

Utah State University

DigitalCommons@USU

All Graduate Theses and Dissertations

Graduate Studies

8-2018

“[Taking] Responsibility for the Community”: Women Claiming Power and Legitimacy in Technical and Professional Communication in India, 1999-2016

Breeanne Matheson
Utah State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd>

 Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#), and the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Matheson, Breeanne, ““[Taking] Responsibility for the Community”: Women Claiming Power and Legitimacy in Technical and Professional Communication in India, 1999-2016” (2018). *All Graduate Theses and Dissertations*. 7111.

<https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd/7111>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Studies at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usu.edu.



“[TAKING] RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE COMMUNITY”: WOMEN CLAIMING POWER
AND LEGITIMACY IN TECHNICAL AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION IN

INDIA, 1999-2016

by

Breeanne Matheson

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Technical Communication and Rhetoric

Approved:

Rebecca Walton, Ph.D.
Major Professor Committee Member

Jared Colton, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Keith Grant-Davie, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Christine Cooper-Rompato, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Peggy Petrzela, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Mark R. McLellan, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research and
Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

2018

Copyright © Breeanne Matheson 2018

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

“[Taking] responsibility for the community”: Women Claiming Power and Legitimacy in
Technical and Professional Communication in India, 1999-2016

by

Breeanne Matheson, Doctor of Philosophy

Utah State University, 2018

Major Professor: Dr. Rebecca Walton
Department: English

Though the field of technical and professional communication has long been saturated with the narratives of Euro-Western males, technical and professional communication as a field has a responsibility to expand the lens of study to include the experiences of global and non-traditional practitioners. This study examines the experiences of Indian women working as practitioners, building power and legitimacy in a globalized economy. Drawing from interviews with 49 practitioners as well as an analysis of historical documents, this study uses a post-colonial feminist frame to examine the methods that Indian practitioners have used to build power and legitimacy by founding professional organizations, leveraging their educational opportunities, and using tactical strategies in their workplaces. The data suggests that Indian women have done strong, innovative work in building their own legitimacy in the field. However, work remains to remove barriers that disproportionately bar women from access to professionalizing structures.

(161 pages)

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

“[Taking] responsibility for the community”: Women Claiming Power and Legitimacy in
Technical and Professional Communication in India, 1999-2016

Breeanne Matheson

Though the field of technical and professional communication has long been saturated with the narratives of Euro-Western males, technical and professional communication as a field has a responsibility to expand the lens of study to include the experiences of global and non-traditional practitioners. This study examines the experiences of Indian women working as practitioners, building power and legitimacy in a globalized economy. Drawing from interviews with 49 practitioners as well as an analysis of historical documents, this study examines the methods that Indian practitioners have used to build power and legitimacy by founding professional organizations, leveraging their educational opportunities, and using tactical strategies in their workplaces. The data suggests that Indian women have done strong, innovative work in building their own legitimacy in the field. However, work remains to remove barriers that disproportionately bar women from access to professionalizing structures.

DEDICATION

To the people who shared their stories.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you.

To the members of the STC India community who partnered with us, supported us, and shared knowledge with us. I've learned more than I could ever write from collaborating with you. Your partnership has changed how I see the world.

To Dr. Keith Grant-Davie and Dr. David Hailey who offered ardent encouragement that I continue my education. Across five years of doctoral work, whenever I've found myself up against a problem I could not solve, I've landed in Dr. Grant-Davie's office, taking rapid notes as he helped me put things back together.

To Dr. Rebecca Walton who has dedicated an untold number of hours to reading, critiquing, and strengthening my work, challenging my ideas, and championing my progress. I'm a better scholar and human for having worked in your shadow. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

To Dr. Emily January Petersen who sat me down in Luke's Cafe to tell me everything I needed to know to get through my first semester of Ph.D. life and who became the best research partner and colleague I can imagine. Without her adventurous spirit, strategic thinking, persistent optimism, and an unthinkable number of pep talks, this project would surely not exist. Thank you Emily, for your role in shaping my research identity, for spanning the globe with me, and mostly for being the dearest of friends. I'd be lost without you.

To my committee members and USU faculty, Dr. Keith Grant-Davie, Dr. Peggy Petrzelka, Dr. Jared Colton, Dr. Christine Cooper-Rompato, Dr. Ryan Moeller, and Leslie Branum, for their tireless work and patient support. To Lori Hyde, Annie Strickland, Candi Checketts, Carol Hatch, Geneva Harline, the USU library staff, USU English staff, and USU Graduate School staff for helping me manage five years of details. To the BYU staff and student employees who helped to transcribe interview data for this project. To Chris Daley, Lori Lee,

Erin Sorensen, Naomi Barnes, Beth Shirley, Sherena Huntsman, Jennifer Scucchi, Samantha Latham, and so many others with whom I spent hours upon hours talking through everything from our academic progress to our personal successes and losses. Among the best things I'll take from graduate school is the community of people who have helped me stretch and grow.

To the many organizations who offered support to make this project a financial reality. To the USU English Department for departmental funding for that helped to cover books and fees during my graduate studies. To the College of Humanities and Social Sciences for their Dissertation Support Scholarship and to the USU Office of Research and Graduate Studies for their generous award support that included a Graduate Enhancement Award and a Dissertation Enhancement Award. These funds allowed me the invaluable opportunity to return to India to share my results with the STC India community.

To my parents, Kirk and Debbie Matheson, for providing an endless safety net that has seen me through challenging weeks and months on the home front and in every corner of the globe. To my incredible support network: John Bonner, Jared Anderson, Hannah Owen, Josh DeFreiz, Warren Bailey, Jillian Jorgenson, Erin Kube, Clint Martin and countless others who coworked with me, fed me, listened to me think aloud, shuttled me to and from the airport, and picked up the slack at home while I was so often away. To Bob and Susan Fotheringham who put me up on so many snowy Logan nights. To my grandmother, Dixie Matheson who supported my plans in life and in death.

To Benjamin Martin, to whom I first said the words aloud, "I think I'm going to get a Ph.D." and who responded without pause, "You'd be great at it." Across oceans and continents, I learned from you to reach as far as I could imagine and then a bit beyond. Thank you for your courage in sending me out into the wide unknowns, knowing already that it would change everything.

Every big dream is built with the help of a village and mine has carried me every step.

Thank you.

Breeanne Matheson

CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iii
PUBLIC ABSTRACT	iv
DEDICATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xii
CHAPTER	
1.THE NON-WESTERN WORKPLACE	1
Introduction.....	1
Professional Legitimacy in Broadly Situated Workplaces	6
Defining Legitimacy	7
Decentralized Notions of Power	13
Moving Beyond Colonialism.....	20
Intersecting Identities.....	26
Technical Writing in Indian Contexts.....	30
Methods	32
Chapter Overview	39
2.HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION IN INDIA	40
Introduction.....	40
Professionalization as a Mechanism of Increasing Power and Legitimacy	40
Historiography Within the Field	42
Methods	44
TPC in India: The Beginnings	44
Founding the Society for Technical Communication India Chapter	45
STC India Conference: Collaborating toward Professionalization.....	47

Conclusion	57
3. PROFESSIONALIZATION: POWER, LEGITIMACY, AND MARGINALIZATION	59
Introduction.....	59
STC India in 2016.....	59
Using Euro-Western Structure to Improve Power and Legitimacy	60
Voicing Concerns	69
Conclusion	76
4. LEGITIMACY THROUGH LEARNING	77
Introduction.....	77
Professional Legitimacy Through Training	78
Education, Capitalism, Legitimacy, and Power.....	81
Seeking Power through Professional Opportunity.....	83
Problems with the Current Educational System	92
Demand for More Educational Options.....	94
5. “I AM POLITELY AGGRESSIVE”: INTERACTIONAL POWER AND AGENCY	98
Introduction.....	98
Interactional Power	99
Workplace Problems Faced by Indian Practitioners	101
Legitimacy in Organizational Structures	106
Conclusion	117
6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES	119
Challenging Patriarchal Norms.....	119
Extending Education Globally.....	121
Negotiating Transactional Power.....	122
Implications for Research	123
Implications in the Classroom	124
Limitations	126
Areas of Further Study.....	126

Conclusion 128

REFERENCES 129

APPENDICES 137

 Appendix A: Interview Questions..... 138

 Appendix B: Interview Participants..... 142

CURRICULUM VITAE..... 144

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1.1 Interview Topics and Research Questions.....	37
2.1 Speaker Demographics 1999-2003.....	49
B.1 Interview Participant Demographics.....	142

CHAPTER 1

THE NON-WESTERN WORKPLACE

Introduction

Over the ten years of my industry experience in technical and professional communication (TPC), I have never once held a job where I did not find my gender to be a marginalizing factor in my professional growth. My bosses or colleagues sometimes pointed to my gender as a reason that I should not be given certain projects or should not be promoted. After all, what if I became pregnant and left the workforce? In other instances, my age made me subject to skepticism about my competence. I struggled hard to be recognized as legitimate, even when my education level or experience equaled or exceeded that of my peers.

The gendered problems that I faced in the field of TPC are not unique to me or to the field of TPC and they have not gone unrecognized. They are high profile problems that have remained culturally and academically prominent themes (Allen, 1991, Sandberg, 2013, Petersen, 2014, Malone, 2015). They are problems that must be addressed and must be solved. However, it is not enough to seek to remedy the ways in which I have stood at the margin. Feminist and civil rights activist, Audre Lorde (2012) observed that it is possible even for women who have experienced marginalization to “participate, knowingly or otherwise, in [our] sister’s oppression” (p. 132). She warns against becoming so “enamored of [one's] own oppression that [one] cannot see her heel print upon another's face” (p. 132).

To understand and reduce the workplace forces that have marginalized me, it is vital to engage with and deconstruct the complex systems that marginalize individuals with other identities disproportionately. Further, my own whiteness offers me privileges that must be used to address marginalizing forces of all kinds. I feel a responsibility to push back against the dominant forces observed by Lorde (2012) which do “not want women, particularly white women

responding to racism” and that want “racism to be accepted as an immutable given in the fabric of...existence, like evening-time or the common cold...” (p. 128). I feel drawn to address issues that have marginalized me by working to help disentangle structures that marginalize women intersectionally and by taking time to examine the ways in which I may be contributing to such a system.

The field of technical and professional communication (TPC) has a long history of fighting for its power and legitimacy, and women have fought to retain a voice for their inclusion within it (Kynell-Hunt, 2003, Kynell-Hunt & Savage, 2004, Malone, 2015). Much work has been done to try to understand the ways in which the field can address issues of training, professionalization, marketability, and ethics in ways that allow the field of TPC to remain a viable career with demand for workers (Savage, 2003). However, much of this work has been focused on the needs and concerns of Euro-Western practitioners. More recently, scholars have begun to address the ways that such power and legitimacy in TPC are even more difficult to obtain for certain communities often overlooked due to factors such as race, geography, socioeconomic status (Haas, 2008, Agboka, 2013, Dura, Singhal, & Elias, 2013, Petersen, 2014, Rose & Walton, 2015, Walton, Zraly, & Mugengana, 2015). This project carries that banner forward by turning the lens toward a population that has remained often overlooked. It amplifies the voices of TPC professionals in India who are doing strong work to promote power and legitimacy in a globally defined field.

On the whole, technical communication practitioners in the Global South have been chronically overlooked by scholarship in the field. For the purpose of this document, the Global South will be defined as countries falling within the bottom two categories of the United Nations Human Development Indicators, which sets out to measure aspects of human developments including health, knowledge, and standard of living (Frequently Asked Questions, 2016).

The term “Global South” has been chosen for this project because the field of TPC and other fields including engineering, business, and geography have shown preference to the designation of Global South as a term for discussing these regions of the world (Savage & Agboka, 2016). It provides a specific, more neutral descriptor of populations that have alternatively been referred to as “developing countries” or “under-developed” countries which suggest deficiency based on cultural imperialism. The Global South might alternatively be defined in any number of ways, for instance, using only the lowest category on the Human Development Index, but TPC practitioners in both the medium and low categories have received significantly less attention from TPC scholarship than countries existing at the “high” or “very high” categories, and in many cases countries from both bottom categories share similar histories with colonialism (Savage & Agboka, 2016).

Of the 188 countries accounted for in the index, India falls at number 131, falling within the UN’s second to lowest category, “Medium Human Development Category” which includes 40 countries including India, Botswana, South Africa, Bhutan, Nepal, and Pakistan (Table 1: Human Development Index and its components, 2016). Though countries belonging in similar categories may share some social concerns, the experiences of individuals within any given area cannot be considered to stand in for the experiences of individuals in other countries or regions, even when those areas share similar United Nations Human Development Indicator rankings.

India makes a particularly interesting site of study for technical communication work because of its multilingual history as well as its relationship to the English language. Linguists have observed as many as 225 distinct languages in India and the government of India recognizes 15 of them. About 30% of the country speaks some form of Hindi which is recognized as the national language. Additionally, as a result of nearly 200 years of British rule, English is also widely spoken, especially among those of higher social status (Singh, 2012, p. 6). Further, English also has become the most important language for conducting private and government

business. Such widespread fluency in English among formally educated Indian people combined with a strong technical education system has made India an ideal location for American business processes such as call centers, data processing, IT, and engineering offices to be located (Kelly, 2014, p. 138).

Growing alongside the increasing demand for Indian technology workers in the 1990s, technical communication rapidly became a profession in high demand. Although no exact count of practitioners exists, Pandit and Talwar estimated that in 2010 the field had grown to between 12,000 to 15,000 technical communicators, with that number growing every year (Pandit & Talwar, 2010). Since then, that number has certainly grown, although it is impossible to say for sure how many technical communicators exist in India. Still, even without an exact count, technical communication has a large, important presence in India. This large community is also home to the only chapter of the Society for Technical Communication outside the United States and Canada (Communities, 2018), making it an accessible place of study with a structural support network to support the research process.

Women in India have suffered from historically low economic status compared to men and women's economic wellness did not grow with the influx of technology jobs in India in the 1990s. Jobs demanding high levels of technological expertise have largely excluded women who have lower levels of education and training for these jobs, except in a handful of fields such as hospitality and customer service. Lower class women who are the primary earner in their family tend to remain in factories or manufacturing which can lead to diminishing wages and women being exploited as factory work became increasingly feminized, and thus, seen as less valuable (Forbes & Forbes, 1999, p. 239). More affluent women tend to drop out of the workforce, feeling less pressure to add to the household income unless they can find jobs appropriate for their family status (Asia Research Center, 2011, p. 18).

Technical communication as a profession has served to provide work employment

opportunities for middle and upper-middle class women, where many educated women are part of the growing workforce. Though, it is impossible to fully understand the demographics of the field in India because no research currently exists, one leadership member of the STC India estimated that in 2016, 60% of practitioners in India were women. That same individual estimated that close to 80% of individuals coming through certificate programs in 2016 were women, suggesting that the field's gender imbalance may continue to grow. The field of TPC is a feminized field in a country where women's work has long been valued less than the work done by men. As such, it is vital that TPC scholarship focus on the experiences of these women.

Research Objectives

This project draws from data gathered as part of a qualitative study in partnership with the Society of Technical Communication (STC) India chapter as well as from historical analysis of the documents kept by the STC India in the early years of its formation. My primary research question is based on the ways women have negotiated power and legitimacy in TPC in India over the past twenty years: How have women working as technical communicators in India expanded their access to power and legitimacy as professionals? This question will be best answered by pursuing the answers to several more specific questions about the means by which these women have strengthened their access to power and legitimacy. Those questions include:

1. Have women utilized organizational or structural forces to build their power and legitimacy in a global system? If so, how?
2. Have women utilized non-structural tactics to improve their access to power and legitimacy? If so, how?
3. Have women been affected by other identity factors besides gender? If so, how?

This project describes the challenges that have been faced by women working as TPC professionals in India, the strategies and tactics that they have used to strengthen their relationship to power and legitimacy in and outside of structural forces, and the challenges they are continually facing that must be addressed. It amplifies these stories of practitioners claiming power and legitimacy in ways that might assist other communities facing similar struggles and challenges Euro-Western practices that may hamper these efforts.

Professional Legitimacy in Broadly Situated Workplaces

Because TPC practitioners are agents in shaping the way people understand the world around them, scholars are increasingly calling upon the field to engage more ethically in such a powerful role. Power comes with an imbued responsibility for technical communicators to contribute toward the public good in order to manage our expanding roles and responsibilities (Hopton, 2013, p. 66). The field of technical communication often struggles to do this, in part because it has historically prioritized the perspectives and needs of white male culture (Haas, 2012, p. 8). To move toward more ethical practice, the field must begin to exercise particular concern for marginalized voices with the goal of emancipation (Blyler, 1998, Clark, 2004, Hopton, 2013).

These concerns about which voices are prioritized are relevant not only to the work of industry practitioners but to researchers. Researchers have an ethical obligation to think critically about how what we choose to study and what we choose not to study can reinforce or dismantle systems of injustice (Blyler, 1998, Clark, 2004, Hopton, 2013, Cagle & Tillery, 2015). Chandra Mohanty (1984), a postcolonial theorist and women's and gender scholar, encourages scholarship that is not so much a production of knowledge on a particular topic but rather a "political and discursive practice that is purposeful and ideological" which "resists and changes our ideas about

‘legitimate knowledge’ (p. 334). All research is inscribed with “power relations” and there is not, she warns, any such thing as apolitical scholarship (p. 334).

In an effort to expand ideas about legitimate knowledge in the field of TPC to include practitioners in the Global South, this project uses a postcolonial feminist lens to broaden studies of workplace practice to practitioners in India. To do so, it centers the ideas and theories of Indian postcolonial scholars who are most able to speak to the experiences and challenges of this project and of its participants. It also draws from the ideas of other feminist scholars and Euro-Western theorists to supplement or support the ideas of Indian scholars and theorists. Further, this project amplifies the narrative of professionalization beyond the field’s historically Western-centric focus by emphasizing and amplifying the voices of practitioners in India, observing the ways that they resist forces of marginalization to achieve legitimacy, and shares their needs and concerns with members of the field globally.

Defining Legitimacy

Legitimacy has been highly contested in terms of how it should be defined. The term has long been connected to Euro-Western capitalist structures. Professionalization through education and professional organizations and networks can serve as a means of improving a profession’s market value (Savage, 2003) but theorists such as Lyotard (1984) express concern that this emphasis on training workers to improve market production reinforces a troubling power dynamic that prioritizes the wealthiest members of society. hooks (2004), a feminist and social activist, argues that success in a patriarchal, capitalist structure is not the best method of helping women improve their status, but other global scholarship has challenged this outright rejection of women’s economic empowerment, stating that only those working from a relative place of economic autonomy would make such radical claims (Fernandez-Kelly & Wolf, 2001, Chatterjee,

2012). As such, this project seeks to understand professionalization as a valid mechanism of improving professional legitimacy even while practitioners challenge the power dynamics within legitimizing structures.

Lyotard (1984) argues that the notion of legitimacy is linked to the authority to decide which kinds of knowledge are valid and which kinds of practice should be normalized (p. 8). Further, he observes that accepted scientific and technical language is often most easily crafted by the richest members of society, giving people at the top of the economic power structure the greatest opportunity to shape what society considers “truth” (p. 45). He warns that this system is troubled because the structure of capitalism drives legitimacy to be “based on its optimizing the system's performance efficiency” in ways that benefit its wealthiest members (p. xxiv). This means that educational systems working in capitalist frames often take on the task of trying to train workers to achieve the “best performativity” and to teach “skills that are indispensable to that system” (p. 48). Thus, in a global economic system, professional legitimacy is developed by having the power to generate knowledge and by training workers to be competitive in a world market (p. 48).

Much work has been done within the field of TPC to understand which factors must be considered when seeking to expand power and legitimacy as a profession. TPC scholars have defined legitimacy in diverse ways that often mirror Lyotard’s observations about legitimacy as the ability to define knowledge and train efficient workers. Those definitions include: building status among other professions; expertise in specific areas; credibility in those areas; “market closure,” in which the field is responsible for a certain number of tasks not “owned” by any other field; and educational certifications that serve as an entry point to the field (Savage, 2003).

Many technical communication programs in the United States have become focused on training students to perform tasks efficiently. This skills-based education is intended to improve students’ legitimacy as professionals upon graduation. Technical communication students are

often required to create portfolios showcasing their knowledge and skills for future employers and encouraged to complete internships before graduation in order to practice performing their skills within the system (Harner & Rich, 2005, p. 215). Indian certificate programs for technical communicators are often used as a mechanism of training TPC practitioners since no university programs are available. Like university programs in the United States, Indian certifications place a heavy emphasis on developing workplace skills rather than gaining theoretical knowledge. These certificates sometimes offer Indian students as little as a few days of classroom instruction, preferring that students learn to perform technical communication skills right on the job instead. TPC education, both in the United States and in India, shows a high level of concern for teaching students to perform skills that they can use to be hired into the global marketplace. These educational practices illustrate Lyotard's point that efforts to develop professional legitimacy can result in workers being trained to do tasks that primarily benefit the wealthiest members of society. In addition, this kind of skills-based training can reinforce the kinds of knowledge set forth by dominant structures of power, giving less legitimacy to knowledge that is less profitable in a capitalist system. Further discussion of the issue of education in building professional legitimacy will be presented in Chapter 4.

Collins (2002), a social theorist, raises additional concerns about the inequalities tied up in legitimacy, stating that not only is wealth an indicator of who can legitimize knowledge, but that legitimacy is often controlled by elite white men who are prone to observing legitimacy where it best protects their interests (p. 271). Such powerful structures are often prone to enlist occasional "safe" members from underrepresented groups who will legitimize mainstream claims. White women and people of color are often "enlisted to enforce the connections between power relations and what counts as truth" (p. 271).

Collins observes that communities without access to institutional power have often relied upon "alternate knowledge validation processes" to subvert legitimate knowledge claims from

more powerful structural forces (p. 272). Because black women and other women of color have long lacked access to structures that might legitimize them, they have had to rely on shared “wisdom”, which she sees as distinct from the “knowledge” of the powerful. This extra-institutional knowledge sharing allows individuals to navigate the dangers of intersecting marginal factors. Collective wisdom often relies on information generated by shared experiences rather than from institutionally accepted forms of knowledge (p. 274). This wisdom, though shared and valued within their own communities, is often overlooked or discounted by institutional structure. For example, Collins explains that black women might share wisdom about their lived experience by becoming "blues singers, poets, autobiographers, storytellers, and orators" (p.267). Individuals filling these roles might be seen as experts on the experience of being a black woman. However, expressions of wisdom in creative formats are difficult to translate into the masculine epistemologies required in academic settings, and thus they can become excluded from the body of accepted knowledge (p. 267).

Collins reports that women of color who wish to have their wisdom taken seriously in academic circles must conform to Eurocentric epistemologies which can create a dynamic of becoming an “outsider-within” a system that does not value their life wisdom (p. 287). Though she describes this issue as it relates directly to American black women, it remains relevant for other scholars and industry practitioners coming from underrepresented backgrounds who must learn to translate their cultural wisdom into institutionally accepted language to be considered valid. Though working within powerful knowledge centers offers a form of legitimacy, these women often end up being required to support the knowledges valued by mainstream institutions at great personal cost, silencing the wisdoms they might otherwise have brought to the table (p. 287). To illustrate this point, Collins cites the concerns of June Jordan who expressed how difficult it is to translate the black experience from Black English to Standard English without losing the essence of the experience. However in order to be taken seriously in academic circles,

Standard English was the only acceptable means of expression. Collins explains, "the ideas themselves defy direct translation," between the two different kinds of English thus, the act of translation that might have offered her access to structural legitimacy reduced the impact of her voice (p. 268).

Acknowledging the ways that capitalistic legitimacy can harm individuals and scholars, TPC scholars have also observed that the field's conceptions of power and legitimacy should challenge such a capitalistic frame, bypassing market forces, certification, or utility as factors. Instead, they acknowledge that power and legitimacy can come from the impact that TPC practitioners can have on the world. Critical scholars in TPC argue that the field's relationship to power and legitimacy can also be measured by factors such as our influence in building culture and status, our role in shaping the modern technological workspace (Kynell-Hunt, 2003), as well as our engagement in social action (Miller, 1979). Expanding our definitions of power and legitimacy beyond serving the interests of the most powerful members of society to include the impact the field can have beyond a capitalistic frame offers us the ability to grow beyond the utility of our work. Alternatively, Blyler (2004) argues that professionalization of the field is an outdated modernist idea and therefore should not be our goal. Instead, she argues that in a field with roles and technologies moving as fast as TPC, the ambiguous nature of working in a non-professionalized field is a strength, not a weakness (p. 189).

Though power and legitimacy may never be perfectly defined, it is difficult to deny that the field must remain somewhat relevant to the global capitalist structure to maintain legitimacy as a profession which allows members to earn a living, even while the scope of the field includes engaging in social action. Kynell-Hunt (2003) has observed that as a field, we must be strategic, using structural power to claim a "body of knowledge of our own," to "establish our legitimacy" and to be "able to determine certain conditions of practice." These strategies might be leveraged to change agendas across the entire field, but not all practitioners will agree about what should be

done (pp. 1-2). In response, individual practitioners must surely have the ability to exercise tactics in order to counter the powerful force of mainstream ideology within the field (de Certeau, 1984).

Feminist scholars have observed that professional legitimacy through employment in globalized jobs has complex effects on the women who work in them. In many cases, globalized jobs, even when they exist within a marginalizing structure, are appealing because they offer higher wages, and thus higher buying power than the employment options that previously existed. Improved wages in globalized, professional jobs can contribute to a sense of legitimacy as Lyotard (1984) defines it by helping women become more valuable in a system that prioritizes the knowledge and contributions of those with more earning power. Increased professional legitimacy creates new ways for women to support themselves and their families.

On the other hand, globalized jobs reduce economic autonomy in localized communities and perpetuate Euro-Western working conditions that can be patriarchal and colonialist (Fernandez-Kelly & Wolf, 2001, p. 1246). In addition, Euro-Western workplaces can require women to obtain professional legitimacy by participating in a capitalist system that does not necessarily value their voices. Working in these jobs may require women to remain silent about the wisdom they have access to within their own communities in an effort to become “safe” to the dominant system of power in which they work (Collins, 2002, p. 271).

Some radical feminist scholarship dismisses the capitalist legitimacy women can earn by increasing their buying power and autonomy through globalized jobs, declaring it less important than eliminating patriarchal, colonial structures. However, such an argument is often made from an existing position of power by Euro-Western individuals (often in the academy) who already have access to economic stability and legitimacy in their employment. These critical views may not actually be shared by women who benefit from growing economic opportunities globally (Fernandez-Kelly & Wolf, 2001, Collins, 2002).

Decentralized Notions of Power

To understand the way technical communicators in India positioned themselves toward increased power and legitimacy as it allows them to further their goals, it is important to understand the mechanics by which power works. Critical theory (including postmodernism, feminist theory, critical-race theory, queer theory, critical-race theory, posthumanism, etc.) takes varying approaches to addressing the many forces of power at play in varying situations. These theories provide mechanisms by which to understand why individuals act the way they do and what forces might influence them to do so. Across these varying schools of thought, many theorists have contributed new ways to approach top-down notions of power by suggesting ideological shifts in the way we think about it, including rejecting binaries; erasing arbitrary boundaries between people, things, and ideas; and acknowledging broader contextual forces that shape physical and social dynamics. Collins (2012) observes that because marginalizing forces such as racism, sexism, classism, and other similar oppressions “mutually construct one another,...[and draw] upon similar practices, forms of organization, and ideologies,” they cannot be understood independent from one another (p. 455). A study of these issues results in a deeper understanding of the power forces that drive these issues and keep them in place.

