"This isn't what the industry should look like anymore":
U.S. Student Journalists, Harassment and Professional Socialization

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Abstract

While harassment targeting journalists is a growing area of concern in both professional and academic circles, research into student journalists' experiences with harassment is scant. This study aims to fill that gap using an online survey (n = 218) and focus groups (n = 8) to assess the source, type, and impact of harassment experienced by U.S. student journalists. Our findings illustrate that harassment directed at student journalists comes from a variety of sources and that harassment can have negative psychological effects on students. The results also suggest the gendered nature of harassment and demonstrate how students of different racial backgrounds experience harassment differently. Black students, for instance, are more likely to report threats of violence than students who identify as other races. Female students, meanwhile, described how gendered harassment made them question pursuing careers in journalism. We consider our findings in the context of the theory of professional socialization and grapple with the role journalism educators must play in creating a professional culture that doesn't normalize harassment or minimize the toll it takes on the people who experience it.

Introduction

Many journalists face on-the-job harassment (Parker et al., 2014), and student journalists are not immune. In recent years, student journalists have become increasingly vocal about the harassment they experience, its negative impacts, and their desire for their professors to do more to help them cope (Copeland, 2021; Wen, 2021). There is, however, scant academic research into harassment targeting student journalists. This study aims to fill that gap by exploring the source and type of harassment experienced by student journalists as well as the impacts that harassment may have on students' personal and professional lives. In doing so, we aim to better understand the role journalism educators can play in preparing students to handle harassment and, perhaps, in changing journalism's culture in ways that make on-the-job harassment less prevalent.

We define "student journalist" as anyone who has performed or is performing journalistic work as part of their undergraduate or graduate education. This includes class assignments, work for campus publi-

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cations, or work done as an intern or freelancer for professional news organizations. This definition is intentionally broad and designed to account for even the earliest exposures students may have to the practice of journalism, as those initial experiences, even with class assignments, can have deep and lasting impacts. Our definition of "harassment," meanwhile, is informed by Miller (2021) who describes it as "unwanted abusive behaviors" that include "sexual and non-sexual harassment, as well as verbal and physical harassment" (p. 4). Harassment, Miller notes, can be mild or extreme but is distinctly different from "mild workplace annoyances" (p. 4). Past studies focused on professional journalists have found that harassment can come from both inside and outside the news organization, and happens online and in the real world. Journalists who identify as women, people of color, or both often experience more intense forms of harassment, especially sexual harassment (Ferrier, 2018).

Our study explores how these dynamics play out among student journalists in the United States and what the implications of harassment are for student journalists' professional socialization, a concept Sadeghi Avval Shahr et al. (2019) defines as "a process that is formed through internalization of the specific culture of a professional community" (p. 8). We also examine the role journalism educators must play in creating a professional culture that doesn't normalize harassment or minimize the toll it takes on the people who experience it.

Literature Review

We situate this study at the intersection of two primary bodies of literature: work that documents threats to journalists' physical and mental safety and research about student journalists' experiences as emerging practitioners, especially as it relates to professional socialization.

Harassment of journalists is a global problem—one that is receiving more attention in both professional and academic circles, especially in countries with governments that have historically been considered conducive to robust press freedoms (Fadnes et al., 2019). Journalists' gender and race often impact the likelihood they will experience harassment, as well as the form that harassment will take. The cultural and geographic contexts in which journalists work also impact their experiences with harassment (Konow-Lund & Hoiby, 2021). Multiple studies have shown that women journalists are especially prone

to sexual harassment online, in the field, and in their own newsrooms (Walsh-Childers, et al., 1996; Ferrier & Garud-Patkar, 2018; Posetti & Storm, 2018). The problem of online harassment targeting women is magnified by expectations for modern journalists to build and maintain public social media profiles (Finneman, et al., 2019). Women of color, lesbians, and women who identify as Jewish or Arab experience the worst of online harassment (Posetti, et al., 2021). Furthermore, there is some evidence that experiencing sexism on the job pushes some women journalists to seek careers in other fields (Everbach & Flournoy, 2007; Harden & Whiteside, 2009). Experiencing harassment can decrease journalists' job satisfaction regardless of their gender—something that is especially true for younger journalists (Miller, 2021b). Many journalists, especially women, see harassment as "a normal and expected piece of doing journalism" (Miller, 2022, p. 14).

