

On the Impossibility of Managing Diversity as Polyphony: Swedish Radio - a Case Study of the Media Diversity & Inclusion Paradox

Gober, Greta; Jupowicz-Ginalska, Anna

Erstveröffentlichung / Primary Publication

Konferenzbeitrag / conference paper

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Gober, G., & Jupowicz-Ginalska, A. (2023). On the Impossibility of Managing Diversity as Polyphony: Swedish Radio - a Case Study of the Media Diversity & Inclusion Paradox. In F. Haumer, C. Kolo, & J. Mütterlein (Eds.), *Reorganization of Media Industries: Digital Transformation, Entrepreneurship and Regulation* (pp. 1-13). München: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft e.V. <https://doi.org/10.21241/ssoar.90875>

Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY Lizenz (Namensnennung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.de>

Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY Licence (Attribution). For more information see:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

On the Impossibility of Managing Diversity as Polyphony: Swedish Radio – a Case Study of the Media Diversity & Inclusion Paradox

Greta Gober, Anna Jupowicz-Ginalska

Faculty of Journalism, Information and Book Studies, University of Warsaw (Poland)

Zusammenfassung

In den letzten Jahrzehnten hat sich der Begriff der Vielfalt in den Medien von einer traditionellen Definition, die auf psycho-soziodemografischen individuellen Unterschieden beruht, zu einer Definition entwickelt, die Polyphonie und Pluralität der Stimmen betont. Am Beispiel des schwedischen Rundfunks lässt sich der paradoxe Charakter dieser Entwicklung veranschaulichen. Während die Leitung des Senders daran arbeitet, Vielfalt als Vielstimmigkeit zu managen, erheben ehemalige und derzeitige Mitarbeiter des schwedischen Rundfunks einen öffentlichen Appell, in dem sie den Rassismus im Sender anprangern und damit das aufdecken, was Wissenschaftler als das Paradoxon von Vielfalt und Integration in den Medien bezeichnen. Mithilfe einer gemischten Methodik aus quantitativer und qualitativer Forschung, einschließlich 11 Tiefeninterviews mit aktuellen und ehemaligen Mitarbeitern des schwedischen Rundfunks, ziehen wir theoretische Anregungen aus der ethnografisch inspirierten Organisationsforschung heran, um zu argumentieren, warum das Erreichen von "Vielfalt als Vielstimmigkeit" im und durch den Journalismus unmöglich erscheint. Wir leisten einen Beitrag zur Forschung über Epistemologien der journalistischen Nachrichtenproduktion, Nachrichtenvielfalt und die Rolle der Medien in demokratischen Gesellschaften.

Keywords: Medienvielfalt, Radio, Schweden, gemischte Methoden

Summary

Over the past few decades, the conceptualization of diversity in the media has evolved from a traditional definition based on psycho-sociodemographic individual differences to one emphasizing polyphony and a plurality of voices. We exemplify this shift's paradoxical nature on the example of Swedish Radio. While the management of the station is working to manage diversity as polyphony, former and current employees of Swedish Radio come out with a public appeal calling out racism at the station, exposing what scholars refer to as the media diversity & inclusion paradox. Using a mixed methodology involving quantitative and qualitative research, including 11 in-depth interviews with current and former Swedish Radio employees, we draw theoretical inspiration from ethnographically inspired organizational research to argue why achieving 'diversity as polyphony' seems impossible in and through journalism. We contribute to research on epistemologies of journalistic news production, news diversity, and the role of media in democratic societies.

Keywords: Media Diversity, Radio, Sweden, Mixed Methods

Introduction: The Media Diversity & Inclusion Paradox

Research in the field of media diversity has long spread across two traditions reflecting the field of diversity management more broadly: the instrumental tradition (which argues the business case for diversity management) and the critical one (which argues the normative case of social justice and fair representation for diversity management) (Awad-Cherit, 2008). On the one hand, there is a consensus that the news media should strive to present a diversity of opinions and plurality of voices as one of the prerequisites of healthy democracies (Becker, Van Aelst, 2018). On the other hand, the linking of diversity to the reorganization of the (news) media economy has motivated media organizations to prioritize and innovate their media diversity management efforts. As the business models of news organizations evolve, moving increasingly from advertising revenue to subscriptions and while trying to stay relevant in increasingly heterogeneous societies, newsrooms started looking for ways to meaningfully engage with (and maintain) existing audiences, as well as attracting new consumers. Many argue that diverse newsrooms provide the solution, expected to produce diverse content, guarantee better access to sources and communities, and help engage audiences meaningfully and in their own *languages* (Borchardt et al., 2019: 8. See also: Borchardt, 2020; Lück et al., 2020; Toff et al., 2021; English, 2021).

