
- II. Resisting It
  - i. Labor Intensification
  - ii. Decline in Social Status
  - iii. No Change in the Nature of Work
  - iv. Impersonalization
  - v. Platform Discrimination
  - vi. Financial Drain
- III. Ambiguous Views

How do they view the nature and conditions of their work life?

- I. Privileged Profession
  - i. Autonomy
  - ii. Competitive Job
  - iii. Print Supremacy
  - iv. Social Responsibility/Collective Images
  - v. Power and Influence through Work
  - vi. Access to Information
- II. Corporate Employee
  - i. Cog
  - ii. Undermined Workers' Power
  - iii. Alienation
  - iv. Political Economy

How do they view the role of newspapers?

I. Social Responsibility
II. Business

Characteristics of the Workplace

I. Male Dominance/Macho
II. Organization Consciousness
III. Intimacy
IV. Closeness to Information Sources
V. Silos/Territoriality
VI. Social Identity

APPENDIX G

FOCUSED CODING—*JAPAN OBSERVER*

How do they think about economic changes?

- I. Economic Changes
  - i. Fewer Workers
  - ii. Tighter Budget
- II. Minor Concerns
  - i. Increase in the Workload
  - ii. Multitasking
  - iii. Undermined Workers
- III. Major Concerns
  - i. Lower Quality
  - ii. Lower Motivation
  - iii. Distrust in Management
  - iv. Anxiety/Uncertainty

How do they think about technological changes?

- I. Technological Changes as Social Trends
- II. Embracing It
  - i. Convenience
  - ii. Speedup
  - iii. Potentials of Digital Platforms
- III. Resisting It
  - i. Devaluation of Newspapers
  - ii. Impersonalization
  - iii. Platform Discrimination
  - iv. Financial Drain
  - v. Labor Intensification
  - vi. Extra Work
- IV. Ambiguous Views
  - i. Good and Bad
  - ii. No Change in the Nature of Work

How do they view the nature and conditions of their work life?

- I. Privileged Profession
  - i. Autonomy
  - ii. Creativity
  - iii. Dream Job
  - iv. Elitism of Newspapers
  - v. Unique Medium
  - vi. Belief in Print
  - vii. Social Responsibility/Collective Images
  - viii. Power and Influence through Work

ix. Access to Information

II. Corporate Employee
   i. Cog
   ii. Routinization
   iii. Alienation
   iv. Political Economy

III. Lack of Mobility

How do they view the role of newspapers?

I. Social Responsibility
II. Business
III. Elitism
IV. Gap between Newspapers and Readers

Characteristics of the Workplace

I. Unique Workplace
II. Intimacy
III. Cultural Differences
IV. Silos/Lack of Communication
V. Anomie
VI. Resistance to Change
VII. Voluntarism

APPENDIX H

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION—*U.S. TIMES*

Appendix H, I and J are supplementary readers for Chapter V. The appendices describe journalists' perspectives and experiences by newspaper along focused themes (for the list of themes, see Appendix E-G), including their real voices. Readers find redundancies in these detailed descriptions because they are not processed through comparisons of the three newspapers. Redundancies are indicators of how similar the three newspapers are. For focused comparison of journalists' views and attitudes, see Chapter V: Findings.

How Do They Think about Economic Changes?

The economic climate surrounding the *U.S. Times* is bleak. Advertising revenue is dramatically shrinking, while circulation is steadily dropping. The chief operating officer looked back and said advertising "just rolled in twenty years ago," but it is not the case today. The newspaper now has to chase advertising down. The major advertisers of the *U.S. Times* are real estate, car dealers and retailers, such as department stores. All of them are struggling under the current economic climate. The managing editor lamented, "Department stores are not doing good. That affects our revenue. Classified ads are also a problem. Classified ads have shifted online, such as to Craigslist. That's a major concern."

The first thing that other U.S. newspapers did and are still doing in the face of the shrinkage of income is to cut costs by laying off employees because labor costs are one of the major expenses in newspaper operation. But the *U.S. Times* did not resort to layoffs until recently. According to *U.S. Times* employees, this is because the owner family of the paper cares about journalism and appreciates the loyalty of employees. The *U.S. Times*, instead, downsized the workforce companywide mainly by attrition and by offering early retirement buyouts. However, the newspaper is not immune from general economic trends. The economic meltdown in 2008 hit the newspaper harder, and finally, the *U.S. Times* executed three rounds of layoffs in 2009 and late 2010.

When I first visited the *U.S. Times* newsroom in 2008, it looked already empty because of many vacant desks in such a spacious newsroom. The size of the newsroom workforce had further shrunk by layoffs by when I revisited the newsroom in 2010. But the newsroom did not give me an empty feeling in my recent visits because the advertising department had moved into the newsroom area. The advertising department used to be located downstairs, while the newsroom was upstairs. Because the upstairs space now accommodates both the newsroom and the advertising department, the number of employees on the floor has increased. As a result, that space has a more lively feeling than before. Some newsroom workers welcome the move, but others who are more traditional do not like this change. It is not acceptable for traditional journalists that the editorial department sits next to the advertising department because it symbolizes the intervention of advertising on news content.

Rapid contraction of the workforce—by half in the last five years—has caused an increase in the workload of remaining workers. *U.S. Times* employees have ended up doing multiple tasks to produce the same product with fewer hands. Reporters are assigned to multiple beats. Kevin, an editor, realizes one of consequences. Reporters have become generalists rather than experts in particular fields. Kevin said:

> One way we notice and we joke about is everyone is responsible for more areas of coverage. Almost every reporter, in addition to his or her main area of responsibility whether it's city government, court or school district, almost all of us now are essentially general assignment or GA reporters as well. More things are piled on each reporter.

Meanwhile, editors write stories in addition to doing traditional editing work. They are squeezing their work hours for additional work of writing. Because editors are expected to stay in the office during their work hours, unlike reporters, they write stories basically based on news releases and phone interviews instead of actually going to the field. Such work practice saves time and labor of editors for that extra task.

Reporters and editors now do even clerical work. Clerical work used to be done by news aides. The newsroom had four news aides in the past, but now one. Clerical work that the only news aide cannot manage has to be done by someone in the newsroom. Though clerical tasks may take up only a few hours, they erode time for reporting or editing.

Under the influence of downsizing and the increase in the workload, *U.S. Times* employees recognize their work pace has speeded up. Reporters express frustration that they cannot spend enough time on stories to do satisfactory work. They say they are increasingly producing faster and shorter stories to fill pages. Nancy, a reporter, looked back and said:

> My work practices changed. I had a lot more thinking time before. I could go to my editor and say, "I need another day," or "I need a week to better understand this." And my editor would say, "Sure," because there was a big stable of reporters. And if I couldn't produce stories, someone else would, and we didn't have to worry, "Do we have enough stories to fill the newspaper?" Today, that's not the case. So, I don't have the luxury of going to the editor and saying, "I can't. I need more time to give you a really good story." The bar has been lowered in terms of how much time I can have to produce a thoughtful piece of journalism.

The top priority of reporters and editors is now to have enough stories to publish the newspaper rather than pursuing quality work. Filling the paper is now an obsession. Kevin described the nature of newspaper work as "feeding the beast." The beast is always hungry. No matter how much you feed the beast, the beast gets hungry soon and starts chasing after you for more. Newspapers are the beast. Journalists fill the paper today, but the paper will get hungry tomorrow. Then, journalists will have to fill the paper again. This cycle endlessly repeats because the paper is always hungry.

Newspapering is a never-ending process. With a smaller staff, *U.S. Times* employees are more afraid today of failing to fill the paper every day because it is inexcusable to publish the paper with empty space.

In order to complete their work in the limited time, *U.S. Times* employees rationally rely on ready-made information, such as public relations materials, and write shorter, faster and easier stories. Michael, a reporter, said he does "more and more PR rewrites that I put in the system without a byline." *U.S. Times* journalists are not necessarily comfortable about using public relations materials to write stories. First of all, they know public relations materials reflect a one-sided perspective. Second, ready-made materials are not information that journalists collect themselves. Journalists feel writing stories based on ready-made information is not real reporting. They get frustrated because they feel that they are not doing what they should be doing. For them, reporters should be in the field. Reluctantly or not, however, they rely on public relations materials more now because their resources and time are limited. Reflecting this change, George, a reporter, said, "The quality of my work has changed more than the volume of work." This is a dilemma. *U.S. Times* journalists believe that good stories need time, but they cannot spend time on stories.

U.S. Times employees are making rational decisions, in a sense. They are asked to produce more, but the company does not provide extra compensation for their increased work. The company does not allow hourly-paid employees—rank-and-file workers—to work overtime. That is, the company is asking workers to do more work in the same paid work hours—40 hours a week. "They [Management] are not paying for it [intensified work]. I think it's a little demanding for what they are not paying for," said Larry, a manager. Because their surplus production is not compensated, *U.S. Times* journalists feel that their labor has been cheapened. Joseph, the deputy managing editor, said, "We might not be as expensive as we might have been." This causes low morale in the newsroom because, "It doesn't matter how much harder you work here. You get paid the same amount," said Matthew, a reporter.

Younger reporters view the speedup of production in a different light. They are more confident and positive about that change. Dennis, a reporter in his 30s, said:

> My workload has certainly increased in the last five years. I feel like I've been able to adapt to it pretty easily. I make smarter decisions about spending less time on stories that are not important. As you get more experienced as a journalist, you get to be faster and more efficient about what you do. Even though I'm producing more as a reporter, I don't feel the huge amount of stress about that or exhaustion or whatever. I've been able to deal with it fine.

Dennis does stories that interest him, and he spends a good amount of time and energy on them. He also does assigned work. For instance, he has to cover crime reports, which he basically writes from news releases by the police instead of actually collecting information in the field. In order to manage his time and workload, he divides stories into ones that he thinks are worth his energy and others that are not.

The paper's emphasis on producing more local stories is another reason that the work pace has speeded up and journalists have become busier than ever. To differentiate

the newspaper from other news sources, the *U.S. Times* emphasizes the production of local news. By providing news and information that are not available anywhere else, the *U.S. Times* wants to attract local readers and, more important, local advertisers. The front page has to have two or three local stories out of three or four on most days, which places pressure on the *U.S. Times* journalists, as the staff size shrinks. *U.S. Times* employees agree with this local news-focused business strategy, hoping that local stories add value to the paper. But some criticize that the great pressure of producing local news degrades the quality of the paper. Scott, a reporter, was critical about the front page:

> Sometimes I see stories on the front page that I don't understand why they are there, doesn't seem like front-page news. I think, from that aspect, it sort of cheapens the front page a little bit if you have dumb stories out there.

In addition to a decline in the quality of the newspaper, *U.S. Times* employees are concerned about the decrease in the amount of information that they produce. As advertising space diminishes, the space for news and editorial content shrinks. Anthony, a reporter, explained:

> It's shrunk, literally shrunk. When I first started working here, the newspaper was wider than it is now. They [Management] shrunk the physical size of newspaper to save money because newsprint is expensive, very expensive. There are fewer pages than it used to be. I assume that the newshole[44] is smaller than it used to be. It's all connected to declining advertising.

Given the physical shrinkage of the paper, *U.S. Times* journalists' saying that they became busier to produce more stories sounds contradictory. But cutbacks in newsroom workforce are occurring faster than the shrinkage of pages, and therefore the workload of individual workers has increased. But the workload of individual employees is not proportional to the amount of information that the newspaper publishes. Despite the increase in workload, the amount of information ends up decreasing.

The layoff of workers in 2009 "was a huge blow to people," said Charles, a copyeditor. *U.S. Times* employees started actually experiencing what had been already happening in the newspaper industry and what they had heard and read about. They realized the vulnerability of their employment situation. *U.S. Times* employees expect the newspaper and the industry will go through a further transition in the very near future—they said five to ten years, but they cannot imagine how and with what consequences. Linda, a reporter, predicted a gloomy future for newspapers because effective measures have not been applied to prevent newspapers from further declines:

> Nobody knows exactly what to do. It's clearly collapsing. I'm sure that I'm in the last generation of reporters. This is it. People who are working now will see the end of newspaper journalism.

[44] The newshole is the amount of the paper that is used for news and editorial content.

U.S. Times employees are pessimistic about the economic recovery of the paper. Even if the economy picks up, they think that classified advertising would never come back to newspapers, and they are not sure how much display advertising would be back.

All those things considered, *U.S. Times* journalists are very anxious and uncertain about their future with the newspaper and in the newspaper industry. Thinking about the future is "depressing," they say. Jason, a copyeditor in his 50s, said, "This is probably my last job with newspapers." But at the same time, they are grateful to be able to be newspaper journalists in this climate where the number of newspaper jobs is scarce.

Because they believe a great danger is approaching the newspaper and the industry, *U.S. Times* journalists think about other career options in other industries. Dennis has ambition to advance in newspaper journalism, but at the same time, he is realistic about the industry:

> Every once in a while, I apply for a job here and there, but I'm not optimistic about continuing to advance up the journalistic ladder and make it to the Wall Street Journal or the Washington Post just because of all the terrible stuff happening in this industry. You know, so, I've considered other career options.

What Dennis thought about as one career option was to be a Foreign Service officer because he has knowledge about the world and interests in international relations and politics. He actually applied for it but failed. He is thinking of applying for it again.

The most popular career option among U.S Times journalists is public relations, and a few reporters have left for public relations positions. Nancy said:

> Every time there's a public relations job in town, there's a little huddle. "Are you applying? Are you applying?" "Will you write a letter of recommendation?" I actually applied maybe two years ago for a public relations job that I didn't get.

Journalists often work with public relations professionals as news sources so that they have some ideas of what public relations jobs are. Public relations jobs share skills that journalists have, such as collecting and analyzing information, and writing. Public relations is familiar work to journalists to a certain extent.

Changing jobs and careers is not easy, however, especially in this bleak economic climate where the unemployment rate is the highest in the last 20 years. In addition to such an economic climate, there are a few other reasons that limit the mobility of *U.S. Times* journalists. One is family obligations. *U.S. Times* employees are the breadwinners of their family with children in many cases. For them, it is risky to start over in another career. As Paul, a photographer, said, "We [My family] are in a situation where I wouldn't be able to gamble with career change right now." The lack of education (and/or practical skills) is another reason. Even though public relations jobs share similar skills of journalists, it is not easy for those who do not have a degree in public relations or practical experience to get such a job. Furthermore, the job market of public relations is

getting more competitive, proportionate to the growth in popularity. Charles talked about his experience of a job search in public relations:

> I'm applying for PR jobs where people have master's degrees in marketing, master's degrees in public relations or ten years of experience in major corporations, in the public relations department. Five years ago, it would have been, "Oh yeah, you have skills. Come in and interview. We will take a look." Right now, it is very difficult even to get your foot in the door because there are so many people that have résumés that are so much more tailored toward what they are trying to do.

When they think of going back to school to earn a master's degree, their age matters. The younger they are, the easier it would be to go back to school. It is difficult for those who have a family and children to stay out of a job for two years to earn a master's. George said:

> I think I'm too old. I'm in my 40s. If I started making changes, I would be late in my 40s by the time when I came out of school. Then, I'll become more uncertain. It would be expensive to go to college, go get a master's degree or go to teach at university or something. That makes me feel anxious.

Like George, *U.S. Times* employees in their 40s are a population that may worry most about their future partly because they have a growing family, and partly because they have a good amount of time, about 20 years, until retirement. Their concern is to lose their job when they hit their 50s if they did not act now. They want to move for better job security, hoping a new job guarantees their employment until retirement, but a variety of reasons do not allow them to do so. Those in their 50s are searching other possibilities, but they are not as desperate or struggling as their colleagues in their 40s. They are closer to retirement in the first place. Also, the *U.S. Times* is a union paper, and the rule is that layoffs occur on a seniority basis. Thus, those who have worked for the paper for a long time, like those in their 50s, are less likely to be laid off. In this regard, age limits the mobility of *U.S. Times* journalists.

How Do They Think about Technological Changes?

U.S. Times employees talk about two technologies: production technology and the Internet. By production technology, they mean the integrated content management system called DTI[45] Lightning that the company introduced in 2007 to efficiently produce both the print edition and multimedia products, such as the website and news feeds. This system allows reporters and editors to work on both platforms (and more platforms in the future) and directly access the database that leads to print and digital

[45] DTI=Digital Technology International

publishing. This new system is mainly affecting editors who manage both the print and online editions. The *U.S. Times* does not have a department exclusively engaging in digital publishing. There are three web developers, but they are more IT engineers than web content editors.

U.S. Times employees accept technological changes that they are experiencing as social phenomena. They understand the newspaper has to have its digital presence to be relevant today, considering a rapid public migration to the Internet that is a great social change of the 21st century. Both consumers and advertisers flock to the Internet, and therefore, "We don't have any choice because everybody else is online. If we are not online, we are not a part of the conversation," said Charles. This is a common idea among *U.S. Times* employees.

The *U.S. Times* launched its website in the mid-1990s when U.S. newspapers broke into the Internet "as a defense of move" in Gary's words (a web developer). That defensive measure is now an obligation. *U.S. Times* employees feel that the paper needs to further expand its digital presence as people's consumption patterns change and diversify. The *U.S. Times* introduced the integrated multimedia publishing system in order to respond to the diversification of news consumption. Using that system, *U.S. Times* editorial workers efficiently publish and update stories on the website as well as other digital media such as Facebook and Twitter. *U.S. Times* employees understand digital diversification is an "experiment" because the paper has not figured out how to make money on digital distribution. The newspaper is obligated to keep up with digital trends through trial and error in preparation for more changes and in search of a new profitable business model.

Why has the *U.S. Times* not successfully capitalized on its popular website? Kenneth, a computer programmer, explained, pointing out differences between advertising in print and online:

> We don't get much revenue for ads on that thing [the website]. I have known that because I'm the one who controls ads on the website. It's less than 10 cents on a dollar of what it is for printed. A print ad might cost you $400, and a web ad might cost you $30, roughly like that. You can't really get by on that. That's not a viable profit model.

U.S. Times employees believe in the potential of the newspaper's digital performance. The *U.S. Times* is trying to become a multiplatform news organization as a business strategy, according to the managing editor. He believes electronic communications increase its importance, while the print product diminishes it. The chief operating officer says that the combination of the print edition with the Internet strengthens the brand. The print readership is declining, but the number of visitors to the online edition has been on the rise. *U.S. Times* employees work for digital platforms, hoping to gather attention from information consumers. The *U.S. Times* in fact boasts of its high-traffic website. *U.S. Times* employees are proud that they have more readers than ever because of the website. "Eight out of ten people in the county read the *U.S. Times* either in print or online," according to Joseph, the deputy managing editor. Joseph added, "We use the web to extend the reach and depth of the content."

