

# Representing the Underrepresented: Exploring Diversity in CBC News Media and the Role of Self-Identifying Journalists in Disrupting Traditional Practices

Darnell Wyke

## Abstract

In recent years, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) has bolstered its diversity efforts, and in 2021 they announced a new equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) plan to be implemented through 2025, designed to better serve underrepresented groups in Canadian media. Throughout the past decade, CBC has made multiple efforts to increase EDI practices throughout its organization. However, scholarship has identified the limitations of previous policies in making a meaningful impact, and research documenting the underrepresentation of diverse groups in Canadian news media is almost non-existent. The objective of this study is to acquire a deeper understanding of how CBC News programming reflects Canada's current cultural diversity by studying how diverse groups are represented in CBC News programming. To measure this, a two-week content analysis of written and televised CBC News was conducted, which explored and categorized emergent themes in the representation of diverse Canadians and the journalists who cover diverse stories. The data revealed CBC's extensive coverage of Indigenous communities and a commitment to empowering diverse journalists with the opportunity to tell such stories about the communities to which they belong. To further investigate the latter phenomenon, a discourse analysis of diverse stories written by self-identifying journalists was conducted. This section highlighted how self-identifying journalists incorporate personal experience to tell more impactful stories about the communities they identify with. Finally, this report illuminates potential oversights in CBC's coverage of underrepresented groups in news media. This report encourages CBC to conduct an internal organizational review to evaluate how they can improve news coverage of underrepresented groups before the conclusion of their current EDI plan in 2026, suggesting the continued empowerment of self-identifying journalists and including more diverse perspectives into the newsfeed as potential solutions.

## Keywords

EDI, journalism, representation, diversity, news media, CBC, Indigenous



**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY**  
Department of Communication,  
Media and Film

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## Introduction

For decades, researchers have highlighted and examined how diverse Canadians are underrepresented across the Canadian media landscape (Mahtani, 2001). Studies have demonstrated that despite Canada's real and perceived multiculturalism, diverse populations continue to be misrepresented and underrepresented in Canadian media (Mahtani, 2001; Clark, 2014). As others have highlighted, this issue is not localized to Canada, in many countries across the Western world, cultural minorities are both misrepresented and underrepresented across a wide variety of media discourses (Klein & Shiffman, 2009; Clark, 2014; Arguedes et al., 2023).

In 2008, diversity within news media was recognized by Canadian media professionals as one of the five areas of Canadian media that requires further research (Savage, 2008). Despite the call for action, over the last 15 years, studies that investigate diversity in Canadian media remain scarce. Driving much of the research in this area is Brad Clark, whose 2014 and 2017 studies of CBC's organizational norms revealed the difficulties of CBC's EDI policies in meaningfully impacting the news coverage of underrepresented groups (Clark, 2014; Clark, 2017). Clark demonstrates news media's implicit biases against reporting on diverse groups and offers actionable strategies to combat these biases, including empowering diverse reporters with the opportunity to use their cultural knowledge in diverse stories (Clark, 2017). In the nine years since Clark conducted his initial study, Canada's population has become more diverse (StatsCanada, 2022b). There are now over 450 ethnic groups living in Canada and the percentage of people who belong to racialized groups has increased every year since 2016 (StatsCanada, 2022b). Therefore, it is imperative, now more than ever, that Canadian news media represent Canada's diverse population and perspectives.

To this point, there has been a paucity of quantitative research on the extent to which diverse Canadians are being underrepresented in news media, which groups are being underrepresented, and the nature in which these groups are being underrepresented. However, it would be incorrect to suggest there has been no research at all into these areas. As Clark (2017) highlights, there have been studies in North America that have produced quantitative demographic data about minority participation in news media, however, this research mostly emerged during the early 2010s and focused on the identity of news producers, rather than the subjects of the news themselves. This study seeks to emphasize the importance of researching the stories that are produced by Canadian news organizations, and while the producers of the

texts are considered, the bulk of the data focuses on the news texts. In this aspect, this research study is the first Canadian quantitative study of the author's knowledge to approach the study of diversity and representation in Canadian news media from this perspective.

### **Methodology**

This two-part study began with a hybrid qualitative/quantitative content analysis of National and Local CBC Front Page News. The content analysis used qualitative research methods to develop codes to highlight themes and trends, while quantitative methods were used to document the data. This method has proven to be successful in previous studies in which the researcher seeks emerging themes from the data (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). In these instances, hybrid coding is useful. To understand what would be required for the content analysis, before the project officially began, I immersed myself in CBC news content to familiarize myself with the structure and norms of both television and written news. This process lasted approximately two weeks and helped me gain a deeper understanding of the types of data points I should look for, where to look for them, and how CBC's website worked to categorize and display different news stories. Once I was satisfied that I had a strong understanding of CBC's news content, I conducted a small literature review of media representation studies to understand the steps others had taken to create codes and what they felt was most important to document during their research. I then combined my preliminary research with that of previous scholarship to inform a set of priori codes to begin my study with. The priori codes were developed to fit within the accepted academic framework and engage with existing literature, as recommended by Proudfoot (2022), in his analysis of inductive and deductive hybrid thematic analysis in mixed methods research.

