

## RODNEY BENSON

### WHAT IS NEWS DIVERSITY AND HOW DO WE GET IT?

#### LESSONS FROM COMPARING FRENCH AND AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COVERAGE

Organizations such as Unity: Journalists of Color, Inc. have defined diversity in terms of greater news coverage of racial identity groups and greater employment of reporters who “belong” to such groups. The argument is made that “racial” identity is important because it is a “crude proxy” for ideas. This justification implies that what ultimately matters are the ideas. But if this is so, why not focus on the ideas themselves? And surely a range of other identities also matter.

In this paper, I thus suggest how we might go about directly measuring diversity of news content, and I challenge the notion that hiring more reporters of color is the best way to increase content diversity, or what sociologist Herbert Gans has called “multiperspectival news.” I base my claims on a comparative study of French and U.S. immigration reporting over the past four decades, involving both extensive interviews with journalists and a large quantitative content analysis of news coverage.

How do we measure diversity of news content? Both diverse viewpoints and voices are important. For any given issue, there are a range of frames that answer the following question: What kind of problem is this? Thus, to take the example of the immigration issue, my research identifies ten problem frames that capture the range of debate from far left to far right, three “victim” frames (global economic injustice, humanitarian, racism/xenophobia), three “hero” frames (cultural diversity, integration, and good workers), and four “threat” frames (job threat, public order threat, fiscal threat, and national culture threat). Diversity of voices is linked to institutional diversity. Contemporary complex societies are composed of distinct professional/occupational fields, each of which are governed by their own distinct ways of thinking or understanding the world, for example, the fields (and associated sub-fields) of religion, academia, the arts, non-profit associations, business, and the various branches of government. News content is thus diverse when it incorporates the widest possible range of frames (issue perspectives) and fields (speaker locations); this is an ideal that goes well beyond the usual goal of balancing “two sides.”

What contributes, then, to greater or lesser news content diversity? First of all, does race/ethnicity of the reporter make a difference? In my analysis of *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, and *Washington Post* coverage of immigration from the 1970s through 2006, reporters with Hispanic surnames accounted for around 10 percent of all bylines. At these three papers, I did find a weak correlation between Spanish-language surname byline and increased frame and field diversity. However, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the newspaper that offered the most “multiperspectival” coverage in my U.S. sample, had no Spanish-language surname bylines. Likewise, French newspapers, which employ virtually no North-African origin reporters, were significantly more multiperspectival than U.S. newspapers. This does not mean that it’s not a worthwhile policy to hire more journalists of diverse racial/ethnic origins; it just means that such a policy is not likely to significantly increase content diversity.

Rather than the race/ethnicity of the individual reporter, my research finds that structural factors matter far more. I find that the most “diverse” news comes

from media outlets which rely least on advertising and whose audiences are highest in “cultural capital” (advanced education, and occupations in the arts, education, and liberal professions such as law, architecture, and medicine): notably, *Libération* and *Le Monde* in France, and the *Christian Science Monitor* and to a lesser extent the *New York Times* in the U.S. All of these more multiperspectival newspapers also have ownership models that help check excessive commercial influences: partial or majority journalist ownership at *Libération* and *Le Monde*, church ownership of the *Monitor*, and the *Times*’ family “trust.”

At the same time, I also find that the French press as a whole, regardless of level of advertising or audience composition, offers greater content diversity than the U.S. press. I attribute this difference in part to the broader ideological spectrum encouraged by French political tradition, to France’s contemporary multi-party political system, and to government policies that discourage publicly-traded companies from owning newspapers and that provide subsidies to explicitly promote ideological diversity in the press. The harsh reality is that persons of color and their specific concerns are largely ignored or covered in narrow ideological terms because they are disproportionately poor; thus, they are less likely to be part of the affluent audience that commercial media companies and their advertiser sponsors care about reaching. Without changing the economic model that drives the entire U.S. media industry – stock market profit maximization pressures and advertiser funding – it is unlikely that most mainstream media will offer significant content diversity. French government policies help compensate for these negative economic effects on content diversity.

I also find that content diversity strongly correlates with a particular “form” of news presentation. In France, news is organized as a “debate ensemble” in which the top news of the day is approached from multiple angles and journalistic genres (breaking news, analyses, historical context articles, profiles, editorials, transcripts of interviews with experts and activists, etc.). In contrast, in the United States, news and opinion genres tend to be strictly separated, and most breaking news is presented in the form of “dramatic narratives” focused on the personal struggles of one or more individuals. Whereas personalized narrative-driven articles restrict room for the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas, the debate ensemble format is explicitly oriented toward facilitating wide-ranging public deliberation. To adopt Glasser, Awad and Kim’s terminology, the debate ensemble format makes possible diversity of content within newsrooms, as well as across newsrooms, and it is not exclusive to France. Indeed, the (now defunct) online *New York Times* “Extra” version was designed in many ways as a debate ensemble, providing links from news articles to a range of alternative media, blogs, and non-media produced web content. Website links provide one way to link diverse alternative media to wider public debates; another way, as is common in France, is for the public television and radio stations to provide daily “press reviews” which survey the top headlines and editorials of a broad range of ideologically diverse newspapers and magazines.

In sum, my research on French and U.S. coverage of immigration shows that diverse news content has little to do with the racial or other personal characteristics of reporters. Genuine content diversity is achieved by checking excessive commercial influences (whether through governmental policies, or alternative ownership models) that artificially narrow public debate, and by journalistic practices that go beyond narrative to incorporate multiple genres of writing from non-journalists as well as journalists.

**CHERIAN GEORGE**  
THE LIBERAL MODEL AS A TOOL OF AUTHORITARIANISM:  
THE CASE OF SINGAPORE

The diffusion of the Anglo-American or Liberal media model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004) across the globe is generally assumed to occur hand in hand with democratisation. Key elements of that model have an affinity with democratic ideals. In particular, the liberal notion of professionalism – with its emphasis on autonomy in editorial decision making, and norms that link horizontally across the profession – can act as a bulwark against authoritarian governments' impulse to control the media. The liberal model is also characterised by reliance on market mechanisms and dominance of commercial media, which, in the orthodox view, are the best habitat for rearing independent, watchdog journalism.

However, the liberal model is not without its internal contradictions; not all its features support democratisation in all its senses (e.g., Curran, 2002). Astute authoritarian governments may be able to exploit certain aspects of this model to silence more unruly forms of journalism and thus entrench themselves. Singapore offers an intriguing case study of this nexus linking the rise of the liberal model, the decline of diversity in journalism, and the strengthening of hegemony.

On the surface, Singapore appears to conform to conventional wisdom. The authoritarian People's Action Party (PAP) government has had well-publicised run-ins with *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Economist*, *Time* and other major Western news organisations that, for many, embody the liberal model at its best. This, however, is only part of the story. The PAP's remarkable resilience (it has been in power continuously since 1959) has also depended on successful subordination of the country's own newspapers. And, this was achieved not by crushing the liberal model entirely, but by encouraging and harnessing its less-than-democratic tendencies.