The *U.S. Times* puts emphasis on increasing traffic to the website to sell advertising space. Blogs are strong forces to bring people to the website. About ten reporters keep blogs, and sports blogs are extremely popular among local sports fans. Seeking bits and pieces of information, sports fans flock to those blogs. One of the sports bloggers not only frequently updates his blog but also even responds to readers' comments. *U.S. Times* employees think the interactiveness of blogs is a major attraction to information consumers.

Younger reporters and editors are more comfortable about the website and other platforms than older journalists. They do not think that the paper's website is taking away readers from the print edition. Rather, they think that the increase in traffic to the website is good. Mary is one of young reporters who disagree with the general understanding that the website is a competitor. She said:

> Even if your print paper is declining, it's better to have the number of people looking at your website increasing. It's better than both go down. [The website] might become a main mode some day.

Young journalists also say they do not mind if they work for an online-only publication in the future. They think hardcopy newspapers in the future will not look like them today. Robert, a copyeditor in his 20s, is confident about a possible shift of newspapers from hardcopy to online. Predicting a more Internet-oriented future, Robert said:

> I think eventually we will all be the online world. I wouldn't have hesitation to work online only. I see the capabilities. I feel like there's always going to be a place, no matter what the platform is, for good editing and good writing. It's just a matter of how you do it. I'm young, and I have technology skills. I grew up in this environment. It wouldn't be a culture shock to do it.

The website satisfies the journalistic ego of *U.S. Times* employees because they think their stories are read by wider audiences via the website. The circulation area of the print edition is limited within the county, but the online edition does not have geographical limitations. "The website is great for disseminating information," said Jason, a copyeditor.

More visual presentations are great advantages of the website, which print publications are not suitable for. The *U.S. Times* publishes photo archives and uploads videos to the website. Because the *U.S. Times* does not hire videographers who exclusively produce videos, some reporters and photographers shoot videos on the side, while they report and take still photos. Paul talked about how newswork—storytelling and presentation—became more integrated because of technology.

> If you think about that from a traditional point of view, it used to be a reporter would do a story, and a photographer might come onboard and do the pictures, and copyeditors would look at the piece, and photo editors, would look at the images, and all that's going to get put together

> by a copy desk editor, and it's handed off to the production people who ultimately put it in the paper. On the Internet package, video package, that's all compressed in one person's job description now.

U.S. Times employees indicate two aspects of the Internet: production and consumption. They are producers of online content and, at the same time, consumers of online information. These producer and consumer aspects show the "two-edged sword" nature of the Internet. The production side of the Internet is not friendly to *U.S. Times* employees and the newspaper, but the consumption side is of great help for journalists. Journalists' view of technologies is two-sided and, therefore, ambiguous.

For reporters and editors, the Internet is a great invention that made their work easier, more efficient, and more accurate. The most prominent change in their work practices because of the Internet is how they collect information. The Internet provides easy and immediate access to information. *U.S. Times* reporters say the Internet is now their indispensable tool of information gathering. Google and Wikipedia are sites that reporters frequently use for initial background research of their topics. These websites save their time and labor because they can get a great volume of information with "a few keystrokes." Reporters no longer go to the library, government offices and other information sources in person and manually search information. Dennis was amazed by efficiency brought by the Internet:

> It's interesting because obviously the newsroom has shrunk because of the decline in resources, but we are also capable as an individual reporter of producing a lot more content with less work.

Because the Internet changed reporters' work practices, Matthew's everyday work now looks like this:

> Hardly a day goes by when I don't include some information I've gleaned from the Internet. Almost always when I first start working on a story, I get whatever background information I can through our electric archives and through Internet searches so that I'm kind of grounded in the subject that I'm writing about. Then, I start contacting people I need to interview.

But there is a warning voice raising concerns that journalists rely on web search for information gathering too much. In fact, *U.S. Times* journalists warn themselves to carefully evaluate the credibility and reasonability of information posted on the Internet. Kenneth thought the Internet would help journalism at the outset of the Internet, but now, he has a different view of journalistic use of the Internet. Kenneth believes casual Internet search does not necessarily contribute to good journalism:

> Technological change that I've seen mainly is replacing people with automation and better data gathering. But you don't necessarily budget for people to learn how to get data that are not available from something like Google. I mean, just doing web search is absolutely inadequate, in

> my opinion, to get data. Now, you've got people who don't have a real sense of the underlining reality underneath data.

The Internet changed the mode of communication. Reporters now use email to contact information sources more often than telephone. Linda said, "A lot of times, email is the means or the way you get people." Email is an efficient way of communication because it can be sent regardless of the time of the day. It is convenient for their information sources, too, because they can respond whenever they like (and they can simply ignore if they do not feel like responding). Reporters also realize that some people are more comfortable about email than the telephone to respond to their requests and answer their questions.

Email is used for communication within the company, too. For *U.S. Times* employees who are busier than ever, "It's much easier to sit and email," said Jason, than to walk across the newsroom or to wait until someone to whom they want to talk becomes available.

Reporters use social media, such as Facebook, to find contacts to information sources. Facebook is an amazing place to find people, according to them. Nowadays, a great number of people hold a Facebook account. "Facebook is one of the few ways that I can get hold someone without knowing their cellphone number," said Robert, a copyeditor who occasionally does reporting work. Linda also uses Facebook for work. She said, "Facebook is sometimes the only place where you can find them. You send them messages [through Facebook] and ask them to call [you]."

U.S. Times employees point out the impersonal aspect of digital communication. Though *U.S. Times* journalists heavily use the Internet at work, including email, blogs, Facebook, etc., they feel like they are losing communication because of it. All those digital communications brought efficiency and convenience to both journalists and their information sources, but *U.S. Times* journalists realize that they talk less and "hunker down in their chair," as Eric, a graphic designer, observed. Because of digital communication technology, "It seems like a lot of impromptu conversation doesn't happen," said Charles. Charles thinks face-to-face communication is different from communication via email and in other forms. Face-to-face communication is more beneficial to journalists because they may come up with new ideas that they do not expect through that type of communication. This possibility would diminish in digital communication.

While U.S. reporters appreciate the Internet, editors and photographers embrace the development of production technology for better productivity. Editors and photographers are closer to production than reporters. In addition to editing, editors do layouts and send pages to the press. Photographers go to the field and take photos, but they also edit photos, do videos, edit and process them into packages and upload to the website. For them, the integrated multimedia publishing system and user-friendly computer software, such as InDesign and Photoshop, have made their work easier, more efficient and more diverse. Joseph strongly believes in the capacity and flexibility of the integrated multimedia publishing system with which newsroom workers work. Joseph talked about how editors efficiently publish the print and online editions by using that system:

> There are a number of ways to do it. They could do the newspaper part and come back at the end of their shift and do the web part, or they could do both at the same time. All they have to do is push the button, and it goes to the plate. Push the button, and it goes to the web. It's really easy. A parallel thought could be that technology has helped pick up the slack where we've lost resources, and that it's extended our capabilities.

Eric, a graphic designer, agreed with Joseph by saying, "Personally, I think the only reason we can do the amount of work we do with what little staff we have is because of the technology. There's no other reason." Because work came to be done more efficiently, thanks to advanced technology, the work hours of individual workers has not necessarily increased. Paul indicated that his work increased, but his work hours remained the same:

> I think my workload in terms of hours in a day, I still manage to mostly cram into eight to ten hours a day. But what I'm doing is different. I think I'm much more productive in terms of the body of work that I have to produce in eight hours period. And, I'm much more flexible and versatile in terms of what I am able to do during a given shift.

Advanced technology helps the newspaper business from an economic standpoint because fewer people produce the products in limited work hours. "That made it easier to make profit for newspapers," said Daniel, an editor.

There are some *U.S. Times* employees who believe digital technology benefits readers. Kevin, for instance, said the paper's website serves the immediate needs of news consumers:

> We want consumers to know that something has just happened in the community. They don't have to wait for the paper in the morning. They don't have to turn on the TV news. They can go right now to the newspaper's website and know right away what's happening. And, we are somewhat interactive on our webpage. We ask a daily question in our poll. Not every story, but we often let readers respond with their observation about our stories.

At the same time, *U.S. Times* journalists see this as a change in news consumption, because "You need to present it, dribs and drabs, throughout news cycle," said Kevin. Charles further put it, "Technology has made everything in a 24-hour cycle." *U.S. Times* journalists constantly update the website and post to blogs several times a day in addition to meeting the deadline of the print edition. "Newspapers have to compete more with all other media that are more tailored toward 24-hour audiences," added Charles.

As Joseph said earlier, updating the website does not take much time of newsroom workers. But blogging is a different story. Blogging takes time. George said, "I write blogs all the time." The time log of the most popular sports blog one day, for

instance, shows the blog was updated at 4:28 am, 2:20 pm, 2:58 pm, 4:48 pm, 5:21 pm, 5:42 pm and 6:51 pm for that day. The earliest post of the day even attracted hundreds of comments from readers. This blog may be an extreme case, but it indicates that blogging is almost 24-hour production and consumption. Working on such a constant and immediate medium, *U.S. Times* journalists are having a hard time to manage time. "I try to get the blog done during my normal working hours, but sometimes it doesn't happen," said Frank, a copyeditor, who does blogs in addition to editing work.

U.S. Times employees believe that there are consumer demands for frequent updates. That is one reason that they are obsessed with updates. George explained:

> It [The Internet] creates more demands for instant stories. Readers expect information instantly. Now, I write stories to go on the Internet more rapidly. There's more demand for faster turnaround. Readers are unsatisfied to read a story that's ten hours old because they have been able to get it instantly.

This speedup of production is a concern of *U.S. Times* journalists. They are worrying about the impact of speed on the quality of work. They feel immediacy is emphasized and quality is downsized. James, a copyeditor, analyzed his work:

> We are kind of rushed to get things on the web. Maybe, that carries over to print. We are rushed to get things in print. I'm hurrying to get it out right away. Maybe I'm not proofreading as well as I should.

The *U.S. Times* does not have employees who are specialized in monitoring and controlling the content of the website and blogs. The quality of the website and blogs are managed at individual journalists' discretion. Because stories are published without going through editors, some say they find silly mistakes. One of the beauties of the Internet, however, is to be able to fix errors easily and immediately. But Charles warns that the newspaper's website has to take into consideration broader consequences of errors. Charles said:

> I can resolve the issue before it gets in the paper, but it's been on the web for two or three hours. And, the thing is, if it's on our website for two, three hours, all the TV stations have already looked at it. They are putting it on their six o'clock news. So, not only you are putting it out on your own website, but you are kind of throwing it out to the world. "Boy, I hope it's right," you know, because it's hard to get that back. So, quality definitely suffers.

This indicates that *U.S. Times* journalists are conscious about their responsibility as the primary information source for other media in the paper's circulating area.

Not only the Internet but also production technology has increased the speed of production and the workload, especially of editors. User-friendly computer software and the publishing system help editors to do multiple tasks in their limited work hours. "All the technological advances make you save your time, but they don't mean you work less.

In a lot of ways, you work more," said Larry, a manager. Because their work hours are limited, they have to squeeze their traditional work such as editing so they can perform new tasks such as composition.

Page makeup used to be done in the composing room. When computer-assisted composition came into existence, pagination moved in the newsroom. Early pagination software was not easy to operate so the newsroom needed specialized design editors. But with advanced software, composition became easy enough to be done by editorial workers without assistance, which editors say increased their work. William, a copyeditor, confessed he spent an amount of time doing non-journalistic work:

> I think what has happened is that the actual editing part has been squeezed a little bit. That's suffered in this because we've taken on all that work that came from the composing room. I'd say half of your time is spent working on the computer that is doing the layout and placing all the pieces and arranging them. And maybe, half of your time is spent editing, actually editing stories.

The *U.S. Times* used to have a mobile journalist, which they call "mojo" for short. The definition of this job is to be out in the field and make videos. There was one condition for this position. The newspaper did not let him do video unless he wrote stories. After producing many video stories, he stopped doing mojo. He now focuses on producing stories. Other reporters point out difficulties of the multitasking of journalistic work. In their opinion, reporting and video shooting are two people's jobs. Writing stories is hard enough, and shooting videos is hard enough. If one person does both, what s/he creates would be shallow and unsophisticated, they say.

Some feel the Internet has devalued newspaper journalists. Charles said, "Being a newspaper journalist was a pretty cool thing," but this is not the case anymore. The Internet has diminished the importance of newspaper journalism and, at the same time, degraded the status of newspaper journalists, he said. Free information created by free labor is prevailing on the Internet. The website of the *U.S. Times* also provides information for free, but that information is produced by paid journalists. Everyday information consumers do not distinguish free information from costly information. They do not appreciate newspaper journalists' work because they take for granted that information, regardless of who produced it, is free online. Given this consumer mentality in the Internet age, Dennis expressed his frustration by saying, "Ranks of journalists are steadily dwindling."

U.S. Times journalists say the big mistake newspapers, including the *U.S. Times*, made at the outset of the online edition is that they started it by giving away information. It is too late for them to realize the mistake after information consumers got used to free information online. *U.S. Times* employees tend to think that the paper cannot charge visitors for access to the website, believing consumers will leave if online news consumption costs them money. "We can't put the genie back in the bottle," Jason said, expressing the newspaper's dilemma. This also leads to one of the consumer conundrums that *U.S. Times* employees wonder about. Gary said:

> You pay 99 cents for a song, and you pay $4 for a latte. But someone wants to pay $2 to look at the newspaper for a month? It's like, "Wow, wow, time out!" It's weird, people's price sensitivity.

Michael more critically views newspapers' business strategy about the online edition. He pointed out a critical difference in views of newspapers between newspaper producers and consumers:

> Newspaper people seem to believe that people are buying stories. I don't think people are. They are buying crossword, classified advertising, comics, bridge column and just all that stuff. They can get it all in one place. And, they are buying at a hugely subsidized price because of advertising. Now, newspaper owners think we are going to take clips of what they think as their product, the story, and put it up online and charge people enough money to pay for it. It's never going to happen because all those other things have been taken away and are now available in different places, basically online. It's like a death blow, I think.

U.S. Times employees use the New York Times as a reference. If the New York Times does not make money from the website[46], they think the website of the *U.S. Times* will not, either. The Internet is not a place where conventional business models can be applied. Gary explained, "Whatever the future is, it's going to be a lot of nickels instead of lots of dollars. Google has all the cash because of all the pennies, not because of dollars."

U.S. Times journalists indicate the newspaper has lost in competition of speed, the volume of information, relevancy and people's priority in the Internet age. Under such circumstances, it is difficult for the *U.S. Times* to be the unique source, says Joseph, the deputy managing editor of the *U.S. Times*. The newspaper cannot be the first, either. When fewer people buy the paper, the print edition of the *U.S. Times* is getting irrelevant. In an economic sense, the print edition still generates almost all of the income for the *U.S. Times*, though the size of the income is shrinking. Given the shrinkage of print readership, *U.S. Times* employees feel that the print edition has lost its value to the public. As their newspaper has less meaning to people, *U.S. Times* employees feel that their work is not appreciated by the public. This is a change in their work in the Internet age.

How Do They View the Nature and Conditions of Their Occupation?

Newspaper work is a calling or a dream job since their youth for *U.S. Times* journalists. They enjoy their work because they have autonomy and power to influence the public. They experience something new and different all the time, which never bores them. Having said that, they understand they do not have absolute control and power over their work. *U.S. Times* journalists know their labor is under the control of

[46] The New York Times restarted charging for online access at the end of March 2011. The New York Times aborted making readers to pay for access to the website in the mid-2000s.

management. They are anxious and uncertain about their future as the finances of the paper get worse. Concerned workers look for other options in order to have better job security beyond the *U.S. Times* and even the newspaper industry. They believe that improving and acquiring skills are vital to increase their mobility.

The newsroom of the *U.S. Times* is quiet, indicating reductions in workforce and the lack of communication among employees. One characteristic of the *U.S. Times* newsroom is that journalists individually and narrowly focus on their work. Though the financial condition of the paper is bleak, and working conditions are accordingly deteriorating, employees do not give up their respect for the family ownership of the paper, which is another prominent characteristic shared among *U.S. Times* employees.

a) Privileged Professionals

U.S. Times journalists think their work is "privileged," "blessed" and "fortunate," comparing their occupation with other types of jobs. Because they enjoy their work, Jennifer, a reporter, said, "I never dread going to work like some people who have jobs where it's just terror to get up and go to work every day. I never feel that way." For *U.S. Times* journalists, "attorneys" are worn out at work, "accountants, construction workers, janitors or whatever" just do their jobs to pay the bills.

U.S. Times newsroom workers, especially reporters, cite autonomy as the primary reason that they enjoy their work. Mostly, they decide what they write about. Reporters discuss story ideas with their editors, and they are occasionally assigned some stories regardless of their interest. As long as they complete required tasks, they are free to pursue their journalistic interests. Anthony indicated that autonomy is key for job satisfaction:

> One of the reasons why I like my job so much is because I do have quite a bit of autonomy. I don't have to write about a lot of things that don't interest me. I write 90 percent of my articles, maybe more, maybe 95 percent are on my beat, which I enjoy and care about and find very interesting. Probably I'm one of the most satisfied reporters in the newspaper.

The relationship of reporters with their supervisors is an important determinant of the level of autonomy. It is helpful for reporters to have a sympathetic editor with whom they can share journalistic interests. If reporters successfully win trust from their editor, the editor likely leaves reporters on their own to pursue stories. Larry described his reporters, "They are expected to be self-starters and to have their own ideas. I don't have to lead anybody along. They know what to do, and they do it."

While reporters are enjoying the freedom of choice, editors have other motivations. Though they may not often create story ideas or write stories themselves, news editors enjoy a different type of autonomy. They choose the national and/or international stories from wire services to be published in the paper. Copyeditors feel a sense of responsibility to make stories readable to general audiences. That sense of responsibility gives them satisfaction. In addition to editing stories, the work of editors nowadays includes page makeup because of the computerization of composition. This is

an increase in their workload, but it gives editors more control over a wider area of production. Gary said:

> I was always interested more in production. That's why I was more interested in copyediting, because to me as a reporter, there's so much more happening after you are done. You don't have any control. After you let your story go, how it is presented, what impression it makes, all out of your hands. If I was making a film, I wouldn't be an actor. I would have control over it. I would be on the end of the assembly line, and I don't want to be at the front.