The second component of this study was a discourse analysis of stories written by diverse self-identifying journalists about the communities with which they identified with. Since its rise in popularity in the 1980s, discourse analysis has been an important tool in the study of mass media messaging (Van Dijk, 1983). Discourse analysis provides the opportunity to research themes within the texts, observing both what is said and what is omitted, as well as the strategies that inform the production of such texts (Van Dijk, 1983). Short of conducting interviews with self-identifying journalists, discourse analysis provides the best opportunity to understand the practices of self-identifying journalists at CBC.

The term ‘diverse’ is used often throughout this paper and, given it has become a buzzword in modern society, a definition is useful for understanding its purpose in this study. The term was selected as it was thought to be more positive than categorizing people as racialized or marginalized. By using ‘diverse’ in place of these words, the focus on the differences of individuals does not carry a negative connotation. Additionally, this study was designed to be as inclusive as possible to impact the greatest number of diverse groups who have historically been underrepresented in Canadian legacy news media and are, in general, not the majority population in Canada. While other studies have typically focused on a select few core groups, this is exclusive and potentially ignorant of other groups that are also experiencing underrepresentation, which is why this study includes ethnic minorities, gender minorities, religious minorities, and people with disabilities under the umbrella term ‘diverse individuals.’ It is also therefore important to identify why women, while not excluded from the study, do not make up a distinct category in the qualitative data of this study. In short, while the quality of the study may have improved from gendered coding, one of the most important aspects of this study was its commitment to straying away from traditional labeling practices that are often used in these types of studies and instead relying upon the self-identification of individuals and news producers to aid in the coding process. Therefore, since most sources of gender were not identified, it did not feel right to assign genders and make it a part of this study. Furthermore, the scope of the study was already very large given the timeframe, and including as many different groups was prioritized above differences within specific groups. This study does, however, recognize that women, specifically diverse women, are a historically underrepresented group as both news producers and sources of stories, and future inquiry into this topic is recommended.

**Part 1: Content Analysis**

**Table 1**

*Total Number of News Stories*

<b>TYPE OF NEWS</b>	<b>DIVERSE LOCAL NEWS</b>	<b>NON-DIVERSE LOCAL NEWS</b>	<b>DIVERSE NATIONAL NEWS</b>	<b>NON-DIVERSE NATIONAL NEWS</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>

<b>TELEVISION NEWS</b>	25	36	46	70	177
<b>WRITTEN NEWS</b>	37	220	150	352	759
<b>TOTALS</b>	62	256	196	422	936

The sample for the study comprised 62 *Diverse Local News Stories* and 196 *Diverse National News Stories*, for a total of 258 *Diverse Stories* (stories referencing a diverse group or individual in some form or fashion). This study tracked how numerous stories appeared in the news each day to identify what percentage of stories are diverse, which is the reason 936 stories are identified in Table 1. However, the 678 non-diverse stories were not coded any further and are thus not a part of the sample.

In total, *Diverse Stories* made up 27.6% of *All Stories* (every story, both diverse and non-diverse, that appeared throughout the study). Even if diverse populations were not the focus of the story, stories were coded as diverse, even when a diverse individual only appeared as a source in the story, or a theme about a diverse group was mentioned. An example of this would be a story that mentions the government wanting to improve infrastructure for Indigenous communities as part of a larger story about policy. *Diverse Stories* made up 24.6% of written news stories, appearing 29.9% in *National Written News* and 14.4% in *Local Written News*. *Diverse Stories* made up 40% of all television news stories, appearing in 39.7% of *National Television News* and 40.1% of *Local Television News*.

**Table 2**

***Frequency Data: Number of Stories Underrepresented Groups Appear In***

<b>GROUP BEING REPRESENTED</b>	<b># OF STORIES BY SELF IDENTIFYING JOURNALISTS</b>	<b># OF STORIES NOT BY SELF-IDENTIFYING JOURNALISTS</b>	<b>TOTAL # OF STORIES GROUP APPEARS IN</b>
<b>2SLGBTQIA+</b>	0	16	16
<b>ASIAN</b>	3	10	13
<b>BLACK</b>	0	69	69

<b>DISABLED PEOPLE</b>	0	17	17
<b>DIVERSE INDIVIDUALS (ALL)</b>	1	3	4
<b>EAST INDIAN</b>	0	33	33
<b>FOREIGNERS</b>	0	2	2
<b>IMMIGRANTS</b>	0	10	10
<b>INDIGENOUS</b>	17	66	83
<b>INDIGENOUS (MÉTIS)</b>	2	8	10
<b>LATIN AMERICAN</b>	0	7	7
<b>MIDDLE EASTERN</b>	1	8	9
<b>RELIGIOUS MINORITIES</b>	0	13	13
<b>UNIDENTIFIED VISIBLE MINORITIES</b>	0	20	20

The data from *Table 2* seems to indicate a higher number of *Diverse Stories* than previously reported in this paper. However, some stories focused on multiple groups at the same time. For instance, a singular story could be about both Black and Indigenous people. While the story is coded at each code, it does not mean an additional story is about diversity, hence the discrepancy in the two figures.

