Comunicação e Sociedade, vol. 48, 2025, e025022
https://doi.org/10.17231/comsoc.48(2025).6419

The Invisible Costs of Working on "Diversity" for Minoritized Journalists

Elena Louazon
Faculté de Lettres, Traduction et Communication, Université libre de Bruxelles, Brussels, Belgium

Abstract

Journalism has long been criticized for its lack of diversity, both in the newsrooms and in content production. In response, media professionals, policymakers, and even some scholars commonly assume that hiring journalists from minoritized groups would lead to a more diverse and inclusive news coverage — or, put simply, that "diverse" journalists would produce more "diversity-related" content. Yet, interviews with LGBT journalists and racialized journalists working in French-speaking Belgium call this assumption into question.

Drawing on 61 semi-structured interviews, this research challenges institutional discourses that frame minoritized journalists as a solution to the lack of diversity in media content. The findings highlight three key issues: minoritized journalists feel that they have a limited influence on newsroom content due to routines and bias, their efforts to improve representation result in unpaid, unrecognized and invisible labor and they face professional risks for engaging in diversity-related work.

Systemic barriers embedded within newsroom routines, editorial gatekeeping and entrenched journalistic norms significantly restrict minoritized journalists' capacity to influence media narratives. As a result, they often find their ability to shape coverage severely constrained. Yet, pushing back against these institutionalized practices and ideological frameworks in an effort to foster more inclusive reporting demands considerable labor — labor that is frequently invisible, uncompensated, and disproportionately borne by journalists from minoritized groups. Moreover, this study reveals a distinct professional penalty associated with working on diversity. Many minoritized journalists recount being cast as biased simply for defending stories that reflect the realities of their own communities, further reinforcing their precarious position within news organizations.

Keywords
journalism, diversity, discriminations, routines, minoritized journalists

Os Custos Invisíveis de Trabalhar a "Diversidade" Para Jornalistas Minorizados

Resumo

O jornalismo tem sido há muito criticado pela sua falta de diversidade, tanto nas redações como na produção de conteúdos. Em resposta, profissionais dos média, decisores políticos e até alguns académicos assumem frequentemente que contratar jornalistas de grupos minorizados levaria a uma cobertura noticiosa mais diversa e inclusiva — ou, dito de forma simples, que jornalistas "diversos" produziriam mais conteúdos "diversos". No entanto, entrevistas com

jornalistas LGBT e jornalistas racializados que trabalham na Bélgica francófona põem em causa esta suposição.

Com base em 61 entrevistas semiestruturadas, esta investigação questiona os discursos institucionais que enquadram os jornalistas minorizados como solução para a falta de diversidade nos conteúdos mediáticos. Os resultados destacam três questões centrais: os jornalistas minorizados sentem que têm uma influência limitada sobre o conteúdo das redações devido a rotinas e preconceitos; os seus esforços para melhorar a representação resultam num trabalho não remunerado, não reconhecido e invisível; e enfrentam riscos profissionais por se envolverem em trabalho relacionado com a diversidade.

As barreiras sistémicas incorporadas nas rotinas das redações, na filtragem editorial e nas normas jornalísticas enraizadas restringem significativamente a capacidade dos jornalistas minorizados de influenciar as narrativas mediáticas. Como resultado, estes veem frequentemente a sua capacidade de influenciar a cobertura extremamente limitada. Contudo, resistir a estas práticas institucionalizadas e a estes enquadramentos ideológicos, na tentativa de promover uma cobertura noticiosa mais inclusiva, exige um esforço considerável — um esforço muitas vezes invisível, não remunerado e assumido de forma desproporcionada por jornalistas de grupos minorizados. Além disso, este estudo revela uma penalização profissional particular associada ao trabalho sobre diversidade. Muitos jornalistas minorizados relatam ser considerados tendenciosos apenas por defenderem histórias que refletem as realidades das suas próprias comunidades, reforçando ainda mais a sua posição precária dentro das organizações noticiosas.