Two such features were especially compatible with the PAP's brand of authoritarianism. First, there is professional journalism's ritualistic application of the principle of objectivity, which has long been understood to have a bias for the status quo even in liberal democratic societies (e.g., Gans, 1979). Transplanted to a setting with extremely limited political pluralism, professional objectivity has an even greater tendency to turn journalism into an echo chamber for the powers that be.

Second, liberal journalism's business model – entering into a supposedly win-win-win marriage with profit-oriented investors and advertisers – handed the PAP additional leverage in its effort to create a more compliant press. The global trend towards industrialisation and commercialisation of the press suited the PAP's hegemonic purpose. It introduced a new press law in 1974 that legitimised the public listed company as the proper ownership structure for daily newspapers. Newspapers could no longer be controlled by individuals or families. By spreading ownership thinly across the stock market, shareholders' personal motivations would be reduced to their lowest common denominator: the increasing of shareholder value. Company directors had a fiduciary duty to protect shareholders' interest, ahead of political principles. As long as the PAP

continued its pro-business policies, there would be a confluence between the PAP's political interests and newspaper companies' business interests.

Alternative forms of journalism were forcibly marginalised. These included radical traditions within the vernacular press – a historical phenomenon generally ignored by most discussions about Asian journalism. According to the PAP, Chinese-language and Malay-language journalism in Singapore embodies the respect for authority and the premium on social harmony emphasised in “Asian values” (Yew, 2000). Such ahistorical claims are made mainly with a view to chiding the English-language press, and by extension the Western media. In fact, the non-English press in Singapore had a strong tradition of adversarial journalism. For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, until the PAP fully entrenched itself as a hegemonic regime, it was not uncommon for vernacular newspapers to express radical critiques of prevailing power centres.

Contentious journalism was an integral part of Singapore's nationalist awakening in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Hardly a marginal phenomenon, its diverse practitioners staked their claims in the middle of the public square, helping to embolden and empower Singapore's various ethnic communities. Many were not yet restrained by the mantle of objective disinterest that professional journalists were in the process of adopting under the influence of the liberal model. Instead, they were simultaneously activists, public intellectuals and journalists. Before independence, such journalists and their readers constituted a powerful force in the anti-colonial movement.

After independence, the same fervour was inconveniently directed at PAP policies. The PAP's development strategy was to build an independent republic on multinational investments, multiculturalism, bureaucratic rationality and strong government – and with a resolve that had no place for the ideological diversity that journalism had been a vehicle for. The PAP used its significant discretionary and arbitrary powers – inherited from the British colonialists – to force compliance by closing down recalcitrant newspapers and detaining journalists without trial. It was mainly through its battles with the Chinese-language press that it realised that wilful proprietors could be difficult to tame, leading to its unique 1974 press law that delegated ideological management to the stock market.

Erasing journalism's historical diversity from the collective memory has helped to bolster the professions' sense of identity. In the Singaporean context, this amnesia has another effect, allowing the state to frame its fraught relations with journalism in Asian-versus-Western terms – terms that do not pose a significant threat to its authority, since Singapore's political and economic relations with the West are fundamentally positive. The PAP's criticism of Western-style democracy and press freedom has always been contained within a firm realpolitik sense of the United States' indispensability as a guarantor of economic and military stability. For the US, in turn, Singapore is a major hub in the capitalist order – one of the world's main financial centres, ports, and multinational outposts – and as a base for its naval fleet.

Thus, the PAP's Achilles' Heel has never been its differences with the West, but its relations with segments of the population at risk of being structurally marginalised. This is why the brunt of PAP repression was felt not by the pro-business, pro-Western, English-language press but by its counterparts that stood up for workers' interests and for the Chinese speaking majority or

ethnic minorities. And, it is why the government is uncomfortable with even the memory of such a diverse journalistic heritage: it represents unresolved tensions that, if poorly managed and allowed to mobilise, may yet erupt.

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**KARINA HORSTI**  
CULTURAL DIVERSITY MEDIA POLICIES  
IN EUROPEAN PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING

Public debate on multiculturalism has intensified in Europe during the past decade. In many countries there has been "backlash" to multicultural policies and an increase of a new "end of tolerance" discourse. The sense of belonging in European countries is to a large extent based on ideas of ethnicity and shared cultural traditions. A new discourse of "realism" claims multiculturalism too "idealistic" and favors "social cohesion", a demand that minorities need to integrate to majority values and traditions. These ideas that re-introduce assimilationist vocabulary have become increasingly visible. Recent debates on the visibility of Muslims in Switzerland, France, and Denmark are examples of new concerns. In addition, similar debates are taking place in the Nordic countries of Sweden, Finland and Norway that have prided themselves on equality and human rights.

This presentation will focus on cultural diversity policies in public service broadcasters (PSB) that are crucial in many European societies. Recent policy transformations are discussed, based on an analysis of empirical material that includes policy documents from the European Broadcasting Union and the Finnish PSB company, workshops, the EBU's Diversity Toolkit, and interviews with Finnish PSB policy makers.

In a competitive and changing media environment, economic principles have become increasingly important also for European PSB. However, democratic principles guide and justify the existence of PSB, companies that are still relatively strong, particularly in Northern European countries. For instance, in 2007 the public service television market share was 44 per cent in Finland and 35 per cent in Sweden.

Intensification of assimilationist discourses have led PSB companies to remove from their schedules migrant specific programme slots. Even minorities themselves had criticized those programmes of "ghettoizing" minorities outside the "normal" programming. Inclusiveness is now tried to achieve by "mainstreaming" difference throughout programming. However, this usually means that programmes are first and foremost targeted to the majority. Through multicultural recruitment, PSB companies now strive to diversify the visual outlook of the company or channel and diversify the content and perspective. However, we might ask: What power do these individual journalists have to change perspectives and production within these large and often rigid companies that have their routines and structures?

Multiculturalism has never been a clear paradigm in Europe, but rather a set of discourses and policies that recognize minority group rights and celebrate difference. Often these policies are implemented by governments or municipalities, and thus are often interpreted as elite discourses. I will critically discuss how multiculturalism and now increasingly "cultural diversity" discourses are used in the European mediascape. Agency is particularly crucial here. Who decides what kind of difference is acceptable in a multicultural society for celebration and inclusion? How the democratic idea of inclusion is defined in social institutions, such as media organizations? Who defines when a media system, journalism (both production and content) are inclusive enough? Who orchestrates negotiations

around inclusion? It is a widely accepted principle, but how is it actually implemented and why?

In my understanding, the status quo is legitimated through discourses of multiculturalism and cultural diversity. The journalistic field has, at least until recent transformations, had significant power to set the agenda, frame the public debate, and marginalize "other" perspectives and ways of doing things. Unheard are serious claims for changes in structures that would enable opportunities for inclusive journalism. By structures, I refer to public funding schemes, infrastructure, access to higher education, recruitment to top positions, editorial freedom, and leadership in media organizations.

