Chapter 7

The Politics of Women’s Digital Archives and Its Significance for the History of Journalism

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THE POLITICS OF WOMEN’S DIGITAL ARCHIVES AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE HISTORY OF JOURNALISM

Pernilla Severson

This article explores the politics of digital archives focused explicitly on women journalists and their work. A key question is here the wider implications and value for journalism historiography. A qualitative analysis is conducted of the online presence of two illustrative archives, one an oral history project called Women in Journalism and the other a women’s history database called Kvinnsam. The analysis finds that whereas the archives do not lend themselves to participation as agency in co-constructing history, they give access to otherwise nonsearchable, nonvisible, and nonaccessible material of relevance to the history of women journalists and their work. The agency and political power of the archives are dependent on institutions, first, to simply materialize as online archives and, second, to (potentially) affect political matters and express political acts of resistance. For journalism history studies, this means engaging with the archives that exist, what forms they have, and how they are used. For digital journalism, this also implies a discussion of how archival experimenting could develop the field.

Introduction

A recurrent issue for journalism history relates to the relatively narrow range of sources used by journalism historians: news media texts or the personal papers of individual journalists (Nerone 2011). A related issue is the call for journalism history studies to more actively write women into history (Steiner 2017). One problem is that certain types of sources lend themselves to telling particular types of stories (Nerone 2011); another is that a journalism history that excludes women’s perspectives creates a distorted perception of what journalism is and has been (Beasley 2010).

Following this, archives should be seen as political acts for advancing the history of women’s journalism (Tusan 2005). Feminist historiography as the study and creation of feminist archives to promote gender equality is growing (Cifor and Wood 2017; Eichhorn 2014). It also has a history. In 1935, the World Center for Women’s Archives was initiated by building a collection with the intent of its being a counter-archive using alternative approaches to represent women’s experiences more broadly. This shaped feminist historiography, the women’s archive movement and archival
scholarship, particularly regarding marginalized groups (Lubelski 2014). This is linked to proactive collecting, such as oral history projects providing inadequately documented groups a voice and the formation of women’s archives to enable collection development policies (Zanish-Belcher and Mason 2007).

Digital archives could broaden their range of sources by including women’s perspectives but could also simply continue and thus increase bias. The politics of archives and digital archives are part of a broader research context giving voice to or silencing marginalized communities. The archive is recognized as an incomplete repository, with silences, gaps, and elisions (Thomas, Fowler, and Johnson 2017). The politics of archives is researched in various fields (Casswell 2014; Derrida 1996; Hoskins 2017; Robertson 2011). Postcolonial research shows, for example, how the archive is a co-creator of the forgotten history of oppressed peoples (Burton 2003; Gauthereau 2017). The focus in this study is on the politics of women’s digital archives in relation to journalism history studies.

The digital archive suggests “a new kind of archive, with new structures, new ways of searching, a paradigm shift in record keeping” (Johnson 2017, 154). Marginalized communities can be co-creators with archivists in selecting material and designing interfaces as seen in community archives (Johnson 2017). Eichhorn (2014) places archives in a feminist and activist movement as way of enhancing agency and power where digitization matters, including roles for feminist action as a radical cataloger or as an accidental archivist. In contrast, there is a fear that digitization only happens for fields and topics that are already popular. Uricchio (2014) makes a case for contours of absence in the construction of media history and the need to “make productive use of the historiographic problems we face” (126).

Archive politics suggest that one of the roles of the archive and the digital archive is to give voice to women journalists and to engage in a critical understanding of how to think about digital media, history and gender. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to analyze and distinguish what voices are made present in two illustrative women’s digital archives for journalism history, how digitization matters in this voice-making, and how this can be understood in relation to democratic values.