The most represented diverse group during this study is Indigenous people, who appear in 32.2% of *Diverse Stories* and 8.9% of *All Stories*. The second most represented group is Black people, who receive coverage in 26.7% of *Diverse Stories* and 7.3% of *All Stories*. The distant, yet clear third most represented group is East Indian people, who appear in 12.7% of *Diverse Stories* and 3.5% of *All Stories*. In total, the *Three Most Represented Groups* appear in 71.6% of *Diverse Stories* and 19.7% of *All Stories*. No other group is represented in over 8% of *Diverse Stories*.

*Less Represented Groups* refer to those groups who appear in 10 or more stories but are not part of the *Three Most Represented Groups*. *Less Represented Groups* include 2SLGBTQIA+ people, Asian people, Disabled people, Immigrants, Métis people, Religious Minorities, and Unidentified Visible Minorities (visible minorities who are not identified as belonging to a specific group). In total, *Less Represented Groups* appear in 30.6% of *Diverse Stories* and 8.4% of *All Stories*.

The *Least Represented Groups* are those that appear in less than 10 stories across the length of the study. This group includes Foreigners (people represented as foreign visitors/permanent residents with no other identifiers), Middle Eastern people, Latin American people, and Diverse Individuals (stories referring to multiple diverse people at the same time who do not belong to the same group). In total, the *Least Represented Groups* made up just 8.5% of *Diverse Stories* and 2.3% of *All Stories*.

Stories were also coded according to where they appear in the news. When it comes to the news, the location of the story matters. There is a difference between front-page and back-page news. While this study focuses only on *Front-Page News*, this is defined through the context of a modern digital media landscape, in which news is most often delivered digitally, not physically. Digital distribution allows for more stories to reach *Front-Page News*, as readers can easily scroll through the website without having to physically flip through the pages. Once a reader is forced to commit an action that involves anything other than simply scrolling (aside from clicking on a story they would like to read), the story is no longer considered to be a part of the front page.

**Table 3**

***Diverse Stories Told by Self-Identifying Journalists***

AUTHOR IDENTITY	# OF STORIES TOLD	# OF UNIQUE STORIES TOLD
INDIGENOUS	7	6
INDIGENOUS AND BLACK	1	1
BLACK	8	3
MÉTIS	3	2

<b>KOREAN</b>	1	1
<b>FRENCH</b>	1	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	21	14

Out of 258 *Diverse Stories*, only 21 stories (8.1%) are told by journalists who self-identified as belonging to a specific cultural group. This number differs from the 24 stories referenced in Table 2 because some stories were told by self-identifying journalists who focused on more than one diverse group. The most likely reporters to self-identify are Indigenous and Black people, who when combined account for 16 stories (76.2%) told by self-identifying journalists. When repeat stories are omitted, there are just 14 unique stories told by self-identifying authors, with half being told by Indigenous authors.

**Table 4**

***Frequency of Diverse Stories***

<b># OF DAYS STORY APPEARS</b>	<b>APPEARS ONCE</b>	<b>APPEARS MORE THAN ONCE</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<b>THE AUTHOR DOES NOT SELF-ID</b>	136	48	184
<b>AUTHOR SELF IDs</b>	14	7	21
<b>NO REPORTER IDENTIFIED</b>	9	11	20
<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	28	5	33
<b>TOTALS</b>	187	71	258

71.3% of *Diverse Stories* are told by journalists who refrained from self-identifying themselves as belonging to a particular cultural group. 20.5% of *Diverse Stories* are not credited to any one specific author. Stories are coded as having *No Reporter Identified* when there is no reporter associated with a particular story. Stories are coded as being authored by an organization when the story is accredited to a news organization instead of a particular author, such as CBC News or AP News.



**Table 5**

***Number of Stories that Appeared Twice or More on the Same Day***

# OF DAYS STORY APPEARS	THE STORY APPEARS ONCE ON THE SAME DAY	THE STORY APPEARS TWICE ON THE SAME DAY	TOTALS
STORY APPEARS ONCE	164	23	187
STORY APPEARS TWICE	64	7	71

187 stories only appear once in the newsfeed. However, this number is still not indicative of the number of *Unique Diverse Stories* that appear in this study. 23 stories appear twice or more on the same day in *Front Page News* and only once in the news cycle. Seven stories appear twice or more on the same day in *Front Page News* and appear multiple days in the news cycle. Taking this into account, there are a total of 164 *Unique Diverse Stories* that appear in the newsfeed, which makes up 63.6% of all *Diverse Stories* that appear in this study. Further research should be conducted on how often unique diverse stories appear in the newsfeed compared to unique non-diverse stories.