Because this project focuses on the workplaces of TPC practitioners in the India, a field which is largely feminized, a postcolonial feminist lens has been used to understand the complex power dynamics at play both in the workplace and in the culture that surrounds it. hooks, (1984) observed that postcolonial feminism aims to navigate and subvert power structures in ways that “eradicate the ideology of domination” that runs Western society and instead, recreate society in a way that prioritizes the “self-development of people” over “imperialism, economic expansion, and material desires” (p. 63). Understanding these systems of power can impact the ways

individuals are able to navigate or subvert ideologies of domination in order to make the system more equitable in promoting the best interests of individuals (Prosen & Schuster, 2008).

Power does not exist as a binary between hierarchical structures and the individuals and organizations they govern. Foucault (1980) explained, “power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away” rather, “power is exercised from innumerable points” (p. 94). Further, though power is not linear in its distribution, it is still not generally exerted in an egalitarian manner. de Certeau (1984) observed that among bodies of marginalized people, a form of transactional power can be enacted by people outside the dominant structure. “[U]nrecognized producers” blaze “apparently meaningless trajectories” that do not adhere to the larger power structure in which they exist. These individuals remain unpredictable in the face of the organizing power found in power structures. They tend to use the language employed by systems of power in order to infiltrate and carve out new paths, “overflow[ing] and drift[ing] over an imposed terrain” in ways that defile established order (p. 35).

Power is more complex than it may seem because hierarchical structures including prisons, schools, workplaces, and other organizations often discipline individuals into being complicit in marginalizing themselves by employing the use of observation. Foucault observed:

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. By this very fact, the external power may throw off its physical weight; it tends to the non-corporal; and, the more it approaches this limit, the more constant, profound and permanent are its effects: it is a perpetual victory that avoids any physical confrontation and which is always decided in advance. (Foucault, 1975, p. 202)

Thus, individuals in any given environment, such as practitioners within the field of TPC, may appear as though they are self-directed but instead might be subject to disciplining power mechanisms that were implemented by dominant systems carried out by individual members.

This lens is important when thinking about marginalizing systems in TPC and beyond because it can help shed light on the ways that people might sometimes act against their own interests due to the power dynamics at play. For instance, in her book about women in the workplace, Sheryl Sandberg observed that women might be less likely to apply for promotion even when they are better qualified than men. Instead, they hope someone will notice their talent and promote them. By adhering to a cultural expectation that women not promote themselves or be seen as too assertive, they can lose out on career opportunities that would benefit their personal goals (Sandberg, 2013, p. 63).

Additionally, de Certeau (1984) cautions against thinking about marginality as limited to “minority groups,” but instead suggests it “is rather massive and pervasive” based on the ways that productivist economies are enacted (p. xvii). For example, hooks (1984) suggests that women are able to reject narratives about their reality “even if they are poor, exploited, or trapped in oppressive circumstances” in acts of “resistance and strength” (p. 92). Likewise, TPC practitioners, even when identifying with a marginalized identity, can exert power in part because they can act individually or in groups to reshape their circumstances even in face of powerful structures.

Increasing one’s position of power does not always mean or require dismantling the system. Though some women of color are able to actively work toward change within the system, Collins (2002) observes that some women lack the ability to directly change the social structure of the world around them. She emphasizes that power can still be reclaimed even without the ability to immediately change life’s circumstances. She describes women as having the power to improve their own consciousness through writing or through sharing their experiences aloud. This process can help women begin to see their lives as being “in process, and therefore amenable to change” even when an opportunity to reclaim power hasn’t occurred yet (p. 132).

Other women are able to reclaim some degree of power by working within the system. For example, when women elect to assimilate into global jobs, they have access to new kinds of financial power that allows them some level of participation in a global capitalist system. Fernandez-Kelly & Wolf (2001) explain that radical feminist ideology has been critical of the way women working in globalized jobs can access expanded, but still limited, buying power. Radical feminists have expressed critical views of the way that global jobs allowed women working in them to be able to purchase something as frivolous as a haircut. However, Fernandez-Kelly & Wolf push back against the notion of even small amounts of purchasing power being frivolous. They argue that radical feminist scholarship often originates with EuroWestern individuals who are likely to take the ability to pay for a haircut for granted. These scholars are operating from a position of privilege that may put their perspectives at odds with the experiences of women working in the Global South (p. 1246).

When seeking to understand women's relationship to power in the context of the intersectional factors that impact them, it is important to consider that women are not under "illusions about the glitter of globalization" (Chatterjee, 2012, p. 805). Rather, women's complex identities mean that even if they have professionalized in global jobs as a mechanism of improving their class status, they still retain the power to resist structural forces within the context of their work. Using this intersectional frame allows scholars to understand women as having the ability to claim power by working toward legitimacy in multiple ways, including by harnessing existing structures of power, but also by resisting them (p. 805).

As TPC in India has organized and begun to discuss its own relevance to the global field and to Indian society, it has begun exerting transactional power. Communicating about power serves as a mechanism of shifting power dynamics through transaction, and any and all communicative actions are, as Schneider (2007) observes, "an occasion to reproduce, undermine, or change apparently fixed power relations" (p. 196). Further, understanding power as something

created on an interactional level helps explain why it “can slip away so easily” because “it can never be accomplished once and for all” (p. 196). Instead, even people who lack hierarchical support can access power through interactional and interpretive conventions within the organization (p. 187). For example, much of Sandberg’s advice to women seeking to improve their workplace position suggests simple tactics to improve their interactional power, even if they are not in a position to access institutional power. For instance, she suggests that women struggling to have their voices heard in the workplace should make sure to pick a seat at the conference table during a meeting instead of sitting in the back of the room. This small move can help women be seen as an active part of the meeting as well as someone whose input is worth listening to which can increase her influence in her organization (Sandberg, 2013, p. 28).

In an effort to understand the mechanisms of power and legitimacy in the field in India, it is important to observe what is said, but also what is not said. One should observe the distribution of individuals who are able to speak and those who are silenced, taking note of how those who are not able to speak use discretion to subvert the hierarchical structures (Foucault, 1975, p. 27) . Further, attention must be given to the kinds of knowledges that are shared within communities without wealth or status that may not be seen as “legitimate” by Euro-Western structures. Shifting how we evaluate knowledge has the potential to direct attention towards the work of valuable communities that have long been silenced. In order to do so, Royster and Kirsch suggest broadening our field of study to include research sites outside of Euro-Western writing practices, in an effort to center other kinds of knowledge. For example, such study might include women’s oral traditions, global political movements, and less traditional sites of economic growth. Looking for and amplifying the work of often overlooked communities is important to understanding communicative power because centering overlooked voices requires dominant discourse to be contextualized alongside coexisting silences and subversions. Broadening our field of study to

understand and reformulate how knowledge is measured and valued redistributes power and offers a legitimizing mechanism for overlooked voices (Royster & Kirsch, 2012, p. 127).

Feminist movements have engaged in efforts to reshape conversations about the legitimacy of women and of their work that is often undervalued, in an attempt to improve the power and legitimacy of these fields. However, hooks (1984) criticizes the way these movements have focused more on highlighting the use of traditionally female traits, which failed to “point out the complex nature of women’s experience” (p. 92). This reinforces instead of deconstructs the idea that women are “passive or unassertive” (p. 92). Likewise, Mohanty (1984) challenges the binary that feminism sometimes sets up between men and women, arguing that women lack a coherent group with shared interests and desires. Using gender as an identity that fails to consider ethnicity or race or class as a universal binary would be an argument *for* patriarchal power structure, not a deconstruction of it.

Using this uncritical binary creates a homogenous notion of women that can end up producing the image of what Mohanty (1984) described as an “average third world woman” who, based on her gender, is sexually constrained as well as “ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized, etc” (p. 335). This image, she observes, is often contrasted with the self-representation of the Western woman who autonomously controls her own body and sexuality, freely able to make her own decisions (p. 336). This binary between women in the Global South and Euro-Western women is especially dangerous in the context of TPC practitioners where though struggling against complex gender norms, women working in TPC in India retain a degree of socioeconomic and educational privilege in relation to their communities and have complex needs, wants, and identities, much like their Euro-Western counterparts.

Not only is portraying women as homogeneous inaccurate, it assumes an “always-already constituted group....which has been labeled ‘powerless,’ ‘exploited,’ ‘sexually harassed,’ etc. by

feminist scientific, economic, legal and sociological discourses” (p. 338). Instead of finding seemingly powerless groups of women to paint women as powerless, Mohanty (1984) argues that scholarship should focus “on uncovering the material and ideological specificities that constitute a particular group of women as ‘powerless’” (p. 338). This observation shares Foucault’s (1980) position that, “that there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations” (p. 94). Instead, power dynamics are complex and exerted from multiple points. As such, this project resists framing participants as powerful or powerless and instead, watches for contexts and systems that might make individuals or groups *seem* powerless as well as the ways in which those individuals or groups press back against marginalizing contexts and systems. To do so, as Collins (2002) suggests, this project was designed to center Indian women working as TPC practitioners using the lens of their experiential knowledge, seeking to amplify their collective wisdom through the stories they tell about their work and about the ways that they work in and against marginalizing structures to secure their own power and legitimacy. This project will preserve participants’ exact wording wherever possible. Further, the establishment of collaborative publication projects are in the works. Collaborative publication in open-access Indian publication venues will ensure that individuals who have contributed to this project get recognized for their work and that the communities who helped generate this body knowledge have access to it.

Though Spivak (1999) is considered one of the founding thinkers of postcolonial feminism, she also issues some strong warnings against the use of binaries, this time in the opposition that postcolonial feminism creates between colonial and colonized populations. She argues that Northwestern European male philosophers utilize the “native informant” in order to establish the Northwestern European subject as “the same” while turning the “native informant” into nothing more than a “piece of material evidence” in establishing Northern European sameness (p. 165). If Northwestern European Subjects are described through sameness, “third

world women” can get morphed into a conglomerate category of "women of color.” Mohanty goes on to explain

[This]...leads to absurdities. Japanese women have to be coded ‘third world women!’ Hispanics must be seen as ‘women of color,’ and postcolonial female subjects, even when they are women of the indigenous elite of Asia and Africa...are invited to masquerade...in the margins. This nomenclature is based on the explicit acceptance of ‘white’ as ‘transparent’ or ‘no-color. (p. 165)

Additionally, she pushes against even calling women in colonized areas “marginalized” noting that using the framing of marginalized vs. dominant recenters the narrative around colonizers vs. colonized populations. She instead suggests that individuals historically labeled as marginal might instead be recognized as the “silenced center” (p. 269). Further, embracing a system of binaries most often serves a capitalistic system focused on profit, which frames certain individuals as “surplus” instead of growing a system that focuses on human need (Lorde, 2012, p. 114). As such, this project minimizes the use of binaries in its framing. Instead it frames individuals and participants as existing within the “silenced center,” viewing TPC practitioners in India as agents who claim and exercise power, even while being historically overlooked.

Moving Beyond Colonialism

This project addresses Mohanty’s (1984) concern that scholars have historically been prone to silence around issues facing women in non-Western countries. She observes that the work of forging “international links between women’s political struggles is both pathbreaking and absolutely essential” (p. 336). However, Mohanty goes on to warn Euro-Western feminist scholars (such as myself) that “feminist scholarly practices (whether reading, writing, critical or textual) are inscribed in relations of power-relations” which feminist scholars may resist or support (p .334). She warns

Western feminisms appropriate and “colonize” the fundamental complexities and conflicts which characterize the lives of women of different classes, religions, cultures, races and castes in these countries. It is in this process of homogenization and

systematization of the oppression of women in the third world that power is exercised in much of recent Western feminist discourse, and this power needs to be defined and named. (Mohanty, 1984, p. 335)

Collins (2002) expresses similar concerns about the power dynamic between Euro-Western white women and women in the Global South. She explains that these groups of women often work together to form powerful coalitions, only to have the power balance continue to be uneven because white women maintain narrative control. This dynamic can require non-Western women to expend already limited resources fighting for control of their own narrative from white women who are supposed to be supporting them. As a result, the causes of women in the Global South can lose steam (p. 253). In addition, non-Western feminists don't always share the same concerns as Euro-Western feminists, even when Euro-Western feminists are also women of color. For example, women in the Global South have expressed concern about women having access to education and the professions, as well as very pressing issues such as violence, hunger, poverty, and disease. However, when Euro-Western women maintain narrative control, these issues have often been left out of the feminist agenda (p. 256).

Collins argues that all people can be categorized into a "transnational matrix of domination" in which different groups of people have access to different levels of power, even when their histories or agendas are interconnected (p. 264). The boundaries of this matrix are fluid and unfixed, but must be understood in order to renegotiate dynamics of power in the favor of women who have historically been silenced. For example, women in the Global South may share some concerns with black Euro-Western women but not share others because different communities of women have access to different levels of power and resources. To illustrate how different communities might be situated on the matrix of domination, Collins cites the way that black women in the United States and black women globally share some similar concerns such as economic opportunity, but not others. For example, she observes that black women in the United States have fought for the rights that they should be guaranteed based on citizenship within their

country. However, black women in other parts of the world face injustices dealt by the colonialist behavior enacted by citizens of the United States. Protections of citizenship in the United States cannot protect women globally or further their causes.

The result of this power imbalance between communities means that productive coalitions between women on a global scale are likely to encounter moments of productive collaboration as well as moments confrontation in which power dynamics are renegotiated. Euro-Western women collaborating with women in the Global South occupy a position of more power and so in order to cooperate in ethical ways must be prepared to listen and learn from the “multiple angles of vision” put forth by women in the Global South that have the potential to shape global politics (p. 268).

In response to these warnings about the way Euro-Western scholars can insist on dominating the narrative, this study takes an open-ended approach to asking questions, leaving space for participants to discuss the complex issues that impact them even if those topics extend beyond the scope of the original study questions. Further, it positions participants as experts in their own subversions of marginalizing forces. Allowing interviewees to guide the interview process is a crucial mechanism to centering their experiences and allowing participants to speak about their own concerns which can yield valuable insights into their experiences (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 29). Participant participation was built into the interview process. At some point during every interview, participants were given the opportunity to share anything they thought to be relevant that the interviewer may not have asked about. During this section of the interviews, participants often shared information beyond the stated interview questions and often pointed to intersectional factors in their experience that may not have otherwise come up in the interview including concerns about age, globalization, or marital status.

This project uses the participants’ own words whenever possible in an effort to provide “thick descriptions” with concrete details to support any claims. These thick descriptions and

direct quotes help to reduce the ways that representations of participants are filtered by the researcher (Emerson, 2005, Creswell, 2009). Plans to coauthor with Indian practitioners in the Indus newsletter, published monthly by the Society for Technical Communication, are also in the works. Co-authorship will allow the researcher to share power with Indian practitioners who have contributed their knowledge and work to this project by amplifying and including their voices as key members of the project. Indus was cited by a number of participants as something they read to stay abreast of the field, making it a valuable place for Indian practitioners to contribute in order to build their own professional reputation. Additionally, Indus newsletter sits outside the pay wall that sometimes makes scholarly work inaccessible to individuals outside academia, so publishing in this venue ensures that all participants and their colleagues will have access to the body of knowledge generated by their contributions.

Though imperialization originally began as a fight for land, scholars now commit forms of imperialization in the narratives they tell about formerly colonized regions. Narrative control gives scholars power around some of the same issues as land once did: ownership, rights to work, and plans for the future (Said, 2012, xiii). Spivak (1999) draws a similar parallel between older, more geographical expressions of colonialism and the narrative colonialism still committed by contemporary scholars. She expresses concern about way scholars often propagate the narrative of the “old Third World as distant cultures, exploited but with rich intact literary heritages waiting to be recovered, interpreted, and curricularized in English/French/ German/Dutch translation” (p. 114) in a way that repeats a colonial pattern. Scholars who turn up in the Global South, collect data, and return home to profit from academic success as a result of their research are guilty of colonialist practice. Instead, scholars have an obligation to share power in the knowledge creation process, allowing participants to help shape the research they participate in and to get credit for the work they do.

Postcolonial feminist scholars raise critical questions about the ways that Euro-Western scholarship is poised to recreate unacceptable colonial narratives if left unchecked. They offer directives which give insight into the ways that Euro-Western scholars can resist a colonial model in their work.

1. Scholars must keep in mind that individuals at the margin have often been considered “wholly other” and that individuals considered to be “other” have had “an unpredictable relationship to our ethical rules” (Spivak, 1999, p. 174). To avoid ethical pitfalls, Lorde (2012) encourages looking beyond the values of a profit economy to stop viewing “human difference” with fear or hate and instead, to relating across difference as equals (p. 115). Scholars and other people in positions of power within a capitalist system have often chosen to overlook the humanity of women in India (and beyond) when it served their interests. Ethical scholarship requires that such behavior must stop. Capitalist interests must be set aside in order to prioritize individuals as equals above all else.
2. Good feminist scholarship ought to be formed with a historical and political framework that presents a nuanced, accurate representation of the broadness and limitations of colonialism (Mohanty 1984, Spivak 1999). This directive requires scholars to incorporate information about history and broader political context into their scholarship with an understanding that women’s experiences don’t occur in isolation, but instead are inherently impacted by the context in which they occur.
3. Responsible scholarship highlights ways in which “women are not mere victims of the production process, because they resist, challenge and subvert the process at various junctures” (Mohanty, 1984, p. 345). It is not adequate to highlight concerns women might face. Instead, feminist scholarship must also engage with the ways women are actively participating in shaping the world around them, pressing back against circumstances that don’t serve their interests and subverting power dynamics that cause them harm.

4. Writing should take place as a mechanism of resistance against forces that have traditionally marginalized women (Spivak, 1999, p. 113). Since no scholarship is neutral, scholarship must actively push back against the normalization of marginalization, centering voices that have been long overlooked.
5. Scholars must widen our lens beyond solely gendered analysis to include considerations for a broad range of identities such as race, class, ethnicity, as well as issues such as patriarchy, imperialism, colonialism, and capitalism (Royster & Kirsch, 2012, p. 122). Individuals must be understood with an awareness of the complexity of their experience as well as the way these complex factors can compound one another.

In order to navigate this complex dynamic of power, this project addresses the above points in the following ways:

1. This project was conducted in collaborative partnership with the STC India chapter. Study participants are acknowledged as subject matter experts in their own experiences. Further, their voices have been prioritized in this work by relying on their narratives, told in their own words wherever possible. Member checks have been conducted to clarify and confirm the accounts written within this project as needed.
2. This project has prioritized historical data and timelines (see Chapter 2) in order to properly contextualize voices of participants. In addition to participant voices, historical documents have been analyzed and included in an effort to achieve the most accurate representation possible.
3. Every effort has been made to understand and highlight the ways in which study participants and historical figures have resisted and subverted marginalizing power structures. Accounts of resistance, subversion, and making positive change are the prevailing narratives in this project.

4. Like all scholarship, this project is not apolitical. This subject matter has been selected as a mechanism of resisting dominant narratives in the field of TPC and amplifying voices from the silenced center with an aim to strengthen methods of practice in a globalized field.
5. This project has aimed to identify the impact of patriarchal, capitalist, and colonial structures wherever possible. It addresses identity issues beyond gender such as age, education level, and family status. Further, it has included the voices of men where needed in order to capture a broader picture of the intersectional factors that impact women working in the field.

Intersecting Identities

Critical race theorist Crenshaw (1989) first coined the term “intersectionality” as a way to help people understand how complex identities impact the way people move through the world. She explains, “the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism” and thus, any analysis of these issues that does not take into account the complexity of these intersections cannot sufficiently address the problems in policies and structures drawn up by the most powerful members of society (p. 140). Crenshaw cites the case of *DeGraffenreid v. General Motors* in which black women fought against compounded discrimination in their employment. She explained that black women were excluded from hire for secretarial jobs at General Motors that white women were regularly hired to do. However, since black men were being hired to work in General Motors factories, the courts claimed to find no racial discrimination in hiring because they failed to consider the specific intersectional discrimination that impacted black women and the case was dismissed. This example illustrates the way that failing to understand and address intersectional factors can mean that individuals with more than one marginalized identity can fall through the cracks in systems of power (p. 141).

Crenshaw (2015) later clarified that intersectionality is “a way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power” (para. 5). Though she originally explained this concept as it applied to black women, she observes that it has now been applied to erasures of other identities including intersections of individuals identifying as LGBTQ, people of color, immigrants, and people with disabilities.

She observes that using intersectionality as a frame offers individuals a way to talk about their circumstances and fight for “visibility and inclusion” (para. 5). Though she promotes the frame as a useful tool for negotiating change, she acknowledges that people who occupy multiple marginalized positions, such as women of color or people with disabilities in the Global South, often experience erasure, and are unlikely to be able to entirely shift organizational power in their favor on their own. Many individuals will be required to wait until leaders and policy makers address “intersectional dimensions of racial injustice” in order to benefit from broad change (Crenshaw, 2015, para. 11). Crenshaw’s work adds a valuable tool to the postcolonial frame of this project by emphasizing the importance of understanding the compound effect that complex identities can have on individuals.

Such a frame is useful in India where women face a complex myriad of marginalizing systems. Participants in this study mentioned occupying marginalized positions in their work and personal lives, naming marginalizing concerns such as gender, family responsibilities, class, economic earning power, and others. Using an intersectional frame to understand these marginalized positions preserves the complexity of the experiences of study participants and allows their experiences to be represented more fully. The following paragraphs outline some ways that marginalized positions sometimes operate in Indian society more broadly. Specific findings of the study relevant to these same positions will be presented in later chapters.

Scholars have documented that patriarchal dominance still exists in India, which has an impact on practitioners working in highly feminized careers including TPC. Culturally, it has

been acceptable for men to make a large number of the decisions concerning women with women having less status in their homes and in society (Amirtham, 2011, p. 7). Though traditionally women have not worked outside the home, the number of women holding outside employment is growing. Currently, about 36% of urban Indian women participate in labor outside the home but with fertility rates also falling among the population this number is estimated to reach the “international norm” of 50-60% within 10-15 years (Asia Research Center, 2011, p. 8). Cultural norms in India require many women to continue looking after the affairs of the household, which means, if they are able to work at all, they may need to remain close to their homes even when they leave the home for work. “Patriarchal spatial strategies” mean that because women are considered to belong in the home, they may lack guarantees of safety and reputation when they work outside the home (Amirtham, 2011, p. 42). This means that because women’s work in the home is considered to be their most important identity, once they leave to work outside the home they may be subject to harassment or to attacks on their character on the street, on public transportation, or within the workplace. This study seeks to understand these issues as they apply to Indian practitioners, especially women, working in TPC jobs, exploring the ways that gendered norms impact their ability to do their work in a way that allows them to be actors in their professional lives.

Because of the strongly gendered cultural norms in India, it is often assumed that Indian women may feel marginalized in their work contexts. However most Indian women report feeling valued on their teams at work, are reported to be working a similar number of hours as their male counterparts, and are often found doing higher level tasks than men in their offices (Ilavarasan, 2006, pp. 47-48). The experiences of Indian women in the workplace are also directly intersected by class. Women in higher classes often feel less pressure to work than women in lower classes. Higher class women generally enter the workplace only when jobs available are commensurate to their class status and are paired with high enough salaries. Service jobs such as “teaching,

nursing, government services such as anganwadi or village health workers, clerical jobs in urban areas are preferred” (Asia Research Center, 2011, p. 18). Higher wage jobs in TPC might be added to such a list.

Class represents another intersectional identify factor that has a strong impact on the broader social dynamics in India. These dynamics are shifting in the face of economic opportunity. Deb (2011) observed that globalization of tech jobs has brought with it a fair amount of opportunity to India. Such work created a generation of Indian workers empowered by capitalism “who had begun to break down the old restrictions of caste, class and gender, and who now exemplified the new India where men and women worked together late into the night and partied into the day...that had been brought to India by the same vigorous capitalism that had given them their jobs” (p. 8). Still, critics have observed that it mimics some of the old exploitative tactics used in colonization. Tech workers are sometimes required to spend long hours and late nights while sometimes assuming western identities and accents (Deb, 2011, p. 8). Spivak (1999) amplifies concerns around class and capitalism in a global context, noting that in a capitalistic society, the “capitalist is the benefactor” as a job creator and the worker is systematically deprived of welfare because the job is viewed as a gift. Further, she explains that decolonized nations suffer in the global economic pattern that removes boundaries between larger economies and more fragile, decolonized ones, making social redistribution nearly impossible (pp. 357-358). Spivak’s perspective held true in my study, as the women who participated in the study of TPC practitioners regularly expressed that they made good wages and their situations were privileged in their communities at large, even when they sometimes felt marginalized in their professions.

hooks (2000) acknowledges that some feminist movements have made intersectional efforts to help women achieve economic stability to improve their class status. Though these movements have not always been effective, hooks suggests that jobs that have high wages and flexible working conditions have the potential to offer the greatest degree of self-sufficiency for women, and thus freedom for women to make their own choices. These high earning, flexible

jobs would offer women the opportunity to improve their class situation while continuing to support the demands family life that often fall to women. However, women often find themselves working all day and coming home to work all evening night at home, adding to women's daily responsibilities and harming their overall quality of life (p. 49). Study participants seemed to fit this pattern with many women reporting feeling fulfilled, satisfied, or valued in their work while still contending with responsibilities at home that occupied large amounts of their time. The challenge of balancing a career with the demands of family life represents a big intersectional concern for Indian women working in TPC.

Technical Writing in Indian Contexts

Much of the early technical writing work in India was a result of outsourcing from Euro-Western countries. Outsourcing is typically defined by using goods or services from a supplier from another country to gain the cost advantage of labor arbitrage (Thatcher & Evia, 2008, p. 2). Labor arbitrage between the United States and India results in workers in different countries being paid at different rates for the same job. Though accurate figures are difficult to obtain, some studies estimate that organizations in Euro-Western countries can trim 25% to 60% of their costs by moving IT support services to countries with lower labor costs (Prasant & Pandit, 2008, p. 15). For example, reports suggest that a software programmer in the United States might earn \$7,750 a month while a programmer in India might earn \$725. Though not a direct corollary to TPC jobs, this conceptual cost savings as well as the ease of sharing information digitally has led to a rise in internationally sourcing labor (Getto & St. Amant, 2015, p. 26). Further, present day India is the fastest growing nation in ecommerce, making domestic technology jobs more relevant than ever (India Online, 2016).

It is important to note that outsourcing is not driven just by cost concerns. Prasant & Pandit (2008) observed that India has fostered “emerging markets, pools of talented and educated professionals, and increased productivity.” This growing talent pool has made India an obvious partnership for businesses interested in “achieving multiple gains through the use of outsourcing” (p. 15). Indians who attend more affluent schools begin the study of English while very young.

English is widely spoken in public and across media outlets, making it familiar to many Indian people. Further, India's technical-college system produces a large number of well qualified graduates, offering Indian workers strong qualification for working for American companies (Kelly, 2014, p. 138).