Palavras-chave
jornalismo, diversidade, discriminações, rotinas, jornalistas minorizados

1. Introduction

Journalism has long been criticized worldwide for the lack of diversity within both its productions and its newsrooms (Alvarado, 2021; Bravo & Clark, 2019; Lück et al., 2020). As a consequence, media companies are increasingly expected to promote greater diversity, both within their content and within their editorial teams (Awad Cherit, 2008). In French-speaking Belgium, interest in diversity arose from recognizing that media outlets do not reflect society's makeup. Since the 2010s, numerous quantitative studies have consistently reached the same conclusion, noting very limited progress over the past decade: men remain significantly overrepresented, while women, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ individuals, people from the working class and individuals "perceived as non-White" are greatly underrepresented (Derinöz et al., 2024; Desterbecq et al., 2023). Several studies on newsroom demographics in French-speaking Belgium also reveal that editorial teams fail to reflect the diversity of Belgian society. Men constitute 65% of the profession, while only 16% of journalists self-identify as belonging to a minoritized group based on gender, sexual orientation or ethnic background (Libert et al., 2023; Lits & Standaert, 2024).

A significant body of research on media diversity in French-speaking Belgium and beyond notes that an implicit link is often made in the newsroom between the

underrepresentation of minoritized individuals in the news production process and the lack of diversity in content produced by media (Baillargeon et al., 2023), sometimes to question this link (Marthoz, 2011), sometimes to endorse it (Nishikawa et al., 2009). In many newsrooms, the prevailing idea for the past two decades has been that increasing the presence of journalists from diverse backgrounds — referred to here as "minoritized journalists" — would result in more representative and inclusive media coverage (Pritchard & Stonbely, 2007; Skrentny, 2014). This idea has been at the very core of public policy development on diversity in the media for the past two decades (Metykova, 2016). In 2006, the Belgian Audiovisual Council even stated that: "internal cultural diversity among staff at various levels is the best guarantee of diversity of viewpoints and sensibilities in the programs" (Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel, 2006, p. 8). This perspective reflects an implicitly utilitarian view of minoritized journalists' presence — one frequently found in institutional discourse on diversity — which emphasizes organizational benefits over considerations of social justice (Bereni & Jaunait, 2009).

This study in French-speaking Belgium, conducted as part of a PhD, aimed to explore whether minoritized journalists felt they could contribute to more diverse content and how engaging with diversity-related issues impact their working conditions and professional trajectories. It explores the consequences of the expectations placed on minoritized journalist regarding diversity.

2. Literature

2.1. The Minority Tax

Several studies already highlighted the paradoxes of institutionalized diversity, its symbolic usages by companies and their instrumentalization (Sénac-Slawinski, 2012). It was sometimes studied through the lens of "tokenism" (Kanter, 1977), where "members of a nondominant group, either in or status, are selected, elected or otherwise designated to represent symbolically their set within an occupation or organization" (Nesbitt, 1997, p. 194). Because token employees are so few, they are highly visible which put a great pressure on them to perform their work according to very high standards (Kanter, 1977).

As a result, this phenomenon often leads to additional, unpaid labor for minoritized individuals. Critical diversity studies highlight that minoritized individuals often take on extra, unpaid, and invisible workload simply due to their belonging to a minoritized group, in connection with public discourses on diversity that contribute to a process of "commodification". As Oneya Fennell Okuwobi (2025) explains: "because diversity display requires that the racial identity of people of color be commodified, employees of color become valuable objects for their respective organizations rather than valuable people" (p. 54). For these critical approaches, this situation contributes to the perpetuation of inequalities in the workplace by producing a "commodification" of identities. It creates a tension around situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988), as diversity discourses

rely on and promote the assumption that minoritized individuals inherently possess specific knowledge, skills, forms of expertise or "racial abilities" (Skrentny, 2014) that could bring new perspectives and benefit the company (Bereni, 2023).