U.S. Times journalists believe that their work is fun and often brings them excitement and rewards they get, while many other corporate workers work simply to sustain their lives. Fun, excitement, and even rewards are through meeting and working with interesting people, seeing and experiencing interesting things, and going interesting places. They understand that they have access to these experiences because they are newspaper journalists. Nancy described her easy access to information in this way:

> I have a license to pry. I call people up and say, "I'm a reporter, and I'm working on a story about x," and people would talk to me. Or, I say, "Can I come see you?," and they would say yes.

Because the newspaper is a daily product, newspaper work is a challenging in a sense. Journalists must report, write, edit and publish stories in a limited timeframe. Newspaper workers are placed under time pressure every day, However, this "daily-ness" is also a reward to newsroom workers because they constantly experience new things and produce new products (e.g., stories). They can see the end result of their work as soon as the following day, or even sooner if it goes online first. Eric described the philosophy of the daily-ness of newspaper work:

> What I love about newspapers is when I leave tonight, all the work I do will be in tomorrow's paper that I have already forgotten. And, I can start it over again. That's kind of life. Every day you wake up, it's a brand-new day. Past is past. You can start over. There're not many jobs like that. You make mistakes, and sure, you will hear about it. But people forget quickly, readers forget quickly, your bosses forget quickly, you forget quickly because you have so much in front of you ... It's a wonderful thing about newspapers, I think. I love that.

Newspaper journalists, however, are not always full of energy. In fact, they sometimes lose confidence in what they are doing. Nancy talked about ups and downs of her morale and said her motivation was supported by the daily aspect of the newspaper:

> At the end of a particular day, I might be tired, thinking, "This job sucks. I can't do it one more day." And next day, you go to work, and they go, "Can you go to this vineyard and interview this vineyard owner having

> problems with pesticide and poisoning. And, I'm like, "Yeah! I could do that." I mean, it's really exciting. It's a good job. It's fun.

U.S. Times journalists were fascinated by newspaper work at an early age. Some of them were influenced by parents who subscribed to one or two newspapers. They remember that they read newspapers with their parents when they were young. Since then, newspapers have been indispensable in their lives. Others were fascinated by newspapers when they worked at their school newspaper. There are various reasons that they joined their school newspaper. Some jokingly said that they took part in their school paper because they thought making the paper was easier than taking a regular English class. But they were eventually fascinated by charms of newspapering. Others said they loved writing since their childhood and going into newspapers was a natural path for them. Some took the school newspaper more seriously. Dennis talked about his "investigative" work with his junior-high-school paper. He wrote a controversial story about a power game between school administration and teachers. When asked if he actually investigated for the story, he recalled:

> To the extent that a 13-years-old can investigate anything, yeah. It was like a real news story. The administrators were really upset about it and threatened to sue. Of course, I found that really appealing. The whole idea is that a 13-years-old can write something and be taken seriously. I felt a real sense of kind of voice. I felt like what I had done mattered. And I really liked to write something that I was always good at and enjoyed doing. From really early, I felt like I wanted to be a journalist.

Like Dennis, some other *U.S. Times* journalists learned that they could have power through their writing. They keep seeking and feeling power through their professional work. Nancy remembers her investigative work on embezzlement in a nonprofit organization, which made her feel that her work had power. She published details of the scandal in a series. Her stories ended up moving the organization to correct its inner wrongdoings. Nancy recalled:

> If I hadn't written this story, it would have been a private matter, and they wouldn't have fired her [a person who embezzled]. It was my first experience with hard news where I was writing things that were influencing the course of events. I would write a story, and there would be a public outcry. I would write another story, and there would be more public outcry. I got to see this evolution because of my reporting, and I realized I had a huge response.

Compared with large or national newspapers, the impact that local newspapers have is small. Local newspapers may not be able to have the impact that Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein had in the nation in the Watergate stories. But local newspapers mean more to local audiences who care about their communities. People read local newspapers more than national newspapers in the United States. In a sense, local newspapers are more influential than national newspapers as agenda-setters in local communities.

Nancy's experience is an example of how local journalists may determine and tell people what is important.

The *U.S. Times* is widely read in the community, and its journalists work close with local people. In other words, *U.S. Times* journalists are part of the community, actually living in the community. Eric lives in a rural part of the community where residents are close to each other, going to the same church and doing community activities together. Neighbors and churchgoers know that Eric is working for the *U.S. Times*. Eric talked about his neighbors' attitudes toward the newspaper:

> It's a special thing to them. It's good to know I'm doing something that is important to people. That's how a lot of people start their day—by reading the paper. And, I have something to do with that. And, they would say, "I saw your name on that map," which is just a tiny little thing. I'm not curing cancer or anything, but I'm doing something that means something to someone. I'm giving something, just a small tiny little piece of something, to people in the community that matters to them.

U.S. Times journalists experience similar interactions with people in town at work and in private. They say that seeing people reading the paper in a coffee shop or a restaurant gives them a satisfactory feeling. Through interactions and feedback from audiences, journalists confirm that their work is appreciated, which leads to job satisfaction.

b) Corporate Employees

U.S. Times journalists feel privileged because of work autonomy, access to information, impacts of their work and appreciation from audiences, but they are not fully satisfied workers. They acknowledge that they are vulnerable to the economics of the paper, and that their labor is controlled by someone else. They also indicate that they are alienated from their work.

"One of the biggest changes is job security," answered Jason, when asked about changes he had experienced in his career. Job security was one of the appealing factors of the newspaper industry. *U.S. Times* employees who have been in the newspaper business for a long time say that newspaper workers never dreamed of being laid off in the past. Today, it is not the case. Newspapers have come to more easily lay off workers to keep profit margins or to stay in business. Diminishing job security scares *U.S. Times* employees. Michael said, "There's literally a sense that any day you come in, you might find out your job is on the line. It's very hard."

The *U.S. Times* is a unionized paper. With union rules, layoffs are based on seniority. The *U.S. Times* first lays off workers with shorter careers with the paper. James, a copyeditor, was once laid off during one of the rounds of layoffs because he had only a year of experience with the *U.S. Times*. He was hired back as a part-timer soon and became a fulltime worker again. James has mixed feelings about his employment. He appreciates that his department manager made a great effort to hire him back. He is also grateful to the company for the second chance to work, but he cannot get rid of his fear of being laid off again because he knows he is the first one to leave in next round of

layoffs, if there will be one. The union cannot protect him because of his short career with the paper. Furthermore, the union cannot prevent layoffs because "that's the company's right," says Michael. James feels vulnerable to the economics of the paper and powerless in the face of the company's business decisions.

U.S. Times employees increasingly think that things are getting out of their control. They say they have autonomy in their work, which means autonomy in everyday practices, but they cannot take part in fundamental business decision-making. Layoffs are one thing that they do not control. *U.S. Times* employees are subject to all business decisions that the company makes. This is nothing new. But *U.S. Times* employees realize that management is concentrating power, while employees become more powerless. Because of reductions in workforce, every part of the newsroom is short of manpower. Management moves people more frequently from one position to the other to fill positions. For instance, Charles was hired as a web editor, but he was moved to a copyeditor of the print edition. Some are going back and forth between working as a reporter and an editor/copyeditor. Some do not hesitate to express their cynicism about their labor. They say the *U.S. Times* is simply an income source. Matthew said:

> It's where I work. They write my paycheck every week, every two weeks now. I guess I used to have more loyalty to the *U.S. Times* than I do now. Maybe that's from the cynicism that comes from working in one place so long. I've kind of seen a lot of different things that make me not embrace the company wholeheartedly at all times.

Some employees find it difficult to keep motivating themselves and negatively view their work. Michael realizes that his work is often so routinized that he feels like he is mindlessly producing stories. He added that he shared the same feeling with his colleague:

> Rebecca [My colleague] was feeling grumpy one day, and I said something like, "You are still good to be a reporter." And she said, "No, we are not reporters. We are stenographers." I feel that way sometimes. We're just constantly taking releases and rewriting them. The level of minor frustration keeps going up.

U.S. Times journalists differentiate themselves from other occupations because of privileges that other workers may not have; however, such views may be diminishing. Jennifer, a reporter, pointed out that newspaper journalists themselves devalue their work.

> We always consider that our work here is a career and not just a job. That's why we went into journalism, and that's what we want. In some ways, a lot of people now feel that's not really so much the case. We are not looked at as professional as much as we were. We are just workers getting the paper out every day. That's difficult. It is a change.

U.S. Times journalists are swinging back and forth between their perceptions of being privileged workers and being corporate employees. They love and enjoy their work

because newspapering is their calling or a dream job, but they have to face the reality of being a corporate employee whose purpose is not to pursue a dream or be free from any kind of constraints but to serve the company's interests.

c) Characteristics of the Workplace

The first thing that I realized about the *U.S. Times* newsroom was its quietness. Some employees jokingly described the newsroom as an insurance office. Richard, a columnist, realized something was missing in the new building after more than ten years that the newspaper moved into:

> I'm not complaining. I understand the reason for the *U.S. Times* to move. I love the extra space. But you know places take time to develop souls. And, there's no soul out there. I've been waiting for it. It's been ten years, but it's still not there. It's just different sort of feel than there used to be. Part of that might be a little bit of nostalgia. I don't know.

The newsroom is spacious. Desks are laid out in zigzag fashion, and there is ample space between rows of desks. Each row is assigned to a different task, such as copy desk, business, sports, etc. Each desk of reporters has two partitions: one in front and another on the right. Once you sit at a desk, you find a desktop computer in front of you and realize that you are seeing someone else's back or an empty desk that is before you and on your left. There are empty desks here and there, which give a sense of forlornness.

People sit at their desks, talking on the phone and/or working with their computers. William described this landscape in this way: "It's very boxy at the *U.S. Times*. Everybody is in their box." Eric analyzed the lack of communication in the newsroom:

> Because you are just working at a newspaper, it doesn't mean that you are a great communicator. You might be a good storyteller. You might take a good picture. But communication, I think, is a skill that not everyone has.

The quiet newsroom is not comfortable to some workers. The lack of communication causes awkward human relationships in the workplace. Because people do not share what they think, some get suspicious about others. Scott talked about his discomfort because of the lack of communication:

> It's so quiet. I've gotten in trouble for talking. I've gotten from my editor, "You talk too much." Where is this? Kindergarten? Give me a freaking break! That would make me quit right there. I was so pissed when she told me that. Where did this come from? That's [editor x], I think. It wasn't [editor x] who talked to me. But I think it's [editor x] who told my editor.

People in the sports department have different opinions about the newsroom. When asked a question about relationships with colleagues, only sports journalists answered that they had close ties with colleagues within the sports department. The sports department is a small part of the newsroom. It was physically isolated from the news side in the newsroom for a long time in a section that one of my interviewees called the "island." The island was absorbed into the newsroom in 2010 as part of an overall layout change. That isolated environment helped create a sense of affinity within the sports department. Larry expressed his strong attachment to his colleagues:

> I'm fortunate that I feel I've worked with my friends. We have a great sports department. A lot of us have worked together for a long time. Guys are going on vacation, and I miss them. That's the kind of relationship we have.

Most journalists on the news side are in their 40s and 50s and have families. They say that they prioritize their family over socializing with their colleagues. On the other hand, many sports journalists are younger than the average age of the newsroom. They socialize outside the office. Robert in his early 20s gave an example:

> A lot of people in the sports department play the sports league together, so that brings people close together. So, it's a lot of communication between people outside work and back in work. I like it.

Even in the same newsroom, employees experience different levels of affinity with their colleagues. The strength of social ties among workers varies by department and depends on characteristics of the department.

Another conspicuous characteristic of the *U.S. Times* newsroom is that employees admire the family ownership of the paper. It does not mean that they single out any particular family members or the publisher to respect. Some employees do not hesitate to show their mistrust of family board members or the current publisher. *U.S. Times* employees say that there is no communication between rank-and-file and upper management in the first place. *U.S. Times* employees regard the owner family as a metaphysical entity that they believe has pride in its product. Employees have good feelings about that entity. Eric is proud of working for the community-oriented newspaper:

> This family who owns this paper believes in newspapers. They could have sold it many years ago for quite a profit. They didn't because I think they still believe in the role of the community newspaper. And, I'm thankful. I mean, it's really wonderful working for a family-owned paper, which is really rare.

In 2008, before the rounds of layoffs, Frank, a copyeditor, compared the *U.S. Times* with chain newspapers where he had worked before and said:

> The family has been in the newspaper long enough and understands the value of people enough. I get the impression from outside looking in they are trying to do as well as they can for their employees. I think they appreciate the work people do.

Even after the *U.S. Times* resorted to layoffs in 2009, many employees maintain their good feelings toward the family. James, who was once laid off, even expressed his sympathy for the owner family to make tough decisions to lay off people by saying:

> I know layoffs are not easy for them. I think if it's owned by a major conglomerate—Tribune Company or Gannett or something—they would have done layoffs a lot earlier, and they would have probably done more. Part of me is grateful for that.

These comments do not mean that employees want to stay with the *U.S. Times* forever. In fact, they frequently think about their next step. There may be several reasons for this, but the primary one is job security. They are very anxious and uncertain about their future with the paper and the newspaper industry itself. Except those who are close to retirement, *U.S. Times* employees want to choose other options for better job security in other industries. Because they cannot expect the *U.S. Times* to guarantee their future, they need to take responsibility for themselves, looking for other options if they want to maintain or improve their living standard and job security or stay in journalism.

U.S. Times journalists are aware of the importance of skills for their next step. They try to improve their skills and acquire new skills that may help them move beyond the *U.S. Times*. Paul is a photographer with a great deal of curiosity. He likes new things. He said there was resistance in the newsroom when the company started putting emphasis on videos, but he willingly took up the new task. He soon learned the production of videos and related computer software. He enjoys learning new things, keeping in mind the value of them. Paul talked about marketable skills that may help him change careers in the near future:

> Photographers tend to be people who have a lot of different skill sets that I could easily move into a production job. I could probably move into a graphic design job. What I'm specifically doing right now is still employable [outside the paper], you know.

Some think of becoming an entrepreneur with their skills instead of changing companies. Kenneth is one of them. He wants to launch his own science website in the near future, using his computer skills and the knowledge of science:

> My goal would be either to go back into some kind of low-level science and technology thing to do with essentially climate stuff or better to be part of a public interface between science and the public. I'm scientifically trained in physics mostly but also other things. It'll probably be online. I've got some reasonable networking going on already. So, that's kind of my goal.

U.S. Times employees who have computer and Internet skills are optimistic about their circumstances because they believe those skills are useful in the Internet age. In the quiet newsroom, *U.S. Times* employees are individually focused, thinking about their next move.

How Do They View the Role of Newspapers?

U.S. Times journalists point out two major roles of newspapers: one is watchdog and the other is agenda-setter. Many of them say they obtained the image of watchdog from Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein of the Washington Post during the Watergate scandal. Veteran journalists actually witnessed the investigative journalism of Woodward and Bernstein in real time. Jason looked back and said, "I grew up in the age of Watergate. I was 13, 14 when Watergate was going on. From the late 1960s into the 1970s, the press was a hero." Even younger reporters in their 20s and 30s cite Woodward and Bernstein as role models of journalists because they read books and watched movies and television shows about them, such as *All the President's Men*.

The watchdog role and investigative journalism are traditional work of newspapers, *U.S. Times* journalists say. Investigating and revealing issues and wrongdoings whenever reporters come across them is one of the typical ideals of the watchdog role of newspapers. William said:

> I believe in the traditional role of trying to make sure that the government is working and that problems are exposed or that help people who don't have much of the voice, you know, get their concerns aired and hold people accountable who may be in the position to exploit certain situations.

In addition, *U.S. Times* journalists believe that the presence of newspaper reporters itself helps keeps things honest. Newspaper reporters serve as a deterrent force on wrongdoings by regularly going to City Hall, other authorities and organizations. However, because the *U.S. Times* has lost a number of reporters in recent years, *U.S. Times* journalists are worried that the newspaper is losing such power over authorities.

Not all *U.S. Times* journalists have a journalism degree, but those who have a degree in journalism say they learned what journalists should be through journalism education in college. Linda is one of them, and she still sticks to what she learned in college. She said:

> I was really lucky when I was in college to become a student of Pete Steffens, who is a son of Lincoln Steffens, who is one of the famous muckrakers from the 1920s and 1930s. Actually, the department was run by real hardcore newspaper men. It infused in me the knowledge in the heart of what a journalist is. To be independent, be loyal only to your readers, not necessarily to your bosses, and really value the role in

> society. The role of a person who is the best they can be, report the news with passion.

Other journalists who do not have formal journalism education are not sure exactly where they gained the image of watchdog, other than from the Watergate scandal. They say it may have come from television shows and movies and also from their family members and relatives. When asked where she got that image, Nancy said she did not know at first. But after a moment's thought, Nancy remembered she was impressed by the investigative work of her uncle, who was a newspaper journalist, when she was young. Meanwhile, Paul grew up in a newspaper family. Paul said he naturally learned the newspaper's role by helping his father's newspaper when he was young.

U.S. Times journalists are concerned about the recent sharp polarization of public opinion in the United States. They say certain broadcasting news programs and information on the Internet are one-sided and agitative. And a great number of people are willingly consuming such biased information that is not necessarily based on truth and facts, which may distort the worldview of the public. *U.S. Times* journalists tend to differentiate their newspaper from other media, based on the quality of information. Daniel compared the *U.S. Times* with local television and said:

> Though our report has gotten smaller, it's not abandoned. If you look at local TV websites or watch TV news, they have abandoned an amount of news. They don't have watchdog journalism. They don't have investigative coverage for the most part. The battle we are trying to fight is to hang onto the local news franchises. In our case, we are pretty successful thus far, not necessarily profitable at it but journalistically successful.

Not every journalist tries to follow the watchdog role. Michael, for instance, is more interested in the features side of newspaper work than the muckraking one. Michael was also greatly influenced by the work of Woodward and Bernstein because it happened when he was a college student. Michael confessed:

> I was graduated from college right after Watergate. Naturally, I started off doing investigative-style stories, but I realized quickly that I hated it. Sometimes, I found that people I was writing about how terrible they were were actually pretty fascinating and charming. They are crooks, so what? So, I stopped doing that and started doing more long stories about stuff that I thought interesting. Pretty quickly, I found myself as a features writer and stayed that way almost for my entire career.