These developments have impact not only on the Indian labor market, but on the field of TPC more specifically. Thatcher and Evia (2008) found that from the perspective of technical communication, outsourced projects which are "international by definition" are "vulnerable to cultural differences, and liable in legal and political dilemmas" (p. 2). In her work on Indian call center workers, Kelly (2014) observed that Indian workers also sometimes face challenges and even resistance when working in global contexts. She described,

Indian call center workers have a difficult task to provide technical information to American customers. Americans believe that America is the most technologically advanced society in the world. And any person they perceive as not American may be considered suspect when dealing with technological matters, even though Indian CCWs are more likely to have technical degrees and frequently receive more training and technical support than their American counterparts. (p. 136)

She notes that in American contexts, an Indian accent may mark workers as "other" and thus reduce their legitimacy as communicators of technical information. In the past, Indian workers have used American names to try and combat the stigma of being "other" but the pseudonyms felt disingenuous to customers in the United States. Instead, she argues that Indian workers must positively differentiate themselves from their American counterparts in more authentic ways. She suggests the Indian call workers are most able to differentiate themselves by developing the kind of professionalism expected by customers in the United States while remaining true to their cultural heritage and strong technical training (p. 150). My work is positioned to challenge some these stereotypes, focusing on Indian voices as vital and central to the field, and highlighting their moves toward increased professional legitimacy. Further, it portrays them in their own words,

with members of the STC India community checking in on my work for accuracy and appropriateness in representation.

Methods

This project draws from a mix of qualitative methods and textual analysis which strengthens the validity and reliability of the study by triangulating information from more than one source. It includes responses and analysis resulting from long-form interviews with three key informants, select responses from 49 interview participants, and an archival study of conference proceedings from the India chapter of the STC from the first five years of its founding as well as from the year 2016 when interview data was collected.

This study was originally designed to include only women participants, in an effort to understand the experiences of women working in a feminized field. However, in total, we spoke with 46 women and three men. We decided to include these men in our study for several reasons. First, it became apparent that though the field is occupied by more women than men, men often occupied important roles of leadership, management, or power, and held key roles in the early years of the Society for Technical Communication chapter in India. This meant that their insights and observations were important and useful in understanding the context in which women were working. Additionally, as we observed the intersectional identity factors that impacted women working in technical communication in India, it became clear that men working in the field were also impacted by some of these issues. For example, men (as well as women) experienced the need for additional professionalizing structures early in the field's history and remain impacted by the limited educational opportunities available to practitioners in India. (These concerns are described in more detail in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4). Their experiences in working to strengthen the power and legitimacy of the field in India were useful in understanding more about these intersectional factors that shape the experiences of women working in the field.

Dr. Emily Petersen and I began collecting data onsite in July 2016. We began with long-form interviews with three area representatives of the STC in India that began with the same questions that were asked of the rest of the participants. These interviews became long-form because they contain, in part, a more detailed reporting of the roles that each of these three individuals played or are currently playing in the formation and growth of the India chapter of the STC as well as their observations about the educational opportunities available to practitioners in India. After the original three interviews, the remaining 46 selected interview participants were recruited via snowball sampling beginning with our original three, long-form participants. The consistency of respondents' answers across demographic categories suggest that our methods achieved saturation. This project concludes with data from 2016, which was when the interviews were conducted.

These interviews were transcribed by me, Dr. Emily Petersen, and undergraduate students at Brigham Young University. Then, in collaboration with Dr. Petersen, I hand coded for key themes related to the topic of developing power and legitimacy within the field in India. These themes were selected as they emerged from the data. Those categories included educational background, legitimacy in workplace, legitimacy in social structures, family responsibilities, reasons for joining the field, gender issues, work/life balance, STC (present), STC (history), and other issues around identity factors such as age, class, and globalization.

Later, these categories were used to inform the textual analysis of historical documents from the STC India chapter conferences over the last 18 years. These documents were selected to improve validity of data collected in interviews, offering multiple perspectives on the same events. Further, historical documents offered information that had been forgotten or misremembered by individual participants, allowing me to check for accuracy and consistency in the sequence and meanings of historical events. Any inconsistencies were sent back to participants for further clarification.

Demographic Information

Though postcolonial feminist scholarship warns against the use of binaries and the way that it can create artificial divisions (Mohanty, 1984, Spivak, 1999), this demographic information has been set up to be displayed in a binary format in order to protect the privacy of participants by obscuring identifying details. For example, participants have been grouped by age into two groups: younger than 35 years old or 35 years and older. These categorical details offer some contextual information about the participant's individual frame of reference without disclosing specific personal details that could compromise the anonymity of participants. In cases where demographic data is recorded as unknown, either participants were not asked that particular question due to time constraints or the participant declined to answer that particular question. A table listing all participants and their basic demographic information is available for reference in Appendix B, Table B.1.

Study participants included 46 women and three men. Three of these 49 interviews were long-form interviews; one man participated in a long-form interview, the other two long-form participants were women. Though the study was originally intended to interview women only, interviewing men became important as it became clear that these men sometimes sat in positions of power or otherwise had access to important information about the field's context. Further, because men in India are impacted by some of the same intersectional identity factors as women, their interviews were helpful in gaining insights as to how these factors play into intersectional issues. Men's roles in the foundation of the STC India chapter are discussed in detail in Chapter 2 and additional information about the intersectional factors mentioned by participants can be found in Chapter 5.

Information about the ages of participants was collected. Twenty four participants reported being 35 years of age or older; eleven reported being under the age of 35. The ages of the remaining 14 participants is unknown. We also collected information about family

demographics of participants in an effort to understand their obligations outside the workplace. Thirty one participants reported being married; 11 were single. The marital status of seven participants was unknown. Additionally, 29 participants were parents, 14 were not parents, and it remains unknown whether the remaining six had children or not.

Of the 49 participants, 26 explained that they were members of the STC India chapter. Eight reported that they were not members. The remaining 15 were unknown. However, even individuals who reported not being official members of the STC India chapter sometimes participated in STC India events or conferences or used the newsletters to stay abreast of industry news.

When asked directly about whether gender sometimes served as a marginalizing force in their workplace, a little more than half of participants said yes. However, 40 of the 49 participants described instances of gender bias in their workplaces. The response to questions about gender varied somewhat between married and unmarried women with 80% of known single women and 79% of known married women relaying information about gender impacting their workplace. However single women were slightly more likely to specifically identify and name the issue as gender bias at a rate of 60% whereas married women recognized or named it only 48% of the time.

Out of 49 participants, 40 reported having a bachelor's degree or higher. The educational status of the other nine participants is unknown. Only one participant reported having a degree in Technical Communication, which was a master's degree from a program in the United States. The rest of the degrees reported were in English literature or in scientific fields such as computer science, engineering, biology, or chemistry. Participants also reported earning master's degrees in business, law, engineering, and communication.

In addition to asking about participants' university education levels, we collected information about specialty training in technical communication through certification programs.

Twenty-seven participants had earned some kind of technical communication certification, and 18 had not. It is unknown whether the remaining four had earned a certification.

Interview Data

Before the study began, a draft interview protocol was sent to three area representatives in India to be reviewed for cultural relevance and appropriateness. Two of these individuals participated in the study in long-form interviews. Once approved by area representatives, we asked some or all of the questions to each of the 49 respondents, depending on how much time was available and whether participants wished to discuss the topics the questions contained. Interviews were extended in instances where a participant had extensive knowledge about one or more of the interview questions that led to a more lengthy discussion. The three interviews that became long form interviews grew out of interviews that began with the same questions that were asked of the other 46 participants. These study questions included, but were not limited to:

1. What can you share with us about the history of technical and professional communication in India?
2. What professional organizations do you participate in?
3. What is your educational background?
4. Do you feel valued in your workplace?

The full list of questions that participants were asked is available in Appendix A. Though all of the questions listed in the appendix were asked to some or all participants, not all of these questions and their responses were able to be addressed within the scope of this dissertation project. Questions and responses outside the scope of this dissertation will be addressed in later publications.

Interview questions covered topics including demographics, workplace culture, gender, workplace roles, appearance, professionalization, work/life balance, education, and motherhood.

Table 1.1 below illustrates the correlation between the stated research questions for this project and the interview questions.

Table 1.1

Interview Topics and Research Questions

	Have women working as technical communicators in India expanded their access to power and legitimacy as professionals? If so, how?	a. Have women utilized organizational or structural forces to build their power and legitimacy in a global system? If so, how?	b. Have women utilized non-structural tactics improve their access to power and legitimacy? If so, how?	c. Have women been affected by other identity factors besides gender? If so, how?
Demographics				x
Workplace Culture	x	x	x	
Gender	x	x	x	
Workplace Roles	x			
Appearance	x	x	x	x
Professionalization	x	x		
Work/Life Balance	x	x	x	
Education	x	x	x	x
Motherhood	x	x	x	x

Each interview was transcribed and coded using themes that emerged from the interviews. As I coded, I looked for themes relevant to the building of power and legitimacy such as: comments about the way participants see or value their own legitimacy, ways participants built their own legitimacy or subverted structures of power, use of the STC or other professional

organizations as a means of gaining legitimacy, educational markers of legitimacy, identity factors outside gender that impacted power and legitimacy, and methods of subverting organizational power structures.

Textual Analysis

The India chapter of the STC keeps extensive documents including newsletters and conference proceedings that help to record the workings and goals of the organization. These documents begin in 1998, the year that the STC chapter was founded. Extensive efforts were made to obtain copies of early Indus newsletters, but leadership of the STC India chapter and the of STC headquarters in the United States were unable to locate copies of these documents. After ten months of email exchanges and phone calls without success in locating copies of these documents, I decided to move forward without them. Conference proceedings from the first conference on are available online, however, and documents from the first five conferences as conference documents from 2016 were analyzed. The document analysis was conducted serially after interview coding was complete. This serial method enabled the coding structure for the interviews to be used to code the documents as well.

Accounting for Ethics

As this project seeks to move past the field's fixation on telling Euro-Western histories and instead create a historiographical decolonial narrative (Haas, 2008), I have adhered to the words of participants wherever possible. In situations where the data was unclear or conflicted, members of the STC India community have checked my work to ensure the fidelity of my findings. Additionally, the analysis of interviews was completed before analyzing historical documents to allow the perspectives of participants to impact the assessment of the documents. Finally, this project includes documents as a source of data, in part, to reduce the impact of my

work within local communities by accessing information they have already created instead of requiring additional time and energy to be dedicated to meeting with researchers.

Chapter Overview

Because postcolonial feminism recognizes a need to understand power and legitimacy across a number of dynamic identities, this project centers the voices of postcolonial feminist scholars but also pulls framings from a variety of theorists based on works that are most able to address the aspects of identity at play in any given chapter. The literature review found in this introduction is extended at the chapter level so that each chapter's framework can stand alone as an individual work.

Chapter 2 uses a feminist historiographical framework to describe the founding of the STC India chapter as a mechanism for strengthening power and legitimacy for the field in India as a whole. Additionally, it describes the roles that women served in the founding years. Chapter 3 extends that work by outlining the ways Indian women in 2016 used (and did not use) professional organizations as a tool toward professionalization. Chapter 4 uses concepts from Lyotard, Herndl, Foucault, and Freire to address the ways that Indian practitioners have claimed power and legitimacy through traditional and non-traditional forms of education. Using the theoretical work of Schneider, Mohanty, and Spivak, Chapter 5 discusses the ways in which Indian practitioners experience a sense of powerlessness and highlight the strategies by which they subvert these dynamics to assert their own legitimacy. This chapter is coauthored with Dr. Emily Petersen. Finally, Chapter 6 seeks to acknowledge the limitations of this project, state the implications of the findings for research and scholarship, identify the pedagogical implications of the findings, and point toward areas that need further study.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION IN INDIA

Introduction

Scholars have given much weight to the question of power and legitimacy in the field of TPC, but much of that focus has been given to practitioners in Euro-Western contexts (Haas, 2012). However, practitioners in India have also worked to strengthen their own power and legitimacy by harnessing existing structural mechanisms. Both men and women were involved in the effort to found a professionalizing structure. However, the issue of professionalization is an intersectional one and understanding the formation of the STC India chapter is vital to understanding the professionalization of women and their role in the organization more recently. This chapter addresses the founding of the STC India chapter as a mechanism toward building power and legitimacy through professionalization. It discusses definitions of power and legitimacy and ways in which professionalization helps to establish those goals. It covers a historical analysis of the founding years of the STC India chapter, learning about ways that founding members and early participants worked to build their own legitimacy. It describes the roles that women played during the early founding years as speakers and leaders of the organization. It sets the stage for Chapter 3 to provide information about the state of the STC India chapter in 2016, the mechanisms it has used to empower practitioners in the field in India, as well as the challenges it is facing in helping those members achieve a sense of legitimacy in their work.

Professionalization as a Mechanism of Increasing Power and Legitimacy

The conversation about power and legitimacy in the field has the potential to help global TPC practitioners behave in more ethical ways as individuals come to understand the impact that

they have on the world. However, much of the scholarship in this area has focused on Euro-Western practitioners. The struggle for TPC power and legitimacy is also relevant across global contexts. Spivak (1999) acknowledges that individuals from formerly colonized countries sometimes have access to globalized communities in part because they have been influenced by the “culture of imperialism” (p. 187). She warns that this is not some kind of luck, and that neocolonial anti-colonialists might still wish to turn such people into an “object of a conscientious ethnography” (p. 187). This observation of the way dominating power structures often replicate their marginalizing methods in colonized places requires careful scrutiny of Euro-Western models of power and legitimacy as they pertain to communities in the Global South.

Gerald Savage (2003) observes that power and legitimacy in a Euro-Western context have been described by addressing status, expertise, credibility, “market closure” of certain tasks not owned by other fields, and educational credentialing. He described professionalization as “an exclusive process” which requires an “undemocratic presumption that, as the basis of expertise, certain kinds of knowledge should not be available to everyone” (p. 3). This perspective reflects attitudes Collins (2002) warns about, raising concerns that these limits to knowledge sharing often privilege certain people, making individuals with access to the most resources appear the most legitimate. Fields seeking to professionalize are often faced with challenges of diversifying their workforce while developing ethical guidelines that will ensure their profession remains a net good to society while also working against market forces that may call for behavior outside those guidelines. Further, professionalization requires deciding what kinds of knowledges and skills should be prioritized, determining methods of research for creating knowledge, and selecting which areas of practice should be included.

Once a field has professionalized, its social value may become more apparent, but the early phases of professionalization often lack this credibility. Earning this credibility is often a matter of prioritizing particular kinds of knowledge as well as competency in particular tools

(Savage, 2003). Kynell-Hunt (2003) assigned power and legitimacy to the task of claiming a body of knowledge and establishing conditions of practice which have the ability to shape the field more broadly. Blyler (2003) pushed back against these ideas, stating that the notion of professionalization is a modernist idea that was past its time and arguing that the field should instead embrace its ambiguous role as a strength.

The early process of professionalization might best be described by de Certeau (1984) who explained that tactics are “calculated actions” taken by the individual who lacks structural power in order to transform the status quo into a “favorable situation” (p. 39). However, once the field has professionalized, establishing professional bodies with organizational power, individual members switch to negotiating power by use of “strategies” which can only be enacted by organizations with structural power in order to “influence, guide, or manipulate” situations more broadly (p. 81).

Historiography Within the Field

Savage (2003) suggests that when thinking about a field’s relationship to power and legitimacy, we must remember that “no practice, no set of institutional or social arrangements, no body of knowledge, values, or beliefs is an essence. All have histories and arise from historical exigencies.” These historical exigencies become the catalysts that form identities, but the outcomes of identity formation are not by necessity, fixed. Instead, our identities are tied to the origins of the field, to the practices put forth in the early years of its formation. These factors impact identity and the challenges that those identities face whether or not a historical account is familiar or even written (p. 4).

Conner (1991) observed that studies of historical evidence are an important method of research in the field of TPC because they encourage researchers and practitioners to “rethink the avowed principles of technical communication, to ask new questions, and to follow new lines of

inquiry.” Further, historiographies are critical in helping shape our own identity as a field in ways that encourage critical awareness of our need for humane sensitivity in our work. This has the ability to bring about change (p. 5). However, it is not adequate to remain fixated on historical sites of populations that have maintained historic dominance. The study of reports and documents generated by often overlooked populations has the potential to result in improved awareness of the contributions of those populations (Haller, 1997).

Additionally, the study of historical genres in TPC is vital because thoughtful inquiry often reveals them to be fluid and complex and impacted by a wide variety of factors than originally assumed. For instance, many early technical genres were assumed to be “male genres” because they were written by men, but historiographies developed in context have the potential to offer more robust, inclusive narratives. For example, documents created by women might be studied alongside documents created by men in an effort to understand the ways in which women used rhetorical tactics to move through a predominantly male space. Sutcliffe (1998) argues that a fully historical investigation of texts sees them as anthropologically, rather than psychologically, produced artifacts; that is, they are embedded in a complex cultural matrix, not just expressions of one isolated individual. In other words, texts can be studied as part and parcel of the complex cultural milieu in which they arise (p. 154). In an effort to broaden historical research in the field of TPC and widen our scope of study to often overlooked populations, this chapter uses historical research to learn more about the ways that Indian practitioners in the early 1990s sought to improve their power and legitimacy by creating a chapter of the Society of Technical Communication (STC), a professional organization which began in the United States in 1953 (Locations- future and past, 2017).

Methods

This chapter describes the founding of the STC India chapter as a move toward claiming power and legitimacy through professionalization. It steps beyond the telling of Euro-Western histories and instead creates a historiographical narrative of the ways that Indian practitioners moved tactically to claim more organizational power (Haas, 2008, p. 83). Using a feminist historiographical approach, this chapter frames the founding of the STC in India, presenting the words and ideas of survey participants in context as Sutherland (2002) advocates (p. 109). The words of participants have been adhered to wherever possible.

I have used documents as a secondary source of data in order to reduce the impact of my work within local communities by accessing information they have already created instead of requiring additional time and energy to be dedicated to meeting with researchers. Further, this mixed methods approach strengthens the validity of my findings. Analysis of interview data was completed before analyzing documents to allow the perspectives of participants to impact the way I assessed the documents.

In some instances, the oral histories of survey participants contradicted information provided in historical and modern documents kept by the STC India chapter. In these cases, inconsistencies were sent back to participants for clarification. Additionally, participants were given the opportunity to give feedback on these conclusions in an effort to conduct ethical, collaborative work as well as to strengthen the validity of the findings.

TPC in India: The Beginnings

When asked about the history of TPC in India, a surprising number of participants did not first describe the technology boom in the 1990's but rather, started unexpectedly far in the past by reporting that technical communication in India was founded by the god Ganesha. Ganesha is

believed to have penned the part of the epic called Mahabharata, one of the two major Sanskrit epic poems of ancient India, as it was dictated by a sage named Vyasa. One participant in the study, Bijal, explained that Ganesha's role was to listen "to everything and put it across that fast," recording information in real time so nothing was missed. Participants related that this was their belief about the origins of the work of documentation. This assessment of TPC as a divine practice seemed to offer participants some sense of value in their work. However, beyond the discussion of the divine origins of their work, participants agreed that modern TPC began in the 1990's during the technology boom that took place both in the United State and in India. A long-time practitioner in the field, Wamika, explained that technical writing had "existed in the form of scientific publications and writing for other industries" but that it didn't really take off until the IT industry began to demand it.

Jay described entering the field around 1994, observing that though the field in India was young, there were already other people working with five to six years of experience in the field. Some of these writers got their start with engineering companies who needed documentation and others were working with big IT companies who had recently started hiring writers. Practitioners who were working in the field during that time recalled an era of working mostly independently without a lot of training or institutional support from other practitioners or professional organizations. Participants recounted finding jobs for themselves by walking into technical organizations, describing their own writing skills, and then learning on the job.

Founding the Society for Technical Communication India Chapter

Technical communication grew rapidly alongside IT jobs in India in the 1990's especially in cities that were becoming technology hubs such as Bangalore, Mumbai, and Pune. However, no TPC educational programs were available to practitioners and practitioners had very limited connections to each other unless they lived in a place near other writers (About us, n.d.). This

need for training and professional networking led Gurudutt Kamath to found The Technical Writers of India (TWIN) mailing list in 1998, which helped professional communicators connect to and support one another (Technical Writers of India, n.d.). Early founding members described that the list started with around 70 members in various cities. In 1999, Kamath had turned over the reins to the TWIN mailing list to Makarand Pandit. That same year, Pandit and Kamath saw a need for more systematic structure, hierarchy, and operational procedures among their community. They envisioned that this would allow the community to be able to prove it was taking responsibility for itself in order to show its relevance to the technology sector that hired technical writers. This growing network of communicators and the want for more formal structure formed the exigency for the founding of an STC chapter in India in 1999. Covering the cities that had the most practitioners, Kamath circulated a petition to found an Indian chapter of the STC in Mumbai, and Pandit circulated an additional copy in Pune and also traveled to Bangalore to gather additional signatures. Between the two documents, there were 17 signers to the original founding documents. Only 15 were required to form the chapter. The documents containing information about these early signers are no longer available; therefore it is impossible to know exactly how many women were involved in the founding. However, long-time members of the field suggested that some women were part of the founding group.

When the chapter was approved by the main STC organization in the United States, Kamath became the first president of the newly formed India chapter. Pandit became the Membership Manager. Since Kamath left the STC India and the field of technical communication entirely in 2000, people have come to think of Makarand Pandit as the “father of technical writing” in India. He has remained active in the STC community serving as chapter president in 2005 and 2016 (About us, n.d.).

Wamika, a participant with nearly twenty years of experience, described that being a practitioner in the 1990’s was extremely specialized and that at that time, there were few

technical writers in India. She described making a move to a new city to take a new job, where she first met a few other practitioners. They began to hold meetings for discussions and presentations where they could talk to each other about the work they were doing. There, they could share skills, pose questions, and network with each other. This community of practitioners became the early voices that contributed to the growing community of technical writers that were seeking additional professionalization. After the STC was founded, Wamika took a leadership role and “became a regular.” She observed that her work in the capacity of professional organization gave her the opportunity to develop skills such as writing, collaboration, organizing, and networking. Navya, another long-time practitioner with more than a decade in the field, observed that the field in the United States had more longevity and was more mature than the field in India, but that the formation of the STC India chapter was “was one of the oldest organizations” in the field in India which offered needed networking and education.

STC India Conference: Collaborating toward Professionalization

With the foundation of the STC India chapter, members began to grow into new ways of sharing information. A national conference was initiated in 1999, with the first conference being held in Bangalore on December 4, 1999, with 70-80 people in attendance. An analysis of the archives of speaker presentations from the first five years of this annual event offers a window into the concerns and priorities of the newly founded organization and its members.

Speaker Demographics

It is difficult to get an accurate representation of how much say women had in the founding of the STC India chapter because the founding documentation is no longer available. However, some records of STC India chapter conference presentations do exist which can offer a sense for how often women’s voices were represented at the chapter’s annual meetings. The

conference documents for the first five years of the conference have been preserved online but contain some missing files, broken links, unnamed presentations, or corrupt files, and lack complete program information. Therefore, it is important to note that the following accounting of early conference documents cannot provide a complete picture of women's conference participation. However, the information available does illustrate that women were present, if not proportionally represented, in the early years of the STC India conference.

In 1999, historical records offer slides for 12 conference presentations. Of those, three were given by Indian women, and another was the keynote, given by Kathryn Auten from the United States. The remaining eight were given by men. The records for the following conference in 2000 are sparse, with only three presentations documented, and only one of those presentations listed speakers' names. That presentation was given by a panel of six women, with one Indian woman speaking on the panel with five Western women. Information about any other speakers is not recorded. For the 2001 conference, speaker information was available for eleven of thirteen speakers. Four were Indian women, one was a Western woman, and six were men. No information about the keynote speaker is available. In 2002, two of eleven speakers were Indian women, three were Indian men, and two were given by a Western man. Gender information is not available for the remaining four known speakers. The keynote address was given by a Western man. Much of the identifying speaker information is missing from 2003. Of 10 speakers, one was a woman, three were men, and the remaining six were impossible to identify due to missing files or documents without speakers' names. No record exists about the keynote address in 2003. In sum, though an incomplete accounting, totals from the first five years of conferences show proof of 11 Indian women serving as speakers compared to about 20 Indian men serving in the same capacity. Table 2.1 shows the year-by-year breakdown of the speaker demographics.

Table 2.1

Speaker Demographics 1999-2003

	Indian Men	Indian Women	Western Men	Western Women	Gender Unavailable	Total Speakers
1999	8	3	0	1	0	12
2000	0	1	0	5	2	8
2001	6	4	0	1	2	13
2002	3	2	2	0	4	11
2003	3	1	0	0	6	10

During these years, women appeared on the conference programs only a third as often as men. Further, the topic of gender was never directly addressed during any of the conference talks for which documentation exists during this time period. In addition, no women served as chapter president during this time period. This historical information demonstrates an underrepresentation of women in the early years of the chapter in some of the most visible roles, a problem which has remained true in 2016 and will be discussed further in Chapter 3. Still, women's voices do appear on the program and were, from the beginning of the chapter's history, an active part of shaping the narrative of what the community would become.

From the first five years of documents, only documents from 1999 and 2002 denote information about the keynote speakers. In both cases, those addresses were given by Euro-Western speakers. In 1999, the keynote address was given by Kathlyn Auten from the United States and in 2002, the keynote was given by Saul Carliner from Canada. The selection of Euro-Western speakers as keynotes during those early years suggests a deference to Euro-Western voices from the beginning of the chapter's meetings.

Congruent with Lyotard's (1984) concerns about knowledge being seen as the most legitimate when it comes from the wealthiest sources, white, Euro-Western voices being selected to headline STC India events may represent a move to demonstrate the legitimacy of Indian practitioners by training workers to be efficient at the kinds of knowledge most valued in Euro-Western contexts. Further, promoting Euro-Western voices as the highest-profile conference sessions sidelines Indian voices within their own organization, illustrating Foucault's (1975) concern that power dynamics within dominant systems can cause people to be complicit in marginalizing themselves even when they appear to be acting autonomously.

Developing a Professional Identity

Topics from the early conferences also offer insight into the ways that early conference meetings served to shape the field's power and legitimacy in India. The keynote speaker at the inaugural conference in 1999, Kathlyn Auten of Texas Instruments, addressed fundamental questions of power and legitimacy such as:

1. Who are we?
2. Who must we be?
3. Where are we now?
4. Where will we be?

In answer to the question, "who are we?" she referred to practitioners as a "rag-tag assortment from every discipline." She observed that this conglomeration of identities within a group of practitioners could be framed as a strong advantage due to the multiplicity of skills found among them (Auten, 1999). Auten's keynote frames the identity of the field globally as being defined by the diverse skills they bring from a variety of disciplines, and pushes practitioners in India to define themselves more specifically. This Euro-Western push toward more clearly defining the skills and roles utilized by Indian technical communicators echoes Lyotard's (1984) observation

that professional legitimacy is usually developed in by polishing a certain set of skills in order to serve the wealthiest members of the global capitalist system. In this case, the push toward capitalist legitimacy was also delivered by a Euro-Western speaker who occupies a position of relative power in relation to recently-organized Indian practitioners (Collins, 2002).

Though it is impossible to say for certain based on the limited amount of information in the archive, Auten's use of the word "we" to include herself alongside Indian practitioners at the first meeting of the STC India chapter also raises some concerning questions about the dynamics of power between Euro-Western practitioners and Indian practitioners in 1999. Collins (2002) explains that individuals with a variety of identities, such as Auten and members of the STC India chapter, can share concerns and work toward common goals. However, she warns that when groups with different levels of power collaborate it can be easy for Euro-Western individuals to dominate the narrative. This uneven power dynamic replicates colonial patterns of domination that silence voices that are already often overlooked. In addition, Auten's prominent spot on the program very literally gives higher priority to the ideas and concerns of a Euro-Western practitioner than to a practitioner in India.