We choose here to embrace those critical approaches with the concept of "minority tax". The "minority tax" concept has been mostly explored in healthcare and refers to the additional burdens imposed on individuals simply due to their minoritized status (Rodríguez et al., 2015). It includes mentoring or tutoring other individuals from minority backgrounds, representing organizational diversity, raising awareness, joining diversity initiatives and managing the emotional toll of workplace discrimination experienced or observed. In a paper on LGBT leaders of international schools, Robert Mizzi (2024), referring to the additional labor imposed on minoritized individuals who are expected to lead "diversity" initiatives alongside their regular duties, notes:

> this labour is often unrecognized within job evaluations, adds to workload, and tokenizes workers. It also causes non-queer workers to have a new reason to not engage queer inclusivity if they have an out queer staff member to complete the work for them. (p. 51)

The concept highlights how diversity and inclusion policies have paradoxically increased workloads for minoritized individuals, reinforcing career-related inequalities. This work is often invisible, unpaid and adds to regular job responsibilities, increasing the risk of burnout due to a heavier workload. Moreover, the time and effort invested are rarely acknowledged in career advancement, promotions or salary decisions (Rodríguez et al., 2015). The term fosters critical reflection on how administrations, businesses and institutions implement "diversity" policies, often overburdening minoritized individuals by assuming their lived experiences grant them inherent expertise. These tasks remain invisible because they are seen as naturally undertaken rather than recognized as work, despite the time and energy they demand. As a result, the "minority tax" constitutes a form of free labor that disproportionately affects minoritized individuals.

2.2. The Impact of Minoritized Journalists on Diversity-Related News Content

Despite discourses connecting the presence of minoritized individuals in the media workforce to an increased content about minoritized individuals, scholarly research has yet to establish a direct causal relationship between increased diversity among journalists and more representative media content. Existing studies offer contradictory findings, and much of the literature that focuses specifically on minoritized journalists within newsrooms tends instead to highlight the persistence of structural barriers and limited editorial influence (Clark, 2014).

As early as the 1990s, Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen Reese's (1996) hierarchy-of-influences model challenged the idea that individuals alone shape media content. Their model outlines five levels influencing media production: social system, social institutions, organizational structures, professional routines and practices and individual

journalists' values. By embedding personal beliefs within broader socio-economic and organizational contexts, their work shows that individual attitudes are unlikely to be the primary drivers of media content. Following their contribution, many studies demonstrated that presence in newsrooms of minoritized individuals does not improve coverage of topics on minority groups, either quantitatively or qualitatively (Hultén, 2009). In those studies, professional routines and norms are said to significantly obstruct content diversification, despite the presence of minoritized journalists (Clark, 2014; Lück et al., 2020). Those practices and norms are described as shaped by a White, masculine worldview, influencing the media's inadequate or distorted coverage of certain topics, even when minoritized journalists are among newsrooms (Alemán, 2017; Johnston & Flamiano, 2007; Meyers & Gayle, 2015; Oh & Min, 2023). Evidence suggests that journalists often internalize prevailing professional standards, adapting to routines that reinforce traditional coverage. Even in more diverse newsrooms, adherence to established norms remains strong, resulting in minimal deviation from dominant journalistic practices (Pritchard & Stonbely, 2007). Journalists who distance from these institutional norms may face various forms of social sanction or marginalization within their professional environments (Jackson, 2022; Lima Pôrto & Alves Feitosa, 2017). Therefore, these organizational routines and professional practices, notably the norm of objectivity (Rivas-Rodriguez et al., 2004), have been criticized as fundamentally reflecting and reinforcing dominant perspectives — even among minoritized journalists themselves (Nishikawa et al., 2009).