However, as the Reuters Institute's study found in 2019, achieving a satisfying level of staff diversity in the newsrooms remains among the top three challenges faced by the news industry (Borchardt et al., 2019). The European Commission's vice-president Věra Jourová similarly argues that the current progress in diversifying European newsrooms is too slow (Brzozowski, 2020) and European media leaders agree that the *how* question in media diversity management remains acute (Borchardt, 2020; Borchardt et al., 2019). Furthermore, the promise that diversity management will bring innovation into journalism is complicated by the so-called *media diversity & inclusion paradox*. This paradox illustrates the gap between media organizations and newsrooms' expressed commitments to diversity and the experiences of journalists from minority and underrepresented backgrounds working within them (see, e.g., Douglas, 2022; Nwonka, Malik, 2018).

Understanding the *media diversity & inclusion*

paradox and innovating media diversity management efforts is essential for ensuring that journalism remains a cornerstone of healthy democracies and open societies. Today's research on the adoption of innovation in newsrooms primarily centers on the integration of technology in *newswork* (Boczkowski, 2004). In this study of the *media diversity & inclusion paradox*, we aim to emphasize the role of social innovation as a precondition for socio-technological development (Howaldt et al., 2016). Our presented case study of Swedish Radio illustrates the challenges of transforming journalism during a time when news organizations are actively seeking innovations to support their operations, while trying to stay relevant to increasingly distrustful audiences and the heterogeneous societies they are serving.

Literature Review

The existence of the *media diversity & inclusion paradox* has been acknowledged by scholars for some time. The last time economic imperatives opened the doors of newsrooms to a marginalized group was in the 1960s and 1970s in Western Europe and late 1980s in Eastern Europe. Researchers at that time demonstrated that women, who were then considered *the Other* in newsrooms, were treated instrumentally and subjugated to the commercial logic of audience ratings and the commodified form of television and news production (e.g., Van Zoonen, 1998; Djerf-Pierre, Löfgren Nilsson, 2004; Melin, 2008; Gober, 2018).

For a long time, researchers have attempted to understand why and increase in staff diversity often does not result in a more diverse content. Two primary reasons were identified: firstly, processes of professional socialization can override the values that *the Other* might want to bring to the newsroom, values that differ from the traditional and normalized values embraced in the newsroom (e.g., Byerly, 2004; Hanitzsch, Hanusch, 2012). This is now referred to as the epistemological crisis in journalism, pointing to issues related to power, structure, epistemological blind spots, gaps, and exclusions in journalism's prevailing epistemology of objectivity, particularly in the context of USA (see e.g., Callison, Young, 2020; Steensen, 2019; Downie Jr., 2023). Secondly, *the Other* is often expected to cover issues those in power define as suitable for them (Djerf-Pierre, Löfgren Nilsson, 2004; Nwonka, Malik, 2018). Omega Douglas, for example,

drawing on interviews with 26 journalists of color from the UK, argues that UK's mainstream news organizations work to ensure "everyone has a voice", as long as they are "speaking in a way that's in keeping with organisational status quo" (2020:14). She argues that one of the paradoxes of news institutions is allowing race-related stories in the so-called outside world but not within the institution itself (ibid.: 5). Douglas describes mechanisms of exclusion that cause the mismatch between diversity management on paper and in practice and stresses that racism experienced by journalists of color, both within their workspaces and externally (in the field, online) is still rarely acknowledged by the bosses.

Combined, these processes are responsible for what is often referred to as the failed promises of diversity initiatives that often end up reinforcing marginalization of those they intend to benefit. Sara Ahmed, who studies institutional transformations from the perspective of race and cultural studies, calls this *paradox* "folding minorities into life". She argues that until diversity initiatives start with "conditional hospitality", social inclusion will remain a "fantasy" (2012: 163). Similarly, Clive James Nwonka and Sarita Malik challenge the assumption that is prevalent in many diversity debates, that "cultural participation is an enabler of social inclusion" (2018: 1112) or that cultural diversity in the arts and the media is a remedy for racism (Malik, 2002: 46). According to their research from approximately the 2000's, "culture and celebration of difference" were expected to mask the class, gender and ethnic inequalities and structures of power in the UK (ibid.: 1118).

Given the existence of the *media diversity & inclusion paradox* and given the ongoing transformation of journalism, with news organizations searching for innovations and linking diversity to the reorganization of their operations, a research gap emerges. This gap merits a closer examination of an important dimension of this transformation: the tensions that arise between the imperatives that attract organizations to manage diversity and experiences of journalists whose voices and perspectives differ from those traditionally accepted and present in newsrooms. Our paper aims to do just that by posing the following research question: what can we learn about *the paradox* from journalists working for news organizations, that are actively working with the objective of increasing their newsrooms' diversity?