Another presentation, aptly named "Survival of the Fittest," highlighted mechanisms for helping the field of TPC survive in India (Stanthanam, 1999). The presentation discussed concerns around preserving technical communication as a viable career in India. Similar to the points in the keynote, Raji Stanthanam designed a set of questions by which to define the profession:

1. Why should technical communication change?
2. What is my role?
3. How should we adapt to changing markets?
4. Who are technical communicators? What do they do? What don't they do?"

He noted that technical communication required creating information about products or service

for a specific audience. Further, he defined technical writing as an act of interpretation between engineers or programmers and the consumer into simple English. He created a list of titles by which such professionals might be known, including technical writer, information designer, information engineer, documentation specialist, or information developer. He also made an attempt to define the kinds of documents that such professionals might create including the creation of manuals, online help, EPSS, marketing collaterals, tutorials, and training material (Santhanam, 1999).

Anupama Manjeshwar challenged the way the field was often labeled as a “support activity” as part of an engineering function rather than a field of its own, labeling it a “threat” to the field (Manjeshwar, 1999). However, he saw TPC as an integral part of the software development process and encouraged practitioners to seize this organizational structure as an opportunity to assert their value to the organization. Unfortunately, since few TPC-related educational opportunities were available, he acknowledged that practitioners might have to learn how to prove their organizational strengths while already on the job.

The archived documents from these presentations show a strong sense of the way the field was beginning to legitimize by working to better understand itself. Speakers sought to address the kinds of questions raised by Savage (2003) including which areas of practice should be included in the definition of the field, what kinds of knowledge should be prioritized and obtained by Indian practitioners, and which kinds of tasks the field should consider itself responsible for. These tasks helped to address Manjeshwar’s (1999) concerns that the field was indistinguishable from the field of engineering and began to create a shared language within the field of TPC around its new, growing identity.

To some extent, this effort to determine what kinds of knowledge the field should prioritize based on what the market values goes against Mohanty’s (1984) suggestion that ideals about “legitimate knowledge” should be challenged and expanded rather than accepted and

promoted (p. 334). However, the decision to improve professional legitimacy by aligning with dominant power structure can be understood by using the idea set forth by hooks (1984) who observed that working within existing structures can empower people by granting them access to improvements in class status and does not prevent people occupying marginalized positions from acting with “resistance and strength” even from within structures that are sometimes oppressive (p. 92).

Growing Skills, Roles, and Tools

In addition to defining the field as it currently existed, much of the conference content centered on imagining the future of the field, including what kinds of skills practitioners would eventually need to take on. Auten (1999) suggested that practitioners would be most successful if they developed soft skills for surviving in the rapidly growing and changing field including being resourceful, creative, adventurous, and eager. Further, Santhanam (1999) called for attendees to develop a “portfolio career” that contained a range of skills and cross-disciplinary profiles. A number of additional presentations reiterated the need for ongoing diversification in skills, observing that a broad skill set makes for flexible practitioners who can also adapt to changing markets (Cisco Systems, 1999, Henry, 1999, Mirlay, 1999). Only one presentation emphasized the value in focus and specialization (Cisco Systems, 1999).

Speakers at the first conference also went beyond attempting to define existing roles and began to imagine what kinds of job titles and functions future practitioners might have. Santhanam (1999) suggested that content management, web management, ecommerce, and e-communicators might be the future of the field. He also encouraged attendees to think about new trends that might be upcoming in the field that would help them stay marketable such as preparing to move away from print and toward ecommerce and planning for diminishing display real estate online. Additionally, Auten (1999) pointed toward the future of the field as tied up in

technological proficiency in technologies such as XML, SVG, CSS, DHTML, ASP, speech recognition, database publishing, 3D graphics, animation, audio, and video streaming.

In seeking to understand the future of the field, speakers were discussing the market value of the field, imagining which tasks and roles would remain profitable for their careers, and thinking about the ways in which the field might expand its “market closure” around tasks that were arising with new technologies. Indian practitioners showed strong foresight around the future of skills and technologies in TPC which has likely helped them to stay relevant in the global market over the past 19 years. Many of the technologies and skills discussed in 1999 conference were still being discussed and taught in the 2016 conference such as XML, developing video, managing databases, and creating audio nearly 17 years later (STC India 18th Annual Conference, 2016).

By 2001, in the conference’s third year, a major theme of the conference was collaboration as writers grew into new roles within their organizations. Three different presentations addressed the issue. One offered mechanisms to manage the way other team members viewed technical communicators and what they were able to contribute to the team (Nayar, 2001). Another identified barriers to collaboration for both writers and developers (Gokhale, 2001). Yet another identified strategies for becoming involved in early documentation decisions as products evolve (Lois & Crasta, 2001).

By the conference in 2002, it appears that enough technical communicators were juggling enough roles that a major theme of the conference was about wearing many hats. Whitlam (2002) suggested that technical communicators should step into the role of usability testing to further supplement the work of both engineering and marketing. Giridharan and Seshadri (2002) suggested that technical communicators had space to grow into training and creative roles in their organizations. Sairaj (2002) believed that taking steps to increase the roles that technical communicators were responsible for was worth the risk of seeming like a jack-of-all-trades

because it held the potential to expand the value of the work that technical communicators do. He instructed practitioners to adopt a “can-do” attitude and to use a bit of salesmanship to show the value in their output. This expansion, he suggested, held potential for technical communicators to move from “creation to innovation” (Sairaj, 2002). Still, the following year at the 2003 conference, Biswas (2003) addressed concerns about the future of technical communication citing “role ambiguity, ambiguous team structures, limited growth...[and], developer to writer ratios” as barriers to continued relevance (Biswas, 2003). Such concerns, he suggested, would be best addressed by improving partnerships with professionals in other roles, strengthening domain expertise, and professionalization.

This trend toward strong collaboration, broadening skill sets, and having an eager, creative approach to tackling new tasks resembles Blyler’s (2004) claim that professionalization as a way to narrow tasks, skills, and job titles is obsolete in a profession built around ever-changing technology. Instead, the majority of speakers in the first five years were actively seeking to broaden definitions and encourage practitioners to develop flexible, adaptable roles in order to be able to maintain a high degree of marketability. However, a few dissenting voices from 1999-2003 observed that though flexibility was important, specialization was vital to obtaining “market closure” (Savage, 2003). They argued that specialization increased demand, and thus, longevity, for the field.

The question of whether the field should move toward becoming a profession of flexible generalists or highly skilled specialists is a compelling one, but the underlying question remains an attempt to predict which option will be the most marketable. The impulse to maximize marketability is understandable, given that Leotard (1984) observes that developing marketable skills is a key component of obtaining professional legitimacy. Though marketability often requires workers to do work that mostly benefits the richest members of society, Collins (2002) presents the possibility that assimilating into dominant power structures can improve the access

that certain individuals have to certain kinds of power such as increased buying power and financial autonomy even when access to other kinds of power remains difficult or impossible to access. Even small increases in access to power such as improvements in financial or class status may have prompted Indian practitioners to work toward capitalist notions of legitimacy as a field.

Identifying Challenges to Professionalization

Auten (1999) argued education to be an important piece of TPC identity in India and Pandit (1999) pointed out that Indian writers were at a global disadvantage due to the lack of educational opportunities that were more common in other parts of the world. Even Manjeshwar's (1999) talk about time management raised the issue that academic courses for technical writing did not exist and pointed out that the field in India would have to compete against practitioners in other countries who had access to more educational opportunities.

The topic of educational opportunities for India practitioners is consistently present in the conference presentation archives. At the conference in 2001, Carol Barnum (2001) presented on the growing technical communication programs in the U.S. and pointed out that India had no technical communication programs. She highlighted potential areas for developing educational opportunities, however those programs never materialized. Though some development has occurred, including private institutes offering certification courses, in some ways, the STC India chapter has become and was already, at its first meeting, a source of education. Further, these meetings and the annual newsletter offered the field an opportunity to start discussing what kinds of education they already had and what kinds of education they felt like they were lacking. At least one of the speakers from the first annual conference went on to develop a private training institute for technical communicators.

Reaching for Cultural Context

The inaugural conference also showed evidence that practitioners were already aware of

their social context. Manjeshwar (1999) cited statistics about the roles and titles of practitioners working in Canada, perhaps with an awareness that these figures were relevant to Indian practitioners who work in a global context, often with Euro-Western organizations. Patil (1999) stepped even further beyond concern for global market forces to raise the question of inclusivity, observing that in addition to the skills and best practices for the field, practitioners needed to be aware of trends toward acknowledging gender, culture, and other social issues.

This early nod toward understanding the global and cultural context in which Indian technical communication resides represents movement toward ethical awareness about the implications of the work TPC practitioners do. Early conference speakers showed evidence of the power technical communicators can wield in shaping social forces even within dominant structures of power (hooks, 1984, p. 92). In this way, early Indian technical communicators showed their ability to work in ways that shape social action that provided them another source of legitimacy as well (Kynell-Hunt, 2003).

Conclusion

The foundation of the STC India chapter in 1999 offered structural legitimacy to the organizers and new members, both men and women, who were already working to establish a mechanism of knowledge sharing through the TWIN newsletter. With the formation of the chapter, newsletters continued and an annual conference was founded. Though archival records of the first newsletters are no longer available, archives of the presentations from the first five years of STC India conferences in between 1999 and 2003 offer insight into the ways that early leaders, speakers, and participants were seeking to expand power and legitimacy in the field by defining tasks, skills, roles and technologies that were important to their work, identifying ways in which practitioners lacked training, and beginning to question their role in the shaping of the cultural context around them.

In some ways, the foundation of the STC India chapter shows a pattern of colonization, with Indian practitioners adopting a Euro-Western structure through which to professionalize. Additionally, the first STC India conference shows some deference to Euro-Western voices, with speakers from the United States and Canada appearing as the only two documented keynote speakers. Further, the speaker lineup showed evidence of gender bias in terms of the voices that were selected to speak, with men outrepresenting women 2:1. Chapter 3 will address additional ways that the Euro-Western structure replicates patriarchal systems of injustice within the Indian chapter, underrepresenting women in leadership and requiring women to travel away from their families in order to participate. However, Indian practitioners also prioritized their own workplace needs within their newly founded structure. Indian voices dominated the majority of the speaker list every single year, making it clear that Indian practitioners were eager to learn from each other and to share their knowledge within their new professional structure.

CHAPTER 3

PROFESSIONALIZATION: POWER, LEGITIMACY, AND MARGINALIZATION

Introduction

While the history of the STC India chapter can offer a useful perspective into the ways in which early members of the field organized to expand their power and legitimacy, study of the organization's recent activity shows continued momentum toward professionalization. This chapter builds on the data about the founding of the STC India chapter by discussing what elements have remained over time, what has grown and changed, and issues that the organization is facing in helping women professionalize. The major findings in this chapter have been arranged into relevant subheadings and paired with the interpretation of the data in each section.

STC India in 2016

In the years since its founding in 1999 until 2016, the STC India chapter has grown to around 100 members with additional sustaining member organizations and an ongoing training effort within India. Though the STC India chapter is relatively small compared to the organization's presence in the United States, research suggests that the organization provides the most robust membership and activity of any TPC organization in India. Members are likely to have two years of professional experience and a strong grasp on national and international trends in the field (Prashant & Pandit, 2008, p. 17)

The chapter is headquartered in Bangalore. It does not have formal office space, so the address of the chapter accountant serves as the mailing address. Leadership is elected every year. Both leadership and members are spread across India in different cities and time zones. The annual conference gives everyone a chance to get together and share knowledge. It also offers leadership a chance to meet together to make decisions; conferencing via WebX is used to bridge

the gaps between conferences.

To some extent, the organization has taken on a serious role in offering continuing education in the field. A 2010 study of TPC practitioners in India found that 78.6% of participating managers thought that a governing body or society should head up a degree course for technical writing. The study organizers suggested at that time that STC India or other professional association might take a role in strengthening the educational and professionalization opportunities available to practitioners (Pandit & Talwar, 2010). The organization has begun to do this in the form of its conferences. One participant reported that though the first STC India conference took place in 1999 with 70-80 people, more than 300 people now regularly attend the annual conference which takes place in a different major city in India every year. In 2016 it was held in Hyderabad where about 350-360 people attended. Additionally, there are now regional conferences that take place over the course of the year. Another participant reported that one such conference held in Pune in 2015 had about 150 people in attendance.

STC India members have the option to become STC members at the STC's "Emerging Nations" rate. The fee for a "Classic" membership for individuals in those specified countries is \$50. Comparable membership level for members the United States costs \$170.10. In 2016 it cost 4,500 Indian rupees (about \$70 US dollars) to register for the STC India annual conference compared to fees starting at \$895 for registration to the 2016 annual conference in the United States (Membership, 2018). Conference attendees or their employers must also pay for travel to the conference location and lodging. Most meals are provided at the conference.

Using Euro-Western Structure to Improve Power and Legitimacy

As the field in India professionalized and formed a chapter of the STC India, the organization claimed structural power to be able to enact de Certeau's (1984) definition of "strategies," using "totalizing discourse" in order to "influence, guide, or manipulate" the

professional landscape of technical communication in India (p. 81). Further, it began to build legitimacy by becoming a creator of knowledge (Lyotard, 1984). To do so, the organization released newsletters, held conferences, and elected leadership that put forth the priorities of the organization. As the field has grown, the STC India has served as a strong method of professionalization, strengthening the identity of the field and bolstering mechanisms of training and sharing information.

This strategy carries some resemblance to colonization in which the structure of a Euro-Western organization was implemented in the Global South in order to gain credibility in a globalized, capitalist system. This colonial structure carries with it some strong benefits, allowing workers in India to be recognized by organizations in Euro-Western contexts and providing additional means of education and professional differentiation. However Spivak (1999) warns that the globalized labor market can lend workers to thinking of themselves as “agents of production” instead of “victims of capitalism” (p. 357). This perspective can leave workers to view themselves as beneficiaries of capitalism, even when such systems sometimes run on patriarchal norms that limit the professional growth of people with identities that have often been undervalued. For example, as we saw in Chapter 2, conference organizers selected keynote speakers for early STC India events from Euro-Western contexts, amplifying foreign voices and keeping these important professional opportunities out of the reach of Indian practitioners.

Colonizing power is not a monolith and does not create homogenous issues in all populations (Spivak, 1999). However, in the case of Indian practitioners, who are primarily women working for global organizations based in the United States or Europe, women show signs of struggle similar to their counterparts abroad who have struggled to balance family demands with professional life. Mohanty encourages feminist scholars to think beyond framing individuals as simply marginalized and instead, to observe the ways in which “they counter, resist, or even perhaps implicitly support” power structures that marginalize them (Mohanty,

1984, p. 334). Since power does not always operate from the top down, de Certeau (1984) observes that such individuals may push back against the larger organization or circumnavigate the organization entirely using tactics in which an individual takes “calculated action,” transforming things into a “favorable situation (p. 39). This chapter discusses the ways that the STC India chapter both offers a mechanism of professionalization that strengthens Indian practitioners’ access to power and legitimacy as well as the ways it perpetuates troublesome patterns from Euro-Western contexts that restrict the ability of women to access some of the benefits of professionalizing structures.

Access to Learning Opportunities

When asked about the role the STC India chapter plays in their professional legitimacy, participants repeatedly observed that one of the most important benefits they received from the STC India was access to education. Continuing education opportunities through the STC India were primarily provided in conference settings. Shanaya, a practitioner with two years of experience, described the STC India annual gathering as a place to share information about new tools available for practitioners. Zara, who has nine years of experience in the field, explained that STC India conferences were a place where practitioners could “exchange great ideas or great processes or best practices.”

Vedika, an STC member, described the regional gatherings in her city. She explained that they gather on Saturdays in their city every three to four months. Different practitioners are invited to share their knowledge about new tools with the rest of the group. She described the national conference as a place where people could often share something they were doing that sometimes seemed obvious but that helped other people to solve similar problems in their own organizations. She described hearing a speaker give a fifteen minute talk about information management which caused her to rethink the way her organization did the same task. She

reported that as a result, she was able to head up a project to reorganize that process in her organization.

In many ways, this function of the STC India's conference events is a strong move toward helping practitioners in India develop the kind of professional legitimacy Savage (2003) outlines. Such training offers members of the field the opportunity to obtain expertise and credibility around particular tasks. Gathering together allows members of the field to strengthen their own definitions of the tasks they might claim as a field. Further, in the absence of many structural mechanisms for credentialing, conference events can be a strong mechanism of strengthening an individual's level of experience.

Women in Leadership

In addition to gaining education by attending STC India events, some members benefited from serving the STC India in leadership roles. Although full lists of individuals serving in elected leadership roles are not available from the STC India chapter, records show that no women served as the chapter president during the first five years of the chapter's existence. The first woman served as STC India president in 2004. Between 1999 and 2018, five other women have also served in that capacity with women serving as president in 2004, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2014, and 2018. This adds up to the position being held by women just less than a third of the years that the STC India chapter has been operating. In a field that is dominated by women, this data suggests that women's voices have been present in the chapter's leadership over time but remain underrepresented overall (Past Presidents, n.d.).

Another way to measure the representation of women's voices in the STC India structure is to observe their conference participation. The records from the 2016 conference, the same year in which interviews were conducted, are more recent and thus more complete than the records from the early conferences. More speakers and sessions were documented as well, as the

conference had grown to include more participants. Records show that of 72 speakers, 27 were Indian women and 40 were Indian men. In addition, five speakers (three women and two men) were from Euro-Western countries. The keynote speaker was Scott T. Miller, an Oracle Apps Information Developer from the United States.

Even in 2016, women represented only about a third of conference speakers, showing a similar demographic representation as conferences that took place between 1999-2003. Given that an estimated 60% of practitioners in 2016 were women, the gender of conference speakers represents a continued, significant imbalance over the course of the organization's history. Further, another Euro-Western speaker held the prominent keynote speaker slot, continuing to amplify Euro-Western voices over Indian ones in headline events.

As Foucault (1975) observed, these patriarchal, colonial trends can be difficult to shake when individuals have been disciplined by the dominant power structure to uphold the status quo, even when the individuals who uphold them are most negatively impacted. In this case, similar patterns had persisted for 15 years. However, on the 2016 program was a presentation entitled "Unconscious bias in technical writing" which addressed unconscious bias against people with disabilities, women, age, and varying cultures (Ravikumar & Venkatesh, 2016). This address was given by two women in an effort to fight their own marginalization by challenging bias in the workplace. Their work as conference presenters demonstrates a small move to address the issue of women being underrepresented in positions of visibility and power. Though a single address is unlikely to have the power to radically change a system that has shown bias against women over the course of nearly two decades, such an act represents an example of hook's (1984) suggestion that acts of courage and resistance can begin to erode marginalizing structures from the inside (p. 92).

In their conference address, Ravikumar and Venkatesh cited lack of women in leadership within a study published in the Harvard Business Review as evidence of gender bias in workplace

leadership. The connection between Indian advocacy for equality and related activism in the United States suggest that the demand for equality in the workplace in India may be connected to the growing interest in workplace equality within Euro-Western contexts as well. However, it is impossible to determine the extent to which shifts toward equal representation in India and the United States are tied together from a single conference address. More study is needed to understand the extent to which movements toward equality within the field are able to influence each other on a global scale.

The following year in 2017, the conference theme was on empathy, which also contained programming about inclusion and accessibility. Further, the 2017 program was more gender balanced with women representing 20 of 45 speakers (Main Conference, 2017). Though growing inclusion of women has been slow, it appears to be happening as speakers take on the task of addressing it, conference organizers make a point of highlighting it, and women are increasingly being added to the program. These slow, but significant changes show evidence that work being done within the system to resist or change it can begin to reshape the system over time.

Leadership Opportunities

Despite women being underrepresented in leadership roles, some participants who participated in leadership recounted their experiences. Participants explained that these opportunities offered them the chance to build new skills or develop a reputation in the field. Wamika observed that she served in leadership right from the beginning of the organization nearly twenty years ago which gave her many opportunities to contribute to the profession. Further, it allowed her to develop skills in writing, organizing, speaking, and networking. She saw this opportunity as an important part of her professional growth and as a wise choice for her career.

Other members who had served in leadership, however, observed that they had originally

been reluctant. Chezzy, a practitioner with three years of experience, was reluctant to get involved with leadership even when directly invited. She recounted being asked to serve as a city representative to the STC's annual conference which she had reservations about due to lack of experience. However, a colleague encouraged her to get involved, saying "apart from just technical writing...you'll develop a lot of other skills that will help you." Since then, she's become an active leader for the chapter members in her city, which she acknowledges has offered her a lot of opportunities to gain leadership, organizing, and presentation skills which have been valuable to her career. Another prominent leadership member observed that she had been associated with the STC chapter since 2000, but did not formally join until 2014 because she feared she would be given too much leadership responsibility. She wanted to make sure that if she had committed to leadership she would be able to do it properly and without sacrificing her other goals. Now, she says, with her career more stable she has been able to take more responsibility to the organization and was elected to a leadership role in 2016 .

Other members who were not elected leaders said that being engaged in smaller roles, such as being a conference presenter, allowed them to build their professional credibility. Jharna, who was beginning to present at the STC conferences for the first time in 2016, said that presenting at the annual conference wasn't part of her job and wasn't expected of her by management however, she reported that she liked "to be involved in extra work activities because it adds to...[her] experience" as a professional. Heera, who has been in the field about ten years, describes having an active role in the STC conferences and explained that she felt she had something valuable to contribute to the discussion on maintaining standards based on her work experience.

Not only do these leadership skills benefit the careers of the individual practitioners obtaining them, they also benefit the legitimacy of the field in India at large. A group of professionals with strong, practiced leadership is most able to demonstrate status and expertise of

an entire body of members which can in turn, strengthen the entire field. Further, these leaders are able to work toward establishing “conditions of practice” which shape the way the field is able to impact society (Kynell-Hunt, 2003).

Institutional Support

Not surprisingly, participants indicated that their employers found the educational opportunities provided by the STC India chapter valuable enough that they offered memberships to their employees. Hansika reported that all employees in her organization where she has worked for four years were offered memberships, which she had seen done in other places she had worked as well. Every year, a few of her organization’s employees are sent to the national conference. Employees attending the conference are also encouraged to be presenters. Over her ten years in the field, Indira has been sponsored by her organization and was encouraged by her employer to attend activities that would help her professional development. Navya, who finds it difficult to travel because of her family responsibilities, recounted that the last time her organization had sponsored her attendance when the conference was local to their city, she attended all three days. This employer sponsorship seemed to be a key part of participation for some practitioners. Prishna, who is married and has children, observed that she isn’t a regular at the STC conferences because she is unable to finance her own attendance so her participation is restricted to the budgetary priorities of her employer. On the years that she’s not selected to receive funding for registration and travel, she doesn’t attend. Padma, who has been in the field for almost twenty years, explained that she used to work for organizations that were unable to support her STC membership so she did not attend at all.

Participants seemed to believe that even employees who were not able to attend STC India conference events benefitted from the learning that took place there. Riya, who does not get funding to go every year, observed that even when she wasn’t able to attend she depended

“indirectly...on those conferences because I know our colleagues attend those and then if they realize that there were some people who missed out on that we generally have knowledge sharing sessions within teams then, so even though I have not attended these conferences on my own I still get that information from others.” Sampoorna, an STC member, also reported that she could rely on her colleagues at work to share what they learned at conferences. This process of knowledge sharing suggests that the STC India has the ability to improve expertise and credibility among practitioners beyond the reach of its membership because of the way its members and attendees are likely to share their learning with their colleagues. This process benefits the field as a whole by strengthening the knowledge base of the entire community. It benefits employers whose workers have access to more learning and practitioners who are able to stay up to date on the latest training even when they are unable to attend. The STC India’s ability to strengthen the professional legitimacy of practitioners even outside of its organization represents one of its strongest mechanisms of building the legitimacy of TPC in India.

Networking

Though in many cases it seems that STC India and employers have strong shared goals in training practitioners, many women also valued STC India events because it gave them the opportunity to meet others in the field. These connections offered them a network of people who might mentor them, connect them to new ideas, or hire them into different roles, which works as a strong individual tactic which practitioners can leverage to improve their situation. Though Zara isn’t technically an STC member, she attends many STC India events. She finds her relationship to the STC chapter to be valuable because it allows her to “meet a lot of people” and expand her contacts. She described that these opportunities help her “because people from different organizations, they have different processes in place, they have different techniques in place....[T]he knowledge sharing thing is really great in this STC.”

Others explained that their affiliation offers them a chance to network that is valuable to their career prospects. Sampoorna, a relatively new practitioner, reported using her STC chapter network to gain access to information about which companies had good reputations and which ones she would not like to work for. Further, these networks gave her access to information about open positions from managers and senior managers. Yana confirmed that during her 12 years in the field, being connected to other STC members help her know what job opportunities were available. Further, she added that such community membership provided her with the ability to know what trends were important in the field, which allowed her to leverage her STC India contacts more strategically.

Though the field more broadly might negotiate increased power and legitimacy as the field begins to collectively gain social value (Savage, 2003), women are able to strengthen their own relationship to power and legitimacy as their own skill set is valued and understood by the community around them. In this way, not only does the field benefit from the professionalizing forces that the STC India chapter brings to the group collectively, but also individual women benefit as they are able to showcase their own value and see a career trajectory for themselves over time through these gatherings. The data suggests that when women are given access to resources rather than treated as “surplus” in a system that prioritizes marketability, the entire field benefits from collective improvements in legitimacy which demonstrates the often-overlooked power held by the individuals Mohanty (1984) refers to as the “silenced center” (p. 269).

Voicing Concerns

Relevance

Though many practitioners reported strong positives around the professional growth afforded them in their affiliation with the STC India chapter, not everyone agreed. After seven

years in the field, Samaya expressed concern that only about half of the information shared at STC India conferences was helpful in knowing what was going on with the industry and the rest was mostly common knowledge. She also observed that though the network associated with the STC India might be helpful for practitioners looking for a new job, it was not relevant to her own situation as a more experienced practitioner. Another participant revealed that she didn't like the STC India. She didn't feel that its members or leaders were knowledgeable enough to help her progress in her career. She attributed this to the small size of the community and observed that many members of the leadership had been in the industry for fifteen or twenty years and that the information they were sharing was no longer adding value to her professional development. In all, she did not like to attend because "the kind of knowledge that floats around..[is] very basic, and I don't want to be part of that."

A number of participants also suggested that practitioners with extensive experience lacked opportunities for career growth, and at times felt it was more difficult for them to find work. Maya, who is over the age of 40, explained that "It is harder for older women to be hired on the financial path, because they're willing to pay a certain amount for salary...but they have a lot of people in the 25-40 age group but they're happy with five to six years of experience but they don't value 12-15 years of experience." These concerns, as well as concerns about relevancy of the STC India training opportunities, came from women who had been working in the field for more than ten years, suggesting that while the STC India may be a strong force in professionalizing practitioners who are early in their career, such training and professionalization has not managed to reach more seasoned workers. These factors point to concerns that organizational power benefits younger workers and disproportionately harms older ones. These findings are supported by Chapter 5, in which participants point to age as a significant factor in their work in relation to issues such as pay, promotion, and feeling valued at work.

