

Tracking ethnic newsroom diversity in Germany

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Thanks to

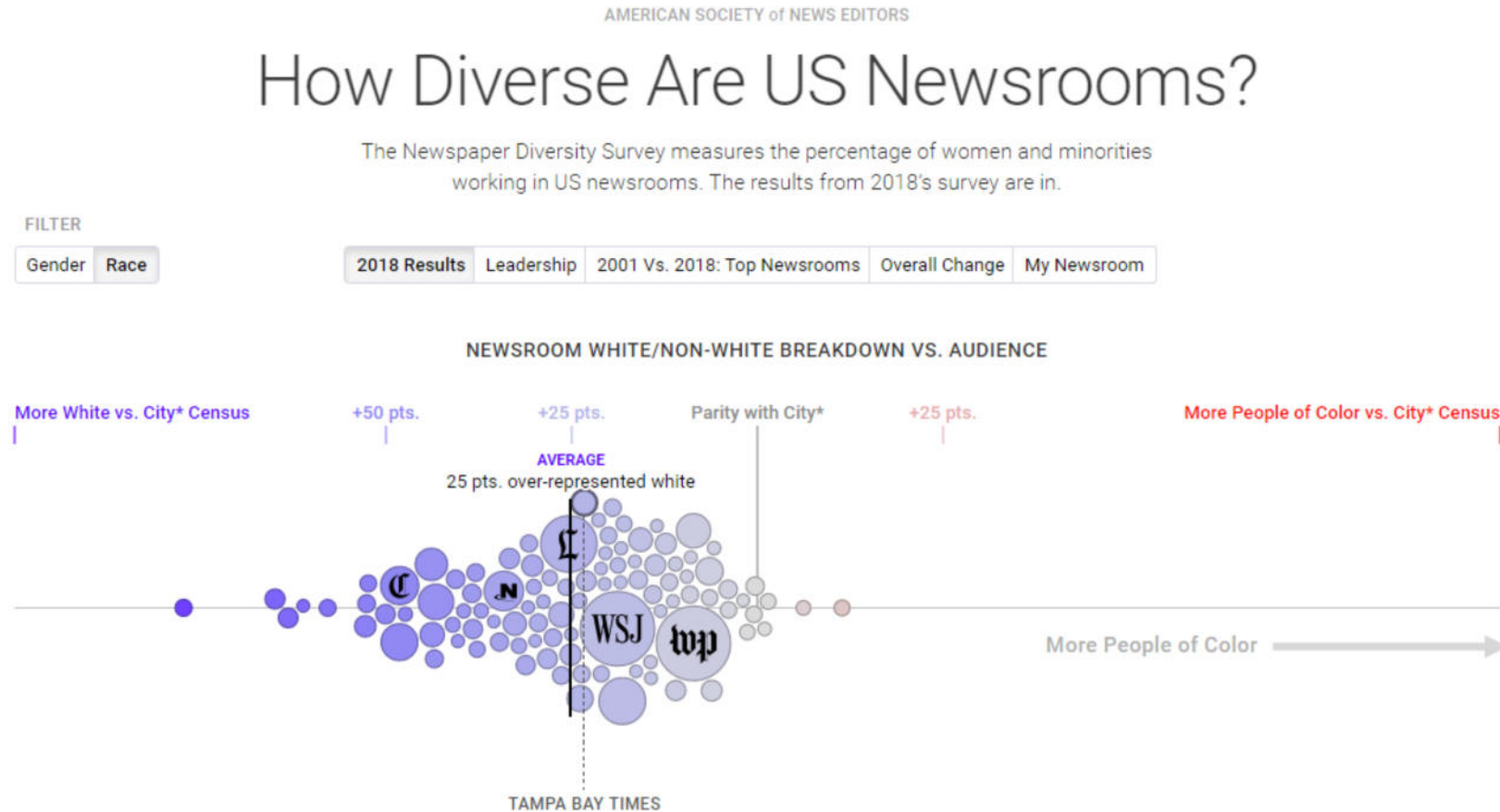
Malin Neumüller



Why newsroom diversity (tracking) matters

- A deep relationship with readers leads to improved trust, stronger journalism, credibility and sustainable business.
- That connection can be difficult to establish when newsroom leaders and staff don't reflect the communities they serve.
- To interpret any issue, you must begin with the data.