Methodology

To better understand the *media diversity & inclusion paradox* at a time of ongoing transformation of journalism, with news organizations linking diversity management to the reorganization of their operations, we chose to study Swedish Radio. We argue that the extensive work Swedish Radio has done around diversity management and the Vems SR? open letter which was written in 2020 by the Radio's employees is an excellent opportunity to study the *media diversity & inclusion paradox*. To conduct this case study, we chose mixed methodology consisting of quantitative and qualitative methods.

Desk research: To study Swedish Radio's diversity management work we've analyzed the Radio's public service reports published between 2010-2020. These reports are available and published yearly to fulfill the Radio's broadcasting license. The analysis has both a quantitative and a qualitative component. In the quantitative part, we've tracked the use of the word *diversity* (mångfald) and its many variations (diversity concept, work, characters, areas, backgrounds, projects, perspective, policy, reporters, dialogues, mission, goals, questions, ability, and competence) in the reports. In the quantitative part, we've examined the evolution of Swedish Radio's approach to managing diversity. The desk research also included a qualitative analysis of the Vems SR? open letter.

Interviews: Additionally, the case study is informed by 11 in-depth interviews with current and former employees of Swedish Radio, some of whom have also signed the Vems SR? letter. Interviews were conducted between March-September 2022 by one researcher, using a semi-structured interview guide and lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes. The names of the interviewed journalists are changed to protect their anonymity.

We conducted the analysis of both the publicly available documents and the verbatim transcripts of the interviews, following the principles of grounded theory. This analysis consisted of two coding phases performed by both of us: initial (open) coding and focused (theory-driven) coding. To aid in the theory-driven coding phase, we utilized N-Vivo software.

Case Study: Evolution of Swedish Radio's (SR) diversity work

The quantitative part of the analysis demonstrates that

'diversity' was present in the Swedish Radio's reports throughout the whole analyzed period (2010-2020), however gained prominence particularly in the license period between 2014-2019 (Graph 1).

Graph 1: Number of times the word "diversity" and its variations appear in Swedish Radio's public service report between 2010-2022

The quantitative analysis demonstrates how starting from 2010 Swedish Radio's attempts to achieve "versatile and multifaceted offering" in its programming gets tied to the idea of "mirroring of the society". The objective of "mirroring" is to be reflected in broadened and diverse perspectives one can hear on the radio: reports of diverse nature, perspectives, angles, networks as well different cultures and cultural expressions that exist in Sweden (SR, 2010: 49-60). As diversity goals are crystalized the concept of diversity is tied closer to Sweden being a "multicultural" country. The 2011 report explains "Sweden is a multicultural society. This must also be reflected in Swedish Radio's offerings and in the diversity of voices and expressions that are heard daily" (SR, 2011: 70). Examples of diversity goals are given, further demonstrating diversity management's focus on ethnicity and race: "to interview someone concerned/expert/authority with a background other than Swedish every day or that the number of participants with a non-Nordic background should be at least two a week" are given (ibid.: 70).

Apart from the work done to ensure diverse content in the Station's news and programming, diversity is starting to be explored amongst Swedish Radio's employees. The 2013 report makes a bold statement that the "composition of staff, as well as the staff's experiences and perspectives, must reflect Sweden" and admits that "recruiting someone with different references and perspectives is often more demanding than hiring someone who is similar to yourself" (SR, 2013: 79). As efforts towards managing diversity intensify (and the number of times the word diversity in its various forms increases in Swedish Radio's public service reports) a new diversity policy is adopted. The company's goal is to mainstream diversity across all levels of the company's operations, instead of being limited to special initiatives (SR, 2015: 48).

In 2013 the concept of "diversity as competence" is introduced and developed in the subsequent years. The company also begins to actively "scout" employees with "diverse" skills" (SR, 2013: 79). Reports explain that editorial offices for several years have "worked to recruit more reporters with a background that carries different experiences than that of the traditional journalist" (SR, 2014: 40). "Diversity as competence" is described as a "concrete tool to broaden perspectives in journalism and in several cases to make journalism possible at all" (SR, 2015: 49) and it's defined as:

"a person having access to perspectives, networks, and languages other than those common in the editorial office or department. It can be about having networks in environments that are not the usual ones in the programs, having experience of being defined based on the minority you belong to or being able to speak a special language" (ibid.: 49)

Swedish Radio's public service reports demonstrate that the organization departs from conceptualizing diversity based on psycho-sociodemographic individual differences (e.g., gender, age, or ethnicity), and instead focuses on (diverse) competences, which are (promised) to help Swedish Radio achieve the effect of mirroring of the society.