Travel Constraints

The feminist design of this survey meant that participants were able to share their own concerns within the interviews, even if those concerns were not explicitly asked about in the interview. In one such case, the open-ended interview format of this study allowed participants to raise concerns about STC India events beyond what was asked in the interview questions. When asked whether they participated in the STC India chapter, 10 of 46 women brought up having difficulty attending STC events due to cost, time, or distance issues even though study question never directly asked about barriers to their attendance. Though issues related to cost, time, and distance are not specifically gendered, they occur as intersectional factors which are often related to family responsibilities, motherhood, class issues, or cultural issues. Eight out of the 10 women who brought up concerns about travel were married and all had children. The challenges these women face are an example of what Crenshaw (1989) meant when she pointed out that complex factors such as gender, motherhood, and cultural expectations, can compound in ways that marginalize individuals at the intersection of specific identities. Using an intersectional frame provides a way to understand the barriers women face to accessing events such as the STC India conferences that would not be visible using the frame of a single identity.

These participants felt that being able to participate in STC India events would benefit their careers; however, they felt barred from accessing the professionalization opportunities of the STC India conferences because it was too difficult to travel to the meetings. Anika, who is married with children, stated that she was unable to attend STC conferences due to her pressing schedule. She explained, "I have my work to do. I have...stuff to do before we leave for work and then we commute, then we come to work and we already have a to do list and we come home and we have stuff to do, so its gets hard." Likewise, Padma, who also has children, relayed that she's able to make shorter journeys for nearby events, but when the trip become nine hours of travel by

train it is just too far.

Other participants described feeling unable to travel to these events due to their family obligations. Though Navya recalled attending the entire three day conference when the conference was in her own city, she told us that she tries to “avoid going to other states” because she has a young child at home and her husband travels for his job, too. Mishti, whose children are very young, told us that she is a member of the STC but that she doesn’t attend conferences because her husband is unable to manage the children without her. She does attend sessions in her home city, and imagines she might be more able to attend more events in other cities when the children are older. Riya relayed that an upcoming regional conference was taking place in her city that same month, but that she was already looking for a babysitter to enable her to participate. Though Basanti might have been willing to travel away from her husband and children for professional opportunities, her concerns with the relevance of the organization meant that she would not sacrifice her family time in order to be there.

Some participants came up with tactics to help them stay involved with professional education through the STC India and beyond that better protected their time at home. Pallavi, a practitioner with children, observed that she was only able to attend conferences that take place in her city because it was difficult for her to travel. However, the last time the conference was in her city she was able to both attend and present. Further, she reported that it was much easier for her to participate in professional development online using Facebook groups, blog posts, and newsletters. Likewise, Zara, who has children at home, subscribes to the TWIN newsletter in order to stay up to date when she can’t be physically present.

Moreover, some participants navigated outside the STC India structure to meet their professional development needs. Kalpana, takes courses online to learn about programming or about various tools because she lacks the time to go away to get more education. She explained, “for now, that’s not my priority...I mean I have two kids...on the way to college so I’d rather see

them off and then focus back on myself.” She reported that a conference unrelated to the STC occurs in her city every year where she volunteers because she can do it during her work hours. That way, she can choose to spend her time at home helping “kids with their stuff or you know get involved with them or spend time with them.” Padma’s first employers in the 1990s would not sponsor her STC India membership so she spent rupees from her own pocket to get the books that helped her stay up to date in the field. That strategy worked so well for her that now she’s kept it up. Because she reads as her primary form of professional development, she doesn’t feel like she needs to go to the STC events, which require a lot of time.

Research suggests, and participants confirmed, that women working outside the home in India are often also expected to maintain the home. Further, since the home is seen as women’s primary responsibility, they may be expected to remain close to home even when they leave for work (Amirtham, 2001, p. 42). A long-time STC India member estimated that in 2016, 60% of members of the field were women. This concern about access to the training, networking, and leadership opportunities through the STC India conferences puts women at a significant disadvantage, even though they make up a large percentage of the field. The issue of gender in educational systems is further addressed in Chapter 4, wherein participants described the complexity of juggling family life and financial pressure as factors that limited their formalized educational options as well.

Of the ten participants who volunteered that they were unable to travel for STC India events, nearly all of them reported that the demands of travel were unfairly competing with their home and family responsibilities. One of the strongest opportunities for education and professionalization in the field in India takes place at conferences, both regional and national, which require time and resources outside the regularly scheduled work hours of women in the field. Since obtaining structural legitimacy in a capitalist system often requires women to conform to Euro-Western epistemological structures of knowledge (Lyotard, 1987, Collins,

2002), these barriers to attending the STC India conferences, which serve as a mechanism of education and obtaining structural legitimacy through leadership, put Indian women, particularly those with children, at a professional disadvantage. Even if they are able to access videos of the content from a distance, their voices are silenced as they are unable to ask questions or engage in conference discussions, share their knowledge and build their reputation by speaking at the conference, and lose access to networking opportunities that might help them find positions or be promoted. Further, because these women are less able to speak or serve in leadership at these events due to family constraints, their perspectives and needs are even more likely to be overlooked as structural decisions about the future of the organization may be made without them.

Our participants described a number of ways they are already pushing back against this structural issue which offers some insight into the ways that the STC India might meet the needs of their members with extensive family obligations. Participants routinely suggested that they are more able to read and interact with the information that the chapter puts online and are eager to do so. The chapter already posts the slides for presentations given at conference events, and in 2017 video streams of conference presentations were available online for members to access from home. Additionally, regional conferences seem to offer access for some women, especially when the regional conferences occur during working hours. Further accommodation is needed however, to allow women who are unable to travel to have active voices in the community, rather than being relegated to being consumers of information.

Global Concerns

Though the STC India chapter has brought about many positive change for the field and for members of the chapter, the India chapter still faces some challenges on the international scene. For example, the STC in the United States has many chapters to account for distant geography. India, however, only has one chapter for its large geographical area, creating

challenges in accessibility and leadership. This may further contribute to the issue above, with women being less able to travel the larger distances to attend conferences where leadership meetings are often held. Further, it limits the country to one single leadership body, reducing the number of people who may serve in major leadership opportunities. Since leadership opportunities may be most accessible to men or to women without children who have more spare time or ability to travel, the organization's leadership direction may primarily reflect decisions based on the needs of practitioners with similar concerns to their own. By requiring leadership members to serve a nationwide population, a job requiring travel and time away from home, members of leadership are likely to exist in more powerful positions on the "matrix of domination" meaning that individuals in leadership may share some similar concerns with the whole group, but may not be concerned with other issues facing only members with more limited access to power based on their complex identity markers (Collins, 2002, p. 264). The voices of women with children who make up a large percentage of the field, but may struggle to participate in leadership or to be present at conference events at all, may continue to be silenced when their input would be best positioned to help the organization accommodate other women in similar positions.

Additionally, though the STC chapter in the United States lends its structure and brand to the STC India chapter, the India chapter is legally an independent organization that does not share finances or operations with the organization in the United States which lends structural support. Although this system is largely effective in meeting the needs of both organizations, it also creates challenges in terms of international representation in the U.S. chapter. For example Indian practitioners have been nominated for leadership of the STC in the United States. However, Indian nominations raised legal concerns because leadership in the United States were concerned that an Indian leader would not be subject to laws in the United States, which they thought might open them up to legal issues. These sorts of technicalities mean that while the chapters enjoy

autonomy to meet the needs of their members in each specific country, practitioners in a globalized field are often only able to work with and learn from practitioners local to their own country. Though Indian members were on the ballot in the 2018 election, none were elected to leadership positions in the general leadership (Elections, 2018). This lack of representation of Indian practitioners in a global organization represents a concerning silencing of a large body of practitioners who are impacted by the organizational structure.

Conclusion

The STC India chapter utilizes the structure provided by the STC chapter in the United States to offer a strong mechanism toward continued growth in professionalization, power, and legitimacy to the field in India. In 2016, practitioners who belong to the organization, individuals who do not belong but attend events, and individuals who work with STC India members all have opportunities to benefit from ongoing educational opportunities that the STC India provides at its yearly chapter meeting as well as at regional conferences in its various cities. Further, even members who are unable or disinterested in traveling to events have access to chapter publications such as conference presentations and regular newsletters.

Still, as with many globalized systems, this system perpetuates challenges for many overlooked practitioners who lack access to physical attendance at these conferences. For women who have family responsibilities that keep them from traveling and more experienced professionals who need professional support that is not currently available, benefits surrounding these gatherings such as leadership opportunities or networking time are not accessible. Though many of these practitioners have found ways to further their own development independently, further attention should be given to the needs of these practitioners to bring them into the conversation about strengthening the professionalization opportunities for populations with a diverse set of needs.

CHAPTER 4

LEGITIMACY THROUGH LEARNING

Introduction

When working to expand professional power and legitimacy as a field broadly, an often-named strategy includes developing a set of professional credentials. Practitioners in a given field must then obtain those credentials to be considered a valid professional. In technical and professional communication (TPC) credentialing would keep under-qualified individuals from being hired with only “basic aptitudes or backgrounds in technical subject matter” (Savage, 2003, p. 2). Savage argues that it is not enough to simply like to write or have strong language training. He even goes so far as to argue that practitioners who oppose licensing likely do so because “they would not be able to pass the certification exams or to show the formal credentials that would qualify them” (p. 2).

Though earlier chapters have addressed the educational opportunities professional organizations offer, this chapter seeks to understand formalized educational opportunities that primarily include college degrees or professional certifications and their role in helping practitioners in India professionalize. Further, it discusses the ways practitioners have used their educational opportunities as a tool for accessing better employment, ways practitioners have accessed or subverted the traditional models of education to further their own professional goals, and the ways practitioners have critiqued or improved the educational opportunities available to them. Finally, it illustrates the ways in which practitioners hope educational opportunities in India might grow to further the professional legitimacy of the field and of individual practitioners.

Professional Legitimacy Through Training

Existing literature on TPC in India documents some of the early growth of the field. Like many other fields in the technology sector, demand for technical communicators in India has grown in large part due to the way international companies have begun to open divisions in Indian cities. In India's growing globalized economy, education for these jobs with international companies plays an important role in helping individuals achieve mobility within their class because these jobs often offer high wages relative to India's economy. For this reason, there's a high demand for engineering and writing training in India (Deb, 2011, p. 83). Though critics have been quick to criticize jobs outsourced to India from the United States, "saying that the work was old exploitation dressed up in a new costume," such complaint must be weighed against the wealth that these jobs brought into India that empowered young people to challenge issues such as "caste, class, and gender" (Deb, 2011, p. 8).

Training to be efficient at skills in demand within a global market can also offer workers some access to the structural legitimacy as it is defined by elite members of society and can improve their access to structural power through improved wages, even if they lack decision making power within their organizational structure (Foucault, 1975, Lyotard, 1984). Further, Crenshaw (2015) acknowledges that individuals with often silenced identities are often unable to shift organizational power in their favor, which can make working within the system to improve their circumstances an appealing option even when it contains significant drawbacks.

Interview participants from this study supported the idea that globalized jobs can provide access to forms of social power and but also may exert marginalizing forces on workers. One participant, Kaplana, who came to the field because of her love of language, described professional communicators in her organization as "a privileged bunch" given that they had stable, enjoyable work with access to supportive management, flexible schedules, and a balanced,

manageable workload. Others had concerns about the way their organizations marginalized women with responsibilities at home, treated technical communicators as less valuable than engineers, or created challenges for Indian employees because they were not in the same time zone as international colleagues.

Though the demand for Indian technical writers has grown over the past twenty years along with the tech sector and many professionals have stepped up to fill these roles, higher education has largely failed to cater directly to these professionals. Among professional writers in India, the educational backgrounds which they have developed remain diverse. Prashant and Pandit (2008) observed that degrees among Indian technical communicators included “commerce, English, engineering, science, mathematics, journalism, mass communication, or information systems.” In our 2016 study, participants with degrees in English were most often represented with a master’s degree in literature. Only one participant held a (master’s) degree in Technical Communication which was from a program in the United States. None had undergraduate degrees in technical writing, information design, or rhetoric. This may be because at the time the survey was conducted, no Indian universities were offering academic degrees in these subjects. Instead, skills for professional writing jobs have generally been obtained through employers or at short-term courses by small private institutes. At the time of Prashant and Pandit’s 2008 publishing, group mailing list chatter indicated that such courses at a university level might soon be developed (p. 19). However, these courses have not materialized.

This educational trend in India is reminiscent of TPC practitioners in the United States in 1995. Zimmerman and Muraski (1995) observed that the field in the United States at that time lacked credibility from outsiders. Some of this they credited to the fact that less than 20% of the STC’s members had technical communication degrees. Instead, many had degrees in relevant, but surrounding fields including English, journalism, engineering, or other technical or scientific fields. At that time, the STC attempted to create a certification program that would help fill this

gap, which failed because employers did not support it. To fill the gap, scholars hoped more practitioners would get specific university education in technical communication. However, they also suggested practitioners continue to use professional organizations such as the STC meetings to gain professional skills, read trade journals and use the internet to gather more information, much as Indian practitioners are currently doing.

Although there are no Indian degrees directly related to the field currently available, private institutes have stepped in to fill the role that university degrees often fill in the US. Training through private institutes has come to be the norm in India for technical communication education. Though there is no central database for viewing technical writing institutes that offer private training, I found online evidence of around two dozen such programs through Google searches and scanning forums. WebIndia, a directory site in India, listed 20 certifications from private institutes as well as three single technical communication course offerings from university institutions. The three listed universities do not offer certificates or degrees in technical communications, but rather single, three credit courses for students studying other disciplines (“Technical writing colleges in India,” n.d.).

In their study of Indian managers and technical communicators, Pandit and Talwar (2010) indicated that the field in India has matured and now expects members of the field to have specific training. Of the surveyed managers, 92.9% thought that some form of technical communication education should be a requirement for working in the field in India. This indicates that the field has matured to a place that expects candidates to engage in education before taking a job. Since no university degrees currently exist in India, it also suggests that managers in the field see private training programs and foreign training options as valuable. Still, nearly half of managers (46.2%) thought that training programs should be 500-1000 hours and another 7.7% thought programs should be more than 1000 hours. These numbers suggest that employers expect that training courses should be more exhaustive than the currently available certificates. In fact,

Pandit and Talwar (2010) argue, a program with such a large scope would be easily translated into a full university degree program.

Additionally, 12% of managers preferred candidates with degrees from the United States or United Kingdom and another 40% thought those candidates had better skills for research, analysis, information design, production of technical publications, and linguistics (Pandit & Talwar, 2010). Though this sample size is small enough to need additional clarification, such data may have a range of implications. For example, the survey may point to a need for Indian programs to strengthen training in these areas. However, it may instead point to the way that the globalized workforce has created an atmosphere of cultural imperialism where the educational opportunities available in colonizing countries are considered more legitimate than local models of knowledge sharing, even when local models are sufficient for the needs of local individuals.

Education, Capitalism, Legitimacy, and Power

Globally, scholars have observed that education serves as an intrinsic part of the capitalistic model in which the costs of education are assumed by students and their families, making such training available only to certain populations. Lyotard (1984) states that legitimacy is gained by workers when they are trained to be efficient workers in the capitalistic system. Their position in the system can buy them the ability to be employed in higher paying jobs. However, this structural legitimacy is not equally available to everyone. Individuals with access to higher paying jobs may simply be able to improve their position within the “matrix of domination” which may offer better access to certain kinds of social power. However, even individuals who are able to improve their class status may still find themselves occupying multiple marginalized positions within the matrix of power, with their work primarily benefiting wealthier, whiter members of the matrix (Collins, 2002, p. 264).

Dyer-Witthford (1999) observed that educational opportunities, which can contribute to an improvement in class status, are often sorted by the class individuals are born to and that “those that can pay for entry are trained, sorted, and socialized for the new information economy by increasingly vocational and technical oriented curricula.” Though this marketable training often yields economic success, scholars have observed that these models “stress proficiencies in computer literacy at the expense of critical social analysis” (p. 110). In practice, technical communicators in India are made up of practitioners who already had access to education from the time that they were young and who are able to afford the cost of additional training programs in technical communication. Further, these training programs may train workers to replicate the power structures that sometimes marginalize them or others instead of acting as critical forces able to have constructive social impact on their workplaces and communities.

Foucault (1975) explains that educating students is a way of disciplining them to behave in ways that make students more conforming for life in the workplace. He observes that pedagogy includes three procedures: teaching, acquisition of knowledge, and hierarchical observation. It uses surveillance at its heart to increase the efficiency of learning (p. 175). However, Foucault (1980) later observed that though systems are often set up to seem as though they hold all the power, power never operates exclusively from the top of the hierarchy and instead works from innumerable points. In India, this complex power balance in education remains especially relevant given that no large universities control most of the TPC training options and there is not a strong sense of what students must learn. Instead, smaller organizations offer a variety of training options, giving practitioners a lot of choice in the specifics of their education, leveraging concerns such as cost, time requirements, specialization, etc. in order to get the kind of education they value.

Herndl (1993) also observed alternatives to assuming hierarchical power in educational systems, observing that educational structures do not only create culture by imposing it onto

students. Instead, like other kinds of power structures, education is made up of detailed interaction(s) of day-to-day life (p. 352). This perspective shares power with the learner by observing student agency as a force of resistance. Freire (2000) likewise views education as more complex than teachers handing students capitalistic knowledge and rejects a disciplinary view of education. He advocates for education to become a mechanism for liberation. To do so, he argues, oppressing structures and the educators that work in them must recognize the unjustness facing students in a capitalistic structure so that they might be able to free themselves and their oppressors (p. 56). This model allows resistance to become, as Herndl (1993) observed, a central part of “pedagogy aimed at political and cultural self-consciousness and liberation” (p. 352). In some ways, educational opportunities for technical communicators in India have been shaped by the needs of students themselves. Private institutes offer classes on weekends or in large blocks to suit the needs of students already working full time or who must travel long distances to obtain training. Additionally, such courses are highly focused on obtaining workplace skills which make students marketable, which is the primary reason students sign up for such classes. However, these classes do not incorporate information about challenging capitalistic structures so much as training in adhering to it, meaning that students are more trained to benefit from systems that are sometimes unjust than to free themselves from them.

Seeking Power through Professional Opportunity

The field of TPC has long sought defined areas of expertise, credibility, marketability, and social impact in order to measure its collective power and legitimacy as a profession (Miller, 1979, Savage, 2003). However, individual practitioners also seek to strengthen their relationship to power and legitimacy in their own contexts as individuals. Their individual efforts were evidenced in the way that participants in this study explained that Indian technical communicators

had a variety of reasons for joining the field that allowed them to meet their own personal goals and have credibility in their professional and personal lives.

The most obvious goal was money. Jay, a seasoned practitioner, described that “being a tech writer is lucrative.” Further, other fields, such as journalism and electronic media often draw people with similar interests in language or communication but those careers tend to have longer, more difficult hours, which makes technical communication a relatively better profession for people whose identities require them to balance other responsibilities such as parenting, caring for aging parents, or housekeeping. Though some participants described long commutes to and from workplaces, they often described their work in a positive way because flexible scheduling and work-from-home options mean that they might still be proximal to their home during hours that are most important to them. These options mean that women with family obligations have the ability to earn money while still having time, energy, and presence to be able to attend to their other priorities.

Participants expressed their desire to have their own professional legitimacy in addition to household roles. Some explained that they wanted a career that would allow them to contribute to shaping the world they live in but that didn’t compete with their work in their homes. Orpita observed that it was important to her identity to have a job while she was raising her children, but that it needed to come second to her family: “I didn’t want to sit at home, I wanted to work, so I thought maybe this career would let me manage both things.” Samaya, who is also a parent, warned that this reputation for technical writing as a family-friendly career made it less appropriate for individuals who were really career driven, but a good choice for women “who want to be working[...or] want to be earning good money [with]...a work life balance.” In her opinion, technical writing jobs pay less because they often go to women who have a husband who is the breadwinner. She felt like her salary was sometimes treated as “pocket money” but still found it valuable to work in the field because “you’re still earning, you’ll have a good life.”

Because many participants benefit from having a husband's salary at home, not everyone felt concerned with increasing their salary at all because their relationship to professionalization has more to do with identity than with money. Still, they sought out these jobs because they valued their professional identity.

Other participants acknowledged that they found professional satisfaction and fulfillment in doing work they enjoyed, especially because many of the women who participated explained that they had been pressured to study engineering or software development by their parents. For example, Parijat who completed her degree in engineering stated that “[coding] was too boring. I didn't like it.” Instead of pursuing a job she disliked, she moved into technical writing because she loved to communicate. Kalpuna described disliking her job in law, and being happy to move to technical communication because it satisfied her love of languages.

Feminization and Professionalization

One of the leadership members of the STC India chapter observed that about 80% of the people coming through Indian TPC training programs are women, which puts TPC careers in a unique place to offer women access to power and legitimacy that comes from increased financial stability and autonomy. This increased autonomy remains especially salient because 20 of 49 participants reported that these careers offer them flexibility in their schedules that allows them to meet their personal preferences or cultural norms of being more present with their families and children than they would have in engineering or science fields. Additionally, a few participants described pressure from their parents or in-laws to study coding or science because those careers are more prestigious. They reported finding satisfaction in moving to a TPC career because it interested them and was related to the degrees they had felt pressured to pursue.

University Educations

Participants of this study were asked about their educational background. Of 49 participants, 40 reported having a bachelor's degree or higher. The remaining ten were not asked the question due to time constraints or declined to answer. Of the participants who shared information about their degree, four had bachelor's degrees in English Literature, five had master's degrees in English Literature, and one had a master's degree in Technical Communication which was earned through a program in the United States. The remaining bachelor's degrees were largely scientific in nature: computer science, engineering, biology, chemistry, etc. Master's degrees included training in business, law, engineering, and communication. Many participants said they had not studied technical communication in a university setting because no full degree programs existed in India. Two participants reported that a single TPC course had once been available at Pune University but that that course was no longer available in 2016. Two others mentioned that a single TPC course was still offered at Symbiosis University in 2016.

Some participants with technical backgrounds pointed out ways in which their technical backgrounds helped them find jobs or be successful in jobs they already had. Eshani observed that her degree in engineering gave her a competency in technology that helps her to better understand the products she works within the technology sector. Chanda responded that she'd learned good research skills as a master's student in a scientific field which was useful on the job and that her undergraduate degree in mathematics also helped her grasp the technical parts of the job indirectly because it "helps your brain function in the right manner." Further, her subject matter expertise in science was what opened the door to a technical writing job that she never would have gotten otherwise. Maya said that her computer science background helped her understand the core of the products that she now documents. These practitioners used the education or skills they already had to pivot into a new career which allowed them a way to do

kind of work that they liked to do. Additionally, they developed narratives around their skills that lent them enough credibility that employers were willing to hire them. Once they had done a technical communication job for a while, their experience stood in for education. Their experience helped them to be hired into desirable TPC positions, allowing them to bypass the professional certification requirement that sometimes serves as a gatekeeper into the field. Creatively reframing existing skills in order to participate in a career that better suits their needs or interests represents a strong use of “tactics” that subvert dominant structures of power in ways that meet the needs of individuals (de Certeau, 1984, pp. 1-2).

Other participants observed that their university schooling did not adequately prepare them for the skills they would need as technical communicators. Mukta said that her undergraduate degree in civil engineering was not at all useful to her career as a technical communicator, but her Master’s of Business Administration (MBA) and her certification in technical writing were valuable to her working life. Parijat observed that the IT program she had studied in had not been useful to her as a writer at all. Tanjua felt that her education in chemistry also failed to prepare her for the workforce, but not just because it wasn’t directly applicable to the subject matter. She observed that her education in India prioritized textbook learning, “passing from one standard to another and moving ahead.” She observed that “this world is totally different than what I came from through the school” and that she had a difficult time adjusting to things once she had graduated. She wished she had gotten more practical education instead. These participants had also managed to professionalize as technical communicators without field-specific education, but they recognized that it left them with a lot of catching up to do in the workplace. Instead of feeling prepared to work, they wished that different educational opportunities had been available to them to make the transition into technical communication easier.

General Language Education and Aptitude

Illustrating Savage's (2003) concern about the ways in which practitioners in the field often become employed using a knack for language as their primary credential, many participants reported that their most useful educational training had come from their early years of schooling or their aptitude for writing. Sampoor, who has a degree in engineering, explained that to obtain her technical communication job, she simply needed to pass a test in English writing. She observed that she passed it easily because her college had offered her "good English lessons" which prepared her more than her later education. Heera, who came to the field after working in a series of other professions, observed that her circumstances also offered her the English skills she needed to get hired as a technical writer because she had been educated in a convent school by nuns, her parents had backgrounds in education, and her college offered her language training.

This recurring theme of practitioners taking up the trade due to a gift for language raises concerns about traditionally held ideas about legitimacy and credibility of the field in India because it challenges the need for specific professional identity and training. However, using a gift for language to develop a viable career also represented creative thinking and tactical resistance on the part of the participants. To develop a career around an aptitude they gained in childhood or in college allowed them a way to select a career that was more family friendly or to sidestep their parents' preferences that they pursue scientific or technical careers in order to gain professional credibility when other professional options did not meet their goals. These moves to participate in the field without formal credentials subvert and resist Euro-Western notions of professionalization using de Certeau's (1984) notion of tactics, allowing a broader range of individuals to participate in the field. Further, hooks (1984) observes that this behavior that subverts the structural status quo has the power to change the structure, in this case making the field more accessible to people with a broad range of training.

Sunanda explained that she had a degree in computer applications because “everybody was doing computers so that’s why I took computer education.” She intended to become a software engineer but that didn’t happen because as a young woman she “didn’t know how to apply, where to apply, where to go.” Instead, when she needed to get a job after her father’s death, she looked to writing because of the “flair for writing and a good English sense” that she had since she was a child.

Basanti said that studying French in college was surprisingly useful to her technical communication job because it involved working with language, and “in technical writing that’s a very important part.” Being good with languages was enough to help her make the switch from being a translator to a technical writer when her job security was in jeopardy. Still, she acknowledged that her language aptitude and training were not enough to prepare her for the “computer language” as well as other complex diagrams that could be difficult for her to understand in her current line of work. These practitioners took the pieces of their educational background that suited their needs and aptitudes and spun them into careers that both met their personal needs and offered professional fulfillment. Still, they acknowledged that this method, while feasible in allowing them to transition into the field, left them with gaps in their knowledge that made their work more difficult. Such gaps might have been filled if these practitioners had been given the opportunity to add courses in technical communication into their college programs or if they had taken a private certificate course first.

Private Institutes/ Certification

Prisha, a long-time practitioner, remembered that in the early days of the field in India almost no training was available and nearly everyone learned on the job. However, more recently technical communication has become a “nice area and has developed value for organizations” which has led to the development of courses for technical writing offered by private institutions.

Now she said, when hiring, candidates are beginning to have “certification on technical writing, other than their basic education. So I think people are starting to recognize it as a professional area...[E]ducation is beginning to talk to us professionally.” Prisha’s perspective echoes the sentiment expressed by Indian managers who, eight years prior believed that technical communicators should be required to have some kind of training specific to the industry (Pandit & Talwar, 2010). The lack of formal educational training has not made significant progress toward improving in recent years.

In addition to having few options for university courses, participants often reported not knowing about the field of technical communication until after they had graduated with a degree or (or two) which made seeking certification through a shorter, private option a natural choice for people wanting to enter the field without incurring more years of schooling or associated cost. One participant with experience in teaching training courses in technical communication observed that students seeking certification had diverse backgrounds. “Most [students] are graduates already. Most have arts or science. Most have non-scientific backgrounds but we have engineer writers also. Some people also choose it as a career change so they...were working as journalists and now they are in technical writing.”