**Topic Data**

18 unique topics were identified and coded. A high number of topics were identified to highlight the variety of diverse stories encountered throughout the study. The same story could be coded to multiple topics if the content of the story called for it. For instance, one story used the story of visual artists and their exhibits to discuss cultural concerns affecting the artist's community. For this story, it was appropriate to code it both as a story about *Arts* as well as *Concerns of the Community Culture*.

The most discussed topic in *Diverse Stories* is *Concerns of the Community*. I identified four mutually exclusive types of community concerns categories. These included **Culture** (Concerns of the community that have to do with that the specific group to which the story is discussing) and environment (Concerns of the Community regarding the environment). **Health** (Concerns of the community regarding the overall health of the group or one of its members), and **Place** (Concerns of people living within the same place, spatially or economically).

Ultimately, all these subcategories were grouped into *Concerns of the Community* as the primary topic, the community concern about a particular event/thing, is the same.

**Table 6*****Topics of Diverse Stories***

<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>INDIGENOUS</b>	<b>BLACK</b>	<b>EAST INDIAN</b>	<b>OTHER (11 GROUPS)</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<b>CONCERNS</b>	29	34	20	63	146
<b>INT NEWS</b>	2	15	10	11	38
<b>ARTS</b>	10	10	0	13	33
<b>NTRL DIS.</b>	17	3	0	7	27
<b>EXCEPTIONALISM</b>	8	8	1	8	25
<b>INNOVATION</b>	14	1	2	5	22
<b>INJUSTICE</b>	1	5	0	13	19
<b>HEROIC STORIES</b>	3	2	0	10	15
<b>VIOL. (INFLICTED)</b>	3	1	7	1	12
<b>AGGR. (INFLICTED)</b>	1	1	0	9	11
<b>SPORTS</b>	2	12	0	2	16
<b>VIOL. (COMMITTED)</b>	0	2	0	4	6
<b>AGGR. (COMMITTED)</b>	0	0	0	1	1
<b>GOOD SAMARITAN</b>	7	2	0	4	13

<b>HIGHLIGHTING CULTURE</b>	6	1	0	3	10
<b>TOTALS</b>	103	97	40	154	394

*Diverse Stories* discuss *Concerns of the Community* 37.1% of the time. The topics with the next highest frequency are *International News* and *Arts*, which are discussed 9.6% and 8.4% of the time, respectively.

In general, Indigenous and Black people are afforded the widest variety in coverage compared to all other diverse groups represented within the study. A noticeable omission in the news coverage of underrepresented populations is stories in which a member of a diverse group commits an act of violence or aggression. With just 1.8% of *Diverse Stories* dealing with these topics, there appears to be a clear editorial choice by CBC to avoid depicting underrepresented populations as dangerous.

### Source Data

In my study, every story that is not categorized as a diverse story is assumed to be told through the lens of whiteness. While there are certainly many non-minority sources in *Diverse Stories*, I did not document them, as a non-minority source would be considered the norm in Western news media. However, non-minority sources are coded as *white* if *Diverse Stories* have an absence of diverse sources. Sources are coded as *white* when they self-identified as Caucasian, or when sources did not self-identify and looked white in appearance and displayed no identifiable diverse markers.

**Table 7**

### *Type of Sources*

<b>TITLE OF SOURCE</b>	<b>INDIGENOUS</b>	<b>BLACK</b>	<b>EAST INDIAN</b>	<b>WHITE</b>	<b>OTHER DIVERSE IND. (11 GROUPS)</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<b>ACTIVIST</b>	4	12	3	0	8	27
<b>ARTIST</b>	5	11	0	0	8	24

<b>ATHLETE</b>	1	8	2	0	7	18
<b>GVRT. OFFICIAL</b>	12	3	9	4	12	40
<b>COMMUNITY MEMBER</b>	20	14	11	3	22	70
<b>STUDENT</b>	9	4	3	0	13	29
<b>OTHER (21 TYPES)</b>	9	5	8	8	37	67
<b>TOTALS</b>	60	57	36	15	107	275

As to be expected, based on the other data presented in the *Frequency* and *Topics* subsections, Indigenous, Black, and East Indian people receive the most representation as sources. However, while Indigenous and Black people are the focus of 83 and 69 stories respectively, they only appear as sources in *Diverse Stories* 60 and 57 times. This indicates that even if a diverse group is the focus of a particular story, they will not always be the source of said story. This characteristic is exaggerated further when one considers the likely possibility that all Indigenous and Black sources coded in the study may not have exclusively informed Indigenous and Black stories. While the *Three Most Represented Groups* are the subject of 71.6% of *Diverse Stories*, they only appear as sources in 59.5% of *Diverse Stories*. All other diverse groups appear as sources in 41.6% of *Diverse Stories* and white people appear as the only source of *Diverse Stories*, just 5.4% of the time. Once again, multiple sources can appear in a singular story, and this is the reason the cumulative percentage is higher than 100%.

Besides documenting which diverse group a source belongs to, this study also coded the title/profession of the source. This was done to demonstrate how sources of *Diverse Stories* are given legitimacy by CBC and to further highlight how diverse groups are being framed in CBC news media.