The Vems SR? public appeal regarding racism

In the license period between 2020-2025 diversity received less attention in Swedish Radio's public service reports (a Graph 1 demonstrates). Meanwhile, in September 2020 fifty-eight of the Radio's current and former employees signed an open letter appealing for a discussion on racism in the Radio's coverage and workplace - the Vems SR? public appeal regarding racism at the station (2020). The letter was written in the aftermath of the Black Lives Matter movement, which the journalists felt exposed serious and profound problems with racism also at Swedish Radio.

In the letter the journalists accuse Swedish Radio of both poor and non-existent coverage of social problems that remain outside of the radio's spotlight, calling such practices as going against the broadcaster's own mission. The undersigned stress their belief in the public service mission, i.e., balanced, multifaceted, and factual journalism reflecting the society at its

wholeness. Without such journalism democracy is undermined, they argued.

"We who stand behind this letter are all current or former employees who have a strong belief in the public service mission as a basic foundation for a functioning democracy. Without independent journalism that in a balanced, multifaceted and objective way reflects society, the whole society, democracy is undermined" (Vems SR, 2020).

The letter also highlights issues within SR's work culture, which, according to the journalists, has become increasingly unbearable for Afro-Swedish and non-white journalists, resulting in them leaving the station. The primary concern revolves around biased coverage against minorities and the large diasporas living in Sweden. The biased coverage reproduces and reinforces racist stereotypes, problems which the letter attributes to both lack of knowledge and will to change among SR's editors and managers. The debate on diversity in the Swedish media is deemed ineffective, with 'cosmetic' changes and investments.

According to the letter's signatories, Swedish Radio is failing its own mission statement "More voices and stronger stories for greater understanding" (ibid.). The journalists feel that they are not keeping up with the evolving and nuanced international debate on anti-black racism. They find themselves stuck, constantly having to provide evidence to justify the existence of racism. The allegations against the editorial practices include:

1. Dismissing ideas presented by minority journalists.
2. Dismissing experts with knowledge of racism and discrimination in Sweden, labeling them as controversial or underqualified.
3. Hindering the coverage of stories related to racism within the Swedish police force, discrimination in the labor market, housing segregation, and other similar stories (ibid.).

Racialized journalists at Swedish Radio feel ignored, made suspicious, and questioned. Their expertise, which stems from their experiences as members of

minority communities, is often assumed, then promptly dismissed, or made conditional. They find themselves in situations where their knowledge is sought after but in problematic contexts, such as being asked for contacts related to gun sellers or terrorist organizations. In other situations, their perspectives are ignored or regarded with suspicion. When their viewpoints deviate from the newsroom's editorial line, they are unfairly labeled as partial, biased, or activist.

The letter points out a troubling double standard, emphasizing that white colleagues are never subjected to questions about their impartiality based on their special skills or interests. The journalists believe that SR's largely homogeneous newsrooms harbor an implicit bias, perpetuating a notion of objectivity rooted in a norm of whiteness. This equation of whiteness with objectivity is seen as a form of false objectivity, which the journalists label as "mock objectivity" (ibid.).

The Vems SR? letter illustrates that, despite the organization's apparent efforts to acknowledge and respect a variety of perspectives, it has fallen short of its objective to "mirror the society" from the standpoint of non-dominant journalists. The response from the management and CEO has also raised concerns. Those who signed the letter have faced restrictions on the topics they are permitted to cover. This ban is quite expansive, encompassing not only the letter itself but also any subjects related to race and racism. The rationale provided is that Swedish Radio considers these journalists to be impartial regarding the issues raised in the letter (SVT Nyheter, 2021).

Additionally, Swedish Radio's management has pointed to a specific phrasing in the letter, which they interpret as a call for quotas and, consequently, as being in violation of Swedish law. The signatories have refuted this interpretation, and the Discrimination Ombudsman has affirmed that there is no demand for quotas within the Vems SR? appeal (Nesser, 2021).

Discussion and theoretical contribution: managing diversity as polyphony

Swedish Radio's public service reports indicate a shift away from the traditional approach of conceptualizing diversity solely based on psycho-sociodemographic individual differences. Instead, the focus has shifted towards considering diverse competences. This

communication-centered conceptualization of diversity, emphasizing polyphony and a plurality of voices, is also evident in the efforts of other news media organizations to "manage diversity" (e.g., Borchardt et al., 2019: 37). Research from the Reuters Institute in early 2022 partially attributes this shift to a response to the gender and racial reckonings of recent years. It also acknowledges generational change within the industry, which has prompted more "internal soul-searching in newsrooms over diversity and inclusion" (Newman, 2022: 26).