What is known – USA



- Ongoing survey for 40 years by the American Society of News Editors, now funded by Google

What is known – Germany

- Pro Quote – analyses gender diversity, tracking based on names
- 23,6 percent migration background
- Last representative study in 2009, 84 percent of daily newspapers do not have any journalists with a migration background
- Attempts to systematically record the situation afterwards failed due to a lack of research funding on the topic and the effort involved. The response rate of editorial offices is low.
- More recent study limits itself to unrepresentative estimates and deals primarily with the situation in North Rhine-Westphalia, 4 percent of journalists with a migration background.



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Migranten als Journalisten?

Eine Studie zu Berufsperspektiven in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft

Herausgeber: **Pöttker**, Horst, **Kiesewetter**, Christina, **Lofink**, Juliana (Hrsg.)

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Tracking project – approach

- Study of prominent German newsrooms
- Around 130 media selected based on circulation / reach
- Local, national newspapers
- Magazines
- Public and private TV
- Public and private radio
- Online
- Questions sent out to editor in chief and press office

Tracking project – questions

- 1) Do you know the proportion of journalists with a migration background in your editorial staff? We follow the definition of the Federal Statistical Office, according to which a person has a migration background if he or she or at least one parent was not born with German nationality.

Tracking project – questions

- 2) If yes: How many journalists with a migration background are employed in your editorial department? Of how many employed journalists in total?

Tracking project – questions

3) In order to create data on the proportion of female journalists with a migration background in management positions, we also survey the number of chief editors with a migration background. According to our findings, you are editor-in-chief of XXX and have no migration background. Is this true?

Tracking project – questions

- 4) In the course of the so-called #MeTwo debate, the German Journalists' Association demanded in a resolution on 5.11.2018 that "the composition of society must also be reflected in the editorial offices". The DJV appeals to media companies "to reflect social diversity in the selection of their employees - for example with regard to age, gender, ethnicity, social origin, sexual orientation as well as physical and mental condition". How do you assess this resolution?

Tracking project – examples

- Unfortunately, we do not have such data about employees – it would also be legally highly problematic to collect, store and evaluate them.
– big national German magazine
- Four out of 71 permanent colleagues (some of them part-time) have a migrant background according to this definition. It may well be that other colleagues have a migration background, but this is not known. We are not specifically asking about it. – local newspaper
- Please understand that it is not customary for us to ask employees about their ancestors or their origins. We would find the idea alone alienating. – local newspaper

Tracking project – examples

- In the editorial offices we have a number of employees with a migration background. However, we cannot quantify this for data protection reasons alone, because the HR department does not explicitly ask whether an employee, let alone a parent, has a migration background. – local newspaper
- After consultation with the personnel department, my impression has been confirmed that we do not have any personnel with a migration background. According to the definition of the Federal Statistical Office, however, it cannot be ruled out that there are isolated Polish or other Eastern European roots, but it is not known. – local newspaper
- I cannot verify this exactly, but I am very sure that there are two colleagues (out of 105). – local newspaper

Tracking project – examples

- I get this mail every few weeks. I've sat this out so far and I don't see any increased interest on our part in a participation. Our future in this respect is regulated by the labor market and the development of our company. Statistical knowledge is of little help to us here. – local newspaper
- No. The number of employees with a migration background is currently not recorded. When it comes to filling vacancies or selecting junior staff, however, increasing cultural diversity in the editorial offices as well as in the administration is an important concern. Since 2014, we have trained journalists with Greek, Turkish, Syrian, Tunisian, Polish and Vietnamese migration backgrounds, who continue to be associated with the institution in a variety of ways. – national public radio station
- For reasons of data protection and anti-discrimination, we are not allowed to collect information about the origin of our employees. – national public TV station

Tracking project – examples

- Since we do not collect family background data when hiring employees, we cannot provide such data to you. Of course, from personal knowledge and private relationships one knows whether or not there is a migration background, but this is not specifically stated, and many of our employees explicitly do not want this because they already see it as a form of discrimination. – state public TV station
- No, I'm not aware of that in detail. I know something about your background from some colleagues and not from others. And I think it is forbidden to ask about it, for a superior at any rate. The current #vonhier debate has once again quite rightly sharpened sensitivity for this".

Our project – trends / outlook

- Hardly any newsroom tracks ethnic diversity
- Different reasoning, heterogeneous approach of dealing with data
- Ethnic diversity lower in newsrooms significantly lower than in population
- Publish data in upcoming months
- Follow up project / regular survey similar to the US?
- EU-project?

Thank you!

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Thanks to



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