Archives

While digitization has made scholars from various disciplines interested in how archives shape an interdisciplinary field there is still a lack of agreement on what counts as an archive/digital archive. Archival researchers define archives as records created by a social actor (individual, institution, or organization) in a process through which they are preserved due to their permanent value (Theimer 2012). The unit of the archive is the document: any discreet piece of information (Howell 2006). Digital humanists understand archives as selections, consisting of clustered online material, which can comprise both digital and digital copies of analog material. The selection often consists of materials located elsewhere, such as physical repositories or collections. The archive then means a selection of purposefully collected material. For an organization, an archive is often the place to retain and organize records of the organization (Theimer 2012), like the online news archive of a daily newspaper.
An archival field relevant for the understanding of archives and digital archives is what Theimer (2012) calls participatory archives, which are new forms of archival activity: “an organization, site or collection in which people other than archives professionals contribute knowledge or resources, resulting in increased appreciation and understanding of archival materials and archives, usually in an online environment”. Digitization can provide online access to previously analog material as well as other forms of field collection with participatory approaches (Theimer 2012).

A part of archival knowledge building is digital historiography: a research approach for studying the interplay between digital technology and historical practices focusing on contextual implications (Theimer 2012). Digital archives are understood as everything from traditional physical archival materials represented digitally to born digital materials. Digitally represented traditional physical materials include descriptions in online finding aids and catalog records. Collections of digitized analog historical materials can also be seen as forms of digital archives as repositories that may give online access to digitized collections. A born digital archive is, for instance, the selected digital files from Salman Rushdie’s Macintosh Performa 5400, as well as The September 11 Digital Archive with a crowdsourced collection of materials related to the attacks of 9/11. Born digital archives are also archival initiatives, such as “Web Archives,” which harvest content from the web for long-term access and preservation (Theimer 2012). These archives function as sources for history-writing with Web-based materials (Rogers 2017).

The Selected Archives

Complete inventories of digital archives or of women’s journalism archives, analog or digital, are nonexistent. There are initiatives online, like ArchiveGrid (2018) or Wikipedia (2018), and random selections of women’s history archives, like Centre d’Archives et de Recherches pour l’Histoire des Femmes (2018). However, these initiatives are incomprehensive and biased toward the Western world. This article is based on an exploratory qualitative study aimed to initiate and accumulate knowledge of women’s digital archives for journalism history studies. Thus, a representative selection is neither possible nor desirable.

The studied archives have been chosen for the different ways they raise (theoretical) questions about archives and the history of women journalism/journalists. The selected archives are compared and contrasted in order produce a deeper and richer picture of each archive.

Women’s journalism history research shows how daily news press and journalism unions have been powerful archive initiators and builders. However, for women’s journalism history the newspapers’ own archives are incomplete and lack relevant tagging. Important sources have, therefore, been micro-filmed newspapers at libraries as well as material from women’s research databases (Ney 2006). Material from these databases is primarily historical books on early female journalists, some in the U.S., and then often the result of academically educated female journalists’ research (Ney 2006).

I also strategically probed online information to find relevant digital archives and selections. I explored digital archives by searching for “women,” “journalist,” and “archives” in various Asian and African languages using google translate and the
google search function through all results. No archives were found. I found media history archives digitizing analog material, like The Interviews: An Oral History of Television! (2018). It is quite common in the U.S. to use oral history to capture the legends of particularly important women. Another example of women in journalism archives is The Herstory: JAWS Oral History Project (2018). An example from popular culture is The Women Who Rock Digital Oral History Archive (2018), where the digital includes co-creating the archive in various ways. The 1947 Partition Archive (2018) on the partition of British India to India and Pakistan is another example of more traditional cultural heritage approaches: crowd-sourcing of partition witness interviews where volunteers are trained in the oral history technique. Within journalism and women journalism, this is nonexistent.