Another role that *U.S. Times* journalists keep in mind is agenda-setting. Newspapers are "filters" to sort out information for the public and "guides" to tell the public what they think about. Michael thinks newspapers exert their power in agenda-setting. Michael said:

> The newspaper has a public role to try to help the public understand what is going on around them. That's the real power of journalists. It's not to sway particular decisions but create agendas to write about certain topics enough. Then, people assume that's what's important.

Though information is ubiquitous, *U.S. Times* journalists believe that information on television or on the Internet does not necessarily help keep the public informed because it is biased in many cases. The agenda-setting role of newspapers is needed more than ever in this information age, they say.

U.S. Times journalists place value on public roles of newspapers to keep vigilant eyes on authorities and inform people with unbiased information, but they also realize there is a gap between the newspaper and readers. Some wonder if the public really cares about the accountability or credibility of information. It makes sense to *U.S. Times* journalists that people willingly consume information whose quality is not endorsed because they do not care whether it is credible or not. People are "More like, 'Is it exciting? Does it agree with my ideas? OK, I like it,'" said Kenneth.

Even the definition of investigative coverage may be different between journalists and readers. Daniel questions whether what journalists think investigation is different from what readers want journalists to investigate, implying differences in people's interests. Daniel thinks everyday people are less interested in politics, environment, and social problems that journalists tend to think important. Michael made a more stinging remark about a gap between the newspaper and readers:

> We don't reflect common usage anymore. We don't actually use the language in the way which people use it. We don't reflect the concerns in the community. Our political coverage is so stratifying because it pretends people care about the city government. We cover local issues that are only of concern to a few businesspeople and a few activists. And, we ignore other stuff that's going on.

What Michael implied in his remark is a difference in educational level between journalists and readers. Before the end of World War II, newspaper journalists were basically high school graduates, Michael says. But now, newspaper journalists have to have a college degree. In fact, all *U.S. Times* journalists have one, while only 27 percent[47] of the population of the county in which the *U.S. Times* circulates attain college education and higher. By pointing out a gap between the newspaper and readers, some *U.S. Times* journalists like Daniel and Michael warn that the newspaper is operating in an ivory tower, ignoring consumer needs.

[47] This figure is calculated from 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates posted on the website of U.S. Census Bureau. I do not reveal the URL in order not to specify the county where the *U.S. Times* circulates.

APPENDIX I

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION—*NIPPON HERALD*

How Do They Think about Economic Changes?

Declines in advertising are big concerns among *Nippon Herald* employees, though advertising accounts for less than 25 percent of the total revenue of an average Japanese newspaper. In the early 1990s when the bubble economy burst, advertising revenues sharply dropped, they said. Since then, the *Nippon Herald* has been struggling to restrain the flight of advertising as Japan has faced consecutive economic recessions. The Lehman Brothers shock in 2008 hit the finances of the *Nippon Herald* harder. Yusaku, a reporter, explained:

> Advertising revenues decrease by 5, 6 percent year-over-year every year from more than ten years ago. And, advertising dropped by more than 10 percent after the Lehman Brothers shock.

Nippon Herald employees are pessimistic about the comeback of advertising even when the economy recovers. The company turned off unnecessary lights and stopped using one of the elevators to save electricity, and offered early retirement buyouts to reduce labor costs. Furthermore, "Bonuses have been on a downward trend for the recent years," said Takuya, a reporter. Japanese corporations conventionally provide bonuses twice a year—in the summer and the winter. Japanese corporate workers usually rely on estimated bonuses to make financial plans such as mortgage repayment. Consequently, major cuts in bonuses have great impacts on workers' personal financial plans.

It varies by the business size of newspapers, but newspaper journalists are well paid in Japan.[48] A major national newspaper journalist, for instance, is annually paid 15 million yen (approximately $180,000) on an average.[49] *Nippon Herald* journalists say they are not paid this much, but their pay is "larger than an average income of other corporate workers" as they describe in a humble manner. Kenji, a reporter, said, "Our salaries are higher than earnings of average people in their 20s and 30s." However, their annual income has become smaller in recent years because the size of their bonuses has been slashed. Some are frustrated with the bonus cuts. They blame upper management for bad business decisions. Takuya expressed his frustration:

> The company got into trouble because of mistakes that management made. I strongly believe if they had dealt with things better, if they had taken better actions and made better business plans, the situation wouldn't have been this bad. They blame the economy and society for

[48] Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. (2011). Statistical Study of Basic Wage Structure 2010. Retrieved from http://www.e-stat.go.jp/SG1/estat/List.do?bid=000001028607&cycode=0

[49] A personal interview with an executive manager of a major national newspaper. I do not reveal the name of the interviewee and the paper for confidentiality reasons.

> everything. I'm annoyed by management because they use the economy and society as an excuse to cut our bonuses.

The size of *Nippon Herald* workforce has shrunk by half in the last 20 years mainly because of attrition. Baby Boomers are reaching the age of retirement, and a number of them actually started retiring from the mid-2000s onward. The company is curbing new hires. *Nippon Herald* employees accept this great reduction as a matter of course. Kenta, a reporter, looked back when he first got a job with the *Nippon Herald*:

> There were about 900 employees when I first started here in 1991. The workforce is shrinking at a great speed.[50] This indicates we had that many deadwoods. When I first started, there were a bunch of people who I thought, "What is this person doing?"

Photographers share the same feeling about cutbacks. There were ten photographers at the peak, but now it is four or five. Ryo, a seventh-year photographer, was not at the paper when his department had ten photographers, but he wondered, "I can't imagine what those ten people were doing. I just wonder if there were that many things to take photos."

Nippon Herald journalists view the downsizing of manpower in a relatively positive light. But there is no doubt that individual workers have gotten busier than before because of reductions in workforce. The company endorses the five-day work week policy, but *Nippon Herald* employees say there are many reporters who cannot fully consume their regular day-offs. Kyoko, a reporter, gave a specific example of how busy she became:

> I'm doing work that used to be done by three people in the past by myself. By the past, I mean it was just four or five years ago. My real job is to go to the field and cover stories, but it is getting more difficult to do that.

Another consequence of cutting surplus workforce is observed in the transferring cycle of job positions. The *Nippon Herald* regularly moves journalists from one department to another within the newsroom. Photographers are an exception. Photographers stay in the photography department throughout their career. Reporters and editors usually move every three years. New reporters are sent to local branches for the first few years for on-the-job training. After that, they are transferred back to the head office and assigned to beats. Because every department does not have room to keep surplus journalists anymore, they have to push out someone in exchange for returning reporters. Ousted journalists are transferred to different departments or local branches to balance out. In this way, they regularly move around. *Nippon Herald* journalists think the cycle of the personnel shuffle has been shortened to less than the regular three-year cycle.

[50] The total number of employees was 579 (338 in the newsroom) in 2009, according to *Japan Newspaper Annual '09-'10* (Japan Newspaper Publishers & Editors Association, 2009). This figure includes the workforce of the head office (the editorial department) and the spin-offs (the business and printing departments).

Reporters are skeptical about this shorter cycle because it is hard for them to establish rapport with information sources. Also, frequent transfers do not allow reporters to develop expertise in particular fields. On the other hand, there are some employees who view this short cycle in a positive light. In their opinion, they are nicely distracted from boredom stemming from the routinization of work because their work regularly changes. Suguru, a manager, said:

> If you stay in the same department for a long time, you end up repeating the same work again and again. When you move to a different department, you have different people and things to cover. I take it positively that changes of positions broaden my horizons.

Every journalist in the newsroom has gotten busier, but it does not mean that reporters and editors work beyond their departments. For instance, a police reporter from the city department does not write about lifestyle because lifestyle stories are in the territory of the culture department. But the work nature of photographers has changed because of the downsizing of the newsroom. *Nippon Herald* photographers are trained to write stories when they are sent to local branches in their first years to learn the overall workflow. In the past, when they were transferred back to the head office from local branches, they became photographers specializing in taking photos. But now, photographers are asked to write stories in addition to taking photos. Ryo explained this change:

> We were treated as "photographers," but now we are encouraged to be "photojournalists." This is a big change in the last five years. It may be a general trend in the Japanese newspaper industry that photographers cover and write stories as well as take photos.

The pace of work varies by department and beat. Reporters of the culture department, for instance, likely have more time to cover and write stories than reporters of the city department. City reporters have to cover and write about regular briefings and press conferences of the government and other organizations. Also, in many cases, they have their own topics to follow on the side. Though work speed varies, *Nippon Herald* employees in general are feeling that the workload of individual workers has increased and their work pace has speeded up. As a result, they think that emphasis has shifted from quality to quantity of work. "Management prioritizes quantity over quality. They say both quantity and quality, but as a matter of fact, quantity over quality," said Yusaku. Takuya added, "Those who produce a lot and do a lot of work every day are appreciated."

While the company asks employees to do more work, it has tightened up budgets that journalists can use for work. Rank-and-file employees are aware of changes in the work of managers. Kenji said, "How to cut costs has become a manager's job." Reporters are frustrated with cutbacks on business trips. They are increasingly asked to do without business trips, regardless of how far they may be. They end up using phone interviews or substituting interview subjects who live nearby. Daisuke, a manager, pointed out the limitation of phone interviews:

> They don't allow reporters to go on a business trip, not to mention an overseas business trip. Collecting information in person is different from on the phone. When you interview someone face-to-face, you may have a small talk. From that small talk, you may find something or develop story ideas and projects. Management says if you can do it on the phone, do it on the phone. I don't think this is a good idea.

Like Daisuke, other *Nippon Herald* journalists are concerned about the quality of work because of cutbacks in resources. They are increasingly producing stories in a rush without actual human interactions with information sources to do work with fewer people in less time. Reporters realize that such workflow lowers their motivation. They expect to run into opportunities to enrich their stories when they go to the field and collect information in person. They think that impersonal information-gathering techniques, such as Internet search, cannot give them such opportunities. Reporters believe that they can reflect their experience in the field in their stories, which they feel attracts readers more.

Another consequence of cutbacks is that the *Nippon Herald* relies more on wire stories. Wire services provide news stories, especially national and international stories, and save the time and energy of *Nippon Herald* journalists. Believing the heavy use of wire stories hurts the quality of the newspaper, Kyoko, a reporter, said:

> The amount of original content is decreasing. We can use wire stories from Kyodo[51] to fill the paper, but then we can't distinguish our paper from others. I'm very concerned that we are making a regrettable move.

While reporters and editors are concerned about the quality of information, makeup editors are worrying about the quality of the final product. Because they have fewer workers to compose the paper every day, it is difficult to do elaborate language usage, designs and layouts. The composition of Japanese newspapers is craftwork. Because the Japanese language is flexible enough to arrange and read either horizontally (from left to right) or vertically (from top to bottom), makeup editors can apply a variety of layouts to newspapers if they want. However, such work requires time. Tadashi, a makeup editor, said:

> Newspapers with a lot of efforts are well made, of course. It is obvious that they are carefully made if you look at design, layout and the usage of vocabulary. It is getting harder to put such efforts. We may be better than other local newspapers. They just compose it. They are like, compose it, and it's fine if there's no misspelling or something. Then, I think our jobs lose their appeal. I don't think such makeshift work attracts readers.

Nippon Herald employees recognize that the newspaper has not kept up with social and consumer trends. As Taro, a reporter, pointed out, "The paper is somewhat

[51] Kyodo News is a nonprofit cooperative news agency in Japan.

old-fashioned because it's a newspaper [old medium]." Some criticize that the company has not done enough marketing research to understand consumer needs. Management chants the "reader-first creed," but *Nippon Herald* employees doubt that management seriously takes into consideration readers' needs without a thorough reader survey and the like. According to Taro, the newspaper is so arrogant that it tends to force what it selfishly thinks important on readers without consulting readers. Some *Nippon Herald* journalists realize there is a gap between the newspaper and readers.

Others are anxious because the company does not indicate a clear vision or direction of where it is heading. The operation of the website, for instance, is a business expansion. However, the company has not explained to employees the purpose or business strategy of the website. *Nippon Herald* employees have no idea of what the company wants to do with the website. Takuya analyzed this confusion over the website:

> Current management and editorial executives, coupled with their age, lack awareness of the current state and the merits and demerits of the website. Putting aside these issues, they have made decisions on a patchwork basis. Without thorough discussions on what to do with it, I don't think they are running the website on reasonable judgments.

The lack of leadership and economic declines make *Nippon Herald* employees anxious about the future of the newspaper. When asked about the future of the newspaper, Akihiko, a photographer, said, "The future ... I hope there will be a future." Akihiko may have shown the most pessimistic idea, but other employees think the future will be different from what the *Nippon Herald* is today. They imagine that the newspaper will transform into something that they cannot imagine. They agree that the company cannot remain in the same size when circulation and advertising further decline. The newspaper will have to downsize the business in order to stay in business. But *Nippon Herald* employees believe that the newspaper will not completely go away, at least in 20 years. The reason is the paper's own distribution network. Affiliated distributors sell long-term subscription contracts to readers and deliver the newspaper to their home. *Nippon Herald* employees believe that this distribution system helps keep the paper afloat, based on trust relationships have been established between readers and distributors and between distributors and the newspaper.

There is a reason why *Nippon Herald* employees are anxious about the newspaper 20 years from now. Their major concern is the aging of readership. The majority of readers are in their 50s and older, and they will be in their 70s and older 20 years later. Then, this group of loyal readers may give up subscriptions for various reasons, such as diseases and death. In that case, the *Nippon Herald* is expected to experience a sharp drop in circulation, which may become a lethal blow. *Nippon Herald* employees are drawing this sort of picture of the future.

Some point out the recent increase of lower-income households because of economic recessions and relaxed labor laws[52] as another reason for their concern about

[52] The labor market has been deregulated or liberated under the initiative of the government and business community since the 1990s in order to make Japanese corporations competitive in the globalized economy. The regulations on temporary workers were eliminated and relaxed, which is considered to cause the

the future of the newspaper. The subscription fee of the *Nippon Herald* morning edition and evening edition is about 4,000 yen ($48) a month, and that of the morning edition only is about 3,000 yen ($36). *Nippon Herald* employees argue that these fees are not cheap for lower-income families. They are concerned those households falling from middle class to lower class might stop subscribing to the paper.

Changing housing conditions are another issue. Though the *Nippon Herald* holds its own distribution network covering the entire circulating area, it is hard to sell the newspaper to people living in condominiums and apartments with an automatic lock at the property entrance. In the first place, newspaper sales people have no chance to come to individual entrances to sell a newspaper and collect signatures on the form if residents do not allow them to come in the property on the interphone at the main entrance.[53] Second, because outsiders cannot freely come into the property, newspaper delivery people end up placing newspapers in subscribers' mailboxes downstairs. Subscribers have to come downstairs all the way to collect the newspaper every morning when it may be the most hectic hours of the day. People who do not want to take this trouble are not likely to subscribe to a paper.

Because they think the newspaper will exist at least another 20 years, and because the newspaper has not yet abandoned Japanese conventional employment systems, such as lifetime employment and seniority, *Nippon Herald* employees are not feeling an imminent danger that urges them to make a move in their career. The turnover rate is very low, and in fact, they think the *Nippon Herald* is their lifelong workplace. When asked if they had thought about changing companies or career, they answered either no or not seriously. The only interviewee who said he considered applying for a job position in a different newspaper did not actually send his résumé to the company. He thought about changing companies not because of economic concerns but because of a conflict with his supervisors. *Nippon Herald* employees are anxious and uncertain about the newspaper and their intensified work conditions and skeptical about management and business decisions, but the level of anxiety has not reached the limit of abandoning the newspaper because of their relatively stable financial conditions and employment.

How Do They Think about Technological Changes?

As a whole, *Nippon Herald* reporters and editors view digital and advanced communication technologies more positively than negatively. The most prominent technological changes for reporters and editors are cellphones and the Internet. "Means of communication dramatically changed," said Yusaku. Cellphones allow reporters to have instant contacts with their information sources. Kenta said, "There is no doubt it is much easier to call someone at night." Before cellphones, reporters had to call their information sources and colleagues either at the office or at home. But the cellphone made it possible for reporters to catch them in person wherever and whenever. They feel

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increase of temporary workers who are often called "working poor" by the media. The working poor are people who cannot move out of the cycle of temporary work, living an unstable life with meager wages.

[53] Door-to-door sales are the most widely practiced marketing strategy, in terms of the sales of large- and mid-seize newspapers.

more comfortable to make a call to cellphones even late at night. Reporters and photographers also use cellphones to send stories and photos from the field by connecting cellphones to their laptop computers. They do not need to search for Wi-Fi to do so when in the field, thanks to cellphones. "When I was a police reporter, I often typed stories in the field, like at the park, and sent them via the cellphone. As we can send stories from wherever, I think we are more rushed under time pressure," said Takuya. Cellphones have brought convenience to editors, too. Editors can now easily reach field reporters with cellphones.

Email is another convenient means of communication for reporters. Reporters can send emails to their information sources, regardless of the time of the day. Also, they say it is easier to contact certain people, such as academics, via email than on the phone.

Sending photos via email is possible because of the digitalization of photos. Digital cameras changed the work process of photographers. First and foremost, the digital camera is a time-saving invention for photographers. Digital photos do not need to be developed. In the age of film cameras, photographers had to come back to the office to develop film that they took in the field. Developing film is a time-consuming process. Akihiko looked back and said:

> We had to come back to the office at least 40 minutes before the deadline to develop films and print photos. But now, we can send photos via the computer from the field. We can do that even five minutes, four minutes before the deadline. This was unthinkable in the past.

The portability of work brought by advanced communication technology allows field reporters and photographers to work wherever, which is an advantage, as they say, but at the same time a disadvantage. Photographers think their work became endless because of tighter deadlines enabled by digital technology. Photo shooting of sports matches is an example. In the past, photographers stopped taking photos without waiting for the end of the game because they needed to save time for processing photos. But now, digital camera and communication technology allow them to keep shooting photos until just before the deadline. Akihiko said taking photos until the very last minute was tough and great pressure, but he also said he was proud of producing the latest photos for readers despite such pressure.

Advanced communication technology brought great convenience to reporters and editors. But at the same time, *Nippon Herald* employees feel the same technology has reduced communication. Comparing today with the time before cellphones, Yusaku said:

> Reporters used to call the office more frequently in the past. Today, they are loose in communication. Especially, young reporters hardly report, contact or consult the office. They know they can call whenever necessary, so they lost a sense of tension at work.