Public service broadcasting has the democratic responsibility to serve the whole population. When license fees are debated, inclusion and service of minorities are often presented as important functions of a publicly funded media. However, from the early years of national PSB the main role and justification for public funding has been to support national identity, language and culture. Therefore, we need to ask how the guardians of national culture can cultivate sensitivity to cultural difference. Particularly during the past two decades, immigration and identity politics have forced European societies to re-consider the notion of "national" in a new way. The PSB in Europe need to redefine what is "national" in relation to culture, identity, market, and audience. What is the "national" PSB is supposed to cherish in a demographically and culturally changing society? How can the PSB reach and serve "all"?

PSBs offer an interesting case to push further the ideas presented in the Glasser et al (2009) article. How can publicly funded media increase an environment where diversity *in* journalism and a *of* journalism could flourish? Glasser et al address structural diversity in journalism by suggesting alternatives to journalism-as-a-business model and a stronger role for the state. In Europe, PSBs are required to fulfill their democratic and diversity obligations, but there are several contradictions and problems.

The role of PSBs need to be re-thought not only because the journalistic field is facing transformations at various levels of business models, distribution, production, professionalism, authority and consumption. The future of accountable journalism is uncertain in many ways. However, in the emerging more networked media environment public funding could support minority media, community media, media literacy education and the like. Furthermore, the PSB could facilitate collaboration between various types of media. Redistribution of resources should not only be done through PSB companies, but also more directly through other funding schemes, such as foundations.

The cultural diversity discourses that are currently cultivated in PSB policies tend to be color-blind in their individualistic understanding of difference. As everyone is understood to be different in his or her unique way, issues of inequality and power dissolve. The policies fail to seriously consider structural aspects of racism and power relations in journalism and society, which in my view are key to understand the current problems of exclusion and marginalization of increasingly large numbers of people in European societies.

**ANDREW JAKUBOWICZ**  
DIVERSITY AND NEWS IN AUSTRALIA

Australia is one of the most culturally diverse societies in the world, with over 25% of the population born “overseas”, and over 20% of the population identifying a parent born outside the English-speaking world. Unlike the USA with its significant minorities of long-established Afro-American and rapidly growing Hispanic communities, Australia has no communities of such significant size, resulting in a much more polyglot pattern of settlement and the lack of any major ethno-political lobbies. Unlike the UK and Europe, Australia shares with the USA and Canada a history as a colonial settler society, with unresolved issues affecting the original peoples.

After three generations of “White Australia”, the national government in the 1970s adopted a policy of “non-racial immigration” and “multiculturalism” in settlement and integration strategies. The Immigration Restriction Act (1901) had been designed to exclude non-European immigrants, but had come under critique from both within Australia, and internationally. A range of policy reforms in the late 1960s and early 1970s re-positioned Australia. These changes included political recognition and enfranchisement of the indigenous peoples, and the removal of “race” as a distinguishing category in approving immigration. Over the next generation this had a major impact on the cultural makeup of the Australian population so that the 2006 Australian Census reported over 200 birth countries, with representation from every continent. Unlike the USA, and the UK Australia does not use a “racial/color” categorization of its population, preferring to use three different parameters – country of birth, ethnic heritage, and languages spoken. Multiculturalism in Australia refers to national and state policies which recognize the cultural differences among the population as legitimate, within a broad commitment to the nation. While it remains controversial among those who supported White Australia, or still desire a unitary “national character”, everyday multiculturalism has become an omnipresent characteristic of daily life, especially in the major cities.

Australia has one of the most concentrated patterns of media ownership in the advanced capitalist world, with a national government broadcast/e-media sector comprising the “mainstream” Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the “multicultural” Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), and a community broadcasting segment (CBAA) with an active ethnic and multicultural broadcasting involvement. The commercial sector encompasses the press (state and local) and broadcasting outlets of News Corporation and its effective monopoly cable service Foxtel, the Fairfax media group including press (state and local), online and radio, and the Stokes stake in press and television. There is also a vibrant “ethnic” media sector, especially in the press and online media, through the state-funded SBS, and through community and commercial offerings. With the globalisation of digital media, many media sources consumed in Australia are based outside the country.

The creation and gathering of news is thus an industrial process occurring within a fluid cultural context. While cultural diversity marks the society at large, the media for the most part reflect the interests, perspectives and responses of the cultural elites and the older established core culture. The news media then do not reflect the diversity of the society, though they often deal with issues in which

cultural differences play a key role. Recently for example the Australian and Indian media have entered an internet war over how the bashing and murders of Indian students and immigrants in Australia should be interpreted (<http://tinyurl.com/CDNmediawar>).

It is therefore helpful to explore Mark Deuze's (2005) argument that the tensions between professional journalism as an ideology and the realities of multiculturalism present acute challenges for the organization and practice of newsrooms, not only in terms of the makeup of the news-gathers, but also in terms of the *weltanschauung* of the stories they tell. Deuze addresses key factors such the diversity of cultural makeup of the newsrooms, the news gatherers' understandings and perceptions of the news values of the newsroom and how these might be modified by their cultural perspectives, and the sorts of stories that are foregrounded and the form these stories take when the internationalization of the world intrudes into the local space of the news. Australian news media typically have Anglo-Australian editors and senior staff, directing more junior staff (who may be from non-Anglo backgrounds) in the framing of news stories, choice of sources and journalistic perspectives.

Since the first major scholarly engagement with the issue of journalism and diversity in Australia (Goodall, Jakubowicz, & Martin, 1994), there has been a sustained interest in the role of the journalism practice in mediating inter-communal relations and contributing to social cohesion. That is the news media are understood to have role not only as the voice of "everyman", but as a specifically culturally-inflected reflection of Anglo-Australian views and values.

Unlike the USA with its highly segmented major ethno-cultural media markets (especially Black and Hispanic), Australian media newsrooms are not so ethnically demarcated because their audiences are more heterogeneous, and class rather than ethnically framed. While there is a diversity of media available to ethnically-differentiated audiences, the greater concern for scholarly critics has been the "white-bread" nature of most mainstream newsrooms and their tendency to address audiences from positions of authority that assume them to ethnically homogenous and racially undifferentiated. Over the past decade the Reporting Diversity project, linking a dozen university journalism schools, has explored the problems that can be identified with the way journalism operates in relation to cultural diversity (Possetti & McCallum, 2008).

It should be noted that there are two different spheres of concern in Australia - that associated with indigenous people where overt racism and exploitation have tended to be the key parameters in dispute; and that associated with non-Anglo immigrants, especially Middle East and African Muslims, where the discourses have centered on crime, social order and terrorism.

Indigenous issues remain "hot" in Australia, as indigenous rights especially to land and cultural retention, have been overshadowed by allegations about child sexual abuse, drug and alcohol addiction and chronic ill-health. Some parts of the media have been particularly angry about Indigenous homeland autonomy, as the media have been prohibited in some cases from entering by Indigenous communities. In 2006 the national government "intervened" in the Northern Territory by occupying indigenous communities, sending in parties of doctors and health workers to seek out evidence of neglect and abuse, and removing community control over media entry. There followed a media blitz of the

communities' shortcomings, under the rubric of the "intervention", against which Indigenous groups found it difficult to gain positive media traction.