The most common type of diverse sources is *Community Members*, who make up 25.5% of all sources in *Diverse Stories*. Unsurprisingly, given CBC's position as a publicly funded media company, *Government Officials* is the second most common source, accounting for 14.5%

of all sources of *Diverse Stories*. When we think of underrepresentation in the media, we do not always think of which people within the underrepresented groups receive the most attention. However, this was not an issue at CBC during this study. The source data indicates a strong diversity in the types of voices that were given a platform by CBC, not only in terms of their cultural identity but their professional identity as well. This is best demonstrated by the fact that sources across 21 different professions make up 24.4% of the sources of *Diverse Stories*.

### **Part 2: Discourse Analysis of Stories Told by Self-Identifying Diverse Journalists**

Diverse journalists at mainstream media outlets are often tasked with the coverage of diverse stories and communities (Nishikawa et al., 2009; Sui et al., 2018). There is a belief that minority journalists' proximity to diverse communities, and their own lived experience as members of these communities, will allow them to cover these types of stories better than their white colleagues (Nishikawa et al., 2009; Sui et al., 2018). However, there is also research that supports the idea that many diverse reporters may actively avoid using their lived experience to inform diverse stories, and in some extreme cases, avoid acting as an advocate entirely, as these practices are often unaligned with accepted journalistic standards (Nishikawa et al., 2009). Another potential issue that arises in assigning the bulk of coverage of diverse stories to diverse journalists is that diverse stories are often viewed in the newsroom as less important and less significant than other 'more newsworthy' stories about politics or business (Pritchard and Stonbely, 2007). Typically, this results in white journalists continuing to cover the most newsworthy stories, which are most likely to earn journalists a promotion, whereas diverse journalists are stuck covering the less newsworthy stories, resulting in the reinforcement of white dominance in the newsroom (Pritchard and Stonbely, 2007). In this sense, diverse journalists are essentially asked to sacrifice their own professional goals to become advocates for their communities (Pritchard and Stonbely, 2007). However, despite the real or perceived pitfalls for diverse journalists in covering such stories, this study reveals that several CBC journalists are choosing to self-identify with a particular group and commit to telling important stories about communities they are a part of. This section examines the strategies used by self-identifying journalists at CBC that take advantage of journalists' lived experiences as members of diverse communities. This section highlights how these strategies are used to inform and educate the public, demonstrating how self-identification can be used by diverse journalists to enhance

stories about underrepresented populations. Furthermore, this section seeks to demonstrate how self-identification is a tool that applies to improving the coverage of all underrepresented groups in the Canadian news media.

**Table 8*****Unique Stories Told by Self-Identifying Journalists***

<b>AUTHOR IDENTITY</b>	<b>UNIQUE STORIES ABOUT INDIGENOUS/MÉTIS CULTURE</b>	<b>UNIQUE STORIES ABOUT KOREAN CULTURE</b>	<b>UNIQUE STORIES ABOUT MIDDLE EASTERN CULTURE</b>
<b>INDIGENOUS</b>	6	0	0
<b>BLACK</b>	3	0	0
<b>INDIGENOUS/BLACK</b>	1	0	0
<b>MÉTIS</b>	2	0	0
<b>KOREAN</b>	0	1	0
<b>FRENCH</b>	0	0	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	12	1	1

For this section, only those stories written by self-identifying journalists who covered the cultural group to which they self-identified as belonging are included in the sample. This decision was made as this study sought to understand how individuals' lived experiences as a member of the community were used, or were not used, to inform the story.

A common theme across CBC News stories authored by self-identifying journalists is the inclusion of culturally specific language in the story. In the stories studied, Indigenous language is used to confer meaning to places or people and is used to respect both the individual and Indigenous culture. In a story discussing the development of a new arts centre, an Indigenous author incorporates both the traditional names of the Kanien'kehá:ka community and the Kahnawà:ke word for council chief.

The Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) community, south of Montreal, has been working since 2016 on financing the construction of a multi-purpose arts centre that will house the Kanien'kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Raotitíóhkwa Language and Cultural Centre (KORLCC), Turtle Island Theatre Company, and a visitors centre. Not only is it a home for these three organizations, but it is also a home for the community...to celebrate our own language, said Ietsénhaienhs (council chief) Jessica Lazare from the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (Deer, 2023, paras. 3-4).

Reintegrating Indigenous language into modern culture is empowering, as it represents the legacy of those who overcame attempted language annihilation (McCarty et al., 2022). Furthermore, just as McCarty (2022) suggests that Indigenous languages' inclusion in school curricula serves an important educational purpose in society, I propose that integrating traditional cultural language into the news media can play an educational role in public discourse. On a basic level, integration makes traditional languages seem more commonplace and mainstream, which in turn lessens how much diverse groups are othered within society. On a deeper level, teaching the public a culturally significant language and the meaning behind the words provides the opportunity for all Canadians to see the world from one another's perspective, as certain words in other languages can convey meaning that goes beyond a simple translation. An example of this comes from a story about two Korean artists struggling to come to terms with what it means to be Korean Canadian. During the interview, one of the artists and the journalist, who is also Korean, explained the importance behind the Korean term *Jeung son Jah*, educating the audience in the process.