Generally, the Internet is a great plus for reporters. "Research is tremendously easy now, thanks to the Internet," said Takuya. Suguru added, "The amount of information available considerably increased" because of the Internet. Reporters use Internet search engines and the digital archives of the *Nippon Herald* to do research for

their topics. They can do research, collect information and send it through the computer at the desk. Saori, a reporter, said:

> If you request statistics from governmental organizations or something, there was always a lag time in the past because you sent your request through fax or mail. But now, those data are posted on the Internet, and you can obtain them on the spot. So, I think the efficiency of our work was enhanced.

Reporters can access information that they need without going through time-consuming bureaucratic procedure. But, contradictorily, reporters are missing human interactions with information sources. Taro is one of them:

> They go like, "That's been posted on our website. Why don't you search our web archives?" and slam down the phone if I call them. It is convenient, yes. But I can't see who my information sources are. It may be too much to say, but I feel lonely. I wonder if this kind of relationships with information sources is OK.

From a journalistic point of view, *Nippon Herald* reporters see the paper's website in a positive light. The greatest advantage of the online edition is that it does not have geographical limitations. Reporters and photographers are happy about their stories and photos posted on the website because they expect their products to be viewed by more people beyond geographical limitations of the print edition.

Though the website fulfills their journalistic ego, *Nippon Herald* journalists do not place much importance on the website. Rather, "The website is different from the paper," Suguru said. Newswork is clearly divided and assigned to each profession in the *Nippon Herald*. Reporters write stories, editors edit stories, and they do not do additional work for the online edition. The website is managed by the media department. Consequently, *Nippon Herald* print journalists say the online edition has not increased their workload. The original content online is created by media department workers, not by print journalists. Photographers create photo galleries and sometimes videos for the website, but the number of those is very limited. The website basically reuses their stories and photos from the print edition. *Nippon Herald* print journalists are not enthusiastic about the website primarily because they think the website does not contribute to the company's finances. Yusaku explained:

> No one is making profit from advertising on the Internet. But running the website entails facility costs and labor costs. I think the reality is the paper doesn't recoup the investment.

The *Nippon Herald* is cautious about adaptation to Facebook, Twitter and other digital platforms because the newspaper is not sure if it can capitalize on them. The newspaper is currently thinking of facilitating applications for smartphones, such as iPhones. The newspaper is less reluctant to think about diversification into smartphone business because the public accepts that applications for smartphones cost money. The

newspaper can expect some revenues, even though individual applications sell only for nickels and dimes.

Another significant factor of their indifference to the online edition is that the circulation of the *Nippon Herald* has not yet recorded a sharp decline. In fact, it has been almost level for the last 20 years. The *Nippon Herald* is largely sustained by subscription revenues. *Nippon Herald* employees acknowledge that they lack a sense of urgency of looking for new platforms and business models that would complement the print edition to sustain the company in the future.

While *Nippon Herald* journalists appreciate that the Internet has made their work easier and more effective, they are not happy about negative impacts of the same technology on the newspaper business. They think that the social status of the *Nippon Herald* has declined because of the Internet. Newspapers are now simply one medium for everyday people, they say. Reporters themselves confess that they use the Internet more than newspapers for news consumption as everyday people do. "I read newspapers at work, but I rely on TV and the Internet for breaking news. Online news is good enough when at home," said Taro.

The number of readers who expect that all content of the *Nippon Herald* will be published online is increasing, they say. The *Nippon Herald* does not upload all stories to the website. Therefore, the *Nippon Herald* newsroom often receives calls from readers asking why they cannot read certain stories online. Junko, a reporter, realized another change in newspaper readers:

> Readers have been able to have a say by blogging, for instance. They couldn't in the past if they wanted to. We represented them, right? It is not the case. Because they speak for themselves, they no longer rely on newspapers to make their voices heard. They are like, "I don't mind if newspapers don't report this. I will post blogs." People are changing that way.

Because everyday people have other ways of production, distribution and consumption of information, they appreciate newspapers less. Takuya said that the Internet has made newspapering old-fashioned work, and that people are less respectful to newspapers. Because of the degradation of newspapers, "The social status of newspaper journalists is declining," said Shota, a makeup editor.

Computer technology has made page composition easier, which is appreciated by *Nippon Herald* employees because productivity and efficiency have been enhanced. But the same technology causes negative consequences to certain newsroom workers, such as an increase of workload. The *Nippon Herald* used to have the composing room where pages were assembled for publication. When the composing room was downsized, work that used to be done by composing workers was brought into the newsroom. Now, the makeup department is in charge of the layout and design of pages in addition to traditional makeup work. In retrospect, Suguru said:

> In the past, if we said we wanted to do the layout, a production person would come and operate the machine for us to move around headlines and stuff upon our request. We would sit at the machine together and

> compose the paper together. But it's gone. Now, makeup workers operate the machine and compose pages.

Suguru is one of *Nippon Herald* employees who appreciate the rationalization of production. Using the metaphor of automatic teller machines (ATMs), he described how work within the newsroom was rationalized:

> In the old days, we went to the bank all the way to withdraw money and waited in a long line for a teller's assistance to fill out the form or something. But now, we can withdraw money from ATMs without a teller's assistance. This kind of thing is happening in the newsroom.

Rationalization gives workers more control. Work is concentrated to a large extent in computer systems where workers have access to materials for publication. However, because the number of employees is decreasing, even rationalized work results in increasing the workload. Tadashi was once a makeup editor around the end of the 1990s. After doing reporting work for several years, he was transferred back to the makeup department. He realizes a big difference in makeup work between the first time and the second time he was transferred to the department. He said when he was a makeup editor in the late 1990s, he worked with production workers to "make up" pages. But now, he is all by himself. Tadashi explained:

> I have to operate machines, and I have to organize headlines and layouts. I have to do two jobs at the same time. Because of that multitasking, I don't have time. I can't elaborate words and phrases as in the past.

Tadashi is worried about declines in the quality of work because of cutbacks in the workforce and accompanying increases in workload.

In the newspaper business, production work is the most rationalized area because of advanced production technology. Human labor in production work is more easily replaced by machines and computers than is editorial work. Tadashi observes the rationalization of production work by machines is coinciding with the decline in the newspaper business. As a result, he feels computerization is used to cut labor in production. The workload of those who engage in production work increases, and their labor is intensified. Shota pointed out negative consequences of reductions in workforce because of mechanization:

> The promotion of streamlining now directly leads to stuff downsizing. Are machines capable enough of doing with fewer people? Yes, maybe. But machines still need people to operate. Mechanization rationalizes work, far fewer people take up that work, and a burden shouldered by the individual worker becomes greater. I don't think this is good.

How Do They View the Nature and Conditions of Their Occupation?

Nippon Herald journalists view their occupations in two ways. They are proud of being newspaper workers with privileges. Some of them develop a sense of elitism from there. On the other hand, they do not hesitate to describe themselves as "salaryman," paid corporate workers without individuality.

The *Nippon Herald* newsroom is a male-dominated workplace where patriarchal ideology prevails. Female employees are not comfortable in such a workplace, though they think their situations are much better than decades ago. Sectionalism is another characteristic of the *Nippon Herald* newsroom. Because of this, it is hard for constructive communication between departments to take place.

a) Privileged Professionals

Autonomy is the primary privilege that *Nippon Herald* journalists point out. As long as they complete assigned work, they are free to pursue their own stories on the side. They have freedom to choose topics in their beat fields, organize projects and interview whoever they think they need to talk to. Takuya, has 15 years experience with the *Nippon Herald*. He feels that his career has reached a comfortable point to enjoy freedom: "I may be in the best stage of my career. They let me do things on my own. If I come up with a project idea and say, 'I'll do this!' they'd mostly allow me to do it."

Newsroom workers, especially reporters, do not need to stay in the office all day. They freely go out in town under the name of research. Suguru jokingly said, "I relax myself on and off by going 'missing' on errands in town." From such mental and physical freedom, *Nippon Herald* journalists feel they have control of their work. Even Taro feels like "We are kind of self-employed." Taro is a political reporter, stationed in City Hall. There is a press room in City Hall where Taro commutes directly from home. Reporters like Taro do not often come to the newsroom, though they regularly report to their editors back in the newsroom. They are virtually on their own. *Nippon Herald* employees like the company's laissez-faire policy on daily reporting work. It is up to journalists whether to work hard or not. Some believe that policy creates good pressure on reporters because it is individual reporters' responsibility to satisfy their journalistic ego of getting scoops and exclusives and getting their stories published.

Another factor that allows *Nippon Herald* journalists to differentiate themselves from other occupations is the power of their occupation. Ryo likes imagining that his photo stories are read by 500,000 readers. Ryo said: "I feel fulfilled, thinking that I have influence on society to some extent." Interactions with readers also give journalists a sense of influence. Generally speaking, *Nippon Herald* journalists enjoy feedback from readers, which they receive through letters to the editor and face-to-face communication. Kenta said:

> Not only my own experience, but those who I met through my work told me something like "That article was very good," "That reporter changed my life," and I think our stories have such power. I always want to do that influential work.

In addition to power and influence that comes through their work, they enjoy the name value of the *Nippon Herald*. The *Nippon Herald* is considered an influential company with a long history in the local community. Unlike in the United States,

national newspapers are more popularly read than local newspapers in Japan. National newspapers usually occupy a high share of the local market in most cases. There are some strong local and regional papers, but they are rare. In such circumstances, local newspapers in general are niche products and not usually considered as powerful as national newspapers. In this sense, the *Nippon Herald* is an exception. The *Nippon Herald* is well read by local people. Because the *Nippon Herald* is a well-known name in the community, reporters can feel the power of the name in their everyday practices. Shota said, "You can meet important people who you've never dreamed of meeting, you know, because of the name of the *Nippon Herald*." Junko remembers her experience of getting keenly aware of the brand power. Junko once tried to personally interview a prominent craftsperson. When she made an interview request, she did not refer to the name of the company because it was not a part of her work. Her request was turned down on the spot. Junko recalled:

> By then, I could meet whoever, almost everyone including mayors and police chiefs if I identified myself as Junko from the *Nippon Herald*. But for the first time, I realized how powerful the name of the *Nippon Herald* could be. I can meet all sorts of people because of the company name. I appreciate that. And, people take you seriously and answer you carefully if they know you are with the newspaper.

Nippon Herald journalists believe in the raison d'être of the newspaper. They claim that newspapers are indispensable information sources, even more so in this Internet age, differentiating themselves from other information producers. Kenji said, "Because people are overwhelmed by information, I believe that there'll always be needs for well sorted information. Given that, I don't think I will be out of job." This is a universal idea shared among *Nippon Herald* journalists. The premise for this is that people always want to have newspapers as quality information sources. This belief gives *Nippon Herald* employees a sense of job security.

For *Nippon Herald* journalists, the Internet has increased the importance of their occupation as a gatekeeper rather than poses a threat to the newspaper. Suguru further indicated that newspapers serve as an educator for innocent people:

> Thanks to the Internet, our readers are well informed. We have to provide information that they are convinced with. It is often said that information on the Internet lacks credibility. The majority of our readers are not well trained, so they easily believe information on the Internet is always right. Furthermore, they get the wrong idea that they know more than newspapers do, exposed to gossips and stuff on the Internet. I think newspapers are getting more important to dispel their misconception about the Internet.

Suguru's statement includes a sense of elitism, a sense shared among *Nippon Herald* journalists. They likely view themselves above everyday people. There are some reasons that they develop a sense of elitism. One reason is the competitiveness of getting a job with the newspaper. Some *Nippon Herald* employees are proud of being an

employee of the famous company in the local community rather than becoming a journalist. Many believe that getting a job with a well-known company is competitive, and therefore, not everyone can get it. Shota looked back when he first got a job with the *Nippon Herald* 15 years ago:

> I was a bighead in the beginning. I think I was. You know, I was proud of myself getting a competitive job. People in town treat you well, and you get it wrong. That's why I became arrogant, probably. If you see me now, you may say I'm still arrogant. But personally, I think I'm better, humbler.

A sense of elitism also stems from the social responsibility of newspapers that newspaper producers have in mind. Believing that newspapers produce news and information that may affect people's life and society, Takuya distinguished his work from others:

> We are also salaryman. I don't mean to look down on other occupations, but we are different. We have to be conscious more about that. Our jobs are different. Our mission is not simply to make money or to spend our days in idleness.

b) Salaryman

Like Takuya, *Nippon Herald* journalists do not hesitate to recognize themselves as salaryman. "I'm a salaryman anyway. I have to do whatever and wherever the company sends me," said Taro. They view themselves as replaceable pieces of personnel affairs. Junko acknowledged, "I'm a piece. I'm just a rank-and-file employee." "We are salaryman subject to personnel shuffle," said Suguru. Newsroom workers cannot help but become generalists rather than experts in particular fields because of frequent personnel shuffles. Some welcome regular changes of job positions because they would never get tired of doing the same work. On the other hand, some question frequent personnel shuffles. Kyoko looked back on her earlier career with the *Nippon Herald*:

> I went to a local branch for the first three years. After I came back here [the head office], I was in charge of crime reporting for one year and three months. From there, I was transferred to the business department. It didn't make sense to me. I felt like, "Am I going to waste my hard work so far?!"

Nippon Herald employees commonly think that they are a part of the system and, therefore, are conscious about political and economic constraints inside and outside the system. Kenji said he was exhausted from spending his energy to deal with politics beyond his journalistic activities:

> My predecessor said, "Is City Hall bugging you?" And I said yes. You have enemies in front and back. It is the way of being stationed in City Hall, he said. While I'm confronting City Hall, I realize that I'm being

> criticized from the back. I'm criticized from the back that I expected to protect me.

By "back," Kenji means the *Nippon Herald*. Kenji believes that the company should support workers and their work because workers are parts of the company. When City Hall complains about his reporting, the company should take his side, not the side of City Hall. In reality, the company does not act as Kenji expects because of political constraints. News sources, City Hall in this case, have more power than journalists. *Nippon Herald* journalists are expected to succumb to those constraints as a part of the system.

Employees at the upper level are more sensitive to political and economic pressure than rank-and-file workers. Takuya expressed his frustration against the weak-kneed attitude of his supervisors:

> I understand the newspaper is also a business bound with various ties and constraints with the community, so it can't always chant justice. We should not be compromised by pressure, but I know we change our tones more or less, depending on who we are writing about. I mean, people at my level don't, but people above us do. I'm disappointed at them.

Politics are not only taking place between information sources and the newspaper but also within the company. Daisuke has a frustrating experience that his stories were killed by company politics when he was a young reporter. He lost a political battle with his older colleague. They were working on the same issue but from different perspectives. The older colleague put pressure on the editor, exerting power based on seniority, and killed Daisuke's stories.

Personnel shuffles are used for company politics, too. The *Nippon Herald* had a drug scandal several years ago in which an employee was involved. Because that employee was one of the owner family members, management tried to cover it up. A couple of reporters with a strong sense of justice openly criticized management. The reporters ended up being transferred to unimportant positions in regular personnel shuffles. *Nippon Herald* employees say they are good reporters but would never come back to important positions.

Local newspapers have problems of being local. Journalistically speaking, a mission of local newspapers is to inform the public of issues and problems in the community. Economically speaking, local newspapers need to maintain good relationships with local advertisers who sustain papers' revenue. These two aspects of local newspaper business are causing a dilemma among *Nippon Herald* journalists. Akihiko provided an example of the newspaper's self-censorship so as not to hurt relations with local businesses that he experiences in his everyday work practices:

> There are a bunch of things under taboo in this city. Community newspapers like ours not only cover local events and accidents every day but also need to take into consideration relationships with local businesses and advertisers. So, when something happens to those

> advertisers, you know, when they do something wrong, we can't investigate or press the issue hard. I feel frustrated with that.

Akihiko added that he sometimes felt like a corporate photographer rather than a photojournalist because he was often asked to take photos of events sponsored by advertising clients of the *Nippon Herald*.

Under political and economic pressure, *Nippon Herald* employees struggle to find meaning in their work. Kenji confessed that he has lost confidence in his work.

> I started wondering what I'm working for, if what I'm writing means anything, if my writing is beneficial to something or someone, if people appreciate my stories ... Honestly, my work is just a means to sustain my family. I'm speaking to myself it's OK if I can make my family happy by doing what I'm doing even, though I'm blamed at work every day or I can't find meaning in myself.

Kenji's position within the company causes his alienated feeling. He says he was happier when he was stationed in a local branch. He was close to readers and enjoyed direct and positive interactions with them, which gave him and his work meaning. Revealing political scandals or making scoops is not important for him. It is more meaningful for him to write about events and issues that may not be big but mean something to local people. Appreciation from readers kept Kenji motivated. But now, doing political reporting in City Hall, Kenji finds it difficult to motivate himself.

Kenji is not the only employee who is alienated from work in the *Nippon Herald*. Junko observed, "Some people are goofing off during work. Some are working hard. Some do the minimum amount of work, thinking they are just salaryman." A job at the *Nippon Herald* is simply a means of subsistence for them. They are detached from their work, their colleagues and themselves, asking themselves, "What am I doing here?" The loss in meaning of work sometimes leads to serious issues such as mental illness among workers. Yusaku said:

> The number of reporters who fall ill with depression or other psychiatric diseases is definitely increasing. In the past, if we had a case a year, we would go like, "What?! Really?!" But now, we're not surprised anymore because we have a case almost every year. Mind you, the total number of reporters is decreasing.

Those employees may develop mental disorders because of the lack of communication with others. In fact, *Nippon Herald* employees say they are feeling less close to their colleagues and the workplace than before. They attribute this to general social trends. Interpersonal relations are diluting in the whole society, which *Nippon Herald* journalists believe affects their relations in the workplace. When asked to compare human relationships in the newsroom with 20 years ago, Kenta answered:

> Human relationships have changed a lot. If you look at society, people have less and shallower relationships. That affects workplace relations.

> Furthermore, we have become busier, which has resulted in less communication among us. We go for a drink together fewer times than before, and I think people's everyday communication has become more limited. People naturally get together with their friends, making their own small groups, and they don't talk with others beyond their jobs.

Nippon Herald employees have become busier than ever because of cutbacks in the workforce. Reductions occurred mostly in production work, but the workforce in the newsroom is also shrinking to a lesser degree. Shota pointed out a change in relationships between older workers and the newly hired:

> In the past, editors or managers would take care of young reporters in their departments. They had time and room to do that. They used to take young reporters out for drinks or something after work. But nowadays, their workload has also increased so that they have lost such leeway. So, they can't pay close attention to what young reporters are doing. It's kind of a vicious cycle.

c) Characteristics of the Workplace

The lack of communication is one of characteristics of the *Nippon Herald* newsroom. *Nippon Herald* employees say they do not usually communicate well with different departments, even within the newsroom. Takuya provided an example of no communication between departments. When bird flu broke out, both the city department and the culture department published feature stories in the same issue, which Takuya thinks is redundant. According to him, the paper could have dealt with and presented that issue more effectively if those departments had had good communication and cooperation. Takuya analyzed the lack of communication between departments:

> People may be keeping distance from each other, may have territoriality or may be ambitious about taking credits for things. So, they don't say, "Let's do it together." A bunch of ego is going on.