A particular women’s journalism oral history project is Women in Journalism (2018) (WiJ). Women’s National Press Club, an organization founded to support equal rights for women in the newsroom, initiated the project in 1986. Since 1987, “full-life interviews” (life history interviews) have been collected. WiJ consists of 68 interviews of women journalism pioneers. The self-description of the project states that:

The collection is an important part of the history of journalism as well as showing a very interesting perspective on the history of women in the workplace. As the collection is digitized it will be available for use by scholars to further their research and to educators for development of courses on journalism history and women’s studies. (WiJ)

WiJ began the project “Archive Digitization” by digitizing the Cora Rigby Archives and the Women in Journalism Oral History project materials. WiJ has been awarded for its achievements in presenting women’s journalism history and has been the subject of several studies (Beasley 2015; Fuchs 2003; Whitt 2008). I selected WiJ for this study due to all these traits.

After examining various forms of digital archives, I decided to select a dominant digital archive initiative of women history, a women’s history archive. I would preferably have wanted to include born digital archives or oral history-based archives in two contexts (countries). I have, however, not been able to locate digital women’s journalist archives with aspects resembling community archives or “more digital” archives. There are, of course, digital archives preserving the digital without an explicitly focus on women, e.g. The Journalism Digital News Archive (2018), an online archive of news content in digital format. In my country, Sweden, there are no oral history archives for women journalists as well as for other media professions or journalist-related aspects and themes.

Based on these considerations I selected Kvinnsam (2018), an archive that is a repository and database with accessible digital documentation of analog material, including particular collections. Kvinnsam is the database component of an established library search system made in cooperation with the Secretariat for Gender Research, at Gothenburg University in Sweden. Kvinnsam’s began with the Women’s History Collections, founded as a private initiative in 1958. Since the mid-1980s, the collections have had their own premises. Kvinnsam’s cataloging of new literature is based on the collections of the university library. The collections consist of books, journals, articles, chapters, pamphlets, research reports, etc. Kvinnsam has been online since August
1998 and is available via LIBRIS (Library Information System of Sweden). The database is in Swedish and English. Kvinnsam is, in turn, also part of a larger collaboration with Nordic and European women’s and gender archives. Kvinnsam is a well-known and legitimate actor that illustrates how women’s archives can be created and developed.

The similarities and differences between the two chosen archives arguably create a favorable starting point for an analysis with the ultimate aim of contributing to increasing the presence, power and value of digital archives for women’s journalism history studies.

**A Qualitative Archive Analysis**

This is a qualitative archive analysis where the two archives have been chosen for the different ways they raise (theoretical) questions about archives and the history of women journalism/journalists. More specifically, theoretical propositions help generalize from the archives as analytical generalizations. The analytical technique is pattern matching between the archives as well in relation to theoretical propositions that take into consideration rival patterns.

The theoretical propositions chosen for this study are affordance theory and voice as participation and power. The affordance perspective in this study focuses on the relational aspects of the social and the material; and this perspective will be combined and furthered using other theories (voice, participation, and power). This means that affordance theory directs attention to the potential digital characteristics (meaning the affordances) of the digital archives while the theories of voice and participation as power function as “lenses” which allow a discussion of the complicated problems and social issues of the politics of women’s digital archives focused explicitly on women journalists and their work. In this context affordance theory is a sensitizing concept for focusing on and identifying what a digital archive could be, and then voice, participation, and power are theories to discuss archival politics.

An affordance approach is a way to meaningfully structure an analysis of the relationship between technology and the social. Affordance theory is a micro-level theory on the very specific relationship between the social and the technical. Gibson (1979) developed affordance theory to explain the relationship and complementarity of an animal and its environment, naming affordances as a form of action possibility. To adopt an affordance perspective is to recognize both use and how an object’s materiality could invite and constrain this use. Hence, affordance theory is not only to be understood as interface and technical affordances connected to a device’s interface. The affordances are located both in the social and in the technical. Depending on interest you can emphasize either the social or the technical. Design research and Human-Computer-Interaction research emphasize the technical design of affordances. For a review of how the term affordances has been used by communication scholars, see Nagy and Neff (2015).