The shift from conceptualizing diversity based on psycho-sociodemographic differences to a focus on skills and communication-centered perspectives bears resemblance to a change that occurred in the field of anthropology in the 1980s. During that time, the discipline underwent a wave of political and ethical questioning. Clifford Geertz, a prominent American cultural anthropologist, and advocate of interpretive anthropology, noted that the crisis in anthropology was essentially about bridging "the gap between engaging others where they are and representing them where they aren't." This gap, which had always been substantial but not widely acknowledged, "had suddenly become extremely visible" (Geertz, 1988: 130). Taking inspiration from the field of anthropology and following the work of renowned organization and management scholar Barbara Czarniawska, we explore parallels in the developments of ethnographically inspired organizational research to analyze the *media diversity & inclusion paradox*.

In the article "On the Imperative and the Impossibility of Polyphony in Organization Studies" Czarniawska recalls another American cultural anthropologist, Stephen Tyler, who advocated for a different approach to ethnography. He proposed a polyphonic ethnography in which the subjects being studied were allowed "to speak in their own words" (1999: 105). While this may seem straightforward, it sparked extensive discussions about its feasibility. George Marcus, another prominent figure in the same intellectual milieu, ultimately concluded that achieving true polyphony might be impossible. Nevertheless, despite the evident challenges, he suggested that one should at least try to attain a semblance of polyphony (ibid.).

Considering this debate, it may be reasonable to assume that achieving genuine polyphony in an organizational context is exceptionally challenging or even impossible. Nevertheless, organizations should

persist in their efforts to come as close as possible to achieving a semblance of polyphony.

Polyphony is not a mirror

Building upon the theoretical reflections from the previous paragraph, we can argue that the main reason Swedish Radio and the signatories of the Vems SR? letter could not agree on whether the station achieved a "balanced, multifaceted, and factual journalism reflecting the society at its wholeness" was the ambition for the station to "mirror the society" with the help of its employees' "diverse perspectives".

Approaching diversity from a communication-centered perspective of polyphony comes with certain challenges. As Czarniawska points out, polyphony is never about "same saying" or mirroring, but rather about "translation and representation" (1999: 107). The concept of the mirror is problematic because it assumes the possibility of "perfect" understanding, despite the multitude of voices (languages) involved. In contrast, as explained by Czarniawska, translation, and representation always involve linguistic innovation, signifying both transition and transformation. Following Czarniawska's reasoning, polyphonic newsrooms can engage in "translation to innovate" but cannot genuinely "mirror" anything (ibid.).

Problems with translations: listening to 'minority' journalists

Czarniawska argues that problems arise whenever translation is attempted between so called global and local languages. A global language is one that assumes a universal logic for how a society, organization, or professional group functions. Its underlying grammar is believed to be an expression of some universal nature, of which local variations are just deviations (either something is natural/universal or it's deviant) (ibid.). According to Czarniawska, there are two types of consequences resulting from repeated translation from local languages to globalized ones. These consequences, from the perspective of those for whom the globalized language is the second first language, make true polyphony impossible and include:

the struggle over decontextualization and the resulting distortion by translational out of context,

the resulting untranslatability of one's experiences.

For the users of a globalized language (or in the case of Swedish Radio, "traditional journalists"), the distortion by translational out of context is apt to remain invisible. However, for journalists who represent marginalized or non-dominant groups in newsrooms, such distortion poses existential threats. Their experiences are at a risk of being erased, their perspectives mistrusted, undermined, scrutinized, and ridiculed. Alma, a woman from an underrepresented group who has worked with Swedish Radio for 8 years, describes the challenges of struggling against decontextualization in her daily work:

It wasn't easy because the problem, even when there's no one bothering you or actively stopping you, the structures are around you. You're going against the grain all the time. Every time you pitch a story, you pitch a perspective. It's going to be hard labor. Hard labor trying to explain everything from scratch every single time. Why this is important and so on. It was just exhausting.

Vera, a journalist from an underrepresented group with 8 years of work experience at Swedish Radio, shares her struggle:

I did a story together with a colleague on racism in Sweden, but the national newsroom wouldn't publish it. They said it was factually shaky because we didn't have research. But that was the whole story. I explained, but we're talking to someone who is doing research right now, who is saying it is a problem that there's no research on this.