While there is now an indigenous cable TV network, and online and press news outlets generated by indigenous communities, the mainstream media rarely employ indigenous reporters, and rarely report the news from indigenous perspectives. The most controversial recent government policy, that of the "Intervention" in federal territories to wrest control from Indigenous communities of their lands, has received fairly systematic and uncritical media support. Indeed the government rhetoric of "rescuing" indigenous people from their own purported inadequacies has been insistent in the media, with only the occasional voice of an oppositional Indigenous leader appearing. Thus the question of whether diversity across news providers or diversity within is barely the question – the critical issue remains how to incorporate indigenous perspectives into the mainstream of news reporting.

In relation to refugee, Muslim and African communities, a recent tribunal decision awarding damages to the Lebanese Muslim community in Sydney following its vilification by a radio "talk-back" host foregrounds the broader question of systemic bias. It also opens up the issue of audience and diversity, where distorted and prejudiced reporting of Lebanese Muslims in Australia has affects on two different audiences – inflaming anti-Muslim attitudes (to the point of violence) among non-Muslims, and intimidating and insulting Muslim audiences, thereby alienating them from the wider society. While there are many Muslim news websites available to the local population, and Arabic and other relevant language newspapers, radio programs and TV channels (cable and satellite), this plethora of alternatives can further alienate local Muslims, by corralling their trusted information sources within an ethno-religious terrain if the mainstream media are distrusted. Correspondingly, non-Muslims lose the opportunity to understand the diversity of Muslim and Middle Eastern viewpoints, as part of the national conversation in which they could all otherwise share.

Writing in the recently-launched online *Cultural Diversity News*, Nasya Bahfen (2009) has posited that there are three potential responses to the systemic bias in reporting – refuse to have anything to do with the Western media as they are 'inherently evil'; seek to join the media as a mainstream journalist and change attitudes through interaction; and have Muslim organizations engage with the media to enlarge their knowledge of Islam and Muslim communities.

Thus the question posed by the organizers, diversity across versus diversity within newsrooms, needs to be read within the context of national media, and the different power structures that frame the operation of the news business in cosmopolitan societies. The situation is made more complex of course through the proliferation of e-media, and the transformation in news practices generated by the multimedia environment within both traditional and emerging news media.

Where there are large "minority" blocs it is feasible to argue for the possibility of outlet diversity serving the broader public interest by providing scope for many parallel national and regional conversations. Where the blocs do not exist, or where they exist only as smaller pockets of more recently arrived diaspora communities anxious to secure their culture against erosion into the mainstream (as Wanning Sun 2006 describes for the Chinese diaspora), then the diversity must be embedded within the mainstream media if the quality of democratic debate is to be sustained. My own sense is that both approaches are necessary – different prongs

of a pincer movement to reshape the hierarchies of cultural power that are given expression through media practices and the realities they create for their audiences.

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**MINELLE MAHTANI**  
**DIVERSITY AUDITS & DIVERSITY FATIGUE:**  
**THE POLITICS OF DIVERSITY INITIATIVES IN CANADIAN NEWSROOMS**

“Diversity doesn’t just make good moral sense, it makes good business sense”  
-from an interview with a media manager

What happens in broadcast news journalism when moral and ethical ideals co-opted under the banner of diversity collide with corporate strategies to make a profit? This paper will examine the execution of some diversity initiatives implemented in Canadian television newsrooms by analyzing interviews with corporate media managers - those who are responsible for developing diversity initiatives - as well as those journalists impacted by their implementation. My analysis draws from a larger research project that includes open-ended, qualitative interviews with a variety of stakeholders including journalists, diversity trainers, and NGO staff who are concerned with diversity in the media. However, this paper specifically references interviews conducted with journalists and media managers in Canada who are in charge of the diversity portfolio for their various media organizations.

As those participating in this symposium will be aware, diversity is discussed with increasingly regularity in newsrooms across Canada as journalists interrogate the meaning of what constitutes journalistic diversity in a globalizing age (Glasser et al 2009, Olsson 2009). Indeed, in a hot-off-the-presses corporate diversity and equity action plan issued recently by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation/Radio-Canada, it is stated that “Diversity is at the heart of what CBC/Radio-Canada does. It shapes the content we deliver and plays a big part in the role we play in the lives of Canadians” (CBC Corporate Diversity and Equity Plan 2009-2012).

To encourage journalists to cover stories in ways that will reach different and potentially lucrative audiences, media managers in Canada have developed and implemented several diversity initiatives. On the surface, such initiatives are to be welcomed by those concerned with issues of equity and representation. However, interviews conducted with journalists and media managers in Canadian television newsrooms who handle the diversity portfolio suggest that such initiatives can be seen as part of a broader neoliberal approach to governance with counter-intuitive effects. In this paper, I explore the complex relationship that emerges between diversity, journalism and neoliberalism, in which I see neoliberalism as more than just a system of economic power relations, but as a form of governance that can co-opt diversity and create particular racialized subjectivities.

The Canadian newsroom offers an ideal site to understand processes of neoliberal reform because media convergence has resulted in pervasive organizational restructuring along neoliberal lines and because the backdrop of Canadian multicultural policy directly influences the 1991 Broadcasting Act, clearly stating that coverage must reflect a multiracial and a multicultural country. In my presentation, I will argue that the neoliberalization of the newsroom plays a role in the success of some forms of diversity initiatives, and I explore diversity’s role in reproducing and realizing neoliberal imperatives and logics. Initiatives that might be expected to foster racial equality instead come to embody a kind of neoliberal

racism (Giroux 2008). To make my case, I examine two diversity strategies currently gaining currency in the newsroom: diversity performance audits, and the use of certain buzz words like “workshop fatigue,” “strategic efficiency” and “strategic hiring.” What do these terms mean, and how are they discussed and understood in Canadian television newsrooms? I suggest that a commitment to diversity as articulated through these concepts can camouflage disturbing patterns of systemic racism in newsrooms, working to reinforce power inequities, depoliticize difference and sanitize race.

I also pay particular attention to the ways diversity initiatives are conceived as intrinsically progressive. But what actually constitutes progress? How is progress defined? How is it evaluated? Is it about developing an anti-racist newsroom? Or is it solely about selling to a new kind of audience? I focus on the contradictions and challenges involved in implementing these initiatives. I conclude by emphasizing that, as journalists and educators, we need to ask new questions about diversity initiatives. What would an anti-racist pedagogy look like at our journalism schools? What would the role of journalism be if it was to seriously consider adopting strategies challenging the complex and often complicit relationship that emerges between neoliberalism and diversity in journalism, where we explore the role of diversity as a form of applied ethics in the newsroom?

I end by demonstrating that some diversity initiatives focus on the assumed needs of the consumer. The goal and responsibility communicated to journalists is the importance of seducing new audiences, which does not necessarily translate into better journalism. I also emphasize the role that the Canadian state can play in acknowledging the value of a culturally diverse press.