Daisuke pointed out that journalists know about editorial work well, but that they do not know about the mechanism of the company well. He was once transferred to the executive secretary's office for five years; in other words, he was away from the newsroom. It is rare that editorial workers are transferred to positions outside the newsroom. From that experience, he saw a bigger picture of the company and how much less newsroom workers know about the business operation and structure. There are also people who are comfortable working alone in a segmented field. They do not care about the lack of communication unless it affects their work activities.

Photographers have different opinions about workplace relations. Photographers maintain close workplace relations contrary to their colleagues in the news side. The photography department has its office on the third floor of the building, while the newsroom occupies the fourth floor. Individual photographers often work with journalists from different departments, but they do not frequently or regularly go upstairs

to discuss their work agenda. The photography department is physically independent from the newsroom, creating an intimate community of their own. Ryo said:

> I don't know if I have grown well into this environment in my seven years here, but I now see my colleagues as my people. I commune with them about things. Accordingly, the number of times going for a drink with them has increased. In fact, it's fun to hang out with them.

This behavior is a reflection of a male culture in the department. The *Nippon Herald* photography department is a male-only workplace, while the whole newsroom is male-dominated. Male workers have more opportunities to go for a drink after work than their female counterparts. Sharing food and drinks together apparently helps create more relaxed and informal relationships within the department.

My interviewees pointed out a macho culture at the *Nippon Herald*. The *Nippon Herald* gives the new hires on-the-job training as other Japanese newspapers do. *Nippon Herald* journalists recall that their bosses often landed on them for their amateurish work for the first few years of their career to develop them into full-fledged journalists. One female reporter remembers she often cried on the way home from work. After this training period ends, and young reporters become capable of doing work at a more professional level, older workers start treating them as colleagues. Ryo recalls it was not comfortable going for a drink with his supervisors and older colleagues until he reached this point because his work of the day was often criticized while drinking. But now, he is happier because he feels that he is a part of the department as a recognized photographer.

Female employees, on the other hand, do not feel comfortable about the male-dominated culture. Female employees suffer from the glass ceiling and overt and covert gender discrimination. Japan enforced the equal employment opportunity act for men and women in 1986 and amended it to reinforce the law in 1999 in order to diminish gender discrimination at work. However, workplace gender discrimination has not been eliminated after 25 years. Kyoko got a job with the *Nippon Herald* after the equal employment law was enforced:

> Positions and work to which women are assigned are limited. Female reporters hardly step into fields that male reporters dominate. Or, women should leave after a few years of work and after marriage. When I got a job here, I thought that kind of thing is old and it wouldn't matter to me. But I realized in the fifth or sixth year of my career that even my generation is fettered by gender stereotype. However hard you work, you are not expected or appreciated, I thought.

Saori is married with two children. She appreciates better support systems for female workers today. She remembers her supervisor's reaction when she got married 15 years ago:

> It was about four years after the equal employment law when I joined this company. There were far fewer women at that time. I think the workplace is much more female-friendly today because we have support

> systems for women, like childcare leave, to some extent. I've been married for 15 years. There were guys who openly said to women, "Give up your job on marriage," around that time. The guy who said that to me is still here, above me. Nowadays, they don't, at least openly.

Saori's statement implies the *Nippon Herald* workplace still practices implicit discrimination against female employees. Even some male employees sense this tacit unfair treatment of women. Taro, for instance, witnessed his colleagues complaining about a female employee who took maternity leave for her second child by saying, "She is on leave again!" Then, Taro realized a gap between the public face of the newspaper and reality. The newspaper publicly argues for equal employment and treatment and child-raising support, but the newsroom is practicing the opposite. Taro pointed out poor economic conditions of the paper may have led to such attitudes of his male colleagues. The company did not fill the position after the female employee left, so the rest of her department had to do extra work for her. They are not happy about the increase in workload.

A prominent and common characteristic of *Nippon Herald* employees emerged at the very beginning of every interview. I usually started an interview, to break the ice, with a question, "Will you tell me about what you are doing with the *Nippon Herald*?" Then, my interviewees answered that question by giving their positions within the company. Examples are: "I belong to the culture department. I mainly cover topics related to lifestyle," "I'm in charge of City Hall, covering the government. And, because I belong to the politics team, I also cover elections," or "I belong to the photo news department. I take photos of events and accidents on a daily basis and occasionally seasonal stuff like festivals and local sports." *Nippon Herald* employees identify with their groups (departments).

The *Nippon Herald* exercises lifetime employment and seniority systems. Once employees are hired, they are not fired unless they engage in illegitimate behavior or act against corporate interests. Employees' salaries rise according to their age and length of career. The newspaper has not abandoned this pay raise system amid the shrinkage of revenues, though the margin of raise is getting smaller. *Nippon Herald* employees are generally satisfied with their pay. Taking these systems for granted, *Nippon Herald* employees see the newspaper as their lifelong workplace. Yusaku said, "As long as this company exists, I will stay. I will work for this company until my retirement." Taro does not see a future after the *Nippon Herald*: "Well, I will need to think about what to do if the company goes bankrupt. I don't know what I will do."

Because they regard the paper as their lifelong workplace, *Nippon Herald* employees want to keep it intact. This leads to criticisms and mistrust of management. Some employees expressed their frustration about what management does as well as what it does not do. Kenji said, "By any measure, management is thinking of nothing. Rather than thinking of nothing, they are doing nothing." Junko agreed:

> They are running blind. I think they don't have any long-term plans. I wonder if they are seriously looking for a way of survival. While they don't increase the workforce, our workload increases. It's like the

> landlord-tenant system under feudalism, you know, they force us to produce forever, and our life never gets better.

Frustrations and complaints among employees are delivered to management through the labor union as collective criticisms and demands. In other words, employees refrain from individually or openly arguing with management. Management has the power to shuffle personnel. Such oppressive behavior of management further arouses mistrust among employees. The *Nippon Herald* company union serves as a communication channel between management and rank-and-file employees. The power of the union is in decline for various reasons (e.g., the shrinkage of the workforce, young workers' indifference to union activities), but union member are proud that the union manages to maintain the strength to fight for workers' rights. In fact, the union is suing the company over illegal termination.

How Do They View the Role of Newspapers?

Nippon Herald journalists acknowledge that the newspaper is a business. Because it is a private company, the newspaper is affected by the economy and market forces. However, *Nippon Herald* journalists maintain ideal images of the paper's role. The watchdog role is the first thing that *Nippon Herald* journalists point out. They think it is critical for the newspaper to monitor authorities and chase down issues and wrongdoings. Otherwise, "The government is not above lying. Manipulated by politicians, it may do different things from what it says is for the public," said Taro. In addition to politics, the newspaper should keep an eye on "education, childcare, aging population, pensions and whatever is happening," said Takuya.

Nippon Herald journalists are not sure exactly where such a watchdog image of the newspaper came from. None of my interviewees had journalism education in college, and therefore, they were not formally taught about newspaper roles. Some remember they read and got impressed by nonfiction written by former newspaper journalists, such as Ryotaro Shiba, Katsuichi Honda and Satoshi Kamata, when they were younger. Some were inspired by real incidents in which newspaper journalists were involved. Shota specifically mentioned the development of the blood-donation system in Japan as an example. Until the mid-1960s, Japan had a blood-selling system that caused serious social and health problems. Yasuharu Honda, a Yomiuri Shimbun reporter, laid bare the reality of blood selling by writing a series of reports. His writing drew great attention and moved the central government to replace the blood-selling system with the blood-donation system. Shota says he was impressed by the power newspaper journalists possibly have on society. He believes the role of newspaper journalists is to create a better society.

Nippon Herald journalists think that good newspapers should reflect a variety of voices. "The newspaper has to represent people whose voice is marginalized," "Good newspapers should support and introduce hard-working local people who barely gather attention to the community," and "My ideal newspaper is a paper reflecting diverse voices of everyday people," they say.

Nippon Herald journalists also mention the role of newspapers as an inspirer. As inspired by other newspaper journalists, Kenta wants to inspire people. He talked about his ideal work:

> Stories may change things, society or historical views or make someone's living or life better. I would like to write stories that people feel things changed in a better way thanks to my stories.

Contrary to public roles of newspapers that they present, *Nippon Herald* journalists realize that what the newspaper offers to the public does not always match what the public demands. According to them, the newspaper lacks marketing efforts to keep up with consumer trends. It is because the newspaper is so arrogant that it does not pay attention to its readers. Taro compared the newspaper with other commodities and said:

> If you look at other corporations, they do market research, like surveys and focus groups, to collect opinions from consumers and ultimately improve their customer services. But the newspaper hardly does that, though it trumpets the reader-first policy. It may be common to newspapers in general, but the newspaper tends to selfishly assume that this page must be good or that project must be great. Of course, ideas come first, but given universal market principles, it's not right that the paper forces its ideas to readers.

This demonstrates that the newspaper does not necessarily respond to ideal roles of newspapers that *Nippon Herald* journalists have in mind.

APPENDIX J

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION—*JAPAN OBSERVER*

How Do They Think about Economic Changes?

It is difficult for English-language newspapers to sell and attract advertising in Japan, a monolingual country, though the English language is considered the most important second language. Given this linguistic background, the market for English-language newspapers is small. In such an environment, the *Japan Observer* is considered a niche, specialty newspaper circulating to a small group of people who read English and have (English-related) special interests.

Though it does not do well with display advertising, the *Japan Observer* served as a good vehicle of classified advertising before the advent of the Internet. The newspaper almost monopolistically published classified advertising related to jobs that required English-language skills and/or international knowledge. Classified advertising generated money for the sustenance of the *Japan Observer*. However, this is not the case anymore today because of the increasing number of classified advertising publishers online.

When I first visited the *Japan Observer* in the summer of 2008, the company had already been condensed into the two floors. Observing the two floors (the second floor was occupied by administration and business departments, production, weeklies, and the op-ed department; the third floor by the newsroom), I got a cramped feeling. People, desks, computers and other office equipment were crammed in the limited space. Though I was told the company had lost many employees, I thought the two floors did not provide enough space to accommodate the remaining workers. When I visited the *Japan Observer* again in the summer of 2010, the crowding was the same, though I realized subtle layout changes. *Japan Observer* employees told me that the size of the workforce had gotten smaller by more than half in the last decade. The current size of workforce is 157.[54] In addition to downsizing the workforce, the company cut wages by 10 percent, changed the salary scale, and offered early retirement buyouts several times in the 2000s to reduce labor costs.

In the *Japan Observer*, newly hired Japanese editorial workers conventionally start as reporters. A journalism degree is not necessary. The new hires are trained on the job. After some years of experience, depending on their work performance, they get promoted to be editors. Non-Japanese employees are different in terms of employment. The newspaper tends to employ non-Japanese people with experience. Non-Japanese employees on the news side are basically hired as copyeditors and news editors. The sports and culture departments have some non-Japanese reporters, but they already had experience when hired.

Because of reductions in workforce, more reporters are asked to work as editors in addition to reporting work. Sakura, a manager, lamented the shortage of manpower in her domestic news department:

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[54] Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association. (2009). *Japan Newspaper Annual '09-'10*. Tokyo: Dentsu.

> There used to be eight editors. Because we had enough editors, we could take care of features and long-term projects, and we could take holidays. But now, we have only four fulltime editors, by half. I don't remember how many reporters we had at peak, but I believe there were at least 15 or 16. But now, we have only seven. Most of them are rookies. If we include reporters-cum-editors, it's ten.

Sakura continued to explain that the domestic news department needs four editors every day to fill shifts. Currently, the department has only four editors, which is not enough. The department lacks one editor at least two days a week because of the five-workday policy. The department regularly asks some reporters to do editing work part-time. Under such circumstances, editors are swamped with everyday work, which limits their time to educate new reporters, Sakura added. The lack of attention from editors is one of the complaints that field reporters share among themselves. Field reporters say it is not easy to have instant communication with editors to seek their suggestions. Reporters in charge of governmental offices, for instance, work from the morning to the evening, along with the office hours of their assigned offices. On the other hand, editors come to the office in the afternoon or evening, close to the deadline. The *Japan Observer* used to keep editors in morning shifts, but now concentrates editors around the deadline when editing work is needed most. Because of this difference in work hours, reporters who want to have suggestions from an editor but cannot contact with him/her end up feeling that they wasted the whole morning waiting for a response from the editor.

In the sports department, a reverse phenomenon is happening. Sports editors do reporting work in addition to editing work in their private hours on the side. They use their private hours for reporting work because they cannot use their work hours during which they need to be in the office to do editing work.

The photography department also lost manpower. Yasuhiro, a photographer, said:

> I have lost time to take photos in which I'm interested since it became a two-people department. When we had three photographers, one of them could use their time for their interest, like going to the field. But we can't do that anymore.

The *Japan Observer* newsroom hires an increasing number of temporary workers and part-timers to save labor costs. Peter, an editor from an English-speaking country, compared the current situation of the *Japan Observer* with the newspaper industry in his home country:

> The shift has been going in [my country] for a number of years as well. Newspapers have not been taking on fulltime staff. They've been employing contracts, especially in editing. That's happening in Japan now. Especially the *Japan Observer*, they are not hiring fulltime staff. If they have a vacancy somewhere, they tend to put temporary staff, temporary editor. There're so many temporary people in the *Japan Observer*. They come and go each day.

Those temporary workers do the same work as fulltime workers, such as editing and writing, but their work hours are limited. The company does not intend to employ them as fulltime workers after a certain period of time but renews their contracts every six months or so, depending on the form of the contracts. Japanese fulltime employees who are working with temporary workers say they are concerned about their malcontent temporary "colleagues." Temporary workers are not happy about doing the same work with lower wages and benefits. And they are frustrated with their temporary situation in which they cannot expect to move to fulltime employment.

The *Japan Observer* has cut its budget, and editorial workers have to manage their work on a tighter budget. For instance, they go on fewer business trips and use fewer columnists. Budget plans are open to employees; in other words, employees know how much money each department is allocated. The size of budget varies by department because of differences in the nature of work, but differences in budgets cause awkward relationships between departments. Workers of departments with smaller budgets are not happy about other departments with larger budgets. As Kenzo, an editor, said, "It's not fair. I feel like my department is secondary."

As a part of budget cuts, the *Japan Observer* dropped contracts with some wire services. Most recently, the newspaper stopped subscribing to Reuters in the summer of 2010 for cost reasons. News editors are concerned about less variety of news that they put in the paper. The *Japan Observer* spares a good amount of space for world news, according to its readership. Because the paper does not have staff correspondents overseas, the *Japan Observer* relies on wire services for world news.

Japan Observer employees are worrying about the lessening amount of information that they print. The *Japan Observer* reduced the number of pages, again, for economic reasons. Hana, a webmaster, explained:

> Simply put, the volume of stories is much smaller. In the past, there were a bunch of small stories. I think the paper used to have a lot of small but interesting stories in it. But as the total number of stories decreased, we lost those stories. Mind you, the paper is eight pages thinner than before.

In addition to the amount of information, the quality of information is a concern shared by the *Japan Observer* employees. The decline in the quality of information that they produce is obvious to them. One reason is that individual reporters cannot spend enough time to dig and investigate stories because of the shortage of manpower. As Ryan, a manager, observed, "They feel more pressure to produce results quickly." They say the speed of production is more appreciated than the quality of work. Furthermore, Mayumi, a reporter, points out changes in the mentality of journalists because of the shift in emphasis from quality to speed. According to her, journalists prefer producing fast stories to spending a good deal of time to work on complicated stories. The number of such journalists is on the rise, Mayumi said.

Declines in their income have changed their attitude toward work and the atmosphere in the workplace. The *Japan Observer* cut some allowances and stopped paying overtime when it started experiencing declines in its finances. These cutbacks had

great negative impacts on the total income of *Japan Observer* employees, in addition to the 10-percent wage cut. Hideki, a reporter, observed the newsroom in this way:

> Our salaries were cut, and our overtime work is not compensated. So, everyone is like doing their work and going home as soon as they finish it. I think the size of income and the like have great impacts on people's mind.

Money is not the primary incentive for some *Japan Observer* employees, but even for them, great declines in their income are not tolerable. Some Japanese employees cannot accept that their income is smaller than that when they started. The *Japan Observer* is a Japanese company, and those Japanese employees expect the newspaper to maintain the seniority-based pay scale with which salary and job position rise in accordance with age and length of service, as traditional Japanese corporations do. Yoko, a reporter, is one of those Japanese employees. She feels she is undercompensated for her work and the length of her career:

> I thought money was not so important to motivate myself, but I don't think it is right that my annual income shrinks every year. I didn't expect my income level would plummet like this in ten years of my career.

Yoko added that she felt miserable when she compared hers with better salaries of her friends in other industries and more miserable when she compared hers with far better salaries of elite journalists of major national newspapers. Yoko is assigned to cover the central government, mainly Nagata-cho, the political center, where she works with elite journalists from other newspapers. She believes that she is doing the same amount, or more, of work as other journalists, and she feels all the less compensated. Mai, a reporter, cynically described her undercompensated work:

> Management is nonfunctional. It gets worse every year. Since I started here, circulation has been on a downward trend forever, and my salary doesn't increase. It's like I'm working for a NPO. It's like *kolkhozy* (collective farming) and *sovkhozy* (state farms) in former Soviet Union. No wonder Soviet Union collapsed!

As Mai indicated, *Japan Observer* employees do not have confidence in or positive feelings about management as the financial conditions keep deteriorating. *Japan Observer* employees understand the current economy and social trends are not favorable to the newspaper business in the first place, but they are more frustrated with management's incapability of dealing with those challenges. Management has not taken responsibility for their wrong business decisions, and because of that, employees believe the newspaper cannot stop declining. For instance, the *Japan Observer* raised the price by 30 yen ($0.35), which was a top-down decision. Their explanation was that it was inevitable to stay in business. Minoru, a manager, acknowledges that there would not be other ways for survival than raising the price because the company has already tried as

many cost-cutting measures as possible. But taking into consideration the reader's side, Minoru said:

> With the price raise, we are expected to improve reader services, but at the same time, we have to cut costs. We are actually reducing the content to cut costs. Management doesn't think about the paper for the reader.