"Identity-based" harassment of journalists remains common, with journalists from historically marginalized groups bearing the brunt. Modern harassment, Waisbord (2020) notes, is the latest chapter in a long history of anti-press behavior, especially from the political right.

> Examples include the terrorizing of African-American journalists, including verbal and physical harassment of editors and the torching of newsrooms, during the Jim Crow era; The intimidation of white and black reporters and publications at the height of the Civil Rights movements in the 1950s and 1960s; Right-wing violence against socialist, anarchist, communist, and Jewish publications in modern Europe; Systematic violence against minority ethnic media in post-colonial Africa and Asia. (Waisbord, 2020, p. 1032)

The studies cited above are part of a growing body of research about harassment targeting professional journalists. Research into harassment targeting student journalists, meanwhile, is not nearly as robust, although there have been a few recent inquiries into overarching threats to campus press freedoms. A 2016 survey of campus media advisors, for instance, found that it was common for student publications to face "administrative pressure to control, edit, or censor student journalistic content" (AAUP, 2016, para. 3). The consequences of such intimidation, or even the threat of it, are significant. There is evidence that some student journalists self-censor to avoid backlash from

their universities, especially when they're writing about controversial topics (Farquhar & Carey, 2019).

Documenting student journalists' experiences with harassment (and other aspects of the field, for that matter) has implications far beyond the classroom. Exploring the perspectives of student journalists can provide "a necessary baseline for appreciating how the profession is being understood" (Williams et al., 2018) and may also reflect how educational experiences will impact their future contributions to professional newsrooms (Tandoc, 2014). Several past studies have explored how aspects of a typical journalism school curriculum may reinforce stereotypes in ways that dissuade people from historically marginalized backgrounds from viewing journalism as a viable career path (Hardin, Dodd & Lauffer, 2006; Heckman & Homan, 2020; McCaffery, 2019). Singer and Broersma (2020), meanwhile, used the experiences of student journalists in Britain and the Netherlands as an indicator to predict on a broader level how journalistic norms and roles are evolving in response to the field's growing emphasis on innovation and entrepreneurship. (See also, Broersma & Singer, 2021). It's also important to note that the contours of journalism education differ somewhat across geographic and cultural contexts and can illustrate how the field is defined in various regions (Zagidullina, et al, 2021).

Studies like these illustrate the role journalism education plays in early professional socialization—defined as "a nonlinear, continuous, interactive, transformative, developmental, personal, psychosocial and self-reinforcing process, which is formed through internalizing the specific culture of a professional community, including expectations, values, beliefs, customs, traditions and unwritten rules" (Sadeghi Avval Shahr et al., 2019, p. 8). The concept of professional socialization is often used in discussions about various aspects of medical and business education, and some journalism scholars have also applied it to the training new journalists receive in classrooms and newsrooms (for instance, Van Zoonen, 1989 and Mellado et al., 2013). Examining how student journalists develop their professional identities can provide "a deeper understanding of trainee practitioners' views of journalism as a profession" (Williams et al., 2017).

With this literature in mind, we embarked on an exploratory, mixed-methods study to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the sources and types of harassment targeting student journalists?

RQ2: How have student journalists dealt with the harassment they experience?

RQ3: How has harassment impacted student journalists' desire to continue in the field of journalism after graduation?

RQ4: What other impacts, if any, does harassment have on student journalists?

RQ5: What role, if any, do (a) gender and (b) race play in student journalists' experience with harassment?

Using an online survey (Study 1: *n* = 218) and focus groups (Study 2: *n* = 8), we explored the type, source, and impact of harassment student journalists experienced. We employed a mixed-method approach to gain both quantitative and qualitative understandings of the issue as well as to increase confidence in our findings. With a survey, we aimed to obtain generalizable and externally valid insights of the issue. We also employed focus groups, as they can confirm survey results, elaborate or explain survey findings, or offer new explanatory categories that the survey did not capture.

Study 1

Method

Recruitment: After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), we posted a survey invitation on the Facebook pages of various journalism professional or educator groups such as AEJMC's Commission on the Status of Women, Binders Full of Digital Journalists, Disruptive Journalism Educators, ONA Educators, Journalism and Diversity, and Social Journalism. The invitation explained what the survey was about and that those who performed or are performing journalistic work as part of their undergraduate or graduate education (including classes of 2017-2021) would be the best people to take it. The invitation also encouraged the receiver to pass the survey on to someone else in their department or school. To enhance the sample size, we sent a survey invitation to a contact at the Society of Professional Journalists, who shared the survey link on SPJ's official Twitter account. Invitations and subsequent reminders were sent out between June 1 and June 15, 2021.