In this study, affordance theory guides the selection of relevant study object (digital archives) and help to interpret possible forms of usage. Similar work in journalism research has, for example, been done by Tenenboim-Wenblatt and Neiger (2018) in their development of temporal affordances to study the relationship between news as technology and journalistic storytelling practices. Another example is Djerf-Pierre,
Ghersetti, and Hedman (2016) use of affordances to avoid static conceptions of both uses and technologies in studying journalists’ appropriation of social media affordances.

Simply using identified affordances in an analysis, creates an emphasis on discovery and description. This problem with the affordance approach has recently been discussed by media scholars. Shaw (2017) shows the need to link affordance theory to other theories and merges it with Hall’s dominant/hegemonic, negotiated, and oppositional reading positions to approach the political implications of audience activities with these technologies in new and more nuanced ways. In this study affordances aid the understanding of an archive’s repertoires of action (Basu and de Jong 2016). Affordance as theory provides insight into potential digital archive characteristics to gain an understanding of archival properties that relate to specific usages as well as a range of possible developments.

I mainly build my work on affordances on Evans et al (2017) that show how affordances need to meet three criteria: that an affordance is neither the object nor a feature of the object (features are static while affordances are dynamic, a table is the object and eating is the affordance); that the proposed affordance is not an outcome (locating an image by a search function is an outcome and visibility and searchability are affordances); that the proposed affordance has variability (features are binary and affordances have variability). So, using Evans et al.’s (2017) threshold criteria to distinguish affordances I find “true” potential digital archive affordances to analyze the archives with. These affordances are then real possible invitations for use that are relational constructs between the social and the technical.

Digital archive affordances through the lens of affordance theory are defined as the potential ways in which the archive-related possibilities and constraints associated with the material conditions and technological aspects of the digital archive are manifested in the archival characteristics of the studied digital archives. Identifying digital archival affordances is made through an overview of digital archive research. After identifying such affordances I examine manifestations of digital archive affordances in the studied archives.

The study of the political aspects of archives as the articulation of voice is a significant issue within the politics of archives and, with that, to feminist approaches within this field. Voice as participation is a theoretical model of power aspects as a participant-oriented process aiming to reveal how journalism research can explore, understand and critically discuss power aspects of archives by asking: whose voices participate where and with what consequences? This can be compared with a framing study of online news studying game frames or issue frames, and what is lacking or not. Framing aspects have been found through empirical studies in a way similar to affordances. I have developed an affordance theory approach for studying digital archives, where some affordances are there in varying degrees and some are not, and how this invites a critical discussion using voice and participation as power.

My affordance analysis moves from a descriptive to a more critical approach using Carpentier’s (2016) model to critically analyze participatory media. The model articulates “layers” as fields and processes, making it possible to discuss and reason “how come” and “with what consequences”? Participation in this context refers to the equalization of power relations between privileged and non-privileged actors in formal
or informal decision-making processes. Real power is the ability to affect the outcome of such processes. This political approach shows that participation is an object of struggle and how ideologies defend certain participatory intensities. This makes it possible to discern problematic power discrepancies in power relations, by asking, for instance: What kinds of participation and power are present but also possible in digital women’s archives of relevance to journalism history studies and digital journalism studies?

**Digital Archive Affordances**

The following affordances have been identified in research on digital media and archives as being particularly relevant for digital archive studies:

1. Two key internet affordances: *hypertextuality* and *interactivity* (Wellman et al. 2003).
2. Two affordances specific to the potential of digital archives: *integration* and *customization*.
3. The affordance *visibility* as a possible action related to locating content.

*Hypertextuality* is associated with hyperlinks, which are seen as one of the most fundamental features of the web and as “intended connection[s] between segments of text” (Brügger 2017, 5). This includes an understanding of both the analogue and the digital. Analog segments of text were connected to each other earlier, and hyperlinks can exist on stand-alone computers as well as in local and global digital networks. I do not analyze hyperlinks as web data, but as ascribed affordances of the digital archive of hyperlinks: intended connections between segments of text.