One participant described taking a training course that lasted about three months, two hours a day, totaling eight hours a week. Weekend times were available for students already working in the field or in other fields. Two others mentioned a six month course online. Another described taking a course that lasted for an entire year. Samaya, who originally studied in the sciences, explained that these private institutes offer something important to people making a career change into TPC. She said she chose a private institute based on factors including cost and time required, choosing a lesser-known program that was less expensive. She reported her strategy to be successful: “ I completed the course and...that’s how I got into this profession.” Tanuja, who transitioned to the field from a scientific profession, also wanted to find a program

that wouldn't take too long because she felt she already had a strong grasp of English which she had already gained from "many years" of school and college days. Still, she invested a year in a training program which helped her obtain her first job in the field.

Vedika, who already had a master's degree in literature, described her training experience as a gateway to a more stable job. At the suggestion of a friend she signed up for a course with a private institute. There, she completed training and completed two projects with supervision from the institute. That training was enough to get her a job with a company based in the United States. Basanti, who has a degree in French, also wanted to find a job with more stability than her work in translation. She took a course through a three month certification, which allowed her to move to a position as a lead information developer. Others took their courses online. Orpita said that though her engineering degree was helpful, her online certification was more useful in learning to grasp the "core capabilities that a person looks for in a technical communicator." This course allowed her to move away from her career as a software developer and into a career that would allow her to prioritize her daughter.

Some reported taking courses with particularly short volumes of classroom time. Anika, who holds a degree in the humanities, reported that she took a ten month long course that consisted of "precisely three days" (24 classroom hours) of training and the rest of the training occurred on the job. In her estimation, this was a "brilliant experience because we got to work on real life projects while still being students, you know. We had the backing [of the institute] if something went wrong...but at the same time you get to learn what to do at a job rather than doing a pure class." Tanuja, who also holds a master's degree in a scientific field, also saw benefit in this model saying that she was given the opportunity to work under her teacher on projects as a trainee so is a "win-win situation." Class members were "made to work on real life projects so that was a plus point."

When asked whether she believed university courses to have more credibility than private institutions, Devayani, a practitioner with a master's degree and a certification, said no. "In India you don't have a lot of options so most people go for on the job training." This type of insight came about as a result of open-ended question asking during the study, as part of its feminist design. The open-endedness of these interviews helped strengthen the validity of the study by avoiding a disproportionate emphasis on university models of education more common in the United States. Participant attitudes toward alternative methods of training were so common they became a centrally featured part of the interviews and revealed a number of mechanisms for gaining skill in the field outside traditional structures.

However, Hansika, who completed a ten month course, with nearly the entire time spent working as an intern, offered a different perspective, saying that certificates lacked the credibility of university degrees, especially in a globalized field. She argued that when competing for jobs against workers in the United States or in the United Kingdom, even with similar levels of experience, they would not be treated the same. "I think education is part of that." She said that practitioners in other countries have "graduation or post-graduation in technical communication...We don't have that, so you have a big advantage there."

Problems with the Current Educational System

Basanti, who completed a three month certificate course, observed that her place of work often hires people with certificates from a training course that she viewed as too expensive, and provides an education that is "very, very basic." She observed that the assignments those students were asked to complete were not technical enough. She hoped that people in positions of structural power, especially those that conduct training, would take responsibility for "growing the whole community" but she "just doesn't see that happening." She hoped that newcomers to the field would figure out what needs to be done and what more students need to be trained on.

Hansika, who told us that her training only included three days of classroom instruction, stated that technical writers in India would be better “if there were more education surrounding our profession.” To her, that meant including additional programming around the soft skills involved in professional life. She wanted training that would extend to issues of confrontation in the workplace. “How to say feedback, how to receive feedback, not to let your ego get in the way.” Practitioners in India, she said, lacked education about how to solve problems. “[If] you get that, you would do well in any profession.”

Professional Credentials as a Marker of Legitimacy

Similar to the trajectory of Euro-Western practitioners, certification and training have become markers of professional legitimacy for individuals working in India. Even in 2010, education was widely recognized by employers as a central credential in professionalism for Indian practitioners (Pandit & Talwar, 2010) and many of our participants also recognized it as such. In the absence of university training, and with many professionals jumping to technical communication from other fields, the presence of certifications offers a structural option to establish legitimacy in a new career. However, in addition to the concerns around the programs as they currently exist, such programs may act as a barrier for some individuals wishing to join the field. Participants identified time and money as limited resources, especially when they had already invested the money and effort to secure a number of years of college and post-graduate education. To avoid perpetuating an elite class of working women, these institutes will need to use Crenshaw’s (1984) intersectional approach to looking for and addressing barriers that may bar women occupying multiple marginalized positions from accessing educational opportunities. For example, this may require addressing the accessibility of courses to women with less access to money for education or who have family constraints that limit the amount of time they can spend away from home for professional training.

Demand for More Educational Options

Participants were eager for more educational opportunities. Vedika was seeking opportunity for education abroad and Shanaya, who originally studied business, was anxious to take up any kind of language education she could find. She explained, “I’ve heard of master’s for English Literatures and I want to do that. I want to do school. I want to specialize in technical writing.”

In addition, many participants learned to do their jobs mostly on the job or with only 24 hours of classroom instruction, which they often reported to be adequate in helping them be technically able to do their work. For those for whom such brief training was not adequate, information from the STC India conferences or supplemental material often helped bridge the gap. However, participants reported having concerns about their ability to navigate workplace dynamics and wished more training had been available to them to help them manage the challenging interpersonal aspects of work as a professional communicator. Even though many practitioners had completed the bulk of their training in actual workplaces, they still expressed, like Hansika, that they needed “something that would help us handle real life situations” that involved confronting other members of the team.

Though these challenges exist and can be addressed locally within an Indian context, the responsibility of a globalized field requires global researchers, practitioners, and teachers to assess their work to understand the ways in which they might also better reach practitioners in India. Faber and Johnson-Eilola (2013) called on technical communication scholars and educators globally to engage with the task of supporting practitioners in corporate settings in ways that mediate between the interests of capital structures and individuals. They explained,

We are not suggesting that technical communicators turn their backs on their corporate homes. Instead we argue for a more informed and robust discussion within the field about

issues of corporate control, global business practices, the commodification of knowledge, and the value of non-corporate cultures. (p. 230)

Further, working to incorporate the perspectives of practitioners about their educational needs into standard pedagogical practice offers the possibility of education that liberates and offers learners the opportunity to be empowered as legitimate members of their professional communities (Herndl, 1993, Freire, 2000).

Taking Education Global

In 2009, the STC India conference hosted a debate about whether Indian technical writers “need degrees from Western Universities” (Pandit & Talwar, 2010), so the discussion about obtaining education from institutions outside India is not new. However, our data indicates that practitioners in India are rarely going this route. Some indicated that if options were more accessible and affordable, they would be more able to engage in programs in the United States or Europe. This supports the work of Pandit and Talwar which stated that a staggering 45.4% of their survey participants considered taking a career break to complete coursework in the United States or United Kingdom. They raise the valid question, “Why isn’t there an availability of such courses in India?” It also raises the question, “What factors keep them from obtaining the international experience they desire?” The demand for additional training and the accompanying legitimacy is strong, which should lead to more accessible international options for these practitioners. Care should be taken to ensure that educational opportunities are not only made available to those already with high enough class status to afford further training (Dyer-Witford, 1999). Additional research is needed in order to understand what kinds of programs might best suit the needs of Indian practitioners. Efforts must be made to address barriers to education using an intersectional frame to approach the many compounding identity factors that may be faced by Indian practitioners (Crenshaw, 1989). Concerns such as cost, distance, and

scheduling should be considered within the context of the way those concerns might impact individuals occupying multiple marginalized positions.

Opting Online

Hansika, who completed her course in person, said she didn't know too many people who had sought education online, but said she thought it could be useful. However, she'd heard that too many online programs were unnecessarily focused on tools instead of core skills of audience awareness and technical understanding. Her feedback lines up with research in online education which states that online coursework should instead offer strong awareness of audience and purpose, developing and testing prototypes, collaborating with partners, as well as marketing and managing programs (Davis, 2005).

Pandit and Talwar's 2010 research indicates that 63.5% of participants would be willing to participate in education online, suggesting that program administrators running online programs worldwide have an obligation to reach toward practitioners in India in an effort to make courses accessible to them as well. This may mean evaluating tuition structures to account for global economies, engaging with low or no residency options, and engaging in further study to understand the needs of these international students. However, the differences in global economies between the United States and countries such as India can make it difficult to admit international students at reduced tuition rates when US programs are often required to be financially self-sustaining or to bring in income for their programs.

Strengthening Localized Education

Consistent with Hayhoe's (2003) work observing that many practitioners become "accidental" technical communicators, and thus, value academic training less, many of our participants felt that the training they had obtained on the job, in addition to their English language skill, was enough (p. 101). However, studies such as Pandit and Talwar's (2010)

indicate that Indian employers don't agree. Hayhoe suggests that one of the ways for academics to bridge the gap with industry is to engage in collaborative projects which enhances research opportunities and give students and faculty the opportunity to build skills while building goodwill within the community. Further, he suggests involving practitioners in the classroom to expand students' worldview and foster ongoing dialogue between both camps (pp. 110-111).

Collaborative learning is already taking place in private institutes offering certifications in technical writing, where students such as Anika are often given the opportunity to work with clients for the majority of their training hours. Unfortunately, employers and some practitioners seem to feel that the existing training programs don't go far enough. In the absence of university programs that address this need, private training institutes are in an excellent position to expand, continuing to act as a bridge between industry and academic training, while bolstering their offerings to offer students more of the things that they feel they are missing. Further study should be conducted to understand the nature of existing certification programs in India and the needs of the students they serve.

CHAPTER 5

“I AM POLITELY AGGRESSIVE”: INTERACTIONAL POWER AND AGENCY

Breeanne Matheson

Utah State University

Emily January Petersen

Weber State University

Introduction

Technical communicators in India have developed professional and training organizations to increase their broader professional legitimacy. However, individual practitioners often face challenges to their own professional power and legitimacy on an individual level. In these cases, rather than enacting organizational strategies to improve their situational position, individuals must work within the organizational power structures of their workplaces to accomplish their goals. This situation however, is not unique to Indian practitioners. Petersen’s dissertation research centered on the idea that women working as technical communicators in the United States used tactics to counter sexism to improve their legitimacy in the workplace. This chapter acknowledges that Indian practitioners are connected to TPC in Euro-Western contexts in integral ways by seeking to understand the similarities and differences between the workplace challenges faced by each population. Their experiences add to the knowledge we have about what it means to practice TPC in organizations where collaborative, technical, and global knowledge work is performed. The project of investigating TPC in the United States is only part of the story of what it means to practice TPC, and the work of Indian technical communicators is woven within the same global and technological tapestry.

This chapter reports on 49 interviews with Indian women about their problems with agency and authority in the workplace. Results show that they have found ways to claim legitimacy in the face of devaluation and misconceptions, an ongoing concern for TPC practitioners (Petersen, 2017). Their ability to do so can be explained by interactional theories of power. We trace the stories of Indian women in TPC by examining how they claim authority in the workplace.

Interactional Power

Mohanty (1984) argued that scholarship should focus “on uncovering the material and ideological specificities that constitute a particular group of women as ‘powerless’” (p. 338). To do this, scholars must avoid framing women in the Global South as a homogeneous, marginalized average and instead seek to understand the factors and identities that impact their experiences more broadly. Spivak (1999) further challenges the system of binaries that feminist theory can sometimes perpetuate by arguing against the divide between marginalized and dominant, which centers the narrative colonially. Instead, Spivak urges scholars to think of women in the Global South as the “silenced center,” an idea that urges scholars to dig deeper in order to understand the resistance that women enact (p. 269). Further, scholars must resist depicting women in the Global South as victims and seek to understand and highlight the ways in which they autonomously push back against their own marginalization (Mohanty, 1984, p. 335).

In keeping with Mohanty’s (1984) claims that “women ... resist, challenge and subvert the process at various junctures” (p. 345), our work uses a theoretical lens that frames power as transactionally claimed. Schneider (2007) offered a model for interactional power that can be used to create an intersectional feminist frame for understanding the ways in which power is negotiated. Schneider (2007) defined power as an “interactional accomplishment” that can “never

be accomplished once and for all” (p. 196), thus making power something that is shaped through every interaction. She outlined the following four ways in which power can be wielded:

1. Individuals in organizational structures command “interactive and interpretive conventions” to shape the power dynamics in an organization (p. 187) sometimes using “language” or “social interactions” with others to do so (p. 188);
2. Faced with an inability to change organizational practice, individuals make alterations to their own practice to improve their interactions (p. 189);
3. In the face of disagreeable organizational decisions, individuals may meet change with silence (p. 194); and
4. Power cannot be possessed, but it can be “accomplished through access to interactional resources” that make it possible for individuals to have their ideas and claims accepted (p. 196).

Schneider viewed every “communicative interaction” as an opportunity to reproduce or subvert power relations, giving individuals in organizational structures the opportunity to make changes to accomplish their own tasks (p. 196). Adapted to a postcolonial feminist frame, this model for understanding transactional power takes into account the complex identities of individual TPC practitioners. It observes the ways that complex identity factors might influence technical communicators to respond to challenges in a particular way or keep them from responding at all. Further, it focuses on the way that women negotiate power to change their circumstances in ways that are often overlooked in studies of traditional power structures (Mohanty, 1984).

Similarly, de Certeau (1984) highlighted a mechanism for enacting transactional power, observing that members of organizations can wield calculated actions that counter the organizational structure. He called these actions “tactics,” or maneuvers in plain sight that take advantage of opportunities or cracks in the surveillance of power to make changes (pp. 36-37).

He suggested that tactics are often used at opportune moments and therefore create an element of surprise. Such tactics are commonly employed in organizations by marginalized employees.

Recognizing these tactics used by female Indian practitioners provides a way of heeding Mohanty's (1984) call to observe the ways women resist their marginalization.

Workplace Problems Faced by Indian Practitioners

Confirming Ilavarasan's (2006) work on gender equality in the Indian IT workplace, our data shows that most participants did not always see themselves as exploited or harassed because of their gender. Nevertheless, they did report difficulties establishing legitimacy within their organizations. Although some of these stresses were gender-related, many participants acknowledged that those problems were due to intersecting identities and social factors. They pointed to factors including ageism, childcare, gender, leering men, socioeconomic status, family responsibilities, time zone challenges, language proficiency, and technical experience. The complexity of these many factors makes it both impossible and unproductive to identify one exact factor that contributed to a lack of legitimacy. Instead, we highlight the ways in which women subverted marginalizing power structures in order to establish legitimacy in their workplaces.

Gender

Although few women said they experienced outright harassment at work, many raised concerns about the way they were treated at work based on gender-related factors, such as concerns about marital status, issues around managing home responsibilities, and challenges with maternity leave. Others observed that although they had not experienced gender bias themselves, they had witnessed other people experiencing it. Anika, a practitioner and parent, observed that "women are not taken as seriously here ... [I]t's not my personal feelings, but I have seen people face issues." She credited this back to India's patriarchal society, stating that things were hard for

women, especially when they were married or had children. Still, she observed that her workplace experiences were positive and that her own coworkers were accommodating around her schedule, which allowed some flexibility outside of a normal 8 to 5 schedule. Riya, confirmed this, saying that she had never personally faced gender bias either, to which she credited the strict gender policies in her organization. She did, however, report that she had witnessed women on maternity leave being passed over for important projects even though her own maternity leave was uneventful.

Others cited maternity leave as a troubling issue for women. Pari, a mother herself, acknowledged that once individuals go on maternity leave, they very often drop out of the workplace. If they do return, she observed that women were sometimes demoted or their schedules were not allowed to be flexible enough to meet the needs of their families. Anika gave an example of this, telling about a colleague with such strict demands on her at-home role that once she left work, she was required to cook elaborate meals with a “full spread” of bread, curry, rice, and salad. She noted that women face difficulty because they play “dual roles, and they have to be one hundred percent on both things.”

Other participants reported that cultural expectations around marriage impacted their work lives. Manali, who was still completing her certificate program, argued that it was easier for her to make career and education decisions because she wasn't married, as marriage increases the number of family members who would expect to give input about a woman's career. Vedika also used her single status to her advantage; she was able to stay late in the office and “take... [her] work seriously.” Although she noted that this cut into her personal interests, she liked the freedom to work hard because her career defined her and she always wanted to “be independent.”

Contrarily, other participants noted that being single *added* a layer of professional complication, because failing to adhere to the social norm of marriage could cause men to feel uncomfortable interacting with them in the workplace. Additionally, they noted that this deviation

from the social norm could leave people feeling suspicious of the failure to adhere to an “acceptable” way of life. Mukta had been asked why she is still single in job interviews. She said that she wanted to tell her interviewers that the matter was none of their business but she “answer[ed] them politely” instead.

Some participants reported that they pushed against gendered expectations. Vedika, a single participant, observed that although many women have husbands who expect them to put their career after their domestic responsibilities, she planned to put her career first instead. This was important to her because she stated, “I want to achieve things, and I don’t want to just be a mediocre girl.”

Ageism

Although many of our study questions related to gender, some participants challenged our frame, reporting that their age was impacting their work life much more than their gender. Mukta told us that she thought gender diversity was already happening in the IT sector where she works, but that her age kept her from being able to “gel” with her team. She noted that their style of music and clothing was different from hers, making it difficult to fit in. Maya, a senior practitioner, told us that workers between 25 and 40 were highly valued, but that at a certain level of experience, there was less room for growth. She explained that it is more difficult for older women to be hired because older women have higher expectations for salary but that employers did not necessarily value the expertise that comes with a higher level of experience. She believed this to be true not just for women but for anyone working in TPC. Hansika, a practitioner over the age of 35, revealed from her experience that ageism is rampant, especially within U.S.-owned companies. She said that older workers are often laid off, which causes the industry to suffer because it lacks the rich experience that older workers can add to an organization. She hoped that there would be more inclusivity in accommodating people of “all ages and backgrounds.”

Devaluation of Non-Technical Work

Nearly half of participants felt a lack of power and legitimacy in their workplaces due to the way technical workers are valued over non-technical workers. Participants reported that writing work was viewed as unimportant, as the very last step in the product development cycle, and that documentation was sometimes viewed as something that never gets read. This bias led technical writers to feel disrespected or undervalued. Participants told us that their coworkers did not view the documents the technical writers were producing as useful, causing their roles to be overlooked and undervalued. Mahini, who has been at her company for a year and a half, was told by a programmer that “if I didn’t write in code, you wouldn’t have a job. It’s only because I create product that you have a job.” Indira, who does not have a background in IT, observed that technical workers were quick to tell her when she had made an error but less quick to note that they were often the ones who had failed to provide her with the information she had needed to avoid the error. Heera, who was educated in the humanities, noted that although she had strong English skills, which enabled her to find a job, she was sometimes criticized for not being “technically sound.”

The documentation technical communicators create is often a legal requirement before products can be launched. Participants reported that their organizations sometimes viewed it as an unimportant last step. This meant that technical writing work was pushed to the end of a development lifecycle, encouraging the entire organization to treat documentation as a last priority. Basanti reported that this made her department such low priority that developers would not communicate with members of her department until “managers started screaming” and required them to do so.

Globalization

Many women recognized that working for global companies afforded them advantages, such as strong sexual harassment policies and good work/life balance. Others observed the challenges of working in global contexts. Multiple participants shared that because TPC is a newer field in India than in the United States, practitioners in India often had less experience than their U.S. counterparts. Other practitioners observed that a globalized workplace presented challenges based on time zones or distance. Chezzy described a situation in which she was left out of overseas meetings specifically about documentation. Her U.S.-based colleagues defended this choice, saying that because she was in another time zone it was assumed that she did not want to join. She was upset by this exclusion because she worked hard to be present for all meetings relevant to her work. To keep up with meetings in disparate time zones, she worked hours in the morning, afternoon, and again in the evening so that she could be present with teams in India, Ukraine, and the United States.

Navigating Problems Resulting from Complex Factors

In sum, our data showed that Indian women faced a range of challenges in asserting their legitimacy, many of the concerns overlapping and influencing the others. This complexity of intersectional factors is impossible to fully untangle, and we can never know to what extent different contextual factors impact any given participant's workplace experience. Instead of attempting to construct unrealistically simple identities to explain these issues, we seek to understand the tactics participants used to assert legitimacy across a variety of identities and contexts using an intersectional frame (Crenshaw, 1989). By doing so, we take into account the interactional nature of power *and* the importance of multidimensional identities, complex social and cultural factors, and the agency of women in the India.

Legitimacy in Organizational Structures

Interactional Conventions

As Schneider (2007) theorized, “People in organizations use the interactional and interpretive conventions available to them to construct ... the power relations of the organization” (p. 187) and “the social realities of organizational settings are constructed through language use and social interaction among setting participants” (p. 188). Furthermore, Mohanty (1984) warns that women’s access to power cannot be understood when they are framed as “subjects outside of social relations, instead of looking at the way women are constituted as women through these very structures” (p. 353). Thus, using the interactional and interpretive conventions of an organization alongside knowledge of social and cultural boundaries is essential for a practitioner. While participants reported exclusion from meetings and conversations because of assumptions about technical knowledge, such interactions created opportunities for practitioners to use the conventions of the organization and their technical knowledge to change these perceptions. Indian women found ways to overcome exclusion by constructing interactions and claiming power in ways that made sense to them within their cultural frames.

Kalpana, whose educational background is in the humanities, recognized the problem of exclusion because of mistaken assumptions about the knowledge that TPC practitioners have. She said, “[I]f you are not a person with strong technical background, you really have to struggle to get that respect in your team.” Her solution in these situations is to

show them that you know what you’re talking about. You have to make sure that you always research your topic well. You go to an SME with proper background information and do not just expect them to give you everything. So that building of respect takes some time, but once you’ve established that, I think it becomes easier. Then people know that you are not looking to them to spoon feed you everything.

She found that doing thorough research before approaching subject matter experts (SMEs) allowed her to create authority among colleagues. She said the result of her research when she did

have questions, they knew it was “not of ignorance or laziness, but because you genuinely want to know something or are genuinely trying to understand something.” Yana acted similarly, even with a postgraduate degree in computer systems. She said she always does her homework on important product features before attending meetings. She reported, “The lines of communication have become quite easy. I can talk to them, and I’ve made good friends in that process so that has gone a long way for me.” She saw her workplace research as a way of gaining technical knowledge and therefore a place on the team. As Collins (2002) observes, one way of gaining access to institutional power is to learn the language and norms of the institution, even if they remain exclusionary in nature. Participants exemplified this strategy when they spent time studying and reading before approaching other member of their team which helped them be seen as legitimate knowledge creators in their workplaces (p. 271).

While these interactions have allowed women to gain respect and to create the way they want to interact with SMEs, Kalpana has been working with her same team for six years and noted that the process can take years. Further, technical communicators have to initiate the action. This allows agency in difficult situations but also raises questions about the kinds of cross-disciplinary work that can be done so SMEs are prepared to work with writers and are equally as invested in co-creating good working relationships.

Other women reported having technical knowledge and using that to construct more comfortable power relations within their organizations, but they still had to overcome initial misconceptions about their work. Darpan, who has a master’s degree in engineering, explained that SMEs think that “we come with no domain knowledge or [that] we don’t come prepared. ... [However,] when they talk to me, they realize that I have an equal amount of knowledge on par with them, except the fact that we don’t know the intricacies of their core, so they start talking to me.” Once these SMEs realize that she shares some common knowledge and can engage in conversations about their expertise, she described the communication as “totally eased up from

that point onward.” She said this process takes some ten to fifteen minutes in a meeting, where she feels like the relationship is challenging. Once she makes her abilities and knowledge known, often by engaging in jargon, she rebalances the power construct of the situation to be more equal and amicable.

Similarly, Orpita explained that her technical degree and background give her the ability to construct more equal power relations with SMEs, yet that does not prevent her from experiencing the misjudgment that TPC practitioners often face. She noted, “I have seen SMEs having a pretty laid back attitude toward writers, thinking that they’re not sophisticated enough to understand what they do. If they don’t understand my background, they say ‘Do you really know how the software works?’” She has been frustrated by these interactions, but she is also able to use the conventions of software development to prove her knowledge. She remembered, “I recently told someone that I know better than you because you work in silos in a particular scrum, but technical writers work with four or five teams, so I know about four or five features.” Once she establishes her technical experience, she finds that her suggestions are taken more seriously. She isn’t afraid to speak up and let the SMEs know that she is intelligent, experienced, capable, and willing to engage in their areas of expertise.

Another contribution to the devaluation of TPC practitioners is the fact that they are often lone writers. Wamika, who has a technical educational background, said she felt like her managers did not know what to do with her as the only writer, and “people didn’t know what value the writers add, so that was an uphill struggle.” However, she found her niche in product development and knew she had to be the writer for it. “I insisted on getting my own lab [and] it took a long time and justification to convince people that I could ... [but] it was a moment of pride for me.” Wamika later took a break from the company to get experience with some startups, but when she returned to where she had helped to build rapport among SMEs and technical communicators, she noticed that writers still had “challenges to make sure that they got the

visibility that they were working for.” She worked on this problem by connecting “different functions in the organizations to make sure the writers get visibility and respect.” She reported that she now sees developers seeking out writers much earlier in the product development cycle. She boasted, “They want writers working with them. That’s very encouraging.” She saw problems and worked around them, finding ways to reclaim power, meld different organizational functions, and ultimately teach SMEs and writers how to work together and respect each other.

The women we interviewed were rhetorically savvy about using language and interactions with coworkers to manage problems and misconceptions. In one situation, Charvi, a seasoned practitioner, found herself being told to take meeting minutes, a task she did not necessarily see as part of her job. She handled this by smiling and saying, “I have no issues doing it” but making it clear that “anyone can do it.” Her philosophy was to speak up and then “Do it. But tell them this is not the way it has to be. It can be done also that way. You give them another strategy.” She offered other solutions surrounding what she felt was a problem in order to avoid extreme conflict but to also address her concerns, which helped her team spread the work of taking notes to other members. She called it “a diplomatic transition to the ‘no.’”

Tactic: Asserting Technical Skill. Many women observed that they struggled to assert their legitimacy when their workplace structures valued technical workers more than non-technical workers. Many of our participants have educational backgrounds in technical fields, and they were quick to utilize those skills in their interactions with SMEs to demonstrate competency. Wamika, who set up her own testing lab in order to engage in and prove herself in technical work, saw her company decide to staff more writers as a result. Her persistence in constructing power relations within the organization to include people like her resulted in a better environment for her, more jobs for technical communicators, and a company with thriving groups of SMEs and technical communicators working together.

Other participants, especially those with educational backgrounds in language or arts, explained that they were quick to study and learn the technical issues involved in their work by doing research ahead of time. This created interactions with SMEs who were well-informed. Although participants reported that these tactics often required years of investment, they reported positive results, feeling respected and valued by technical team members who may have originally doubted their skill level.

Tactic: Using Constructive Rhetoric to Solve Problems. Like Charvi, who was asked to take notes in meetings instead of rotating the task through all employees, we observed practitioners addressing the ways they felt overlooked or undervalued by pointing out the issue and then offering constructive solutions to the problem. Charvi observed that solution-seeking offered her a “diplomatic transition to the ‘No’” which allowed her to change how notes were taken. Wamika used her communicative skills to connect team members to each other, which in turn grew into constructive, productive workplace relationships. These problem-solving tactics required practitioners to step beyond the writing functions of their job and address problems head-on. The women were proactive about completing these tasks because it improved their workplace experiences overall.