Participants: A convenience sample of student journalists was used for Study 1. We recruited 327 respondents but excluded 109 respondents who clearly are/were not student journalists or have not experienced harassment, resulting in a sample of 218 (60.6 % fe-

Table 1. Demographic Information of Respondents

Variable	Percent	Variable	Percent
Gender		Age	
Male	33.9%	18-25	64.2%
Female	60.3%	25 - 30	27.0%
Non-binary	0.9%	Over 30	8.8%
Prefer to self-identify	0.5%	Status *(check all that apply)*	
Race		Current undergraduate student journalist	51.2%
White/Non-Hispanic	73.9%	Current graduate student journalist	22.1%
Black/Non-Hispanic	6.4%	Former undergraduate student journalist	21.7%
Asian	5.5%	Former graduate student journalist	5.0%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	9.2%	Experience Length	
Others	0.9%	Less than 1 academic year	27.1%
		1 – 4 academic years	64.2%
		More than 4 academic years	8.7%

male, *M* age = 25.17, *SD* = 3.96; see Table 1 for demographic details). The demographics of our sample reflect the average demographic composition of many U.S. journalism and mass communication programs; a recent survey of 225 schools in the U.S. found that females comprise the majority of journalism and mass communication students (undergraduate: 61.6%; master's: 65.3%) and white students comprise about 65% of undergraduate and master's students (McLaughlin et al., 2020). We also collected the data from diverse states. Our sample size is similar to those used in other recent surveys of student journalists (e.g., Tandoc, 2014).

Questionnaire: The survey was administered electronically through *Qualtrics,* an online survey platform. Once they signed the online consent form, participants were invited to complete a questionnaire. The survey contained a mix of quantitative and qualitative questions. The quantitative questions asked about the sources and types of harassment participants experienced as student journalists, how they dealt with the harassment, how the department or the university responded to the harassment cases, the impact of harassment experiences on their career plans, etc. (see Appendix for the survey questionnaire). We analyzed quantitative survey data using SPSS (ver 28.0). For some survey items, qualitative questions were also included to allow participants to describe their experiences with harassment. Those responses yielded four single-spaced pages of textual data. Through the

software program NVivo, we examined the responses using thematic analysis as described by Nowell et al (2017). We chose this approach for its flexibility and because it is "a useful method for examining the perspectives of different research participants (Nowell et al, 2017, p. 2)."

Results
In regard to the source and form of harassment targeting student journalists (RQ1), participants selected readers and community members (19.2%), other students (18.6%), faculty, staff, or administrators at their university (16.3%), anonymous people (15.0%), faculty, staff, or administrators at another university (12.3%), subjects of their stories (10.3%), and elected or appointed officials (7.6%).

As for the form of harassment, non-sexual insults, name calling, or abusive comments online via email or in-person (32.1%) were the most common type of harassment, followed by sexual insults, name calling, or abusive comments (21.8%), threats of other forms of physical violence (18.5%), threats of academic/professional retaliation (14.6%), and threats of sexual violence (9.8%), and stalking (2.5%).

Regarding their attempt to deal with the harassment experience (RQ2), respondents said they shared the harassment experience with friends or family (26.7%), colleagues at the news outlet (26.4%), one of their professors (21.6%), police and/or other law enforcement officials (12.2%), university officials (8.5%).

Table 2. Harassment Source and Type

	Responses		Percent
	N	Percent	of Cases
Harassment Source *(check all that apply)*			
Readers and community members	106	19.2%	48.8%
Other students	103	18.6%	47.4%
Faculty, staff, or administrators at your university	90	16.3%	41.5%
Anonymous people	83	15.0%	38.3%
Faculty, staff, or administrators at another university	68	12.3%	31.3%
Subject of one of your stories	57	10.3%	26.3%
Elected or appointed officials	42	7.6%	19.4%
Other	4	0.7%	1.8%
Total	553	100.0%	254.8%
Harassment Type *(check all that apply)*			
Non-sexual insults, name calling or abusive comments	177	32.1%	81.6%
Sexual insults, name calling or abusive comments	120	21.8%	55.3%
Threats of other forms of physical violence	102	18.5%	47.0%
Threats of academic/professional retaliation	80	14.6%	36.9%
Threats of sexual violence	54	9.8%	24.9%
Stalking	14	2.5%	6.5%
Other	4	0.7%	1.8%
Total	551	100.0%	253.9%

However, these attempts did not lead to much help from those consulted. For example, 48.7% of respondents said that the university did not take any action (17.0%) or investigated the case but did not follow up with any action (31.7%). In the written descriptions of the university responses, one respondent reported that "I spoke to the head of my department who said their hands were tied." Another respondent wrote, "I was never updated and encouraged to not think about it." Relatedly, most respondents reported that what stopped the harassment was respondents' quitting the job/dropping the class (43%) or taking legal action (36.7%), while only 22.7% said the university's intervention and action against the harasser stopped the harassment.