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**KAREN ROSS**  
BEYOND THE COLOR LINE:  
JOURNALISM, DIVERSITY AND THE TOLERANCE OF DIFFERENCE

*What are the norms and conditions of democratic communication under circumstances of structural inequality and cultural difference? [Iris M. Young, 2006: 6]*

*....journalism diversity matters most as it strengthens the role of minority media in the struggle to achieve the social justice and political parity that a multicultural society demands. [Theodore L Glasser, Isabel Awad and John W Kim, 2009: 75]*

One way to respond to Young's concern is in Glasser et al's statement inasmuch as more diverse voices speaking in different tongues (both literally and metaphorically) from different standpoints, could provide a corrective to the mostly hegemonic and Anglocentric journalistic practices which characterise modern news media. This would be especially the case if those 'alternative' voices were speaking on the same issues as their mainstream counterparts and to the same audience, thus offering a simultaneous interpretation to a public more used to a univocal address. But herein lies the rub. Unquestionably, the existence of, and increase in ethnic minority media is crucial in challenging the endemic and mostly unacknowledged cultural imperialism which makes whiteness the norm against which everyone else is deemed *other* in far too many journalistic accounts of the social world. However, the potency and potential of such diversity of journalism is considerably diminished if its authors only ever talk to themselves. So, whilst Young's question includes an interrogative component which takes inequality as a given and implies its cultural - which I take her to mean racial- base, Glasser et al's response implies a moral and ethical consensus about the (multi)color of the ideal society which, sadly, is not borne out by any evidence, either historical or contemporaneous. Indeed, I would argue that the noughties have witnessed a resurgence or perhaps, more scarily, a renewed *confidence*, in the articulation of a ethnocentric and racist politics which plays perfectly with public fears about the economy and their own future, demonizing the racialized *other* as part of the problem, and their expulsion a partial solution.

Notwithstanding the election of Barack Obama and what America's first black president signifies as a culturally important moment, notions of inclusion and exclusion, of us and them, of the *we* against *the other* have characterised (and continue to do so) the ways in which ethnic majority and ethnic minority communities are understood in relation to each other, as well as providing the rationale for abhorring *their* cultural practices which run counter to *our* own. Drawing on the inspirational work of Edward Said (1979, 2004), cultural studies scholars have argued, rather persuasively, that the power to name *us* and *them* is the power to control both discourse and policy, annexing the support of the majority *we* and bolstering *our* sense of superiority. (Gilroy 2002, 2004; Hall, 1997) Perversely, as I will argue later, it is possible to advance a multicultural politics which acknowledges cultural difference through *our* magnanimous tolerance of *them*, but which simultaneously consolidates a hierarchy which insists that some cultures are simply more equal than others. This is somewhat less than the "demands"

imagined by Glasser et al., and a *lot* less than the racist politics which are enjoying a worrying renaissance in the noughties, at least in Europe.

In Britain, the fascist British National Party (BNP) has seen a significant increase in its support base over the past few years, winning seats in local regional elections and sending two members, including its notorious Leader, Nick Griffin, to Brussels as the Party's first MEPs in 2009. When Griffin was recently invited (and subsequently appeared) to become a panellist on the BBC's prime-time politics show, *Question Time*, in October 2009, news of the invitation caused a public outcry and significant (and critical) media coverage, forcing the BBC to defend its decision on the grounds of free speech. Ironically, Griffin has regularly complained about the way in which his party has been covered by the (liberal-flavoured, cf. the BBC) media through its obeisance to a politically-correct agenda, arguing that the, "ruling elite" had made the "indigenous majority ... second-class citizens in every possible sphere".<sup>1</sup> After his appearance on *Question Time*, even right-wing tabloids caught the zeitgeist of the chattering classes, with the Deputy Editor of *The Sun* (Graeme Wilson) arguing that the BNP is a "stain on British politics". (Wilson, 2009, n.p.). How are we to understand this particular *volte face*, other than a cynical attempt to run with public opinion, since the majority of studies which have analysed news media coverage of racialized others, especially the tabloid press, suggest a mostly negative stance, with issues around immigration and the associated threats to 'indigenous' job prospects and social harmony, constituting primary discursive themes (see, for example, Van Dijk, 1991; Ross, 1996; Law, 2001; Stabile, 2006).

Where does that leave us, now, in 2010, as we contemplate the future of journalism in a global environment which continues to see the world, literally, in black and white?

What is surely necessary is a strategic approach which is as diverse as the diversity agenda itself. Yes, it's important to support the continued development of ethnic minority media, not only to add alternative perspectives to the inevitably Anglocentric lens through which the majority journalist surveys the world, but also to provide channels of communication through which minority communities can talk to, affirm and sustain each other. In my own, albeit rather elderly, work (Ross, 2000) with black media consumers, they particularly appreciated reading the black press because journalists wrote from a shared cultural position (no matter that this can be more about perception than reality) which made them feel part of an inclusive *we* rather than their more common experience of a marginalised *other*. Whilst this is absolutely understandable and desirable, such a strategy *on its own* runs the risk of ghettoising minority voices because they continue to be framed as oppositional or differently interested *others* rather than merely alternative voices within a multicultural and multivocal *we*. So, we *also* need a strategy which encourages diversity *in* journalism, which means not only including more ethnic minority journalists in mainstream media but also training majority journalists to appreciate the importance of acknowledging cultural difference and developing a self-reflective sensitivity towards the reporting of such difference.

To be sure, there are clear lessons to be learnt from the experiences of those parts of mainstream (majority) media which have already tried to pursue more

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<sup>1</sup> Nick Griffin interviewed on BBC Radio 4, *Today*, 8 June 2009 (the day the European Election results were confirmed)

inclusive forms of journalistic praxis, and the BBC's efforts in this regard are a clear case in point. A consideration of why such strategies have mostly failed to deliver on the diversity agenda are a good place to start in attempting to map how journalism might become more inclusive and democratic as we move through the twenty-first century. When Greg Dyke became Director-General of the BBC in 2001, he famously complained that the Corporation was 'hideously white' and put targets in place for the recruitment of ethnic minority staff, initiated training courses on 'race awareness' and commissioned research to identify what ethnic minority audiences wanted from programme content. Concurrently, other broadcasters followed suit and, like the BBC, set up multicultural programme units to 'serve the needs' of minority audiences. Various prizes were initiated to reward journalism which beyond the simple (and mostly negative) binary of black/white to provide more color in the media, including prizes for outstanding ethnic minority journalists. Most of these initiatives were short-lived and Dyke's very modest targets for recruiting black and ethnic minority (BME) staff remained unachieved by 2009; in the same year, the National Union of Journalists report that the number of their members from a BME background is a paltry 1520 (4%)<sup>2</sup>. There is no single answer to the 'why' question which is provoked from an account of these failures and in any case, one's own subject position is likely to determine the way in which such a question is answered. So for every (white) editor claiming that recruitment must be based on merit, there will be a corresponding unsuccessful black candidate claiming discrimination. For every (institutionally white) arts funder's insistence that all small business start-up proposals are treated equally, there will be a small (black) documentary team insisting that the less experienced but white outfit always gets the money. In 2010, British broadcasters have come full circle and have established a mentoring scheme for BME staff and signed a 'diversity pledge' which includes a commitment to recruit fairly and from a wide base, encourage diversity in output, increase the number of senior BME staff and to events which promote diversity.<sup>3</sup> And so the wheel goes around and around. How we actually get out of this groove and start a new cycle should be the stuff of our discussion. Viva Obama.