Source: I'm kind of in an odd position because I'm the *jeung son jah*, which is very important.

Journalist: Yes, very important! Continuation of the bloodline.

Source: Exactly, yes. The first son of three generations (Yoon, 2023, 2:38-2:50).

In this instance, the author's understanding of the Korean language helps her connect to the sources being interviewed and serves as a confirmation of cultural similarities and understanding, as well as educating the audience. The written portion of this story is also offered

entirely in Chinese and Korean, providing further accessibility options. The fact that multiple authors from different diverse groups incorporate their traditional language into their news stories implies that self-identifying journalists view language preservation as important and that they view news media as a legitimate platform in which the public can be educated.

In each story included in the sample, a member (or members) of the diverse group is included as a source in the story. Each time, diverse sources were the first sources that appeared in the story. As other data highlighted (see Table 7), this is not always the case in *Diverse Stories*. This privileges underrepresented voices by granting them authority on matters that are important to their culture and gives power to diverse perspectives that are often marginalized. In a story about Indigenous musicians, the journalist empowers diverse perspectives by providing a platform on which Indigenous artists can speak freely and openly about why music is so important to their cultural identity.

Kanatakta said that as Indigenous people when our drumming, languages and even traditional foods were banned by colonizers, we began making new traditions of our own. Traditions like bannock emerged, but new types of music flourished, blending Indigenous sounds with other genres like reggae and blues. There's a beautiful resistance, and not resistance like I want to fight. It's resistance that I want to make love (Kanatakta, as cited by Johnson, 2023, paras. 6-8).

By offering a distinct perspective on what the audience is accustomed to, self-identifying journalists encourage thinking and discussion about the intricacies of the topic itself. In a story about disagreements between First Nations and Métis groups in Ontario, in response to new legislation, an Indigenous author highlights differences between Indigenous and Métis groups in Ontario and how these differences can cause issues between them. Often, Indigenous and Métis cultures can be lumped together by the media, and the two groups are often depicted as having the same goals. However, as a self-identifying Indigenous woman, the author demonstrates an understanding of the differences between Indigenous and Métis cultures and offers a perspective that potentially challenges readers' beliefs about these two groups.



Ontario's recognition of the six historic Métis communities identified in 2017 is at the root of the issue for some First Nations. The RHW's research said the move by the province provided the MNO with de facto veto power over land-based projects and territorial negotiations involving First Nations by requiring them to consult with the MNO on issues like economic development, mining and infrastructure licensing, specific land claims and treaty land entitlement negotiations (Schwientek, 2023, paras. 18-19).

In their study of the Brazilian News ecosystem, Ganter and Paulino (2020) revealed how independent digital journalists have worked to counteract dominant media ideologies and by doing so larger hegemonic societal beliefs (Ganter & Paulino, 2020). Tactics used by self-identifying journalists can be used to achieve a similar result in Canadian media. By privileging a perspective that is not the dominant one, whether this is through a singular focus on a non-majority opinion or incorporating multiple conflicting perspectives, self-identifying journalists are challenging the notion that news and opinions require homogenization.

Some self-identifying journalists use their position at CBC to bring awareness to stories in smaller communities in which they currently live, grew up, or identify with. This coverage goes beyond an Indigenous reporter simply reporting on Indigenous groups monolithically, instead focusing on specific subcultures. For instance, one reporter who self-identified as being a part of the Kahnawà:ke Indigenous community authored a story about a local Kahnawà:ke activist who is advocating for safe driving initiatives in the community to create safer spaces for local children. Other self-identifying journalists, specialized in covering topics from specific Indigenous communities and areas (not Indigenous culture as a whole). This is clear in journalist profiles on the CBC News website. In the example below, the journalist is identified as specializing in the coverage of Atlantic Canada's Indigenous communities. "Oscar Baker III is a Black and Mi'kmaw reporter from Elsipogtog First Nation. He is the Atlantic region reporter for CBC Indigenous" (Baker III, n.d., para. 1). Just as reporters specialize in weather, politics, or sports, self-identifying journalists' proximity to the communities they cover allows them to act as experts in this area, guiding readers through the twists and turns of the story by providing a context that helps build a larger picture for unfamiliar readers. In this instance, the author's familiarity with Indigenous and Black communities allows him to provide additional insight into

mental health concerns affecting these communities, without coming across as insensitive or stereotypical.

(Green) said men have poor health outcomes in several areas with shorter life expectancy than women, they have more frequent attempted and completed suicides, more alcohol and drug misuse, and more brain injuries. Then if you look at some specific groups of men under the umbrella of male-identified, you have Indigenous and Black men who have even worse outcomes (Baker III, 2023, paras. 9-10).