Harassment experience had an impact on student journalists' career choices to some extent (RQ3). 38.6% of respondents reported that the harassment experience influenced the likelihood they would pursue journalism as a career somewhat or a great deal, while 34.9% reported such experience did not exert

an impact on their career decision so much. In written descriptions of how harassment impacted them, many participants first explained that harassment damaged their mental health with sleeplessness, anxiety, and fear. "The harassment messed with my mental health a lot," one respondent wrote. "It caused burnout. I still haven't fully recovered from it a year later." Participants also described how the harassment had deterred them from the profession. "I graduated college completely burnt out and exhausted from protecting my staff and myself from retaliation by school officials," wrote one former student journalist. "It greatly impacted my motivation to continue in the field." Another former student wrote, "I have faced harassment both from the subjects of my stories and from professors/editors within the industry. I decided that emotional labor was not worth it, and when I graduated, I found work in a journalism-adjacent field." Additionally, a current student noted how the pandemic made experiencing harassment even worse: "The combination of the two really put a hamper [sic] on my mental health, and

that has made me think twice about going into a field that doesn't seem to care about its youngest workers."

Lastly, although the format of survey questions (e.g., "Who was the source of harassment? Check all that apply," "What type of harassment did you face? Check all that apply") did not allow us to statistically compare differences in harassment sources and types across gender or race, our data still suggest that depending on their gender or race, student journalists had distinctive harassment experiences (RQ5). For example, female respondents experienced more harassment by readers and community members (21.6%) or faculty, staff, or administrators of their university (17.7%) than male respondents (13.8% and 13.9% for respective sources). In contrast, male respondents experienced more harassment by other students (22.8%) or anonymous people (19.4%) than female students (16.7% and 12.8% for respective sources).

In the context of race, Asian respondents (36.0%) experienced more harassment by anonymous people than white (14.9%), Black/non-Hispanic (11.5%), and American Indian/Alaskan Native (7.6%) respondents. Also, one third of American Indian/Alaskan Native respondents (32.0%) experienced harassment by readers and community members (20.0% Asian, 16.0% white, 14.3% Black/non-Hispanic). As for the type of harassment, Black/non-Hispanic respondents (15.4%) experienced more threats of sexual violence compared to other race groups (9.1% white, 5.8% Asian, 11.5% American Indian/Alaskan Native). Black/non-Hispanic respondents were also more likely to receive threats of other forms of physical violence; 25.6% of them experienced this type of harassment while fewer white (18.0%), Asian (20.6%), and American Indian/Alaskan Native (23.1%) respondents experienced it. As for the threats of academic/professional retaliation, Asian respondents reported the most frequent experiences (33.3%), followed by Black/non-Hispanic (15.4%), white (13.7%), and American Indian/Alaskan Native (5.7%) respondents. Table 3 provides more details about the gender and race differences across harassment sources and types.

Additionally, two sets of one-way ANOVA were conducted to test if gender and race play any role in the impact of harassment on student journalists' career choices. Data showed that male (M = 3.04, SD = 1.10), female (M = 3.00, SD = 1.46), and non-binary (M = 2.50, SD = .71) respondents were not significantly different in perceived impact of harassment experience on their career choices, $F(3, 208)$ = .302, p =

.824. Similarly, White/Non-Hispanic (M = 3.00, SD = 1.34), Black/Non-Hispanic (M = 3.64, SD = 1.22), Asian/Pacific Islander (M = 3.17, SD = 1.03), American Indian/Alaskan Native (M = 2.60, SD = 1.43) did not report significantly different impact of harassment experience, $F(4, 208)$ = 1.622, p = .170.