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<sup>2</sup> Lena Calvert, NUJ Equality Officer, personal email to author, 13 January 2010.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.culturaldiversitynetwork.co.uk/pledge.php>

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**HEMANT SHAH**  
TOWARD MORE INCLUSIVE NEWS:  
STRENGTHENING MINORITY MEDIA, TRANSFORMING JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE

Motivated in part by the Kerner Commission's critique of news coverage of racial unrest in the late 1960s, mainstream news media initiated efforts to diversify newsrooms, promoting, in Glasser, Awad and Kim's terms, diversity *in* journalism. However, equally enthusiastic attempts to create diversity *of* journalism in America – that is, improving the ways minority groups are depicted and ensuring that minority voices and minority media are included equitably in the media system – have not materialized.

Among the factors that have left mainstream journalism largely incapable of being more inclusive are “racial profiling” in the newsroom, cultural biases toward consensus-based framing, relatively homogeneous reporter rolodexes, definitions of newsworthiness that tend to exclude diversity and an ossified understanding of journalistic professionalism.

Reforming journalism – both as an the industry and as a practice – has become an urgent task for a variety of reasons and two important elements of reform are strengthening the voice of minorities in public deliberation through structural change of the media system and encouraging new journalistic practices that enhance deliberative exchange within and across communities. These reforms should go hand-in-hand: a new media structure with old journalistic practices will not move us significantly toward more inclusive news.

*Strengthening Minority Voices.*

An important first step in promoting truly inclusive public deliberation is to establish a media system that offers a large variety of “forums and sites” in which minority media have equitable deliberative standing vis-à-vis the majority media, which is essential because mainstream media have not generally proven to be an effective or consistent amplifier of minority concerns within the general public sphere. A guarantee that anyone can safely initiate and participate in deliberation in a variety of sites and for a variety of purposes is what one philosopher of democracy has called the “democratic minimum.” But we might question whether or not a democratic minimum is sufficient in societies marked by long-standing structural racial inequities. Might such societies require a *democratic maximum*, in which the state not only guarantees rights of expression but also creates structural conditions (through regulations, incentives, financial and moral support, etc.) for a truly inclusive media system?

*New Journalistic Practice.*

News organizations, especially the dominant players in the U.S. media system, must accommodate diversity in new ways, which means they must not treat “difference from the norm” primarily as a commodity that helps sell papers or attract viewers with sensationalism or exoticism. The mainstream media also must be willing to communicate with and learn from the unique community building and community bridging practices of minority media. However, communicating across divides of cultural difference presents a dilemma: How is deliberation to be

kept mutually intelligible in the context of multiple sites of discussion in which news organizations might operate with varying discursive styles, professional goals and relationships to the communities they serve? The dilemma may be especially acute for minority media, which often are relegated to the margins of the existing media system. Minority media that want to participate in democratic deliberation have to contend, ultimately, with the question, “how does the margin talk to the center”?

One option at the margin is for minority media to use provocative and emotional framing and language to draw the attention of the center. The risk is that the message may be viewed as irrational and illogical and simply ignored by the center. A second option is for minority groups to use the frames, vocabularies and formats accepted by the mainstream media as the standard practices of “professional journalism” but use them in unconventional ways in order to highlight issues and priorities of minority groups. In any case, compelling the majority to listen must be a goal of strategic ethnic media planning.

*An experiment in inclusive journalism.*

In fall 2009, all local media outlets in Madison, Wisc., were invited to collaboratively cover local health care issues. The outcome demonstrated the need for a democratic maximum. Even though many of Madison’s ethnic media participated in the experiment in the early planning stages, many struggled to participate as fully as they might have liked in the reporting and publishing stages. The obstacles were (1) lack of resources such as time, staff and, most importantly, a steady revenue stream or (2) organizational structures that were not conducive to full collaboration. Perhaps some form of incentives to mainstream media to share resources or the creation of a non-profit marketing liaison could have strengthened the participatory potential of minority media. Strategies such as these could be quite attractive even to mainstream media as they recognize that they benefit in the long run – financially and civically – when the overall health of the local media environment is sound.

## LINDA STEINER

### CITIZENS' MEDIATION OF STATUS POLITICS: IMPLICATIONS FOR DIVERSITY

Diversity is important across newsrooms, among journalists, and across content, although not for the reasons usually claimed. I endorse Glasser, Awad & Kim's democratic commitments, but I extend their analysis in somewhat different directions. I note two liabilities with "multiculturalism," including that, at least in conventional and popular usage, it underestimates contests over power and cultural authority. Moreover, multiculturalism across newsrooms does not set a sufficiently high standard. Despite the risk of sounding timid and incrementalist, I ultimately defend mainstream media's admittedly thin approach to problem-solving in order to urge diversity that is not only expressed, but also heard.

Multiculturalists typically justify diversity in terms of "effects." They argue that different groups--usually defined by gender/sex and race/ethnicity--bring to the newsroom different perspectives, in turn producing different notions of what and who is newsworthy, whose questions are worth asking, and who should answer those questions. By this logic, "completeness" and correctness in news requires diversity within each newsroom.

But, diversity need not be defended in terms of effects. On one hand, professional norms and newsroom socialization, especially as this builds on professional "education" offered by accredited journalism programs, will bleach out the perspectives that otherwise might be assumed to follow from different cultural backgrounds. Journalists for mainstream organizations tend to think and act like "journalists." Whether or not this represents a specifically "masculinist" approach, for example, women journalists want to be treated as "journalists." Few gender differences show up in data; sensibly, almost no one studies differences by sexual orientation or race/ethnicity.

Potential solutions to the problems of communities unhappy with the news available to them will be more effective when they incorporate the implications of status politics. Mainstream media are arguably the most effective arbiters in the U.S. of status, respect, deference, honor. No wonder that social groups care how they are represented in news media. They resent being marginalized or, as they put it, "stereotyped," or relegated to low-status beats. Even worse is "symbolically annihilation." In the zero-sum re-distribution of cultural-political capital, only complaints of groups on the rise get addressed. Without exaggerating or over-crediting this, identity politics as well as politics more generally needs to be acknowledged.