*Interactivity* as an affordance refers to the degree of interaction with the archive. This includes all invitations to interact with the website, even for users to click on files as a form of co-creatorship that determines a record’s meaning. Interactivity in a higher degree means user-contributed analysis and comment (Johnson 2017). Technical tools for interactivity are not only hyperlinks but also keyword searches, software downloads, as well as frequently asked questions (Aioki 2000). By interactivity, I also mean low degree interactivity, which makes it possible to discuss the digital of the archives at various degrees.

*Integration* relates to invitations to use digital archives for writing and researching in the same space (integration of parts of knowledge production). If the digital archive invites integration, the user can act as an “authoruser” in relation to material and also be invited to potential user collaborations. *Customization* is an affordance of digital archives that allows for the creation of personalized research spaces and classification systems. This means invitations for authorusers to assemble, upload, and save their own personalized collections of documents and material that they can describe and tag (Purdy 2011).

*Visibility* as an affordance refers to whether and how a piece of information can be located. Visibility leads to locating. In a way, this is the main affordance of an archive: to locate material. Visibility makes possible actions related to finding, confronting, viewing and consuming content. The search is a strong indication of visibility: “Visibility applies to any online technology that includes features to search for and find
information” (Evans et al. 2017, 43). Searchability as a function is something other than the visibility of search. Searchability relates to meta-data registration, search functions, to what actually is searched in, how searches are delimited, if they are in full text or via meta-data, and what the OCR quality is (Ben-David and Huurdeman 2014). An affordance perspective focuses on whether visibility is there or not and assesses it in terms of greater or lesser, or relative degree of visibility. Content visibility depends on a site’s specific features, as well as the end user’s application of specific features (Evans et al. 2017).

Voice as Participation to Analyze Power Matters

What Couldry (2010) calls “new intensities of listening” I approach as “voice as participation.” I do this by adapting and using Carpentier’s (2016) model of a critical analysis of media participation and political agency. By translating voice that matters into voice as participation, it is possible to analytically discuss democratic implications of the digital archive affordances of the studied archives. Otherwise, the analysis would end in a simple description of how digital archives open up for more voices. With voice as participation, I am able to locate and discuss the participation of various voices, how they are made part of a context and made available for use, and how this says something about power in relation to journalism history studies.

Carpentier’s model includes and integrates the participation process in its field by looking at how its actors make decisions and thereby express power. In this study, the model functions as themes for guiding the analysis. The first theme (process) is distinguishing how participation is located in particular archival processes, by asking: (1) In what way is an archive participatory or not, and what complexities are involved? (2) How are the processes situated within contexts that have an impact on them? The second theme (field) is focused on how the archives are part of a field or fields, by asking: How is the archive constructed and structured, with which knowledges, positions, interests, stakes, commodities and histories? The third theme (process and field) is analyzing the position of the archival processes in the field and how the relationships between the participatory processes and the field are organized. If we take women’s voices in history-making as participation, then the participatory process takes place in certain ways within the field and across fields.

The fourth theme (actors) is focused on discerning actors that are active within the archival processes as well as the relations between these actors. The actors’ identities and identifications are also considered. This means, for instance, contemplating how KvinnSam is part of a gender studies and library organization and has a government mission to articulate women’s history as a database. The digital is also considered an actor, as the materialization of trying to inform, and also invite to use and to link to other fields, shapes development. This also relates to whether the actors can be seen as privileged or not in the field. Furthermore, this makes it possible to discuss the degree to which, depending on field, the actors are not privileged. For example, mainstream journalism history and digital journalism do not deal with archives as a study object and gender issues.