The critical context in this news story is that Sweden does not keep statistics or analyze social data broken down by race or ethnicity. Vera further explains her struggle:

I was trying to explain, but we have interviewed everybody that could be interviewed about this. And they still were saying, you don't have statistics. And that's the problem, that is exactly the angle of the story, I said. But you know what, that is also the problem when it comes to white gaze, that they think that statistics is what defines good journalism.

Swedish Radio's decision to impose restrictions on

journalists who had published the Vems SR? letter left the journalists we spoke to convinced that the untranslatability of their experiences had now become an undeniable reality. Lena, with 7 years of experience at Swedish Radio, reflects on the accusations that those who signed the letter were biased activists, unable to cover stories on race and racism:

It's so easy to call others activist when everything is set to your advantage, right? I remember a white colleague walking up to me and saying, I don't agree with that letter. I just said to him. Come on, you are a white man, I am a young woman of color. Just think about that, our experiences of the world are very different.

Alma explains why she decided to leave the station, after the restrictions were imposed:

(After the restrictions), I reached a point where I could finally make the decision to leave. It's one thing to feel that you can't give up on something, but it's another thing to feel that my journalistic integrity is at play. I cannot work as a journalist with a muzzle, because then I will be puppet.

Conclusion: Babel Tower - A Tale of polyphony

Czarniawska argues that the Genesis story of the Babel Tower is a story of polyphony. The resulting crisis of meaning – what we've come to know as God's punishment – is people searching for the lost perfect language (ibid.: 109). However, Czarniawska suggests that perhaps the Babel Tower is the best thing that ever happened to us, serving as a gateway to critical thinking? Newsrooms and journalists have a unique role to play. Rather than pursuing the lost 'perfect' language and attempting the impossible task of "mirroring society," they should strive for a universal language. Czarniawska adds that a universal language is always a posteriori, not a priori. Journalists, like organizational researchers and consultants, serve as intermediaries who translate between users of local and globalized languages. They act as "merchants of meaning" who assist diverse societies in developing shared meanings (ibid.: 112). The struggle over meaning should be seen as a natural component of the newsroom environment, something that a communication-centered conceptualization of diversity as polyphony also necessitates – a dynamic process of

polyphonic voice articulation and mediation (Trittin, Schoeneborn, 2015: 3).

Diversity, media managers are promised, is going to help news organizations stay competitive and attract new customers by fostering innovation, creativity, and change. However, for this to happen experiences of journalists, with whom organizations are working to increase that said diversity, need to be taken seriously and seen as a crucial and critical element of the change process, instead of being ignored, dismissed, or threatened with suspicion. As Reuters Institute's research from the beginning of 2022 summed up: "The lack of diversity and lack of equity in journalism are well documented and won't be solved this year, but more publishers are now openly acknowledging the damage this has done in terms of public trust and audience attention" (Newman, 2022). That same research also found promising signs of change with a more diverse set of editors questioning traditional assumptions about how to cover the news (ibid.: 26).

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The research leading to these results has received funding from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021. Research project no. 2020/37/K/HS2/03773 titled Diversity management as innovation in journalism (<https://managingnewsroomdiversity.com>).

References

Ahmed, S. (2012). *On being included: racism and diversity in institutional life*. Durham, N.C. Duke University Press.

Awad-Cherit, I. (2008). "Cultural Diversity in the News Media: A Democratic or a Commercial Need?"

Javnost-The Public 15 (4): 55–72.

Becker, K., Van Aelst, P. (2018). "Look Who's Talking." *Journalism Studies*. doi:10.1080.1461670X.2018.1463169.

Boczkowski, P.J. (2004). *Digitizing the News: Innovation in Online Newspapers*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Borchardt, A., Lück, J., Kieslich, S., Schultz, T., Simon, F. (2019). "Are Journalists Today's Coal Miners? The Struggle for Talent and Diversity in Modern Newsrooms – A Study on Journalists in Germany, Sweden, and the United Kingdom", Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/our-research/are-journalists-todays-coal-miners-struggle-talent-and-diversity-modern-newsrooms> [08.09.2023]

Borchardt, A. (2020). "Getting real about the diversity", European Federation of Journalists, <https://europeanjournalists.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Getting-Real-About-Talent-and-Diversity-%E2%80%93-10-Recommendations-2.pdf> [08.09.2023]

Brzozowski, A. (2020, Nov. 25). "Diversity in media sector: Still lots of room for improvement", EuroActiv.com <https://www.euractiv.com/section/non-discrimination/news/diversity-in-the-media-sector-still-with-lots-of-room-for-improvement/> [08.09.2023]

Buchanan, L., Bui, Q., Patel, J.K. (2020, June 6). "Black Lives Matter May Be the Largest Movement in U.S. History." *The New York Times*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html> [08.09.2023]

Byerly, C. M. (2004). "Feminist Interventions in Newsrooms". In: K. Ross and C. M. Byerly (eds.), *Women in Media. International Perspectives*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing: 109-131.