A recent study reveals that Western audiences are becoming more open to individual opinions in serious journalism, as new media trends continue to blur the dichotomy between journalistic genres (Riegert, 2021). While objectivity is a core principle of traditional Western journalism, cultural journalism allows subjectivity to be incorporated into the news (Riegert, 2021). As demonstrated above, self-identifying journalists' proximity to the communities they cover affords them the specialization required to be considered 'experts' when it comes to reporting on diverse groups. However, in this scenario, their expertise is informed by their lived experiences as members of the communities, or similar communities, and this legitimizes self-identifying journalists as authority figures on these topics. This authority allows self-identifying journalists to incorporate subjectivity into news stories, as it acts as expert opinion as if they are interviewing a source from the community. By incorporating their own lived experience into news stories, self-identifying journalists can incorporate subjectivity into news stories similarly to cultural journalists. In this example, the author uses her lived experience to establish the story she will tell. This gives the author authority on the subject and demonstrates her interest in the topic.

Ever since I came to Canada from Korea as a kid, I've been wondering what it means to be Korean-Canadian. Then I met these two Korean-Canadian artists who had just done an exhibit on this very issue. I sat down with them over some Korean fusion food and asked them...when you're a part of two cultures what do you gain (Yoon, 2023, 0:00-0:22, 2023).

Missing from self-identifying author's coverage in CBC News are stories that approach current issues and events from a cultural perspective. No stories provided a diverse perspective on topics such as politics or business. Each story is firmly within the cultural community in which diverse stories are allowed to exist in Canadian society. As previously highlighted, diverse Canadians exist in contrast to the 'normal' that is white Canada (Peake & Ray, 2001), and this normalized whiteness is continued through existing practices in the news media (Pritchard & Stonbely, 2007).

Another noteworthy absence from the study of stories written by self-identifying journalists is the inclusion of their own perspective on why they chose to self-identify while other coworkers did not. Unfortunately, I did not have access to the journalists in this study and therefore could not get a sense of why they decided to self-identify, while other employees declined. It is recommended that a future study further explore this practice.

### **Discussion**

CBC's EDI plan *Progress in Progress* is built upon five pillars, to which CBC refers to as their 'daily commitments' (CBC, 2021). CBC has committed to *Choosing EDI* by recognizing and removing barriers for diverse employees and approaching workplace culture through an EDI lens (CBC, 2021), *Creating Content for All* Canadians by ensuring their content reflects the experiences of all people living in Canada regardless of their ethnicity or identity (CBC, 2021), *Improving Workplace Culture* by recognizing EDI as a core workplace value (CBC, 2021), *Connecting to Communities* by building relationships with underrepresented communities to better understand and represent their needs (CBC, 2021) and *Straightforward Communications* by informing Canadians of their progress in these aforementioned areas and encouraging discussions about EDI throughout Canada's media industry (CBC, 2021).

CBC's pledge to create content that accurately reflects Canada and its diverse population, as well as its overarching commitment to serve Indigenous, Métis, and Inuit communities through this plan (CBC, 2021) is both necessary and praiseworthy. As Canada's public service broadcaster, CBC is rightly held to a higher standard than other Canadian news media companies when it comes to reflecting and reporting on Canadian society. However, CBC's responsibility to improve the coverage of underrepresented communities should not be taken for granted and thus celebrated as an important step in achieving accurate and meaningful representation for

underrepresented communities in the future. CBC has highlighted the importance of accountability for the implementation of EDI initiatives (CBC, 2021) and this section of the report aims to fulfill this civic duty. While many elements of CBC's EDI plan emphasize internal initiatives, the data produced in this report is best suited to address the second pillar, *Creating Content for All*.

If CBC is striving to create content that represents Canada and all its diverse groups, then the percentage of space allocated to CBC's news coverage of diverse groups should at a minimum closely resemble the number of Canadian citizens who identify as visible minorities. This method has been used in previous media representation studies (Klein, 2009; Sharrer & Ramasubramanian, 2022). According to Stats Canada, 9,639,200 Canadians identify as visible minorities, this amounts to 26.5% of the Canadian population (StatsCanada, 2022a). However, StatsCanada does not recognize Indigenous people as visible minorities (StatsCanada, 2022a). To adjust for this, I added the total number of Indigenous people living in Canada to the number of visible minorities. In 2021, 1,807,250 Canadians identified as Indigenous (Government of Alberta, 2023), bringing the new total to 11,446,450 or 31.5%. While imperfect, as it does not account for white religious minorities and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, 31.5% is a relevant baseline to establish and it should be understood that in reality, this number is slightly lower than the number of diverse Canadians.

In *Local Written News*, CBC underrepresented minorities in the media at a disproportionately low rate, with just 14.4% of stories covering underrepresented communities (see Table 1). On the other end of the spectrum, *Local Television News* covers underrepresented communities at a rate of 41%. One potential explanation for the increased coverage of *Diverse Stories* in *Local Television News* content is the visual element of TV news. If CBC wants to promote their improvements in EDI, television is an avenue in which Canadians can see this progress for themselves (Clark, 2017). The differences in the frequency of *Diverse Stories* in written and television news have the potential to increase public perception of the degree to which CBC is telling and promoting diverse stories. Data from this study demonstrates that CBC distributes more written news stories than TV news stories on any given day (see Table 1), however, this does not consider the cultural significance of the two media. When we combine the data from *Local Written News* and *Local Television News* together, *Local CBC News* reports on underrepresented communities just 19.5% of the time.