The final theme is considering decision-making and power. This concerns what the decision-making moments are and what their significance is within the media
process: How equal are the power relations in general when comparing the power position of the actors in each decision-making moment? What does an evaluation of the (un)balanced nature of the power positions of privileged and non-privileged actors show? This, for example, makes possible a discussion on how the decision-making moments for the archives within each archive and its institution are shaped by the voice of women in journalism history and women’s history.

### The “Digital” of the Archives

WiJ displays hypertext through hyperlinks that allow users to continue clicking for more information. Hyperlinks mainly lead users through the project and to other information that concerns the Washington Press Foundation. One assigned link is to a YouTube interview, which is described as telling us that portions of the collection will be added to the WPCF website, and a text section describing the video with an invitation: “To view selected portions of the Oral History archives click here.” Concerning interactivity, WiJ invites communication by addressing the user as a potential sponsor: “This work is made possible thanks to the generous support of our sponsors. If you would like to contribute to these efforts please send an email to the WPCF office.” WiJ also invites users to interact through “Internships,” which are related more to the Washington Press Foundation than to WiJ (http://wpcf.org/internships/). Still, the internships are described as providing “opportunities for women and minorities through internships at some of our nation’s most prestigious media companies” (ibid).

Kvinnsam displays hypertext by offering many options to click for more. Kvinnsam users mainly start in navigations for the database (Figure 1). But Kvinnsam also has interactivity in the form of invitations to contact Kvinnsam generally and to suggest acquisitions specifically. It is the same document for suggesting acquisitions as for the library. In this information, it is the “Book” that can be purchased. As a user, one
is guided toward mainly searching (in the top central menu) and acquisitions (in the lower right). The figure also shows in this section that it is the code for categorization that comes first.

The analysis shows that the archives do not manifest digital archive affordances to a great extent, a reasonably anticipated outcome. This reveals, however, an absence of the digital archival affordances of integration and customization. Concerning integration, WiJ and Kvinnsam do not offer any facilities for the co-construction of meaning. The digital archives do not allow writing and research to occur together. Considering customization, WiJ lacks the possibility of assembling and classifying, if you do not count the possibility to find all search words, as all words in the 10 interviews are searchable and appear as results in the hit list. One can download the material and customize it. But material is not readily accessible as an invitation to customization and offers for downloading are not integrated into the website. Customization also involves uploading, and WiJ does not invite uploading of any material. In regard to Kvinnsam’s customization, the site has a classification system. Customization is limited to saving a search, and uploading is not possible. The lack of integration and customization means that the voice of the authoruser (Purdy 2011) is lacking.

For journalism history studies, the archives offer trustworthy sources for writing women into history. Records are more or less accessible. At the same time, the archives do not fulfill any digital archive promises. The selection of the archives makes this hardly a surprise. What is gained through the analysis is an increased understanding of what digitized archives mean in relation to more digital archives, and what may be lost in a digitized archive where digital archive affordances are low or simply not there. The total lack of any digital archives within journalism to co-create indicates cultural
explanations. These can be related to the journalistic field where authority and autonomy are more valued than involving end-users in co-creation. Digital journalism is also a new field, starting in online news, mobile journalism and such, where the archive thus far is the Web as archive and online news archives. Within digital humanities, more experimental approaches to archives as well as to media history have been applied (Battershill et al 2017; Cambridge Digital Humanities 2018; The Center for Digital Humanities Princeton 2018). In Sweden, several other more digitally experimental archives have been initiated and developed, where the same main actors, KB and Libris, are involved. However, Kvinnsam is not part of these experiments. Another explanation can be that WiJ and Kvinnsam are not counter-archives. They are not experimenting to be accepted into established institutions. Both archives strive for legitimacy as well as to fulfill the aim of writing women into history. This is done by showing that highly competent women exist as well as including sources otherwise inaccessible (like feminist magazines and journals). Experimenting could mean losing legitimacy.