Callison, C., Young, M. L. (2020). *Reckoning: Journalism's Limits and Possibilities*. Online edition: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190067076.001.0001>

Czarniawska, B. (1999). "Chapter 7 On the Imperative and the Impossibility of Polyphony in Organization Studies." Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org.ezp.s>

- ub.su.se/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198296140.003.0007
- Djerf- Pierre, M., Löfgren Nilsson, M. (2004). "Gender-Typing in the Newsroom: the Feminization of Swedish Television News Production, 1958-2000". In: M. de Bruin and K. Ross (eds.), *Gender and Newsroom Cultures. Identities at Work*. Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press: 81-104.
- Douglas, O. (2022). "The media diversity and inclusion paradox: Experiences of black and brown journalists in mainstream British news institutions." *Journalism*, 23(10), 2096–2113. <https://doi.org.ezp.sub.su.se/10.1177/1464884921100177>
- Downie Jr., L. (2023, January 23). "Newsrooms that move beyond 'objectivity' can build trust." *WashingtonPost.com*
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/01/30/newsrooms-news-reporting-objectivity-diversity/> [08.09.2023]
- English, K. (2021). "How a revitalized Public Editor role could solve two of journalism's biggest crises." Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/how-revitalised-public-editor-role-could-solve-two-journalisms-biggest-crises> [08.09.2023]
- Geertz, C. (1988). *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Gober, G. (2018). *Instytucja medialna przez pryzmat płci [Media institution through the prism of gender]*. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Katedra.
- Hanitzsch, T., Hanusch, F. (2012). "Does gender determine journalists' professional views? A reassessment based on cross-national evidence". *European Journal of Communication*, 27(3): 257–277.
- Howaldt, J., Domanski, D., Kaletka, C. (2016). "Social Innovation: towards a new innovation paradigm". *RAM. Revista de Administração Mackenzie*, 17(6): 20-44.
- Khan-Cullors, P. (2016, Feb 23). "We didn't start a movement. We started a network." *Medium.com*
<https://medium.com/@patrissemarieculorsbrignac/we-didn-t-start-a-movement-we-started-a-network-90f9b5717668> [08.09.2023]
- Lück, J., Schultz, T., Simon, F., Borchardt, A., Kieslich, S. (2020). "Diversity in British, Swedish, and German Newsrooms: Problem Awareness, Measures, and Achievements." *Journalism Practice*, DOI: 10.1080/17512786.2020.1815073
- Malik, S. (2002). *Representing black Britain: Black and Asian images on television*. London, UK: Sage.
- Melin, M. (2008). "Gendered Journalism Cultures. Strategies and Tactics in the Fields of Journalism in Britain and Sweden". Dissertation. Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, University of Gothenburg.
- Nesser, J. (2021, Jan. 29). "Så tystar SR journalister som undertecknat uppöppet." *Journalisten.se*
<https://www.journalisten.se/nyheter/sa-tystar-sr-journalister-som-undertecknat-uppöppet> [08.09.2023]
- Newman, N. (2022). "Journalism, media, and technology trends and predictions 2022". Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2022-01/Newman%20-%20Trends%20and%20Predictions%202022%20FINAL.pdf> [08.09.2023]
- Nwonka, C. J., Malik, S. (2018). "Cultural discourses and practices of institutionalized diversity in the UK film sector: 'Just get something black made'". *Sociological Review*, 66(6): 1111-1127.
- Steensen, S. (2019). "Journalism's epistemic crisis and its solution: Disinformation, datafication and source criticism". *Journalism* 20(1), 185-189.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884918809271>
- SR. (2010). Sveriges Radio. Public service-redovisning 2010.
<https://sverigesradio.se/diverse/appdata/isidor/files/3113/10332.pdf> [08.09.2023]
- SR. (2011). Sveriges Radio. Public service-redovisning 2011.
<https://sverigesradio.se/diverse/appdata/isidor/files/3113/12007.pdf> [08.09.2023]
- SR. (2013). Sveriges Radio. Public service-redovisning 2013.

<https://sverigesradio.se/diverse/appdata/isidor/files/3113/14112.pdf> [08.09.2023]

SR. (2014). Sveriges Radio. Public service-redovisning 2014.

<https://sverigesradio.se/diverse/appdata/isidor/files/3113/14763.pdf> [08.09.2023]

SR. (2015). Sveriges Radio. Public service-redovisning 2015.