Context Orientation and Design

As Crenshaw (2015) suggests, individuals, especially those occupying marginalized positions, often lack access to enough power to change harmful systems. When workers cannot necessarily change the circumstances of their work or their value in an organization, they can orient themselves to the context by making alterations to their own behavior, working within the structure in ways that feel more comfortable for them. This includes being patient for matters to resolve themselves or for a change in situation to occur. Alternatively, practitioners demonstrated that they could also alter their own habits to attempt to manage workplace issues on their own.

The women we interviewed demonstrated that sometimes doing nothing was their only real option: we observed practitioners spending time observing, practicing patience, and even serving the best interests of the SMEs or the organization without clear payoff. Although these options were frustrating for practitioners, some reported it being their only viable way forward. Chezzy, who works for a global organization, explained, “The best possible tip I would like to give is you have to be immensely patient. You have to ... make them think their convenience matters to us.” She found that one manager was notorious for ignoring the technical writing team, but she and her team made do and found ways to put up with him and continue to get their work done. This situation is not ideal, however. Similarly troubling, Basanti, who has been in the field for over a decade, described a manager who gave her so many responsibilities that it was impossible for her to accomplish them all. She said, “I did not give up. I made sure that I managed everything that he gave me. He was kind of setting me up for a failure, but I did not fail.” Even when she broke her leg and was working from home, she continued to stay apprised of all that was happening and to stay on top of her workload. The result was that her manager told her she was doing a great job. Yet, “when it comes to actually giving the ratings and the performance raises, nothing showed up there.” These stories demonstrate that sometimes power and legitimacy cannot be negotiated satisfactorily, and there is still work to be done in terms of educating SMEs and managers about the value of TPC and the dignity of all workers. Patience may work to help the practitioner to control their own emotions in a difficult situation; however, these situations show that little changed within the organization because of it.

Tanuja, who came to the field because of its reputation for being family friendly, used patience to wait for an “opportunity” to assert tactical change in her organization (de Certeau, 1984, p. 36). She started attending the SME meetings as soon as she began working for the organization. This gave her visibility and allowed her to do research on them. Over time, she found that people were more welcoming to her and they began to understand that she was not just

there to write but also to be part of the team to develop functionality. She reported, “There was a lot of interest that people showed in all those inputs that I gave them, and then without involving me the meetings did not move ahead. So that was a very nice feeling of mine.” She worked within the constraints of the organization, found ways to insert herself and her expertise, and proved herself to be indispensable to the team. Her patience was combined with speaking up and doing research. These efforts paid off because of her willingness to make her work visible as well as being patient.

Designing the interaction with a work team can be formalized as a way of drawing attention to the work of technical communicators. Heera, who works on an international team, reported giving presentations to her team because of their disparate locations. “Since I’m senior in the company, I give trainings on the tools that we are using ... or a literature course about writing: how we go about writing or documenting.” Because of her experience, she used it to orient new workers to the access points of the organization and to make her team stronger, no matter how new or experienced they were. She drew attention to the work of technical writers by actively educating those who were unfamiliar with the profession. Because of her formal trainings to various teams within the organization, she was able to change the feelings surrounding writing work.

Because of the technical orientation of many organizations that employ technical communicators, Anika, whose background is in the humanities, said that as a “technical writer, you kind of take a backseat because what’s being discussed is too granular and technical that you actually cannot put forth any opinion.” She recognized these as planning meetings where her strategy was to “go with the flow” and give input when she could. She tended to explain to colleagues how long her work would take and then work as best she could around deadlines and quality assurance colleagues. This method of altering her own behavior to adapt to a situation where she felt she had little voice appears to be a frustrating one. Though Anika is able to adapt

her behavior to be more accommodating and still meet her deadlines, her ability to give input on projects remains limited, which constrains the extent to which she feels part of a team.

Tactic: Persistence. Other participants reported working hard to compensate for the issues they faced. Basanti observed that in response to a demanding manager, she simply worked hard to maintain an overwhelming workload to prove that she could and that she should be valued. Tanuja took additional opportunities to offer trainings to other members of her organization, an act that showcased her skills and helped people better understand her needs. The persistence and effort of these participants paid off; however, this tactic also lacks sustainability when it poses the risk of burning out or threatening a worker's other responsibilities. Although effective, this tactic also has the potential to marginalize women who have more responsibilities at home. Technical communicators who cannot put in the extra time required to prove their competence because they need to be home to pick up children from childcare or to prepare meals for a family do not have the same kind of access to this method of strengthening their own legitimacy.

Though we observed many ways that allowed women to make changes to their surroundings, in some cases, women had few options beyond waiting for things to change. Chezzy observed that her team found ways to tolerate a manager with unreasonable expectations until the situation changed. Samaya used patience as an opportunity to wait and learn about the workplace contexts so that she was more able to react and make change when an opportunity arose. Although these practitioners sometimes framed patience as a mechanism of making change, their narratives showed that they remained in difficult situations for long periods of time, many which seemed somewhat unsustainable.

Silence as Interactional Accomplishment

Individuals are often complicit in the decision-making of hierarchical structures simply by remaining silent, as “the deafening silence that meets many organizational decisions [or cultures] must also be seen as an interactional accomplishment” (Schneider, 2007, p. 194). However, Mohanty (1984) suggests that there may be “cultural explanations about the passivity” sometimes exhibited by women in the Global South that reveal complex priorities that might not be immediately obvious to researchers (p. 345). When workers accept organizational rules and functions without questioning decisions, they automatically concede the organization power without checks and balances, and may perhaps do so as a way of preserving cultural capital. Further, hierarchical power can steer individuals toward remaining silent and thus, complicit, even when making it appear as though their say matters (p. 194). If silence can serve a mechanism of complicity, then choosing to speak out when silence might be expected is an act of reclaiming power, especially when done so in kairotic and culturally appropriate moments.

Many participants had experience speaking up when they were otherwise expected to remain complicit in the structure of the organization. For example, Charvi felt frustration that the program managers in her organization did not know enough about technical writing to properly support her and her colleagues. She could not get them to listen to her, so she took drastic measures. She scheduled a meeting without an agenda, and once everyone arrived she locked the door and spent time explaining the needs of the writing staff. Praising her thoughtful actions toward making the change she needed, the program managers told her, "Charvi, you are polite." She replied, "No, I am politely aggressive." Like Mukta, who remained polite in the face of inappropriate questioning about her marital status, Charvi understood that maintaining a polite demeanor was important even when deciding *not* to be silent. Similarly, Chezzy, who works for a global organization and who had been left out of meetings because of her time zone, also made an effort to be polite and accommodating in response to exclusion. She directly asked the person

who had excluded her to involve her. She promised to accommodate meetings into her schedule if they would keep her apprised with what was happening.

Politeness poses an interesting challenge in terms of analyzing the way these women claim authority and yet defer to it at the same time within organizations. Part of what is happening is privilege, and as we talked to these women, many of them reminded us that they were privileged and that we were talking to women who did not consider their problems to be monumental compared to other classes of Indian women. According to Radhakrishnan (2009), “professional IT women become especially privileged signifiers and transmitters of a new India. The new kind of respectable Indian femininity they construct is constituted through their gender and class, which allows them to symbolize the rapid changes taking place in India. Such symbolic work is critical for imagining the nation anew” (p. 198). Respectable femininity is enacted by prioritizing at-home responsibilities over career and money; by focusing on motherhood even while having a career, and by viewing promiscuity as unacceptable (p. 198). According to Radhakrishnan’s study, IT organizations are where respectable femininity is “supported, consolidated, and connected” to Indian cultural identity (p. 198). Further, this may be an example of Mohanty’s (1984) claim that behavior that may appear passive to an outside observer may exist within a complex network of priorities and cultural norms (p. 345). This then means that enacting politeness as part of an acceptable and respectable feminine persona in the workplace is another facet of respectable femininity. These women are educated professionals with extensive knowledge and work experience, but they continue to enact traditional Indian identity expectations, including that of being polite and respectful. We heard numerous explanations of how important motherhood, family, appropriateness (especially in dress) were to these women. It seems that politeness is an unarticulated part of respectable femininity for Indian women. Although they told stories about being polite, they did not characterize such actions as expected. However, we posit that such politeness is expected as part of Indian identity and femininity.

Furthermore, respectable femininity can be used to counter silence and create initiatives. For example, Navya, a more experienced practitioner, realized that women needed additional support in her organization; she consequently joined a gender diversity committee in her workplace, using her privilege to be part of a group that would help others. The committee offered mentoring to women by pairing them up with other women who might help them further their professional goals. Their project included reaching out to less-educated women who work in the washrooms/restrooms of their organization. They used their respectable femininity and its attending privileges to offer women in lower socioeconomic positions opportunities for education and professional growth. While respectable femininity doesn't necessarily look "feminist" or completely empowering from a Western perspective, these women used what they knew about their expected identities and channeled that privilege into causes for other women.

Tactic: Politeness. Many participants were quick to point out the ways in which they countered complicity in their own marginalization by speaking up for their needs. However, we conclude from interview data that participants felt the most able to manage the risks around speaking up against organizational structures when they responded with politeness. This finding is consistent with the research of Mackiewicz and Riley (2003), who observed that politeness offers the opportunity to impose our desires on others without making them feel as though their autonomy has been challenged. Further, we noticed that participants sometimes prioritized politeness, even when they did not feel empowered to challenge the situation at hand, because politeness is a valuable tool for maintaining social status and the status quo.

Our research suggests that politeness is highly relevant in Indian contexts. Indira mentioned, based on her experiences working in a global environment, that Indian audiences value politeness more than U.S. audiences. She noted that when communicating with Indian audiences, she was more likely to use "please and thank you and kindly and all that." The women

understood the contextual value of politeness in their workplaces and have learned how to wield their assertions gently in order to save face and prevent conflict.

Tactic: Organizing Toward Change. A few participants reported being involved in workplace groups or clubs that were set up to offer women support or mentorship. Navya had such great success within her organization that her team was able to expand their advocacy to include the women who worked there as cleaners and washroom attendants. From the data, we suggest that these kinds of tactics are most viable when organizations are open to and interested in making broader change. Such organizations already support the use of company resources to meet the needs of employees. Because power within organizations is often exerted strategically, it operates “without regard for externalities, customary practice, workers’ preferences, or the impact of decisions on their households” (Feenberg, 2002, pp. 75-76). This is hierarchical power, which works to “develop and maintain the quiescence of the powerless ... patterns of power and powerlessness can keep issues from arising, grievances from being voiced, and interests from being recognized” (Gaventa, 1982, p. vii). This means that workers attempting to enact broad organizational changes may face resistance, especially if such innovations challenge the status quo. Their efforts may not be recognized or make a difference without the backing of stakeholders wielding hierarchical power. Therefore, such work must often be performed with rights “granted or conferred by the dominant group” (Black and Stone, 2005, p. 245). Such tactics cannot be successful without the support of the dominant power structure, and workers recognize when this is the case and can act accordingly.

Conclusion

The tactics reported by interviewees represent productive ways of understanding how women working in TPC exercise and expand their access to power and legitimacy through interactional resources. Although hierarchical power has strategies for keeping workers in line,

organizational members often wield tactics that seize opportunities to make changes within the structure (de Certeau, 1984). However, power cannot be possessed, but it can be “accomplished through access to interactional resources that allow one to have one’s reality claims accepted” (Schneider, 2007, p. 196). The women we interviewed responded to difficult situations in ways that serve as models for other communities seeking to productively confront organizational challenges. Further, the tactics they used offer an important starting place for study of women working in India, because they highlight the way women working from the silenced center of a global field do the critical work of empowering themselves.

Although Indian women working in TPC reported facing challenges due to gender, age, lack of technical skill, lack of acknowledgement of technical skills, and the complexities of globalization, we found that participants faced these challenges in ways that showcased their ability to negotiate their own power and legitimacy as professionals (see Faber, 2002). The tactics they employed include “soft skills,” such as using polite language in culturally acceptable ways and a more direct sharpening of technical skills and language to bolster power and legitimacy. Other practitioners employed patience to wait out challenging situations which sometimes helped them survive in their workplaces, but often left the individual technical communicator to bear the burden of systems that did not serve them well. Understanding these tactics (and their successes or failures) can provide models for individual technical communicators seeking to improve their legitimacy in the workplace both in India and also in Euro-Western contexts where TPC workers experience similar challenges. Further, observing the ways that individual employees sometimes must bear the weight of organizational challenges is relevant to technical communicators working in management positions who have the ability to make wider structural changes. Additionally, instructors worldwide should be teaching TPC students tactics for establishing legitimacy in various contexts and organizations.

CHAPTER 6

RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

In a globalized field, much work remains to be done to ensure that TPC practitioners are able to participate in the growth of the field's legitimacy. Further, global practitioners have an obligation to ensure that the field remains accessible and viable for women's voices that make up a large percentage of the field but are often silenced, underrepresented, or absent from leadership. This chapter contains recommendations and best practices for the field both in Euro-Western contexts and in India to expand the power and legitimacy of Indian practitioners broadly, with an emphasis on the needs of women that have often gone overlooked. Further, it calls attention to the limits of this study and points out areas which need additional study.

Challenging Patriarchal Norms

Adopting the preexisting structure from the STC organization in the United States offered Indian practitioners a strong, and ready-made mechanism of organizing professionally. The STC structure has provided mechanisms for practitioners to circulate information, attend conferences to share knowledge, and to obtain leadership experience by working to further the professionalization of the community. However, the structure carries existing norms that conform to troublesome patriarchal structures. The existing structure of Euro-Western professional organizations hinder the professionalization of women globally and raise even stronger concerns in relation to Indian women who retain a high degree of responsibility for family life. As long as professional organizations require practitioners to travel long distances and incur high costs in order to attend important networking events and serve in leadership capacities, women with family responsibilities, professionals without the financial support of their workplaces, and other individuals with limitations on their ability to travel will continue to be sidelined or excluded

from professionalizing opportunities. Though it can be difficult to untangle the complex circumstances that make it difficult for some women to participate in professionalization, the needs of these individuals can, and should be viewed using an intersectional frame which will allow the structures to move towards “visibility and inclusion” (Crenshaw, 1989, para. 5). When their concerns can be more effectively understood as compound issues that face only certain subsets of women, those concerns can be specifically named and addressed in new ways.

Responsibility to correct for these issues falls both to STC leadership in the United States, where the structure originated, as well as to leadership in India where the structure has been adapted. Women’s voices should be trusted to lead the charge about what changes are needed and all leadership members should collaborate to implement such changes. Further, Crenshaw (2015) observes that discussing intersectional issues is not enough. Members of leadership and individuals with access to structural power have an obligation to take “concrete action” to make structural resources more accessible (para. 11). This may include policy changes or shifts in operational norms that make the structure more inclusive of individuals who have long been invisible (para. 11). Data from this project suggests that solutions might include increased regional opportunities to attend trainings and participate in leadership, increased information and training available online, and improved understanding about the challenges women are facing in relation to their families and the professional organizations they belong to. Such changes would allow women to more fully participate in the cities they live in or from home, reducing amount of time they would be required to spend away from their family responsibilities. Further, low or no cost options should be considered for women who lack institutional financial support from their employers. Additional research is needed to learn more about the way changes might support women participating in the STC India chapter.

Indian representation in the STC leadership in the United States is also a concern for Indian practitioners. Though Indian candidates have been nominated to the ballot multiple times,

none have been successful in being elected. This lack of Indian representation within the structure of the United States organization means that decisions for the global STC structure continue to be made without the input of Indian voices for the indefinite future. Without global voices present in decision making for a global organization, the STC organization retains a concerning colonial structure.

Extending Education Globally

Research indicates that Indian hiring managers in technical communication value degrees from the United States and Europe and many practitioners reported being interested in such programs (Pandit & Talwar, 2010). However, only one practitioner from our study had gone that route for education. In a globalized field such as this one, program administrators in technical communication have a responsibility to evaluate their programs for accessibility to international students.

Technical communication and other related programs should begin to orient their programs to be increasingly globally focused, making those educational structures available to Indian students who may wish to obtain their education in the United States, in person or through distance learning. Solutions may include creating options to make tuition, travel, or visas more accessible and affordable for students in the Global South. Further including Indian students will require increasing features to accommodate a broad range of time zones, experience levels, and geographical contexts to ensure that the programs are relevant to a diverse body of students. More research is needed to more thoroughly understand the needs and interests of Indian students.

Unfortunately, even when programs are eager to make these changes to be more inclusive, economic barriers often thwart efforts to make programs in the United States accessible to Indian students. With tuitions in the United States on the rise and many programs facing budget cuts, many technical communication programs in the United States are now required to

become financially self-supporting or even to bring in profit from their course offerings, even at public institutions. This tuition-driven model makes the task of scaling tuition to the economies of countries in the Global South is a difficult one without any easy answers. Solutions to these issues are unlikely to be achieved at the program level, but rather may need to be addressed at the level of the university.

Negotiating Transactional Power

Though much professional structural supports exists for Indian practitioners, practitioners still reported the necessity of negotiating power and legitimacy in their workplaces transactionally through their day to day interactions. Many practitioners, especially those who had been working in the field for a long time, had developed excellent skills for improving their transactional relevance, using tactics such as culturally appropriate politeness, providing education and presentations to convey their value, asserting technical capability to demonstrate the value of their skills, or organizing to create change together.

These skills serve important functions in helping individual practitioners push back against marginalizing forces. These tactics may have the ability to improve the visibility of individuals who have long been part of what Spivak called the “silenced center” to improve their workplace standings. This document seeks to share tactical skills such as polite pushback, organizational education, and tools for improving technical competence to other practitioners with similar issues working in the field. Further, these skills are relevant beyond the Indian workplace and should be shared widely among global practitioners who often experience marginalizing forces in relation to a broad range of identity markers. Additionally, the experiences of practitioners who were not able to resist marginalizing forces in their workplaces around issues such as age, gender, or family status must be observed and understood, especially by managers in technical communication. Individuals working in management may have the

ability to negotiate changes for these workers through the organizational structure (Crenshaw, 2015). However, Lorde (2012) explains that to do so, organizational culture must deliberately move past mere tolerance of difference and into a system of interdependency that values and honors different the strengths that come from working in a diverse environment (p. 111). Managers wishing to nurture the skills diverse employees can bring to the table can create institutional support for their employees to receive more training, work to reduce bias in hiring, or contribute to an organizational culture which treats professional communication as valuable work.

Implications for Research

Practitioners and industry leaders in India have a sense that publication and international recognition is a key part of growing the field within India. Further, practitioners indicated that though they had much they wanted to say about their work, it was rare to capture the attention of researchers in academia. One participant explained, “We have worked hard, but have nothing in the literature.” This perspectives suggests that technical communication as a field has significantly overlooked practitioners working in India. For instance, Indian practitioners might be recruited and supported in speaking at conferences in countries where they often collaborate and practitioners in Euro-Western contexts might make a higher priority to participate in conference events in India.

Practitioners in India also indicated that if more research training was available to them, more practitioners would be able to contribute to the literature. This speaks to the need for increased educational opportunity not only for individuals seeking professionalized degrees but also for aspiring research scholars in India. Global research partnerships might grow best as Euro-Western educational programs expand their global reach, welcoming international students and partnering with Indian universities to develop stronger educational networks. Euro-Western researchers doing work in India and abroad have an additional obligation to partner with local

researchers or research organizations to avoid a culture of imperialism, strengthen the validity of research being conducted, and to support researchers in India completing research work of their own.

The experiences of Indian practitioners cannot be assumed to be representative of the practitioners in the Global South more broadly. However, the literature suggests that this deficit of globally-minded scholarship applies to many other regions of the Global South as well (Haas, 2008, Agboka, 2013, Dura, Singhal, & Elias, 2013, Walton, Zrally, & Mugengana, 2015). This deficit leaves much knowledge about the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of these practitioners on the table. Improved collaborative efforts between Euro-Western scholars and global practitioners and scholars should be designed and executed to improve our globalized understanding of the field. Euro-Western organizations might also expand their efforts to include and highlight global practitioners in leadership and event planning.

Implications in the Classroom

With such a large number of participants in this project working in global organizations, it remains clear that cross-cultural training is vital for technical communicators. Technical communication education in the United States has a responsibility to prepare students for a globalized workplace, encouraging students to become professionals who are prepared to work with colleagues internationally and in complex, dynamic work environments. Kynell-Hunt and Savage (2003) suggest that technical communicators do not have to give up being prepared for corporate work in order to improve their global awareness. Instead, they suggest that students be prepared with a more thorough discussion of corporate dynamics, global business practices, and the value of non-traditional workplace environments (pp. 229-230).

To accomplish this outcome, classroom instruction must extend beyond a short unit on global practice and instead ask students to engage with their topics of study with an eye for global

TPC practice and audience. A critical awareness of these complex factors should help students grow into ethical, responsible professionals and colleagues in globalized workplaces. Flower (2003) encourages fostering a classroom ethos of intercultural inquiry, which practices observing differences between communities without becoming polarizing, with an effort to negotiate, but not silence conflict. Instead, she suggests focusing on finding “shared situated knowledge” which can be translated into action as a method of building understanding (p. 64). Starke-Meyerring (2005) suggests that this might be best accomplished by asking students to participate in “open participatory, and networked genres” which will require students to engage with complex cultural contexts as a collaborators rather than as an individual, building trusting partnerships worldwide (p. 479). Instructors might assign students to work on blogs, Wikis, forums, or other global networks. Further, existing assignments can be adapted or shifted to offer students skills for thinking about global audiences by requiring students to complete assignments that serve audiences in different geographical locations, with differing language needs, and centered across different value sets. Students might practice gaining skills for working with globalized colleagues by learning tools for working asynchronously, developing skills for digital collaboration, and through explicit instruction and practice around solving problems in diverse team environments.

Instructors might also help students build global skills by engaging in global partnerships within the classroom which helps students who might not otherwise have access to these experiences. Starke-Meyerring acknowledges that these partnerships can be difficult to build, but that utilizing global campus resources can be a useful way to build connections globally. Further, instructors lacking support on campus can check with professional organizations such as The Council for Programs in Scientific and Technical Communication who can help facilitate new partnerships (p. 495).

Limitations

The qualitative pieces of this research contain semi-structured interviews with 49 participants. Though interviews were conducted until saturation was reached, this study cannot claim to represent the perspectives of Indian practitioners in a statistically significant way. Additional and ongoing research is necessary to understand the complex dynamics at play in such a large field.

Though much time and attention has been given to the task of securing archival documents from the founding years of the STC India chapter, after 19 years, many of these documents, particularly the copies of the first newsletters, were impossible to locate. I collaborated with the STC India leadership as well as with STC leadership members in the United States both by phone and by email and repeatedly found that the relevant documents were not readily in possession of any of those individuals. Further work is needed to locate and analyze these documents for additional contextual information about the early years of STC India.

Areas of Further Study

This project represents only a small slice of the information and knowledge sharing that remains to be completed. Additional information gathered in the original study still will be addressed and published about in the future. Further, to improve the validity of this study, as well as to further this line of inquiry, Dr. Emily Petersen and I conducted a quantitative survey in December 2017 with support of the USU Research and Graduate Studies Dissertation Enhancement Award. That survey included both men and women who are members of the STC India in an effort to expand the lens of this project to understand more about power, legitimacy, and the marginalizing forces faced by practitioners and India. Data from the survey will be forthcoming in additional publications and will clarify, confirm, and perhaps challenge some of

the ideas put forth in this project. Any discrepancies in the data from the two studies may represent a need for additional study.

Further study beyond these two projects is also necessary. In a country as large and diverse in India with such a sizable population of technical communicators, this project cannot be expected to speak for the entire population. Further attention should be given to understand the work of these practitioners, with particular emphasis for populations that were not part of this project such as practitioners without affiliation with the Society for Technical Communication India, individuals working in other geographical areas, and practitioners working in less traditional workplace situations.

Additional study is also needed about the ways in which practitioners in other countries experience their relationship to power and legitimacy, adding to the body of knowledge about the experience of global practitioners. Such work might begin in other countries with high volumes of professionalized TPC practitioners, within non-traditional workplaces in the Global South, and beyond. Scholars have made calls for additional scholarship within Russia which has long prioritized an oral culture of technical communication (Zemliansky & St. Amant, 2013) and China with its growing connection to technical industries in the United States (Ding 2003). Additionally, calls for more studies of non-traditional workplace practice in areas of the Global South have been made by scholars such as Dura, Singhal, and Elias (2013) who have done work to understand reciprocal communicative practices in rural Peru and Walton, Zraly, & Mugengana (2015) have contributed methodological approaches for doing community-based TPC research in Rwanda. Such scholarship in other locations in the Global South is vital to an inclusive field, and identifying future sites of scholarship may require scholars to use broad definitions of TPC that include workplaces that lack traditional forms of structural legitimacy such as educational credentialing or professional organizations.

In cases where such organizations exist, research efforts might best be conducted in partnership with regional professional organizations of technical communicators around the globe which already possess inside knowledge about the strengths and needs of the practitioners they serve. For example, the practitioners serving within the STC India chapter served as an invaluable asset to shaping the parameters of this study and were vital to connecting researchers to important perspectives and viewpoints. However, in communities where such a structure is not available, community organizations such as nonprofits, cooperatives, or advocacy groups might also make valuable research partners for scholars doing globalized work.

Conclusion

Indian women working as TPC practitioners exist within a global knowledge economy, contributing power and legitimacy to the field through their own strategic and tactical efforts. These efforts deserve recognition and offer a wealth of knowledge that should be shared within the technical communication community in India and with practitioners globally. In addition to being able to learn from the practices of these practitioners, professional organizations and academic institutions in Euro-Western contexts must evaluate their own practices to understand the ways in which they might be contributing to structural issues that decenter the voices of Indian professionals.

REFERENCES

- About us. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.stc-india.org/about-us/>
- Agboka, G. Y. (2013). Participatory localization: A social justice approach to navigating unenfranchised/disenfranchised cultural sites. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 22(1), 28-49.
- Allen, J. (1991). Gender issues in technical communication studies: An overview of the implications for the profession, research, and pedagogy. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 5(4), 371-392.
- Amirtham, M. (2011). *Women in India: Negotiating body, reclaiming agency*. Eugene, Oregon: Resource Publication.
- Asia Research Center. (2011). Labour force participation of women in India: some facts, some queries. London: Bhalla, S., & Kaur, R.
- Auten, K. (1999). MilleMentia [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <http://www.stc-india.org/stc-india-annual-conferences/stc-india-1999/>
- Barnum, C. (2001). Education in technical communication: Past, present, India's future? [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <https://www.stc-india.org/stc-india-annual-conferences/stc-india-2001/>
- Black, L. L., & Stone, D. (2005). Expanding the definition of privilege: The concept of social privilege. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 33(4), 243.
- Biswas, N. (2003). The future of technical writing in India [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <https://www.stc-india.org/stc-india-annual-conferences/stc-india-2003/>
- Blyler, N. R. (1998). Research as ideology in professional communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 4(3), 285-313.
- Blyler, N. R. (2004). Critical interpretive research in technical communication: Issues of power and legitimacy. In Kynell-Hunt, T., & Savage, G. J. (Eds.), *Power and legitimacy in technical communication Volume II: Strategies for professional status* (pp. 143-166). Amityville, NY: Baywood.
- Cagle, L., & Tillery, D. (2015). Climate change research across disciplines: The value and uses of multidisciplinary research reviews for technical communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 24(2), 147-163.
- Chatterjee, I. (2012). Feminism, the false consciousness of neoliberal capitalism? Informalization,

- fundamentalism, and women in an Indian city. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 19(6), 790-809.
- Cisco Systems. (1999). Engineering education: Tell me something I don't know [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <http://www.stc-india.org/stc-india-annual-conferences/stc-india-1999/>
- Clark, D. (2004). Is professional writing relevant? A model for action research. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 13(3), 307-323.
- Collins, P. H. (2002). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Routledge.
- Communities. (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.stc.org/communities/>
- Connor, J. J. (1991). History and the study of technical communication in Canada and the United States. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 34(1), 3-6.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research 3e*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: a black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. *Feminism and politics*, 314-343.
- Crenshaw, K. (2015, September 24). Why intersectionality can't wait. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-theory/wp/2015/09/24/why-intersectionality-cant-wait/?utm_term=.78d0e4350343.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. 3rd ed. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Davis, M. T. (2005). Applying technical communication theory to online education. In Cargile Cook, K. & Grant-Davie, K. (Eds.), *Online education: Global questions, local answers* (pp. 15-30). Amityville, NY: Baywood.
- de Certeau, M. (1984). *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Deb, S. (2011). *The beautiful and the damned: A portrait of the new India*. New York: Bond Street Books.
- Ding, D. D. (2003). The emergence of technical communication in China—Yi Jing (I Ching) the budding of a tradition. *Journal of business and technical communication*, 17(3), 319-345.