Visibility

WiJ makes searchability visible in a not so visible way. Instead, the search is made part of the “interviewees” (Figure 2):

Kvinnsam places its search linking into the LIBRIS database and the field search that is the norm in database searches (Figure 3):

When performing a search, the WiJ archive provides results from only 10 interviews. Kvinnsam offers results from many more sources; for example, a search for “journalist” yields 41 hits. Visibility varies in these search results. WiJ gives instant
visibility to women journalists’ reasoning on a particular chosen subject. Kvinnsam instead gives instant visibility to sources that need to be accessed and read through if one is to say something about women journalists. These digital archives only make visible portions of the archived material, not enough to constitute the entire research process. Both WiJ and Kvinnsam require the user to log in to get access to both actual and more material. But for journalism history studies, the digital archives in this form still provide visibility of more material that might not otherwise be considered research material.

None of the archives invite users to share or to contribute in any way to the voices in the archive (as was also mentioned in the former section). This is something typically valued by feminist archive initiatives. Instead, the archives invite users to engage in participation that is to listen to these chosen, catalogued and made available voices. Hence, voice as new intensities of listening is a possibility. In other digital archives, the actual sharing of material to contribute to an archive is more a matter of voice as expression. WiJ presents voices from the margins of journalism history to be listened to. Kvinnsam collects and make searchable central material for women’s history studies that was previously too scattered to be easily accessed and/or used – making the material central in a collection where otherwise it would have been marginalized. This illustrates the value of distinguishing and analyzing voice as participation in relation to both voice as expression and voice in relation to listening.

**Voice as Participation in WiJ and Kvinnsam**

The processes in focus here are aimed at creating and distributing (inform) an archive as an oral history archive of women journalists (WiJ) and a database for women’s history (Kvinnsam). The fields are constructed and structured positions and interests, from both information management of knowledge production of history for journalism as a profession and of journalism history as knowledge production within women’s studies. These differences invite different relationships between the participatory process and the field. When it is information management of history for journalism as a profession, it is the making of an oral history project within a journalist profession organization, distributing it digitally and through universities (WiJ). With respect to the latter, WiJ use repositories (universities), while Kvinnsam makes “woman” a starting point in material on journalists and journalism. And, information management of gender studies concerns how Kvinnsam is made part of the LIBRIS collection, organized through Secretariat for Gender Research.

The actors are the organizations behind the archive. For both WiJ and Kvinnsam, voice as participation implies that there should be relations between the archive and researchers and journalists. When analyzing the actors’ identities and identifications, two aspects are displayed. WiJ’s approach is that journalism is a profession where women have historically been and remain an integral component. Kvinnsam is a part of gender studies, library organization and with a government assignment to articulate women’s history as a database. The digital as an actor is the materialization of trying to inform and also invite to link to other fields, shaping development. Both WiJ and Kvinnsam link into libraries and universities as repositories that shape their development and enhance their “voice as participation.” Depending on field, the archives are
not privileged. Mainstream journalism history studies have always relied on archives, however, not dealing with archives as a study object, and women are downplayed. Both WiJ and Kvinnsam have non-privileged roles as both are peripheral to the central. At the same time, the archival agency is within each archive, separate from other powers of agency that shapes journalism both as a research field and as a profession. In women’s studies, this separatist approach – being separate from dominant power – is both a necessity and a result of a power struggle within a field.

The politics made within each archive and its institutions are shaped by the power of the voice of women in journalism history and women’s history. If we further this line of thinking to decision making within the various fields, the decision-making moments could mean all journalism history researchers should design based on an awareness of the digital archives of women’s history that are available, as well as asking for and creating material that is lacking to do more inclusive journalism history.

**Linking into Networks of Feminism**

By taking the form of an institution, the feminist project has historically gained power through archives. When an archive takes form as a, or within a, legitimate institution, the archive gains the power of being visible. One can express this as a formation where the collective voice as an institutional voice is crucial to becoming a public voice. Hence, voice as participation for the two archives relies on institutions to be a public voice.