Japan Observer employees think that management cares only about money, not about the content of the paper at all. Akira, a composition worker, said that both the publisher and the vice president do not know the newspaper business very well. The publisher came from an educational background, while the vice president was brought in from a bank to make the company solvent. According to Akira, the vice president with a banking background only talks about money. Walter, a copyeditor, feels the same way. He wants management to be more sensitive about products:

> I think management doesn't have any interest in our products. They keep saying, "Do this," and "Do that," but what they are asking doesn't make sense. It's like a joke that they are not interested in what we are producing. I don't care about whatever they ask us to do, but I want them to carefully look at our products. I believe everyone feels the same way, though they don't say it out loud. We may want to oppose management decisions, but there's no window.

For *Japan Observer* employees, management indicates no vision for the future, which makes them uncertain about their future with the paper. They say they cannot see where the company is heading, who is the target audience, what is the purpose of their work, etc. because they think management does not take the initiative in leading the company. Employees know that the paper's conventional business model is not working anymore, judging from declines in both circulation and advertising. But management has been unable to figure out a new business model appropriate to today's economic climate, which disappoints and frustrates employees. *Japan Observer* employees know if they keep doing the same work, there will be no way out of economic difficulties that the paper is facing. They think they are working in vain.

Because the *Japan Observer* is a specialty newspaper circulating in a niche market, employees do not expect a dramatic comeback of the paper. Furthermore, given the English-speaking population in Japan, "There's no way that this country can sustain three English-language newspapers[55], right? That's too many," said Jack, a copyeditor. But *Japan Observer* employees believe in the potential of the paper's recovery, if not dramatically, because of the brand value of the paper. So, they are not worrying about the paper itself but concerned about the incapability of management. Minoru summarized: "It's totally up to the publisher and management whether to kill or revive the paper."

[55] This interview was conducted in 2008 before one publisher withdrew the English-language newspaper business in February 2011. Currently, there are only two English-language daily newspapers that are published by Japanese companies.

The lack of communication and appreciation from management fuels employees' uncertainty, anxiety and exhaustion, which ultimately causes low morale in the newsroom. Hideki observes that low morale is prevalent in the newsroom, especially among employees who have worked for the paper for a long time. Because they are not financially compensated, all the more, they need appreciation from management to keep their motivation, Hideki says. Given that all *Japan Observer* employees are crammed into two floors of the building, management and employees are physically close to each other, but employees do not feel close to management at all. Hideki said:

> They [Managers] are invisible. "Thank you," "Good job," or whatever small appreciation from management would help. We don't feel what we are doing is appreciated. They may think paying us is enough, but work is not all about money.

Because they are tired of being in the "sunset industry," their uncompensated work and incapable management, *Japan Observer* employees think of career change. Some look for journalistic work in other newspapers and news agencies, and some prefer different jobs in different industries such as international trading. They said they actually applied for job openings, but they either failed or decided to stay with the *Japan Observer* for various reasons. Hana, for instance, got a job offer from an international company. One of conditions for that job was that she would spend one-third of a year overseas on business trips. She could not accept this condition because she had a growing family to take care of. Hana still works for the *Japan Observer*, but she said she was open to career change whenever the right opportunity comes up.

How Do They Think about Technological Changes?

Japan Observer employees view technology—both the Internet and production technology—in a positive light and in a negative light. But they emphasize more negative consequences than positive ones of those technologies. Ryan said:

> Technology is what's been destroying the profitability of newspapers. If the profitability of newspapers is to return, it will be through technology. Innovative disruption. Empires rise because of technology and fall because somebody else has got newer technology. Companies, too. Technology is changing this industry.

There is no doubt that the Internet brought great convenience, speed and efficiency to newswork. *Japan Observer* reporters and editors appreciate that the Internet made information gathering much faster and easier. For example, reporters used to go to the library and archives to look through government-related information, but nowadays this type of information is mostly posted on the Internet where reporters search quickly and easily. This saves their time, and in this sense, their productivity has been increased, they say.

Email has made a great contribution to better communication between *Japan Observer* reporters and their information sources. Reporters increasingly use email at work, such as sending their interview requests. Email has removed, if not completely, bureaucratic procedure to do business with certain people, such as corporate executives and politicians. Sakura explained:

> Email allows us to contact people directly. In order to see a corporate executive; for instance, I would have to call his company, ask the operator to put me through to the PR department and ask the PR department to check his schedule and make an appointment for me. If the PR department said yes, I could finally see this person.

Email streamlined the submission process of stories, too. Reporters now can send their stories from the field via email. Because they can save time of transportation, reporters can spend the saved time for working more on their stories. The coverage of professional baseball games is an example. Professional baseball night games usually end between 9:30 pm and 10:00 pm. There is only limited time between the end of the game and the deadline of the story. Sports reporters used to rush to the winning pitcher for comments after the game and then start writing a story of the game. They had to write and fax their story to the office before the Internet. Then, editors in the office had to manually type the faxed story into the computer for publication. This time-consuming process was completely removed from the submission process so that reporters now have more time to collect comments from more players and spare more time to elaborate a story after the game. Because email allows reporters to have more time, Kenzo realized that the content of sports news changed accordingly:

> As we have more time, the content of stories has changed. Stories about professional baseball games now are all about miscellaneous topics, like this player said this and that player started baseball because of what. They may spare probably one paragraph to tell about the game itself. For one reason, consumer needs changed. Because they watch the game or the result of the game on TV, they don't need information about the game on newspapers. Rather, they want to know what players said. And for another reason, we can have enough time to interview players after the game because of technological development.

Some *Japan Observer* employees say communication within the company became better, thanks to email. Before email, there was little communication between departments. But email made it easy to share the same information between departments by cc-ing it. Hana said, "Email has facilitated communication across the company. Communication without seeing people's faces may be easier."

Others are not necessarily comfortable about this type of impersonal communication. As communication via email increases, *Japan Observer* employees said, "We might speak less on the phone or even face to face because of instant technology" as Henry, a reporter, observed. Yoko even said, "I'm so used to email that I don't feel like meeting and talking with people in person anymore." Editors are concerned that field

reporters do not stay in close contact with the office, even though they have convenient communication tools. The first thing in the morning that field reporters did in the past was to call the office and report their schedules, but it is not the case anymore, editors say. Reporters, especially young reporters, prefer sending emails to the office to calling. Some editors are irritated by such one-sided communication. It is also impersonal so that "It's quite offensive getting email from someone three desks away, you know. 'Come down, and tell me!'" said Peter.

Japan Observer employees place high hopes on the digitalization of the newspaper. The website of the *Japan Observer* is basically a reflection of the print edition. The *Japan Observer* has the web department to manage the online edition. "The website has much more space, almost unlimited," said Henry. Reporters are happy to have their stories published online because there are more possibilities on the website that their stories would be read by wider audiences regardless of where readers are. *Japan Observer* reporters write stories in English. Reporters expect their stories to be accessed from overseas. Photographers also appreciate the potential of the website. Yasuhiro is a photographer who likes the unlimited space of the website. Even if he takes dozens of photos, the print edition would probably publish one or two of them because of space limitation. But the online edition can handle more photos, in color. "The website allows me to do things that I can't do with the print edition," said Yasuhiro. Yasuhiro now shoots videos for the website, though not often. He learned film production in university and wanted to be a movie director before he got a job with the *Japan Observer*. Yasuhiro willingly takes up video shooting and says newspaper production is shifting toward what he has wanted to do.

Some journalists are not keen on the online edition because of economic reasons. The major concern is money. Hiroki, an editor, said, "I don't want to post stories online because the website doesn't make money. It's not a matter of platform but a matter of money." Sakura agreed and said:

> I don't like the web because it distributes my stories for free. It doesn't make sense to me because my stories cost. I spend time and money to write a story. If the online edition can charge, I'm OK with it. That's it.

Peter cynically said about the website, "We have this wonderful idea that the *Japan Observer* is good to give away things, you know."

Japan Observer employees tend to distinguish the print edition from the online edition. They do not willingly cooperate in the development of the website because they think it is extra work for them that is not financially compensated. Hana observed the general attitude of *Japan Observer* journalists toward the online edition:

> The online edition is a thing in addition to the print. No one in our company takes the online edition seriously. They are like, "The print edition is what we are producing. The online edition? It's like a database, right?"

The release of the iPad in 2010 gave hope to *Japan Observer* employees. Management is reviewing the profitability of the iPad edition and has not yet reached a

conclusion.[56] The *Japan Observer* also considered the possibility of a Kindle edition, but the paper was reluctant to publish on that platform because, Sakura said, "The profit margin of the Kindle edition is really narrow." Sankei Shimbun, one of the major national newspapers, was an early adopter of iPad by starting an iPad edition for a monthly subscription of 1,500 yen ($18) in June 2010 ahead of other newspapers. Following the example of Sankei Shimbun, Asahi Shimbun, another national newspaper, published an iPad edition for 1,200 yen ($15) at the end of 2010. While the iPad edition of Sankei Shimbun is an exact reflection of the print edition, that of Asahi Shimbun consists of selected news stories from its English-language edition. Subscription fees of the iPad edition will be less expensive than the print edition, but *Japan Observer* journalists think the production of the iPad edition costs far less than that of the print edition. Assuming that the profit margin of the iPad edition is pretty good, *Japan Observer* employees expect the iPad edition would be a potential income source for the company.

The *Japan Observer* is setting up an infrastructure for such multimedia publication in the future. After I visited the *Japan Observer* for the second time, the newspaper introduced a cross-media publishing system called WoodWing. Ryan emphasized the importance of infrastructure for multimedia publishing before the introduction of the new system:

> Original news content online will increase only when we update the technology, electronic tools, software tools making it easy to do so in the next year or two. We will try to see if it's the way to pull online content back into the print version. Perhaps, they will become more different in the year to come as we have software tools to create online content more quickly.

The system is expected to effectively publish both the print and digital editions, including the website and applications for electronic portable devices. Editors will be more responsible for production work under this system. Editors are showing great resistance against the new system, as Hana observes. Hana believes that they are unwilling to adopt the new system because they directly link "changes in work practices" to "more work." They are opposing the introduction of the new system by demanding that the company offer more pay or hire more manpower, both of which the *Japan Observer* cannot afford.

Another concern about this efficient system is that it would be used to cut labor further. In order to introduce this new system, the *Japan Observer* got a loan from its parent company. At the negotiating table, the *Japan Observer* promised the parent company to downsize the production department at the start of the new system. Further labor costs cuts were one of the conditions for the loan, says Hana.

On another front, there is the major issue of digital diversification of the newspaper. Hana explained:

[56] The *Japan Observer* is selling the iPad editions of its weeklies, which have fewer issues of secondary use and copyright than the daily.

> We lack original content. That's why we cannot pin our hope on digital editions. The paper would have only five pages if we don't use wire stories. You may say, "Why don't you increase original content?" It costs money. The paper doesn't have money. Currently, we publish wire stories on the website, but wire services have begun to say not to do that. Then I think we'd better stop the online edition.

The secondary use of wire stories costs the *Japan Observer*. Kenzo further explained that the iPad edition of the *Japan Observer* cannot be an exact reflection of the print edition like that of Sankei Shimbun because the print edition includes many wire stories that cost the company extra fees for secondary use. Unless the iPad edition has enough readership to pay off the cost of secondary use, there is no reason to publish it. Otherwise, it will become another case of financial loss.

The Internet is controversial among *Japan Observer* employees. They appreciate convenience, efficiency and speed of the Internet, but at the same time blame the Internet for diminishing the raison d'être of the *Japan Observer*. Newspapers are aggregators of news, information, entertainment, etc., but "The public no longer see value in newspapers because they can get the same information from Google for free. They can get aggregation for free," said Ryan.

The *Japan Observer* used to be one of a few information sources where readers in Japan could obtain wider world news for a reasonable price before the Internet. My master's research found that the *Japan Observer* devoted more than 60 percent of newshole to world news, while a Japanese-language national newspaper did 20 percent.[57] World news published in the *Japan Observer* is basically from wire services, such as the Associated Press. The *Japan Observer* was a place where readers could collect stories from those foreign news agencies. Stories distributed by those news services reflect Western perspectives, which Japanese-language newspapers lack, and therefore, such stories were considered to attract certain group of news consumers who may have been people from Western countries and people wanting to have wider viewpoints. The publication of world news was a prominent sales point of the *Japan Observer*. But the advent of the Internet diminished that privilege of the newspaper. Hiroki explained this phenomenon by saying, "The Internet removed intermediaries." Now, news consumers have direct access to stories produced by overseas news agencies and newspapers, thanks to the Internet. What is more, information on the Internet is for free for the most part. News consumers may browse the websites of international news agencies as well as numerous aggregators, news sites, personal websites and blogs where wire stories are linked. Accordingly, the *Japan Observer* lost its value as a rare source of foreign news. Hiroki continued:

> In the past, if organizations wanted to send out press releases, they had to come to newspapers to reach audiences. Newspapers have depended on this route between organizations and audiences. But this route

[57] Minami, H. (2006). Sustainability of English-Language Newspapers in Japan: Why Do English-Language Newspapers Keep Being Published in Spite of the Decline in Circulation? (Unpublished master's thesis). Cardiff University, Wales.

> collapsed. The value of journalists and the value of mass media as a mediator were gone.

In addition to impacts of the Internet, Hiroki said newspapers were also responsible for their own decline. According to Hiroki, news consumers have moved to the Internet because newspapers do not accommodate their needs well. Hiroki said, "Newspapers tend to end up as mere gratification of their own ego instead of serving the public."

Editors are more aware of changes and impacts of advanced production technology; reporters hardly use the technology. The *Japan Observer* uses System Integrators Inc.'s pagination system and InDesign. The SII system is used for collecting and editing stories and photos and composing pages. The SII pagination system is not easy for everyone in the newsroom to use. When the SII system was introduced, editorial workers were trained to search and edit stories and photos in the system, and production workers were trained to compose pages on the screen. Currently, InDesign is mainly used for the composition of special sections and weekly publications. Because of the existence of two types of software, some editors end up handling both applications at the desk, picking up stories from the SII system and moving them to InDesign for layout. WoodWing, based on InDesign, is expected to improve this process, replacing the SII pagination system. Peter is one of the editors who use the SII system and InDesign. He said:

> In those days, on the newspaper, it was very compartmentalized. But now, editors do everything. Stories come online. I edit on screen. I design the page on screen. I produce the page on screen. I put photographs on screen. I remember when this type of technology came in [my country], there were lots of protests from unions because obviously jobs went. Production people were not needed anymore because editors sitting at the desk do everything. Now, we have a much smaller production department than used to be. Editors do most of the work. Production people therefore do more technical stuff we can't do.

InDesign allows editors greater control of production. In fact, editors appreciate that they have more control of the final product. Because they can operate the software without assistance, editors are grateful that they do their work more efficiently without lag time. In the past, they say, they had to wait a while until production workers completed the work they requested. Now, editors do their work at their own pace without such interruption. But Miho, an editor, wonders how far her work responsibility goes because she is doing editorial work and part of composition work at the same time. She feels the boundary between editorial work and production work has been blurred because of technology.

Miho learned how to use InDesign and compose pages, but she thinks her composition work is not as professional as composition workers'. The quality of design and layout is hurting because of her unprofessional work, she says. Peter does not believe that sophisticated technology contributes to the production of a better-quality newspaper

because multiple task responsibilities stemming from technology squeezes the traditional work of editors. He said:

> It's strange these computers are supposed to help, but as computers come in, staff has been cut. So, we'd be asked to do more. It [Technology] may be more efficient, and it may be more cost-effective. But I'm not sure it produces a better newspaper. You tend to emphasize one specific part rather than the whole job. When I came to do InDesign, I was so concentrated on getting InDesign correct or producing a good-looking page that I didn't concentrate so much actually on editing the copy.

How Do They View the Nature and Conditions of Their Occupation?

Japan Observer newsroom workers indicate conflicting views about their work life. They are proud of their occupations because of freedom at work, the creative aspect of work and access to information. They feel their work is special, compared with other types of corporate work, which contributes to a slight sense of elitism to newsroom workers, especially Japanese workers. Japanese newsroom workers feel privileged to use their English language skills at work. The *Japan Observer*, an English-language newspaper, provides rare opportunities to fully work in English. There are not many occupations in which workers use the English language during work hours in monolingual countries like Japan. Declines in the paper's finances, however, have negative impacts on employees' occupational views. Feeling their work is routinized, they have a hard time to motivate themselves and end up being alienated from the company and their work.

The *Japan Observer* newsroom has developed a particular culture, reflecting cultural diversity of employees. Employees welcome cultural diversity that livens up the newsroom, but at the same time, some do not accept differences in each other's attitudes toward their work and work rights.

Unlike traditional Japanese companies, the *Japan Observer* is a gender-free workplace, which Japanese female employees appreciate. Friendly human relationships among employees are another charm of the *Japan Observer* newsroom. Journalists, however, think that such friendliness leads to a lack of leadership. Friendly relationships do not necessarily mean that they have good communication at work. The newsroom is segmented, and people do not communicate or cooperate beyond departments. They attribute the lack of communication in the newsroom to economic and technological reasons.

a) Privileged Professionals

Japan Observer journalists say they enjoy quite a bit of freedom at work, for good or bad. Kenzo even said, "I may not think what I'm doing is work. I've never thought like, 'Heck, I have to sit to work again!'" The *Japan Observer* leaves ways of working up to employees' discretion. As long as employees do whatever they are supposed to do, the company does not force them to follow specific practices. Ryan said,

"Within limitations of budget and time and resources that I don't want, I am doing what I want." Ryan believes that newspaper work is independent and allows him to practice his own way of work without someone messing up his work.

The *Japan Observer* traditionally encourages reporters to stand on their own from the very early stage of their career. Sakura said:

> The *Japan Observer* lets even first-year rookies, like, "Here you go. Write." Because you do all stuff, like investigating, collecting information and writing, it is hard in a sense. But it's really fun.

Editors, on the other hand, enjoy the freedom and control of choosing and transforming stories. Walter said, "I enjoy my work most when I'm choosing stories. It is pretty fun to choose stories from a bunch, edit, and compile them." Peter believes he is a natural-born editor:

> It's not my story. But by making it into what I consider a better story, it kind of becomes my story. I hope, when I finish with it, it's better than the original. What I like really is editing more than newspapers. That's my job—to make it better and make it easier to read and more enjoyable and more informative and less mistakes in it for the reader.