- Dura, L., Singhal, A., & Elias, E. (2013). Minga Perú's strategy for social change in the Peruvian Amazon: A rhetorical model for participatory, intercultural practice to advance human rights. *Rhetoric, Professional Communication, and Globalization*, 4(1), 33-54.
- Dyer-Witheford, N. (1999). *Cyber-Marx: Cycles and circuits of struggle in high-technology capitalism*. Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Elections. (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.stc.org/wiki/elections-2018/>
- Faber, B. (2002). *Community action and organizational change: Image, narrative, identity*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Faber, B., & Johnson-Eilola, J. (2003). Universities, corporate universities, and the new professionals: Professionalism and the knowledge economy. In Kynell-Hunt, T., & Savage, G. J. (Eds.), *Power and legitimacy in technical communication: The historical and contemporary struggle for professional status Vol. 1* (pp. 135-148). Amityville, NY: Baywood.
- Feenberg, A. (2002). *Transforming technology: A critical theory revisited*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Fernandez-Kelly, P., & Wolf, D. (2001). A dialogue on globalization. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 26(4), 1243-1249.
- Flower, L. (2003). Talking across difference: Intercultural rhetoric and the search for situated knowledge. *Journal of College Composition and Communication*, 55, 38-68.
- Forbes, G., & Forbes, G. H. (1999). *Women in modern India* (Vol. 2). Cambridge University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1975). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *The history of sexuality. Volume one: An introduction*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Bloomsbury.
- Frequently asked questions- Human development index (HDI). (2016). *United Nations Development Programme*. Retrieved from <http://hdr.undp.org/en/faq-page/human-development-index-hdi#t292n61>
- Gaventa, J. (1982). *Power and powerlessness: Quiescence and rebellion in an Appalachian valley*. Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.

- Getto, G., & Amant, K. S. (2015). Designing globally, working locally: Using personas to develop online communication products for international users. *Communication Design Quarterly Review*, 3(1), 24-46.
- Giridharan, J. & Seshadri, P. S. (2002). Wearing different hats: different roles for technical communicators [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <https://www.stc-india.org/stc-india-annual-conferences/stc-india-2002/>
- Gokhale, S. (2001). Developer-writer collaboration [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <https://www.stc-india.org/stc-india-annual-conferences/stc-india-2001/>
- Haas, A. M. (2008). Wampum as hypertext: An American Indian intellectual tradition of multimedia theory and practice. *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, 19(4), 77-100.
- Haas, A. M. (2012). Race, rhetoric, and technology: A case study of decolonial technical communication theory, methodology, and pedagogy. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 26(3), 277-310.
- Haller, C. R. (1997). Revaluating women's work: Report writing in the North Carolina canning clubs, 1912-1916. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 6(3), 281-292.
- Harner, S., & Rich, A. (2005). Trends in undergraduate curriculum in scientific and technical communication programs. *Technical communication*, 52(2), 209-221.
- Henry, P. (1999). Information design for product usability [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <http://www.stc-india.org/stc-india-annual-conferences/stc-india-1999/>.
- Herndl, C. G. (1993). Teaching discourse and reproducing culture: A critique of research and pedagogy in professional and non-academic writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 44(3), 349-363.
- Hayhoe, G. (2003). Inside out/outside in: Transcending barriers that divide the academy and industry. In Kynell-Hunt, T., & Savage, G. J. (Eds), *Power and legitimacy in technical communication: The historical and contemporary struggle for professional status* Vol. 1 (pp. 101-114). Amityville, NY: Baywood.
- hooks, B. (1984). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. London: Pluto Press.
- hooks, B. (2000). *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics*. Pluto Press.
- Hopton, S.B. (2013). If not me, who? Encouraging critical and ethical praxis in technical communication. *connexions international professional communication journal*, 1(1), 65-68.

- Ilavarasan, P. V. (2006). Are opportunities equal for women in the IT workplace? Observations from the Indian software industry. *IEEE Technology and Society Magazine*, 25(4), 43–49.
- India online: E-commerce in emerging markets. (2016, March 5). *The Economist (US)*.
- Kelly, K. (2014). Americans' changing perceptions of Indian cultural identity: An analysis of Indian call centers. In Williams, M. F., & Pimentel, O. (Eds.), *Communicating race, ethnicity, and identity in technical communication* (pp. 135-152). Amityville, NY: Baywood.
- Kynell-Hunt, T. (2003). Status and the technical communicator: Utilitarianism, prestige, and the role of academia in creating our professional persona. In Kynell-Hunt, T., & Savage, G. J. (Eds), *Power and legitimacy in technical communication: The historical and contemporary struggle for professional status Vol. 1*. (pp. 53-69). Amityville, NY: Baywood.
- Kynell-Hunt, T., & Savage, G. J. (2004). *Power and legitimacy in technical communication Volume II: Strategies for professional status*. Amityville, NY: Baywood.
- Locations-future and past. (2017). Retrieved from <https://summit.stc.org/locations/>
- Louis, P. & Crasta, A. (2001). Collaborative documentation for an evolving product [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <https://www.stc-india.org/stc-india-annual-conferences/stc-india-2001/>
- Lorde, A. (2012). *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches*. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press.
- Lyotard, J. F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge* (Vol. 10). U of Minnesota Press.
- Mackiewicz, J., & Riley, K. (2003). The technical editor as diplomat: Linguistic strategies for balancing clarity and politeness. *Technical Communication*, 50(1), 83-94.
- Main conference. (2017). Retrieved from <https://stc-india.org/conferences/2017/agenda-main-conference/>
- Manjeshwar, A. (1999). Time management in technical writing [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <http://www.stc-india.org/stc-india-annual-conferences/stc-india-1999/>
- Malone, E. A. (2015). Women organizers of the first professional associations in technical communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 24(2), 121-146.
- Membership. (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.stc.org/membership/>

- Miller, C. R. (1979). A humanistic rationale for technical writing. *College English*, 40(6), 610–617.
- Miralay, P. (1999). Running a successful documentation consultancy [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <http://www.stc-india.org/stc-india-annual-conferences/stc-india-1999/>
- Mohanty, C. (1984). Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. *Boundary 2*, 13(1), 333-358.
- Nayar, P. (2001). Making collaboration happen [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <https://www.stc-india.org/stc-india-annual-conferences/stc-india-2001/>
- Pandit, M. (1999). Freelancing [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <http://www.stc-india.org/stc-india-annual-conferences/stc-india-1999/>
- Pandit, M. & Talwar, G. (2010, February). Do Indian technical writers need professional courses? *Indus*. Retrieved from <http://indus.stc-india.org/2010/02/do-indian-technical-writers-need-professional-courses/>
- Past presidents. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.stc-india.org/contact-us/past-presidents/>
- Patil, V. (1999). A new system for instructional design [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <http://www.stc-india.org/stc-india-annual-conferences/stc-india-1999/>
- Petersen, E. J. (2014). Redefining the workplace: The professionalization of motherhood through blogging. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 44(3), 277-296.
- Petersen, E. J. (2017). Articulating value amid persistent misconceptions of technical and professional communication in the workplace. *Technical Communication*, 64(3), 210-222.
- Prashant, N. & Pandit, M. (2008). Technical communication and IT outsourcing in India: Past, present, and future. Thatcher, B., & Evia, C. (Eds.), *Outsourcing technical communication: Issues, policies, and practices* (pp. 11-30). New York: Baywood.
- Propen, A., & Schuster M. L. (2008). Making academic work advocacy work: Technologies of power in the public arena. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 22(3), 299-329.
- Radhakrishnan, S. (2009). Professional women, good families: Respectable femininity and the cultural politics of a “New” India. *Qualitative Sociology*, 32(2), 195-212.
- Ravikumar, R. & Venkatesh, P. (2016). Unconscious bias in technical writing [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <http://2016-conference.stc-india.org/agenda-main-conference.php#speakers-tabs2>

- Rose, E., & Walton, R. (2015). From factors to actors: Implications of posthumanism for social justice work. *In Proceedings of the 33rd ACM International Conference on the Design of Communication, SIGDOC 2015*, ACM, article 33.
- Royster, J. J., & Kirsch, G. E. (2012). *Feminist rhetorical practices: New horizons for rhetoric, composition, and literacy studies*. SIU Press.
- Said, E. W. (2012). *Culture and imperialism*. New York: Vintage.
- Sairaj, P.V. (2002). Flipping hats quickly: Managing multiple roles as writers [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <https://www.stc-india.org/stc-india-annual-conferences/stc-india-2002/>
- Sandberg, S. (2013). *Lean in: Women, work, and the will to lead*. New York: Random House.
- Santhanam, R. (1999). Survival of the fittest [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <http://www.stc-india.org/stc-india-annual-conferences/stc-india-1999/>
- Savage, G. J. (2003). Toward professional status in technical communication. In Kynell-Hunt, T., & Savage, G. J. (Eds.), *Power and legitimacy in technical communication: The historical and contemporary struggle for professional status* Vol. 1. (pp. 1-12). Amityville, NY: Baywood.
- Savage, G. & Agboka, G. (2016). Guest editors' introduction to special issue: Professional communication, social justice, and the Global South. *Connexions*. 4(1), 3–17.
- Schneider, B. (2007). Power as interactional accomplishment: An ethnomethodological perspective on the regulation of communicative practice in organizations. In M. Zachry & C. Thralls (Eds.), *Communicative practices in workplaces and the professions: Cultural perspectives on the regulation of discourse and organizations* (pp. 181-199). Amityville, NY: Baywood.
- Singh, K. (2012). *India An Introduction*. Harper Collins.
- Spivak, G.C. (1999). *A critique of postcolonial reason*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Starke-Meyerring, D. (2005). Meeting the challenge of globalization: A framework for global literacies in professional communication programs. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 19(4): 468-499.
- STC India 18th annual conference. (2016). Retrieved from <http://2016-conference.stc-india.org/index.php>

- Sutcliffe, R. J. (1998). Feminizing the professional: The government reports of Flora Annie Steel. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 7(2), 153-173.
- Sutherland, C. M. (2002). Feminist historiography: Research methods in rhetoric. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 32(1), 109-122.
- Table 1: Human development index and its components. (2016). *United Nations Development Programme*. Retrieved from <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries>
- Technical writers of India. (n.d.). About us. Retrieved from <http://twin-india.org/About.html>
- Technical writing colleges in India. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://career.webindia123.com/career/institutes/list_colleges_Institutes.asp?group=225&cat=Technical_Writing_Institutes
- Thatcher, B., & Evia, C. (2008). *Outsourcing technical communication: Issues, policies, and practices*. New York: Baywood.
- Walton, R., Zraly, M., & Mugengana, J. P. (2015). Values and validity: Navigating messiness in a community-based research project in Rwanda. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 24(1), 45-69.
- Whitlam, T. (2002). The blue hat- Usability tester of the software user interface and user manual [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <https://www.stc-india.org/stc-india-annual-conferences/stc-india-2002/>
- Zemliansky, P., & St. Amant, K. (2013). The state of technical communication in the former USSR: A review of literature. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 43(3), 237-260.
- Zimmerman, D. E., & Muraski, M. L. (1995). Reflecting on the technical communicator's image. *Technical Communication*, 42(4), 621-623.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Questions

Though all of these questions were asked to some or all participants, some of these questions and their responses have not been addressed in the scope of this dissertation project. These questions will be addressed in later publications.

Demographic Information

Ask about age, education level, job title, place, marital status, household income, salary

Why did you choose your field and how did you get into this type of work?

Why is your work important to you?

What kinds of stress do you experience because of work? What are the causes of this stress?

Do you enjoy your work? Why or why not?

What makes you “professional”?

Workplace Culture

What kinds of organizational decisions do you make?

What is your working relationship with your manager(s)? Coworkers?

Do you feel valued at work?

Do you manage any projects or employees? What concerns or successes have you had doing this?

What are some of the conflicts you’ve faced at work? How do you handle conflict?

What are some misconceptions about your work?

Have you been treated differently than your colleagues?

Have you ever thought about leaving your job because of gender-related problems?

Do you think that women’s contributions are perceived differently at your workplace?

Do you have any concerns about your workplace?

Gender and Sexual Harassment

Have you ever received any unwelcome sexual advances? What happened? How did you deal with it?

How did your company handle the incident(s)? How was it resolved?

Have you had any sexual harassment training? Does your company offer training?

Have you ever felt bullied or in danger at work?

Unpaid Labor/Pay Gap

If you are comfortable sharing, what is your salary? Do you know how it compares to other employees'?

What kind of work do you perform that isn't compensated or part of your job description?

Role Expectations

How are you expected to behave at work?

Do you feel the pressure of any expectations, particularly tied to your gender?

What is your social role with coworkers? As in, do you have friendships with coworkers outside of work?

Appearance

How do you dress for work? How much time/energy do you spend on preparing yourself to look professional/appropriate for work?

Is there a dress code at your work? How do you enact or resist it?

What role does your age play in your career? How do others respond to your age (or perceived age) at work?

What does a professional look like? (Fitness? Body language? Emotional displays?)

Professional Development/Mentoring

What options for professional development do you have? What prevents you from taking advantage of them?

What kind of support would you like to receive from your workplace?

Who are your role models/mentors at work?

What kind of networking do you do?

Which professional organizations do you participate in? What are the benefits of these to you?

Do you associate with any groups geared toward women in your field?

Work-Life Balance

What kinds of support do you receive from your partner?

What parts of your life must be balanced with work responsibilities?

How do you balance your work and family life?

Does technology help you to balance home and work life?

What is your schedule? Can you control it? Can you describe a typical day or week?

Education

How did your education prepare you for the workplace?

Motherhood/Maternity

What are your experiences with maternity leave? What were your expectations? What actually happened?

How do you feel (or what do you know) about possible future maternity leave?

How does your work affect you in ways as a mother that it doesn't affect non-mothers?

How does motherhood/maternity affect your work?

Appendix B
Interview Participants

Table B.1

Interview Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Certificate	STC Membership	Marital Status	Children
Anek	Unknown	Male	Unknown	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Anika	35+	Female	Yes	Yes	No	Married	Yes
Anwita	Unknown	Female	Yes	Yes	No	Single	No
Basanti	35+	Female	Yes	Yes	No	Married	Yes
Bijal	Under 35	Female	Yes	Yes	Yes	Single	No
Chanda	35+	Female	Yes	No	No	Married	Yes
Charvi	35+	Female	Yes	No	Yes	Married	Yes
Chezzy	Under 35	Female	Yes	Yes	Yes	Married	No
Darpan	35+	Female	Yes	No	Yes	Married	Yes
Devayani	Under 35	Female	Yes	Yes	Yes	Married	No
Durga	Unknown	Female	Unknown	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Eshani	Under 35	Female	Unknown	Yes	Yes	Married	No
Garima	Unknown	Female	Yes	Unknown	Yes	Married	Yes
Hansika	35+	Female	Yes	Yes	Yes	Married	No
Heera	35+	Female	Yes	No	Yes	Married	Yes
Indira	Unknown	Female	Yes	Yes	Yes	Single	No
Ipsa	Unknown	Female	Unknown	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Jay	Unknown	Male	Unknown	No	Yes	Married	Yes
Jharna	Under 35	Female	Yes	Yes	Yes	Married	Yes
Juhi	Unknown	Female	Unknown	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Kalpana	35+	Female	Yes	Yes	Yes	Married	Yes

Mahini	35+	Female	Yes	No	Unknown	Married	Yes
Manali	Unknown	Female	Unknown	Yes	No	Single	No
Maya	35+	Female	Yes	No	Unknown	Single	No
Mishti	35+	Female	Yes	No	Yes	Married	Yes
Mukta	35+	Female	Yes	Yes	Unknown	Single	No
Navya	35+	Female	Yes	No	Yes	Married	Yes
Nishi	Unknown	Female	Unknown	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Orpita	35+	Female	Yes	Yes	Unknown	Married	Yes
Padma	35+	Female	Yes	Yes	No	Unknown	Yes
Pallavi	Under 35	Female	Yes	No	Yes	Married	Yes
Pari	35+	Female	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Married	Yes
Parijat	Under 35	Female	Yes	No	STC	Single	No
Pradhi	Unknown	Female	Yes	Yes	No	Single	No
Prisha	35+	Female	Yes	No	Yes	Married	Yes
Ramani	Unknown	Female	Unknown	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Riya	Under 35	Female	Yes	No	Yes	Married	Yes
Samaya	35+	Female	Yes	Yes	Yes	Married	Yes
Sampoorna	Under 35	Female	Yes	No	Yes	Single	No
Shanaya	35+	Female	Yes	No	Yes	Married	Yes
Sunanda	35+	Female	Yes	No	No	Married	Yes
Tanuja	35+	Female	Yes	Yes	Yes	Married	Yes
Udain	Unknown	Male	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Married	Yes
Uma	Under 35	Female	Yes	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Vedika	Under 35	Female	Yes	No	Yes	Single	No
Wamika	35+	Female	Yes	No	Yes	Married	Yes
Yana	35+	Female	Yes	Unknown	Yes	Married	Yes
Yukti	Unknown	Female	Unknown	Yes	Yes	Married	Yes
Zara	35+	Female	Yes	Yes	Yes	Married	Yes

CURRICULUM VITAE

BREEANNE MATHESON

1472 S. 1100 E. #2 Salt Lake City, UT 84105

breeanne.matheson@gmail.com

801.755.2656

BIOGRAPHY

Breeanne Matheson is a recipient of the 2018 national graduate research award from the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing. She has extensive experience conducting international field research in the Global South and has also conducted local action-research aiming to reduce impacts of domestic violence by strengthening volunteer training. Her dissertation research seeks to understand the strategies employed by technical communicators in India to improve their power and legitimacy as professionals.

She has designed and taught composition and technical writing courses with a focus on social justice, ethics, and technology. Her pedagogy is informed by her research interests which lie at the intersection of technical communication, social change, rhetoric, and power. In addition to writing and teaching, her years of industry employment developing content and digital strategy give her work a pragmatic approach to theory and practice.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Technical Communication and Rhetoric (May 2018)

Utah State University

- Dissertation Title: Technical and professional communication in India: Establishing power and legitimacy
- Major Professor: Dr. Rebecca Walton
- Committee Members: Dr. Keith Grant-Davie, Dr. Jared Colton, Dr. Christine Cooper Rompato, Dr. Peggy Petrzelka

Master of Science, English; Specialization: Technical Writing (2013)

Utah State University

Bachelor of Arts, English; Minor: Communications (2007)

Brigham Young University

PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

Grant-Davie, K., **Matheson B.**, & Stephens, E.J. (2017). How doctoral students discover long-term identities as technical communication scholars. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 47.2, 151–171. DOI 10.1177/0047281617692071.

Keywords: Mentorship, scholarly identity

PEER REVIEWED CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Petersen, E.J., & **Matheson, B.** (2017). Following the research internationally: What we learned about communication design, ethics, and context in India. *Proceedings of the ACM International Conference on the Design of Communication, SIGDOC 2017*.

Keywords: research methods, ethics, cross-cultural research design

Matheson Martin, B. (2016). Broadening our view of audience awareness: Writing for posthuman audiences. *Proceedings of IEEE Professional Communication Conference*.

Keywords: disability studies, post-humanism, audience awareness, accessibility

Petersen, E.J., & **Matheson Martin, B.** (2015). Misuse, play, and disuse: Technical and professional communication's role in understanding and supporting website owners' engagement with Google Analytics. *Proceedings of IEEE International Professional Communication Conference*.

Keywords: analytics, big data, digital content

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Matheson, B. & Petersen, E.J. (2017). "*I am politely aggressive*": *Interactional power and agency in India's technical communication workplaces*. Society for Technical Communication India Annual Conference in Bangalore, India.

Petersen, E.J., & **Matheson, B.** (2017). *Following the research internationally: What we learned about communication design, ethics, and context in India*. ACM International Conference on the Design of Communication in Halifax, Canada.

Matheson, B. (2017, April). *Reducing the privilege footprint: Conducting ethical field research*. Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW) 2017 in Portland, Oregon.

Matheson Martin, B. (2016, October). *Broadening our view of audience awareness: Writing for posthuman audiences*. ProComm 2016, IEEE International Professional Communication Conference in Austin, Texas.

Matheson Martin, B. (2016, April). *Broadening the scope of disability advocacy in technical and professional communication: A mental health perspective*. ATTW 2016 in Houston, Texas.

Petersen, E., & **Matheson Martin, B.** (2015, July). *Misuse, play, and disuse: Technical and professional communication's role in understanding and supporting website owners' engagement with Google Analytics*. ProComm 2015, IEEE International Professional Communication Conference in Limerick, Ireland. Hayhoe Fellow Award Winners.

Stephens, E. & **Matheson Martin, B.** (2015, March). *Rhetoric, Gramsci, and Mormon feminists: Understanding the success of the Ordain Women movement*. Gender and Sexuality in Everyday Life in Pocatello, Idaho.

Matheson Martin, B. (2015, April). "Carry That Weight": *The use of presence in addressing campus rape*. Popular Culture Association/ American Culture Association in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Matheson Martin, B. (2014, November). *BPI and pink slime: Rhetoric of image crisis*. Western States Rhetoric and Literacy Conference in Reno, Nevada.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate Instructor, Utah State University (2013—Present)

English 3400: Professional Writing (for majors) (2015—2017)

- Taught foundational theory and research in the field of technical communication with an emphasis in ethics, diversity, and collaboration.
- Fostered practical communication skills by requiring analysis and creation of technical documents across a variety of genres and media.

English 3410: Professional Writing Technologies (2016)

- Instructed technology specific skills in Adobe Photoshop, InDesign, code editors, and Camtasia, helping students develop portfolio-ready documents.
- Emphasized practice in problem solving, finding resources, and working within peer communities to learn new skills and complete major tasks.

English 2010: Intermediate Writing: Research Writing in a Persuasive Mode (face to face and online formats) (2014—Present)

- Introduced effective writing, research, and argumentation techniques to understand and illuminate social issues.
- Facilitated production of digital publications in student teams, fostering collaborative skills and producing a portfolio of published work.

English 1010: Introduction to Writing: Academic Prose (2013—2014)

- Taught writing and reading as a form of inquiry, learning, and critical thinking, emphasizing the relationships between language, knowledge, and power.
- Created opportunities to write multiple genres, allowing students to develop their skills in creating texts for diverse audiences.

Writing Center Tutor, Utah State University Writing Center (2013)

- Met with students in one-on-one settings using writing center best practices to foster brainstorming, facilitate the writing process, or encourage revision.

AWARDS

Graduate Instructorship Utah State University (2013—2017)

\$50,300 stipend (total over seven semesters) plus full tuition award

Emergent Researcher Award

Conference on College Composition and Communication (2018) **\$10,000**

ATTW Graduate Research Award

Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (2018) **\$750**

Dissertation Enhancement Award

Utah State University Research and Graduate Studies (2017) **\$7,000**

Graduate Enhancement Award

Utah State University Research and Graduate Studies (2017) **\$4,000**

Departmental Scholarship

Utah State University English Department (2017) **\$900**

Graduate Scholarship (Research Methods Workshop)

Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (2017) **\$300**

Study Abroad Funding

Utah State University Department of English (2017) **\$2,500**

Dissertation Support Scholarship

Utah State University College of Humanities and Social Sciences (2016) **\$1,000**

Book Scholarship

Utah State University English Department (2016) **\$405**

Hayhoe Fellow Award Winner, Best Graduate Student Paper (international award)

IEEE International Professional Communication Conference (2015) **\$180** Registration Waiver

Graduate Researcher of the Year (University Award)

Utah State University English Department (2015)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Participant, Research Methods Workshop

Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (2017)

Participant, Getting Started as a Successful Proposal Writer Seminar

Utah State University (2016)

Participant, Research Network Forum

Conference on College Composition and Communication (2016)

Online Teaching Certification Program

Utah State University (2015)

Attendee, Council on Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication

Logan, UT (2015)

Allies on Campus Training

Utah State University (2014)

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE

Reviewer

ProComm, IEEE International Professional Communication Conference (2017)

Guest Lecturer, Student Organization for Society and Natural Resources (SOSNR)

Utah State University (2017)

Panel Moderator

Association of Teachers of Technical Writing, Portland, Oregon (2017)

Founding Committee Member, Digital Folklore Project

Utah State University, Digital Trend of the Year (2014)

Panel Member, Graduate School Mentorship

One-Day Event, Utah State University Honors Program (2013)

Panel Moderator

Association of Teachers of Technical Writing, Houston, TX (2016)

Volunteer Member, Local Host Committee

Council on Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication Annual Conference (2016)

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Crisis Line Volunteer

Utah Domestic Violence Coalition (2015—Present)

- Answer calls on the state domestic violence crisis line, offering support and resources to victims of domestic violence.

Big Sister

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Utah (2013—Present)

- Meet regularly with a teenager in the community as a one-on-one peer mentor.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Content Strategy/Information Design

Inq Inc. (2012—2017)

- Ran private consultancy for clients across industries, developing content strategies for digital spaces, social media, and internal communication.
- Conducted audits, provided training, and interpreted data.

Email Strategy Manager

Franklin Covey Organizational Products (2012—2013)

- Directed communication and design strategy for email campaigns, including promotions, product placement, and messaging. Grew revenue 40% year over year.
- Oversaw planning for email sends and growth for three sites totaling 20-30 monthly sends to over a million database subscribers.

Content Manager

Waterford Institute (2012)

- Managed content marketing strategy (including a team of independent writers), website development, and remarketing.
- Responsible for search engine optimization campaigns showing measurable ranking gains and a 45% increase in organic traffic. Ownership of paid search campaigns, reducing cost per click by 11% and increasing click through rates by 40%.

Account Executive / SEO Analyst

SEO.com (2009—2012)

- Managed \$1.5M in yearly client revenue, coordinating between departments to ensure client success. Maintained close client contact to meet the needs of clients.
- Performed keyword research and competitive analysis for clients, created high quality copy and video and built links to improve rankings.

Marketing Manager

Microbial-Vac Systems (2007—2009)

- Directed marketing strategy including nationwide event planning, digital marketing strategy, website design, video production, document creation, and public relations.