Take, for example, the 2007 controversy when "shock jock" Don Imus called Rutgers women athletes "nappy-headed hos." The basketball players consistently and emphatically regarded the insult as racist and misogynist. Coach Vivian Stringer said "it spoke to women, it spoke to sexism, it spoke to racism in our society." The team captain called Imus's remark "an attack on women first." Nonetheless, national and regional print and broadcast journalists almost uniformly transformed Imus's slur into something that was "racially derogatory," "racially-charged," "racist." Sexism went unremarked for many reasons: The primary campaign pitting Hillary Clinton against Barack Obama was already in gear; television networks heads were alert to race but not sexism; Imus's show was infamous for its "locker-room vibe"; and conversely, feminists have chronically

been both unwilling to elbow aside Rev. Al Sharpton and unable to produce juicy sound bites. As a result, journalists' guest lists and sources became mostly (Black) men, not feminists. Beyond Stringer's reference to a double whammy, no one pointed out the complicated intersections of racism and sexism with class and notions of female beauty.

Retaining an emphasis on diversity enables more consistent, productive attention to battles over power, since diversity applies to many dimensions of identity, intellectual and ideological positions, methods, and structures for producing and sharing communication. Moreover, a broad understanding of diversity supports a range of journalism formats.

Legacy and emerging journalism formations have different roles. On one hand, "mainstream" news media maintain their authority to allocate status/deference, only to the extent that they adhere to professional and technical approaches, even if these deny them a voice in debates over how justice is to be defined, achieved, and protected. To the extent that its members trust journalists at all, the U.S. polity demands professionalism. People demand the pretense of neutrality, even as, at the level of individual social groups, they tug on reporters to take their side. Hypothetically, advocating "our" solutions to justice not merely on editorial pages, where it already appears, but also on front pages, fulfills a larger, fuller mission of the press. But we-ness is enormously risky, especially when journalists' credibility is under intense attack.

On the other hand, niche news organs are literally media through which social groups can speak to, from, through, and for their own communities. Indeed, although their claims to authority may be overly confident, alternative media participants may celebrate their distinctness and may not see themselves as minorities, much less "subordinate" (contra Fraser). So-called minority media can also be as narrow-minded and consumerist as their mainstream counterparts. They rarely tell the stories of "the other," much less telling them to others. They do not invite "everyone to consider the plight of everyone else." Invocations of rainbow coalitions have not convinced Hispanic media to relate stories of Muslims, or feminist media to address the problems of men of color, or the Black press to acknowledge gay and lesbian issues, to select a few from a long list of examples. With cheap, accessible bandwidth enabling self-publishing, the public sphere has fractured far beyond the counter-publics Fraser described. Gitlin's worries about sphericules now appear prophetic.

Given our multiple, segmented and hyphenated lives we need mainstream journalism as widely-trusted sites to hear news of others and to locate multiple sites that express the distinct identities, distinct problems, and solutions of social groups. We need diversity because no group and no news site can monopolize justice. Shared concern with justice will preserve and nurture diversity and promote deliberation over potential solutions to social problems. This requires creative thinking about how mainstream media can partner with a host of citizen, niche, and social movement news organizations. How to cultivate "authentic" diversity (i.e., as opposed to merely multiplication of channels or stubborn polarization) is a matter for experimentation and research. Differing perspectives are now easily expressed. The question remains how they can be widely heard and debated. Can "mainstream" organizations encourage alternative efforts, without owning, coercing, or controlling them? Can they provide bridges, literally in the form of

links, to other sites, in the name vibrant structural and ideological diversity, citizen engagement, and justice?

**MERCEDES LYNN DE URIARTE**  
**ADDRESSING THE FRACTURED PRESS**

The economic crisis hit my neighborhood one radio at a time. One by one their music left, like footsteps receding into the distance. Then there were no *cumbias*, *salsas*, *corridos* or preachers warning of damnation. Absent too were the vending trucks offering tacos and tamales. The construction workers were gone. The radios drove away un-remarked upon. And then something related made news, but did so without any direct connection.

By October of last year, four Spanish language radio stations had switched to English. The mainstream papers didn't tell us what had become of the radio owners. Instead they disappeared under "objective" descriptions of a housing market downturn.

This segmented reality of news media, which largely follows a market driven model that sells consumers to advertisers, becomes even more striking because the local English-language mainstream newspaper—the *Austin-American Statesman*—also produces *Ahora Si!*—a free weekly Spanish-language news publication. Circulation emphasizes the distance between the two. Each is distributed to specific parts of town. Austin remains predominately a segregated city with a print news distribution pattern analogous to its residents.

There are other Spanish-language publications here, but they make clear the critical need to distinguish between that which is journalism and that which is simply a publication.

Too often all Spanish-language print media becomes defined as journalism by virtue of its ethnic aim and foreign language content—without any standard against which it is measured. And while no sophisticated studies seem to address this, many Spanish-language publications rushed to print as a market medium. By that I mean they seek advertisers, build a business staff but do not invest heavily, if at all, in reporting of substance.

Two daily newspapers come to mind as contrast—the most widely circulated are the longest established and most professional—*El Diario/La Prensa* in New York (circulation 53,856) and *La Opinión* in Los Angeles (circulation 119,976), established 95 and 84 years ago respectively. They evolved toward this stature, so it is possible that other more recent ones might also. For example, *La Opinión* was still publishing mostly reprints from Spanish-language Mexican publications as recently as 1980. Its vision was mostly international. The paper was often defined as "keeping immigrants in touch with home." But it began changing in the 1980s, first as it translated articles written by *Los Angeles Times* (mostly Latino) reporters about Latino issues. It became more sophisticated while co-owned by the *Los Angeles Times* and even more so when it returned to its original ownership—the Lozano family. Its style is similar to English language mainstream, its perspective is not. The same can be said for *El Diario/La Prensa*. Both papers are now owned by ImpreMedia, where the Lozano family remains at the helm.

But Spanish-language publications are class anchored. A free, "throw away" publication here that is mostly a conveyor of ads, knows that much of its readership

will be immigrant workers, that many of them come with limited literacy<sup>4</sup> and with no hope of becoming part of the self-governing body that Americans believe its news media tries to serve. Even of *La Opinión* readership only 4% are college graduates; 19% earn between \$40,000 and \$60,000 and only 29% earn above that. These factors contribute to the popularity of radio—but in Spanish—radio carries little news.

Readership reflects these differences. According to a Pew Hispanic Center survey 24% of Latinos get all their news in Spanish, 44% in both English and Spanish and 31% in both languages. Like earlier surveys, this data shows a migration to include English language news media over time. But most of these readers are critical of English only coverage about Latino population, issues and Latin America.

This is not surprising since the U.S. press censors by omission (Rosenblum, 1993; de Uriarte, 1996; Bernhard, 1999; Herman and Chomsky, 2002; Bennett, 2005). Thus Americans learn late or never about US interventions in other nations.<sup>5</sup> This allows a culture of naiveté or innocence to insist that U.S. foreign policy exemplifies altruism. A current case in point is coverage of poverty and corruption in Haiti, without mention of repeated US interference with its autonomy.

But the categories of news media raise other issues as well. Is all ethnic press identified casually as journalism regardless of its quality because it is ethnic? Is it identified as ethnic regardless of ownership? The New America Media notes that it ethnic publication number over 2000 without distinction.

