

## **Lack of diversity in Canadian media**

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Several studies and reports, including two very recent Canadian studies, indicate a serious lack of diversity in media, not only in who is represented in coverage, but also in who is working in media. Presently, media workers – journalists, broadcasters, editors, photographers, etc. – are predominantly cisgender, heterosexual, white men.

Although some progress has been made, men still make up the majority of journalists globally and women's underrepresentation in media is especially evident in governance and decision-making roles. Studies in Australia, Canada, the U.K., and the U.S. have found that approximately 70% of news articles are written by men and that men are quoted, photographed, and have their achievements discussed at a much higher rate than women. We see, hear, or read about women's experiences and accomplishments in fewer than a quarter of news stories, and women make up fewer than 15 per cent of quoted experts.

When looking at the results of the Canadian Newsroom Diversity Survey, conducted by the Canadian Association of Journalists, it is important to note the low response rate and that the national averages cited in the survey are being driven by a small number of large newsrooms. These large newsrooms tend to have greater racial diversity, but most Canadian newsrooms tend to be whiter than the audiences they serve.

The Toronto Star, for instance, which owns the Niagara Dailies, shared that – at the time of the survey – 68.5% of its full-time staff is white, 22.8% are of Asian descent, and none of the Star's full-time staff are Indigenous. The Toronto Star's gender balance is split at 47.6% each of people who identify as women or as men, with 4.8% identifying as non-binary or choosing not to disclose their gender identity.

Looking at only Niagara, though, we see a starker picture in terms of diversity. Again, at the time of the survey, there are no women in supervisory positions at the St. Catharines Standard; the full-time staff is 71.4% men; and all of the staff are white. At the Niagara Falls Review, we see the same results in terms of race in that 100% of the staff are white. With respect to gender, 75% of the full-time staff are men, and two-thirds of the supervisory roles are held by men. At Niagara this Week, we see a little more diversity in that supervisory roles are evenly split between women and men, and there is representation among the full-time staff of Black and Asian journalists; however, 70% of Niagara this Week's full-time staff and 100% of its part-time staff are men. We are also aware that Niagara this Week employs a disabled woman among its full-time journalists, and we are not aware of any of the dailies having disabled journalists on staff.

Admittedly, it is difficult to know if increasing diversity in newsrooms and media leadership would change the representation of women and other equity-deserving groups in news coverage, because several studies have found that there is no “sex-of-journalist difference” in how news is covered or that it makes little difference in the gender balance of news coverage. Other studies also found that there is little difference in how news is covered by white journalists versus how it is covered by journalists who are racially-marginalized, and it is noted in all of these studies that the lack of difference may be due to the pervasiveness of the white male point of view and notions of what it means to be objective.

Progress can be made is in adopting strategies that are inclusive, rather than simply focused on diversity, and by rethinking what it means for news coverage and journalists to be objective.