The *Japan Observer* welcomes and respects story and project ideas from reporters. In return, reporters enjoy producing work that follows their interests. Ami, a reporter, chose the *Japan Observer* because of freedom at work. When she was a senior in college, she visited the *Japan Observer* to meet a couple of employees who were graduates from her university. Those employees told her about how much autonomy they had at work. She liked it and chose the paper to work for. Now, Ami enjoy that freedom at work. She said:

> If you have themes in which you are interested, or if you have something that you want to write, of course, you have to think about newsworthiness of them, but if you raise your hand and say you want to do that, they will let you do that. There's such freedom in the *Japan Observer*.

Creativity is another benefit of work at the *Japan Observer*. Compared with other types of office work, *Japan Observer* journalists think that their work is more creative and exciting. Those who do not have work experiences other than with the *Japan Observer* just imagine how other types of office work are. Walter, for instance, said, "My work is much better than that of people like bankers." Because newswork is creative and exciting, they say, they hardly get bored at work. Miho said:

> Because my work always deals with new and interesting information, it's less boring than regular office work. And my work has a creative aspect. You think how to present stories and photos, or you can create and try various measures.

Reporters, meanwhile, enjoy creativity in their stories. Kenzo is an editor, but he occasionally does reporting work. Kenzo said he liked the intensive moment of thinking of story structure under time pressure:

> I think how I can turn this into a story in the most interesting way. I love the time, say only five or ten minutes, to think about that before I start writing. I elaborate a lead, I decide how to write a conclusion, and when the lead and conclusion perfectly links, it gives a thrill.

Japan Observer journalists are proud that the paper is (or was) the best among other English-language newspapers. Japanese newsroom workers have a strong interest in English. They feel they were lucky to get a job that they can use their favorite language at work. "I was an English major, so I wanted to use English at work. The *Japan Observer* was my first choice because it is an English-language medium," said Ami, looking back when she was on the job market.

Another reporter pointed out the uniqueness of the audience. The *Japan Observer* is read by people who reside in Japan and read English, regardless of nationalities. Taking into consideration the demographics of readership, *Japan Observer* journalists feel responsible for providing news and information that are acceptable to both Japanese and non-Japanese readers.

Japan Observer employees believe that working for a newspaper itself is prestigious. The job market for newspaper work is very competitive, and it is a longed-for job among new college-graduate jobseekers who are interested in the news industry. Also, it is a well-paying job, though the size of pay is shrinking because of unfavorable changes in the economics of newspapers. Given those, Hideki believes that newspapers are entities that are socially respected. Working in the media industry is "cool," he thinks. He feels good by thinking that he is a part of the acclaimed industry.

Being engaged in this cool job may lead to a sense of elitism. Hiroki confessed that he was arrogant when he was a university student looking for a journalistic job:

> In retrospect, I was supercilious. I wanted to contribute to society rather than to be a corporate worker who works for profit. Journalists are not greater than others or anything, and I feel bad that I belittled ordinary corporations back then. I was conceited.

Access to information is another privilege that *Japan Observer* journalists enjoy. Yasuhiro has been working for the paper for more than 20 years, and he said the excitement of work has never gone away:

> I can meet a variety of people. I feel good, thinking regular salaryman can't do what I do. I can go to a variety of events, I can cover a variety of things, and I can meet people who you can't meet in your everyday life. I love it!

Such exclusive access makes *Japan Observer* journalists different from other corporate workers who usually stay in the office. Journalists have access because they work for the *Japan Observer*. Hiroki was a reporter until two years ago when he was promoted to an editor, covering the central government. He remembers the prestige of the *Japan Observer* that he experienced in the field:

> Because the *Japan Observer* was the number one English-language newspaper in Japan, people treated you well, and they still do today when you go talk with them. You can enter the office of the prime minister as a *Japan Observer* reporter. The press club in the Ministry of Defense is really exclusive, and only 30 reporters are allowed to register with it. You are one of them. In this regard, the *Japan Observer* had great prestige.

b) Salaryman

Though *Japan Observer* employees enjoy privileges that they believe other types of white-collar workers do not have, they are not free from salaryman consciousness. This consciousness, however, was only observed among Japanese employees. Yoko said, "I don't hesitate to identify myself as salaryman. You are obligated to do whatever your company asks you as long as you work for it." Yoko additionally said that her salaryman consciousness was intensified when she was assigned to political reporting in Nagata-cho for four years. She said, Nagata-cho is a particular world where elite journalists are fiercely competing with each other, and politicians and journalists are creating non-journalistic relationships. She said the four-year salaryman life in Nagata-cho burned her out.

Kenzo has his own theory about journalists. He thinks that corporate workers cannot be journalists. In fact, he does not introduce himself as a journalist. Instead, he identifies himself as a writer when he meets people in the field. He is the only person in this study who openly distinguishes journalists from corporate workers. Kenzo said:

> Newspaper reporters cannot be journalists because they are making a living with ad and sales money. If you want to be a journalist, you are not working here. Journalists are all about footwork. As long as you are bound with the system, the company, you cannot be a journalist.

The economics of the paper has impacts on workers' occupational identity. Declining finances of the paper strengthens workers' salaryman consciousness. Yasuhiro said:

> When the company started declining, I guess I flipped a switch in my mind, thinking this is not good. If I want to cling to my photographer job, I have to have the company. I thought I have to compromise at some point. You may say I changed from a news photographer to a corporate photographer. I wanted to take news photos or photos for newspapers, but things do not work as I wish.

Yasuhiro also said the *Japan Observer* became a company without hope. Yasuhiro relates the hopelessness with the amount of money that employees earn with the company. After employees reach 40, most of them cannot expect further promotions or pay raises anymore because of the limited number of upper positions and the salary scale. What is worse, the *Japan Observer* imposed a pay cut several years ago, and as a result, employees' annual income decreased. A number of those who cannot have hope or confidence in the company have left, Yasuhiro said.

Hideki was an executive member of the labor union for several years. He sat at the negotiating table with the company for better working conditions and compensation many times, but his and the union's efforts ended up in vain. Feeling like he wasted a great amount of his time and energy, he feels alienated from the company:

> I'm concerned and worried, so I want to change this situation, but I gave up. I believed in the company, I made great efforts to change, but I couldn't change and the company doesn't change. People don't want to do painful stuff as human nature. People likely choose an easier life. If you don't do this now, you are not going to die, you know. Then, I just focus on my work.

Alienated feeling coincides with the routinization of work. In the first few years of their career, *Japan Observer* employees work hard to get used to the work environment. A sense of inferiority regarding English also motivates some Japanese reporters. Those who feel their English is not good enough to do their work spend even their private hours studying English. Because everything is new and challenging to them, Japanese employees say it was just enough to have their work done every day for the first few years. In other words, they do not have room to pay attention to other things, such as the economics of the paper and other work issues. They say they were happier then. This is not the case of non-Japanese employees. None of my non-Japanese interviewees say they had a hard time to get used to the new environment. This may be because they have either journalism education or experiences of working for other publications before the *Japan Observer*. The *Japan Observer* is the first and only company for many of the Japanese employees.

After several years, Japanese employees get more familiar with their workflow and acquire more skills to efficiently do their work. Then they realize that their work has turned routine. Miho has worked for the paper for 11 years. She said she was inspired to work hard for the first five years. But after that, her motivation declined because she felt like she was doing the same thing again and again. Since then, Miho has been struggling with a feeling of "What am I doing here?" at work.

For Hideki, working for the *Japan Observer* was his dream. He was very happy and motivated until he was assigned to be a union executive several years ago and faced the economic realities of the company. Now after ten years with the company, he has become a less satisfied worker. Hideki confessed:

> I would say my work has become routine. Honestly, I feel like I'm working for my work. I may be too accustomed to it. I have been in the same department for too long. The conditions of the company may be

> affecting this. I'm physically and emotionally tired. I have a difficulty to maintain positive feelings toward my work.

The poorer economics of the paper has a negative impact on employees' motivation, and employees reduce their energy and efforts to spend for their work. Ami said:

> Basically, not only newspapers but the print media have become sunset industries since I entered this business. A lot of people have left. Circulation has gone down. It is really hard to maintain motivation of the company or of myself. If you work long enough, you reduce the ratio of work in your life. I have realized the ins and outs of the newspaper industry to some extent, so I'm not excited anymore.

Unsatisfied, alienated workers are not happy about their work and want to change their situations. All of my interviewees, in fact, answered that they thought about changing companies or careers. However, there are some obstacles that prevent them from moving to other options. Peter indicated the handicap of being a foreign resident in Japan:

> There're very limited fields for foreigners in Tokyo. The other desperate field is teaching English. That I couldn't do. It's more limited now than when I first came. When I first came, there were four English-language newspapers in Japan. Now, there're basically three or two and half, and none of them are doing well, cutting staff and using temporary staff, instead of fulltime staff.

Japanese employees realize age hinders their mobility. It is not unusual in Japan that recruiting advertising discriminates in job applicants on account of age. Accordingly, younger employees are more actively looking for other options. They, however, have noticed changes in the employment systems in Japan. They are witnessing that Japanese traditional lifetime employment is being eroded. Yoko, for instance, got a job offer from a company, but she ended up turning it down because her contract would be on a daily basis. Though her income would increase, Yoko prioritized job security (lifetime employment) with the *Japan Observer* over a pay increase.

c) Characteristics of the Workplace

The *Japan Observer* newsroom is a gender-free workplace. The number of male employees may slightly surpass that of females, but the newsroom does not appear to be a male-dominated workplace. Female employees are very comfortable in such a work environment. Compared with other news organizations, Sakura said:

> From my observation, the media industry is really a male-dominanted society. It is really hard for women to have equal opportunities to compete with men in such society. By contrast, the *Japan Observer* is

> very female-friendly. The greatest strength of the *Japan Observer* is gender equality. Men and women are absolutely equal.

Hana knows that overt gender discrimination is still practiced in Japanese society from her female friends' experiences. "All of my friends used to work for Japanese corporations. At some point, they got pregnant and told their companies. And they were asked when they would quit their job," said Hana. But Hana, a mother of a three-year-old child, has never faced such gender discrimination in the *Japan Observer* newsroom.

The *Japan Observer* employees pointed out friendly human relationships as what they like most in their workplace. By friendly, they mean that there is no unnecessary competition or corporate politics. They feel that their colleagues are very frank and easy to work with. Japanese employees who have work experiences with other Japanese corporations feel that the *Japan Observer* is unusual for a Japanese corporation. Human relationships within the *Japan Observer* are more horizontal than hierarchical, compared with traditional Japanese companies. *Japan Observer* employees say they believe the work environment is constructed under Western influence. Not only non-Japanese but also the majority of Japanese newsroom workers have experience abroad, mostly in English-speaking countries, and their cultural backgrounds contribute to the construction of a gender-equal, less hierarchical workplace. Some, on the other hand, criticize this lack of hierarchy. According to them, the workplace is so flat that no one takes leadership, initiative or responsibility. Employees are basically free from strict supervision, and they, especially less experienced employees, sometimes get confused and lost at work.

This sounds like a contradiction, but *Japan Observer* employees realize that their workplace is missing good communication among workers and between departments. The lack of communication is another characteristic of the *Japan Observer* newsroom. Both Japanese and non-Japanese employees agree with this. Ryan noticed that the newsroom was segmented:

> What I've observed about the company is that different departments are essentially like silos. So, the sports is a silo, and the domestic news is a silo, and the features is a silo. And, they are not actually connected with each other at all, really.

Because the newsroom is fragmented, workers tend to narrowly focus on their own work and not to envision their product (the newspaper) in a bigger picture. Mai realized that the lack of communication had negative impact on the workflow:

> We are missing even minimum communication in order to effectively do our work. We don't have a sense of togetherness beyond departments. We don't feel like producing the paper together.

An example of the lack of communication is observed in the website operation. The *Japan Observer* has the web department within the newsroom. That department develops and maintains the paper's website, creating web-only content as well as uploading printed news and information. The web department regularly pulls printed

content for web publication without asking permission from the news side. There has been a tacit understanding between the news department and the web department from the very beginning of the website, said Hana. The web department often gets lost without clear directions of what to do with the website because they do not discuss web policies newsroom-wide. The web department physically belongs to the newsroom, but it is treated as an outcast in the newsroom. The webmaster said, "Newspeople go like, 'The web? Do whatever.'"

Some interviewees blame the paper's poor finances for worsening communication between departments. The paper has imposed leaner but discriminatory budget plans on every department (the size of budget varies by department). Newsroom workers say they are not personally hostile against people in other departments, but they are less inspired than before to cooperate with better-funded departments. The distance between departments has grown apart because of economic changes, they say.

Others attribute the lack of communication to the development of communication technology. Workers nowadays prefer computer-mediated communication to face-to-face communication, even within the newsroom. Less technologically advanced workers think this type of communication increases awkwardness in human relationships because it is impersonal and sometimes offensive.

The *Japan Observer* newsroom is diverse in demographics because Japanese and non-Japanese employees are working together, reflecting different values and ideas. Newsroom workers have ambiguous views on "multinationality" in the workplace. On the one hand, they enjoy interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds; on the other, they do not accept each other's differences. Mai described the workplace in a positive way: "There are a bunch of weird people in the newsroom, but I like this chaotic environment where I always interact with non-Japanese people." Keiko, a reporter, believes cultural diversity brings new perspectives to the newsroom and inspires her work:

> People from different cultures get together and jazz up the workplace. It is fun to discuss and search interesting things together with people with different values and backgrounds.

Some Japanese employees, however, are not comfortable about aggressive attitudes of non-Japanese employees. A difference between the nature of Japanese and non-Japanese employees emerges in their attitude toward work rights, especially during labor-management negotiations. There are two unions in the *Japan Observer* because of differences in employment contracts: one is the union for Japanese employees, and the other is for non-Japanese employees. Non-Japanese employees did not organize a union until the *Japan Observer* started axing the budget in the early 2000s. Because their perspectives of work rights are different, both unions do not sit at the negotiating table together to fight for their rights against management. Yasuhiro realized a difference in the level of commitment in the paper between Japanese and non-Japanese employees.

> Foreign workers won't stay in Japan forever. They quit whenever they want to quit. Foreign workers easily get upset when they feel their labor is undercompensated. We won't go on strike together with foreign

> workers. If we do, who will publish the paper? Japanese workers are more mature and responsible in this regard.

Meanwhile, non-Japanese employees do not understand the Japanese way of management. Ryan has worked for the *Japan Observer* for more than ten years, but he does not agree with the Japanese way. He does not think Japanese mangers effectively supervise their departments:

> I come from a different culture. So, I don't really know the traditional way that managers communicate with each other, from department to department in the *Japan Observer*, nor do I fully appreciate how Japanese managers communicate with each other, from one culture to the next. Only through my own personal inquiry, I'm adopting practices that I think may be effective for me.

The *Japan Observer* newsroom is constructing unique work relations, based on the mixture of employees' different value systems, different from either the *U.S. Times* or the *Nippon Herald*.

How Do They View the Role of Newspapers?

Japan Observer journalists see the role of the newspaper in different ways than the watchdog role or investigative coverage. In order to attract English-speaking and Japanese audiences, it is necessary to provide a variety of views of things. "The newspaper should cover a multitude of topics and offer many different viewpoints," said Hideki. Also, providing different perspectives from Japanese-language newspapers is a sales point of the *Japan Observer*, which differentiates the newspaper from the others.

In this Internet-oriented age, the *Japan Observer* still has meaning and value in producing and sending out news about Japan to the world from Japanese perspectives, says Hiroki. Global news agencies, such as the Associated Press and Reuters, provide news of Japan, but Hiroki argues that such news is created and therefore biased by foreigners for foreigners. Hiroki believes that the *Japan Observer* keeps describing Japan from Japanese perspectives to disseminate accurate information and images of Japan to the world. Many *Japan Observer* journalists put more emphasis on the role of the newspaper as a bridge between different cultures than as an executor of social justice. Miho said, "The raison d'être of the *Japan Observer* doesn't take root in the position of criticizing society." Miho thinks that the newspaper should offer more thought-provoking, interesting topics, which other media do not consider because their priority is the immediacy of information, because the newspaper cannot compete with other media in the speed of production and distribution.

Japan Observer journalists are not necessarily confident of the role of the newspaper in the Internet-oriented society. The Internet allows people to choose and consume only information that they like. Because people's consumption style of information changed, "Newspapers as communities that people share in common are collapsing," said Hiroki.

Some *Japan Observer* journalists more realistically and critically view the newspaper and argue that the role of the newspaper is to make money and nothing else. Jack does not embrace the illusion of social roles of the newspaper. He sharply said:

> It is just another business. It's just another company. One expects newspapers to be a kind of check on abusive power or something. But they are not interested. They are just businesses.

Japan Observer journalists distinguish themselves from elite journalists of major newspapers. They think elite journalists are playing political, intellectual games, not serving the public. Political reporters, who have worked with journalists from other newspapers and witnessed how elite journalists collect information and produce stories from it, came to question whom newspaper journalists serve. Yoko said:

> Newspapers should publish stories that are really beneficial to readers. I've realized reporters don't take into consideration readers well. They seem like doing things that help them get promoted or something. I always try to keep readers in mind. Reporters had better think if what they are doing is really necessary for readers, and newspapers should publish good stories in a realistic sense. I think what they are doing is missing the point. I think there are more important things in society. They are so tunnel-visioned. Their coverage has neither depth nor width.

Hideki argues that newspapers in general, including the *Japan Observer*, are too elite to keep up with social trends and consumer needs. While newspapers publish progressive editorials and consider themselves opinion leaders and agenda-setters, both newspapers and journalists hold fast to vested interests such as the immunity of competition under the law[58], says Hideki. They may result in falling into complacency and hypocrisy and not caring about readers. Peter, an editor, realizes a gap between the newspaper and readers. Observing the front page of the *Japan Observer*, he said:

> If you ignore what readers want, then they will go somewhere else. Sometimes when I look at the daily, it's been produced for the editors of the *Japan Observer*, not for readers. "I like this story. I'm interested in this story, so I'm going to put it on the page one." But it's not a story for the page one, you know.

Hideki believes that good newspapers should be close to readers and ideally evoke a sense of affinity among readers. Newspapers should not look down on readers.

[58] The newspaper industry is designated as a special business under the Japanese Constitution. Newspapers avoid price competition; the resale price maintenance system stipulates newspapers must sell at the same price in the entire nation. The newspaper industry has been criticized for allegedly violating the antitrust law, taking advantage of this system, in recent years.

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