WiJ and Kvinnsam illustrate this in various ways. The oral history field as actual voices is particularly evident in WiJ. It shows a materialization of history, or even a closeness to contemporary history, by providing archival material of interviews with the actual women pioneers of journalism. WiJ becomes a public voice for feminist journalism in embedding WiJ in a journalism foundation and the foundation’s activities, like the aforementioned internships. The Swedish archive is more text-based and clearly expresses a multitude of material all in the public voices of “women.” Kvinnsam becomes a public voice for women’s history in general, linking into feminist networks by being a database in collaboration with the Secretariat for Gender Research.

Analyzing public voice as linking into networks of women’s movements can also be understood as forms of resistance furthering a particular agency. Resistance is providing alternatives to a central, mainstream norm materialized as other voices, which implies that the archive remains an expression of voices, not as making a political impact. But in materializing as an archive, being placed within institutional contexts that (potentially) affect political matters, the oral histories and the data collection make expression political acts of resistance.

On another level agency and affecting political matters has to do with who, then, is an end-user? Johnson (2017) points to the acute need in a digital archive for close engagement with end-users. Close engagement is within the feminist community trying to move from women being marginalized and silenced in the archives to being given voice. The agency is within these communities. But how many journalism history studies researchers and digital journalism researchers with an interest in women’s journalism history know about these archives and/or use them? This type of end-user discussion is greatly needed.
**Discussion**

WiJ and Kvinnsam imply that the democratic value of participation as agency in co-constructing history is severely impeded. At the same time, the digital archives do welcome the potential of voice as new intensities of listening by giving access to otherwise nonsearchable, nonvisible, and nonaccessible material of relevance to women’s journalism history. Such potential depends on the power politics made visible in decision-making. This decision-making includes both actual contributions to digital archive material and actual uses of these archives. Public voice shows how the agency and political power of digital archives rely on institutions to be able to materialize as an archive and to (potentially) affect political matters and express political acts of resistance.

The archive as a service available to anyone implies participation as voice that includes new voices and voices with real agency. The two archives exemplify this. The archives try to make words survive as well as texts. Still, it is not the ordinary that is preserved in records and documentation in the archives. It is women, the voice of women, and it is the voice of exceptional and recognized women that are recorded, documented, categorized, and cataloged.

What archives and digital archives can do for journalism history research is to further build on women journalists and write them into history and also with more voices than those of privileged women. Peters (2008, 28) says “we live in a moment of acute archival sensibility, thanks in part to the internet.” It is suggested this archival sensibility of journalism history research should be:

1. To use archives, digital archives and digital traces that acknowledges and analyzes a variety of materials.
2. To solicit, create, use and stimulate use of digital archives that include questions of rewriting journalism history.

For the politics of women’s digital archives in journalism history, this means engaging in what archives exist, how they are used, and what value there is in various forms of web archives, digital archives and digital historiography. For digital journalism, this means a continuing focus on issues linked to digital archives as well as exploring what digital humanities and experimental archival studies means for developing the field. What archives and counter-archives exist and should exist? There could be experimental approaches, like The British Library Machine Learning Experiment (2018). There are also new and emerging approaches to the presentation of archival information online that show the potential for better and more connected archival information. There are several examples of critical archives — see, for instance, the list at Social Justice Digital Humanities Projects (2018).

The politics of women within digital archives for journalism history studies is present whether this is seen as central or peripheral to the field. This presence is essentially providing an argument for shifting perspectives of what centrality is and how the driving forces of history are being renegotiated in journalism history studies. To use simple and naïve understandings of a research field’s strength as being mainly about what is “central,” or what is usually done and with the usual material, is to shy away from truly democratic aspects of journalism history. It is to lend oneself to a hegemonic masculinity and consciously to both make invisible and to downplay important parts of
history, which, ultimately, continues a history peopled almost exclusively by kings and rarely by queens.

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