<https://sverigesradio.se/diverse/appdata/isidor/files/3113/b6743f9f-4bf7-4bf3-b2f8-94f0249195f4.pdf> [08.09.2023]

SVT Nyheter (2021, Feb. 5). "Sveriges Radio-journalister begränsas efter upprop om rasism." <https://www.svt.se/kultur/sveriges-radio-journalister-har-fatt-restriktioner-efter-upprop-om-rasism> [08.09.2023]

Toff, B., Badrinathan, S., Mont'Alverne, C., Ross Arguedas, A., Fletcher, R., Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, R. (2021). "Depth and breadth: How news organizations navigate trade-offs around building trust in news." Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/depth-and-breadth-how-news-organisations-navigate-trade-offs-around-building-trust-news> [08.09.2023]

Trittin, H., Schoeneborn, D. (2015). "Diversity as Polyphony: Reconceptualizing Diversity Management from a Communication-Centered Perspective." *Journals of Business Ethics*, 144:305-322.

UN News (2022, Nov. 4). "Sweden: Step up efforts to fight systemic racism, urge UN experts". <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/11/1130217> [08.09.2023]

Van Zoonen. L. (1998). "One of the girls? The changing gender of journalism". In: C. Carter, G. Branston and S. Allan (eds.), *News, Gender and Power*. London; New York: Routledge: 33–46.

Vems SR. (2020). Vems SR? Ett upprop för representation och mot rasism på Sveriges Radio

<https://vemssr.wordpress.com> [08.09.2023]

This letter was written by 58 current and former employees of Swedish Radio, including 28 individuals

who were named and 30 who chose to remain anonymous. It was penned in September 2020 and aimed to initiate a discussion on racism within the coverage and workplace of Swedish Radio (<https://vemssr.wordpress.com>).

Public service broadcasting companies in Sweden, i.e., Swedish Television (SVT), Swedish Radio (SR) and Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company (UR), operate under a broadcasting license, granted by the Government, and are required to submit yearly public service reports to the Swedish Broadcasting Commission (<https://www.mpr.se/en/broadcasting/public-service-broadcasting/>).

We've conducted the interviews to inform a research project "Diversity management as innovation in journalism" (funded by Norway grants), where we aim to study cases of innovative approaches to diversity management in journalism, launched by newsrooms in Poland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (www.managingnewsroomdiversity.com).

K. Charmaz, *Constructing grounded theory. 2nd edition*, Thousand Oaks, CA 2014.

All translations from Swedish to English are made by Swedish speaking colleague of the authors.

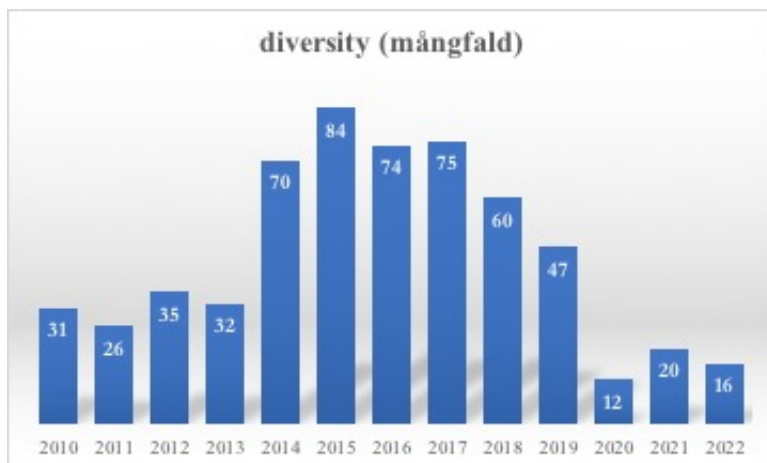
Black Lives Matter grew from a USA based network to a global movement starting from 2013 (Khan-Cullors, 2016). It gained international attention during the global George Floyd protests in 2020 following his murder by a police officer (Buchanan et al., 2020).

The letter mentions Swedish Somalis, Swedish Afghans, Swedish Syrians, unaccompanied minors (ibidem).

The letter clarifies that all people have a race, but some are racialized as non-white, i.e., as a negative deviation from the whiteness norm (ibidem).

Czarniawska uses the notion of translation in what she calls Latourian way i.e., in a much wider sense than merely referring to language (1999: 104).

This has been recently pointed out as problematic by UN human rights experts on non-discrimination who noted that "Sweden must collect and use this data to fight systemic racism" (UN News, 2022).



Graph 1: Number of times the word "diversity" and its variations appear in Swedish Radio's public service report between 2010-2022