Study 2

Method

In an effort to gain a more nuanced understanding of the students' experiences with harassment, we conducted a series of focus group interviews with participants recruited through the survey; at the end of the survey for Study 1, we'd asked participants to leave their email address if they would be interested in participating in focus groups. We'd noted that the email address entered would be linked to their answers to the survey questionnaire. We interviewed eight people through these focus groups for a total of 202 minutes of recorded material that, when transcribed, amounted to 51 single-spaced pages of textual data. Focus group participants were either current students or recent graduates of a mix of public and private institutions in the Northeast, Midwest, and South. Six were women; two were men—which makes sense given that, as noted above, women represent the majority of journalism and mass communication students. Participants were asked a list of pre-determined questions. (See Appendix).

These focus groups took place during the summer and early fall of 2021, and we continued interviewing participants until we reached saturation, defined by Mason (2010, p. 2) as the point at which "the collection of new data does not shed any further light on the issue under investigation." While, as Mason notes, saturation should be the "guiding principle" in qualitative research, our focus group sample size is in line with other recent studies that rely in part on interviews with student journalists (e.g., Kronstad, 2016). We once again used NVivo to assist in thematic analysis as previously described.

Results

When asked the source of the harassment they received (RQ1), most focus group participants pointed to school administrators. For instance, one student told us how a professor publicly threatened her grade over stories she was writing for the campus newspaper. Another student described how she was "bullied" by a high-ranking member of her university's public

Table 3. Harassment Source and Type across Gender and Race

	Gender		Race			
	Male	Female	White/ Non-Hispanic	Black/ Non-Hispanic	Asian	American Indian/ Alaskan Native
Harassment Source *(check all that apply)*						
Readers and community members	13.8%	21.6%	17.6%	14.3%	20.0%	32.0%
Other students	22.8%	16.7%	19.9%	17.2%	16.0%	11.3%
Faculty, staff, or administrators at your university	13.9%	17.7%	17.3%	17.2%	8.0%	11.3%
Anonymous people	19.4%	12.8%	14.9%	11.5%	36.0%	7.6%
Faculty, staff, or administrators at another university	11.1%	13.4%	16.8%	17.2%	8.0%	11.3%
Subject of one of your stories	10.5%	9.9%	9.6%	14.3%	8.0%	15.1%
Elected or appointed officials	6.7%	7.9%	7.2%	11.5%	4.0%	9.5%
Other	1.7%	0%	0.5%	0%	0%	1.9%
Harassment Type *(check all that apply)*						
Non-sexual insults, name calling or abusive comments	31.1%	31.9%	33.6%	25.6%	8.8%	36.6%
Sexual insults, name calling or abusive comments	21.1%	22.3%	22.1%	18.0%	26.4%	5.6%
Threats of other forms of physical violence	18.4%	19.6%	18.0%	25.6%	20.6%	23.1%
Threats of academic/professional retaliation	14.7%	14.3%	13.7%	15.4%	33.3%	5.7%
Threats of sexual violence	11%	9.0%	9.1%	15.4%	5.8%	11.5%
Stalking	3.2%	2.4%	2.9%	0%	2.9%	1.9%
Other	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	0%	2.9%	0%

affairs team. "She would just say awful things to me, telling me I'm a horrible journalist," the student said.

I don't have a future in this field. I should choose another profession. Um, like, threatening to blackball me … in response to us just writing stories they didn't like ... It just affected me so deeply to have this person in such a position of authority in the university saying these awful things to me.

Harassment from fellow students and community members is most common online, according to focus group participants, although they noted that the digital harassment also impacted their real-world social interactions. "It's that feeling every time you walk into a room that someone there is gonna have made a weird meme about you online or posted something rude about the way you look," said one student. "It could be the person sitting next to you in class."

Themes of burnout, lingering mental health consequences, and tepidness about a career in journalism also emerged in the focus group interviews (RQ3 and RQ4). "I don't want the constant negative adrenaline rush of worrying that something's going to happen," said one participant, explaining why she was considering career options outside of journalism. Another participant who was targeted by peers, professors, and school administrators for her coverage of a sexual assault case is now pursuing a different professional

path. "It's completely shifted me away from journalism," she said. "I was very, very passionate about it to the point where I was known on campus for being the newspaper girl. And with the harassment coming from every direction, I lost potential references, I lost a lot of friendships." Several students who do plan to work in journalism said their experiences with harassment spurred them to seek lower-profile roles. "It definitely made me reconsider being a reporter," said one student. "It definitely made me reconsider what kind of prominence I want to have in the newsroom."