CBC performed stronger at a national level. In *National Written News*, CBC represents underrepresented groups at a rate that is proportional to the presence of diverse groups in Canadian society at 29.9% (see Table 1). Similarly, to Local News, *National Television News* represents diverse groups at a rate of 39.7%. When we combine the data from *National Written News* and *National Television News* together, *National CBC News* reports on underrepresented communities 31.7% of the time, nearly identical to the 31.5% baseline. At a national level, it is fair to say that CBC has succeeded in creating content that reflects the cultural diversity of Canada. However, upon closer examination, this statement cannot hold up.

In practice, some groups receive much more coverage on CBC News than others. This results in many diverse groups receiving little to no coverage and their continued underrepresentation (see Table 2). A primary example of this underrepresentation is the lack of coverage of Asian Canadians. According to StatsCanada, Asian people make up nearly 50% of all visible minorities in Canada (2022a), however, they only appear in 5% of *Diverse Stories*.

Given CBC's organization-wide mandate that includes special provisions to strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities (CBC, 2021), it should come as no surprise that Indigenous people are the most frequently represented group in diverse news stories (see Table 1), the most frequently represented sources of diverse news stories (see Table 7) and the most frequently represented group by self-identifying journalists (see Table 4). However, the lack of coverage of Métis and Inuit stories is noticeable. During the two weeks of coverage, just 10 *Diverse Stories* referenced Métis people and there were no stories of Inuit people that appeared in *Front-Page News*. While this study does not attempt to understand CBC's reasoning behind representing certain groups more than others, it is important to highlight that increased attention has been brought to social inequalities facing Indigenous and Black Canadians over the past three years. Most notably, the discovery of 215 unmarked residential school graves in 2021 and the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020. This study advocates that CBC continues to spotlight Indigenous and Black stories while simultaneously highlighting other underrepresented communities.

As discussed earlier, diverse journalists are often burdened with a choice between pursuing their own professional goals or being advocates for their communities (Pritchard and Stonbely, 2007). One potential solution would be for news organizations to place greater emphasis and importance on stories about underrepresented communities so that diverse

journalists feel as though their stories about diverse groups are just as important as any other story in the newsroom (Clark, 2017). To achieve this, I suggest that a ‘Diverse Perspectives’ section be added to the CBC News Front Page, which would feature one story about an underrepresented group each week. If this were to be implemented, it would have the potential to increase the quality of reporting on diverse stories and allow diverse journalists to make use of their cultural capital, as diverse journalists would be further empowered to use their lived experience and cultural knowledge to inform diverse stories.

Additionally, CBC is encouraged to make use of developer tools to create a customization feature, which would allow users who are interested in diverse stories to specify which cultural groups they are interested in and have their news feed updated accordingly. Perhaps this feature would also include a translation function, allowing users to read stories in their native languages. This has the potential to allow underrepresented groups to have better access to stories about their communities and simultaneously provide CBC with important data on how many Canadians are interested in stories about specific cultures and communities.

### **Conclusion**

This study continued ongoing efforts to monitor diversity in Canadian news media, as equity, diversity, and inclusion practices in Western news media are increasingly viewed as important both socially and economically (Clark, 2014; Clark, 2017; Arguedas et al., 2023). Through a hybrid quantitative/qualitative content analysis, this study tracked how front page diverse news stories were covered at CBC News to understand how diverse Canadians were being represented in the media. The outcome of this analysis showed conflicting results. While CBC consistently represents Indigenous and to a lesser degree Black and East Indian groups in news media, it provided insufficient coverage for nearly every other diverse group. This study focused on the strengths of CBC’s coverage of underrepresented groups and sought to understand how self-identifying CBC journalists of diverse backgrounds used their lived experiences to inform stories about their communities. A discourse analysis of news stories told by self-identifying diverse journalists about their communities revealed that self-identifying diverse journalists take special consideration to include diverse sources in every story and elevate diverse voices to the forefront of the conversation. This section also revealed that self-identifying diverse journalists use their lived experiences to provide additional context and

nuance to diverse stories, which provides the opportunity for education. Absent from the coverage of diverse stories by self-identifying journalists was the coverage of popular topics, such as politics or business, through a diverse perspective. The discussion section revealed that although CBC's coverage of diverse Canadians represents their prevalence within society (StatsCanada, 2022a), the coverage of diverse Canadians is not uniform, resulting in the continued underrepresentation of many cultural groups in CBC News media. This study recommends that CBC review strengths in its EDI plan that may have led to the increased and vibrant coverage of Indigenous groups and extrapolate these strengths to other underrepresented groups to achieve the goals they have set for themselves in their 2022-2025 EDI action plan. This study advocates for and encourages further research into the self-identification tactics of diverse journalists across Canadian news media.

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