Here in Austin nothing local compares to either *La Opinión* or *El Diario/La Prensa*. As for the Statesman, neither content nor editorial staff meet the ASNE parity goal. But they are not alone. The struggle to integrate the U.S. press began 32 years ago, met resistance, was reframed as an effort toward multiculturalism and now is referred to as “diversity” *in* journalism, although content has little changed (Wilson, Gutierrez, Chao, 2003; Santana, 2002). Integration plateaued five years ago at 13% (ASNE). Print newsroom integration averages less than ½ of 1% per year. The “turnstile” experience of minority journalists contributes to this slow growth and reflects the inability of most newsrooms to embrace contrasting understandings of constructed realities. Diversity in journalism confronts a conformist newsroom culture defined within as “professional.” (Gans, 1979; de Uriarte, 1994; Campbell, 1995; Newkirk, 2000; Kelley and Mills, 2003; de Uriarte, 2003) and which Warren Breed described in his classic 1954 study<sup>6</sup>.

To meet the ASNE goal, the press sought minority digests. However, minority reporters encountered strife when their “take” on a story differed from the expected, the familiar and thus the more comfortable “circles of certainty.” Newsrooms prefer assimilation. (Gans, 1979; de Uriarte, 1992, Campbell, 1995, de Uriarte, 2003) Unfamiliar perspectives can become labeled as “ideological” or “political.” Reporters were often marginalized for intellectual trespass.

That initiated the debate, conflict and conscience that revolves around whether difference belongs *in* the newsroom where it challenges the concepts of “objectivity” and “balance” or *of* it where it can remain a marginalized option. The

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<sup>4</sup> Until 1992, the required education level was sixth grade; now it is 9<sup>th</sup> grade. But the poorer the student, the more likely s/he will leave earlier to work.

<sup>5</sup> Michael J. Sullivan, III, details 34 of 69 such events in *American Adventurism Abroad: Invasions, Interventions and Regime Changes Since World War II*, published in 2007)

<sup>6</sup> Breed, Warren (1954) “Social Control in the Newsroom: A Functional Analysis.” *Social Forces*.

*in* in journalism remains a hard fought battle, its legal arguments rooted in DNA inclusion. In fact, the rise of “ethnic” journalism may be celebrated, in part, because it distracts from lack content diversity in the mainstream. Until that changes, we remain with fractured and segmented news delivery The struggle over diversity in newsrooms anchors more in thought process than in DNA.

Given that mainstream journalism still defines alternative or independent journalism, dominated by Euro-American males, as less professional, it is unlikely to embrace, let alone import ethnic content. Both reflect an intellectual diversity still resisted as we march toward a majority / minority nation.

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**CLINT C. WILSON II**  
POST-KERNER NEWSROOM DIVERSITY:  
AN ILLUSION OF INCLUSION

In responding to issues raised in the Journal of Communications article, "The Claims of Multiculturalism and Journalism's Promise of Diversity," by Glasser, Awad and Kim, the writer explores why the 1968 Kerner Commission recommendation that newspapers in the United States train and hire ethnic minority journalists failed to significantly enhance the inclusion of minority perspectives in news.

Over the course of American history the author posits that cultural minority groups have been generally cast as outsiders and media content was accordingly framed from an "us versus them" perspective. In this regard communications media adopted a posture congruent with other social institutions that restricted access and equal opportunity to minority groups in employment, education, legal jurisprudence and other aspects of citizenship.

A retrospective social historical review of the nature of ethnic minority exclusion from the colonial era to the issuance of the Kerner Report provides context for a discussion of how nearly 60 years of legally mandated racial segregation impacted the concurrent development of journalism education and the traditional hegemonic perspective that became ingrained as the defining characteristic of professional journalism.

The author considers both of the two major Kerner recommendations to (1) intensify the education and training of minority journalists and (2) to accelerate their hiring into American newsrooms. The explanation of why these efforts have failed to meet the needs of marginalized ethnic minority groups in their quest for social justice and equality is considered within context of the efficacy of "multiculturalism" and "pluralism" theories as applied to American society.

In addressing whether the first Kerner mandate that African Americans (and by extension other cultural minority groups) be formally trained in journalism, the author considers the social historic context in which journalism education arose as a discipline in higher education. The development of journalism education in the United States coincides with the institution of legal separation of races under authority of the U.S. Constitution in the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. It was under the conditions of legal segregation that the traditional and hegemonic values of American journalism were developed and cultivated. The author posits that the training and education of journalists in American colleges and universities is pervaded by the norms of the dominant social group. Student practitioners, regardless of cultural heritage, are taught their craft from the perspective of hegemonic tradition.

Regarding the Kerner recommendation that increased hiring of racial and cultural minorities leads to a more inclusive perspective in news content, the author suggests that sociologist Warren Breed's seminal research on socialization in the newsrooms of mainstream daily newspapers is instructive. Breed's work reveals that institutionalization of traditional workplace procedures and values – and a supportive system of rewards and sanctions – work against meaningful inclusion of minority perspectives in news reporting and reinforce hegemonic themes. It is

noted that the effect of socialization in the newsroom is applicable to journalists of all cultural and racial backgrounds. Traditional journalism education and forces of workplace socialization, therefore, essentially work in tandem to nullify the Kerner premise that the formal training and hiring of minority journalists leads to inclusiveness of minority perspectives in news content.

It is against this background that the case study presented in the Glasser et al article is examined. The study considers both mainstream and ethnic minority newspaper coverage of a proposed shopping center redevelopment issue in San Jose, California and explores factors that led to the different approaches taken by the newspapers. Among those factors is the unique role of the mainstream newspaper executive, an African American journalist whose career coincided with the Kerner Report era. The case study illuminates the naiveté of the Kerner belief that the mere infusion of journalists of color into mainstream news organizations would fully remedy the problems of culturally insensitive and distorted coverage of minorities while adding their perspective to public discourse.

On the other hand, history informs the author that from the earliest days of the American republic ethnic minority groups have developed their own news media as a means of community bonding and addressing their concerns to the power elite. The ethnic press remains as a viable phenomenon in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which speaks to their understanding that they must demand empowerment as the voice of an excluded group. Thus, the notions of diversity *in* journalism and *across* journalistic forms – as framed by Glasser et al -- are not mutually exclusive. The author notes, however, that the relationship between mainstream and minority newspapers is largely a phenomenon of the past 20 years and has been one of commercial exploitation, an aspect that is of less concern to minority communicators.

Finally, the author assesses the future and challenges facing ethnic minority journalism in the new media era and the resulting implications for both hegemonic and minority segments of American society. Questions are raised about whether new media platforms and the specter of use and gratification theory will be detrimental to the maintenance of national cohesion if individual communities (multiplicity of publics) communicate only within themselves. The writer concludes that for practical purposes ethnic minority groups require advocacy journalism as a means of uniting their communities to challenge hegemonic power for social equality. At the same time, although diversity in journalism (multiculturalism) has yielded little in terms of meaningful inclusion of minority perspectives in news content, as a source of employment for journalists of color it does no harm except for its illusionary quality.