Another common theme that emerged in focus group interviews was the gendered nature of the harassment participants experienced (RQ5). This was especially true online. "The harassment that women and gender-diverse people face is ridiculous," said one student. "It's horrible. And it's, you know, so pervasive that, of course, it changes the way you think about your online presence." Another student expressed frustration with her experience in a professional newsroom where, as she put it, "toxic masculinity abounds." Someone else said she was sexually harassed while working in a campus newsroom during her first year of college. The harassment persisted despite her efforts to get help. "I just felt like I was screaming under a cage and no one could hear me," she said.

All of the students who participated in focus groups called on journalism educators to do more to prepare them for on-the-job harassment. "I think it would be really, really helpful for students to be informed of what their rights are as student journalists," said one participant. At the same time, they recognized that faculty—especially non-tenured faculty—are often in a tough position when the harassment is coming from university officials. "Some of my favorite professors are not tenured or adjunct," said one student. "Because I was so close with them, and because they became my mentors, I saw how much they struggled."

In general, many of our respondents felt journalism schools need to diversify more and have more women and people of color in leadership positions – people they feel could help change the culture and encourage a more open dialogue around harassment and other challenges that disproportionately impact historically marginalized groups. "You have student journalists who experienced harassment, often on the basis of those marginalized identities. You just end up with nowhere to go, and that's the problem," one student told us. Another said that her "end goal" as a

female journalist was to make sure other young women don't go through what she did. "When I'm 60 or something, I would love to be a managing editor, not because I want the title, which would be cool, but also because I want to protect," she said. "I want to be the person that I wish I had when I first started out."

Conclusions and Recommendations

This mixed-methods study documents U.S. student journalists' experiences with harassment and explores its sources and impacts, especially as they relate to professional socialization. We also sought to understand what influence, if any, students' race and gender have on their experiences with harassment. While the design of these studies does not gauge the prevalence of harassment among all student journalists in the U.S., our work is nonetheless meaningful. It illustrates the many sources of harassment targeting student journalists and highlights students' desire for their journalism professors and other university officials to protect them or at least help them cope. It also confirms existing literature showing that experiencing harassment has negative emotional and psychological impacts. Experiencing harassment also somewhat contributes to students' desire to seek careers outside of journalism.

Our survey data illustrates how students of different races experience harassment differently. For instance, Black student respondents were most likely to be targets of sexual violence and other kinds of physical violence. Asian student respondents, meanwhile, were most likely to receive threats of academic or professional retaliation. The role gender plays in harassment emerged in our focus group interviews as women student journalists described sexual harassment and what one participant called "toxic masculinity" in newsrooms. Students told us how the harassment caused stress, mental anguish, and burnout, and how they wanted to see journalism educators do more to prepare them for this aspect of their jobs, as well as swiftly and appropriately respond to complaints of harassment.

Our work points to the need for more research related to harassment targeting student journalists, such as a large-scale study designed to gauge prevalence in a single country or a cross-cultural study that compares students' experiences in different national contexts. There is also room for pedagogical inquiries into what types of classroom interventions are most useful in training student journalists to handle ha-

rassment as well as questions about what role media literacy training may play in preventing harassment in the first place.

In the shorter term, however, our findings should serve as a call to action for journalism educators to do more to address the realities of on-the-job harassment. Doing so has the potential to change how student journalists are socialized into the profession—something that could eventually help improve conditions for working journalists overall. As one focus group participant said, "Everything is a learned behavior. This is a microcosm of the news world. If this is how you practice news in your [campus] newsroom, that is going to transfer over." By not advocating against harassment or teaching students how to deal with it, journalism educators risk normalizing the behavior. Given the existing literature on how harassment disproportionately impacts women and journalists of color, continuing to normalize harassment may stymie much-needed efforts to diversify the field. Journalism educators must also create opportunities in the classroom to openly discuss harassment and intimidation. This could be in a journalism ethics course or a more targeted course examining gender in the newsroom. The students we interviewed also desired more training in how to handle online threats and harassment when they do occur.

Overall, journalism schools need to examine the culture they're creating for their students. The traditional notion that reporters need to have a "thick skin" can discourage students from disclosing when they are being harassed or struggling in other ways, while the "view from nowhere" approach to journalism can invalidate the experiences of students from more marginalized communities. As one student told us, "we…need to be building a social justice lens into our journalism education, so that … journalism students are more empowered to say, 'No, this is harassment. I am being targeted. This isn't what the industry should look like anymore.'"

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