Whether examining racialized journalists or LGBT journalists (Hicks & Warren, 1998), research consistently shows that minoritized journalists rarely challenge established norms or influence news content. Those who attempt to resist dominant practices and propose alternative representations often face criticism or resistance, with their ideas frequently dismissed or marginalized by colleagues in the newsroom (Campbell et al., 2012). In his research on LGBT journalists, Larry Gross (2001) highlights that their ability to remain objective and adhere to established professional standards is frequently questioned within newsrooms, leading colleagues to doubt their professionalism and impartiality. Similar findings apply to racialized journalists, whose commitment to established norms is also frequently scrutinized (Oh & Min, 2023).

2.3. A Subtle Work to Diversify That Brings Invisible Work

A few studies also show that, beyond routines and norms, journalists striving to improve media representation face significant additional labor, often through invisible work sometimes analyzed as "strategies of resistance". Because they encounter many challenges to navigate institutional resistance and entrenched norms while trying to influence media practices, minoritized journalists must put great effort (Oh & Min, 2023). This work often takes the form of very subtle professional practices, such as deliberately incorporating some minoritized sources in general news (Correa, 2010; Owens, 2008) while excluding others, portraying minoritized people positively, or finding and training new sources while selectively disrupting media routines to improve representation

(Meyers & Gayle, 2015). Routines are said to exclude some voices due to biases, which brings heavy extra-work for minoritized journalists who want to include these voices (Garbes, 2024). When these tasks accumulate, they hinder career development, as minoritized journalists spend their time assisting others rather than advancing their own careers. Promoting inclusive stories and covering LGBTQIA+ issues in resistant environments was also proven to inevitably add to journalists' workload (Lima Pôrto, 2023).

3. Methodology

The term "minoritized" in this study refers to two marginalized groups: LGBT journalists and racialized journalists, the latter encompassing all individuals identified or perceived as non-White in the Belgian context. In this study, we use the term "minoritized" rather than "minority", drawing on the work of sociologist Colette Guillaumin (1972) in order to emphasize the process of minorization rather than the static condition of being a numerical minority. Guillaumin's theory conceptualizes social hierarchies as dynamic processes that serve to uphold power relations exercised by a majority group over minority groups. From this perspective, minoritization is not an inherent attribute of certain groups, but a relational process of othering that presupposes and reinforces the existence of a majority. Social categories, therefore, are not given but are actively produced and maintained through these asymmetrical relations of power.

As part of a doctoral research project, 61 semi-structured interviews were conducted between March 2022 and December 2023. Participants were not recruited based on their involvement in diversity-related reporting; the main criterion was that they self-identified as belonging to one of the minoritized social groups under study, but also that they currently work or have previously worked in journalism in French-speaking Belgium. Among the participants, 30 were racialized journalists, 26 were LGBT journalists and five identified with both categories. These two categories were selected because research has shown that they continue to face specific forms of inequality and workplace discrimination (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2023, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c), despite prevailing public discourse that portrays Belgian society as post-racial (Demart, 2025) and LGBT-friendly (Verhoeven et al., 2022).

Participants were recruited through professional networks and snowball sampling, representing various media outlets. Interviews averaged 2 hours and 19 minutes. Beyond their minoritized status, they differ from typical Belgian journalists (Libert et al., 2023): they are younger (average age 34.5 *vs* 46.4 for the profession) and less likely to come from upper-class backgrounds, though all hold higher-education degrees. Just under half have permanent positions, with only five in managerial roles. At the time of the interview, eight had already left journalism and five more have since completely departed.

Journalists were interviewed about their motivations and professional experiences, including their reasons for entering the field, their engagement with diversity-related content, and the ways their minoritized identities influence both their journalistic practices and professional self-perception. The interviews also addressed experiences of

workplace discrimination, employment conditions, and participants' sense of inclusion or exclusion within newsrooms — focusing in particular on how their identities shape their day-to-day professional realities. All interviews were fully transcribed and systematically coded using NVivo to facilitate thematic analysis. The analysis was guided by core principles of grounded theory, which served as a methodological framework for identifying and interpreting recurring themes within the interviews with minoritized journalists. Key themes emerged through a hypothetico-inductive and iterative coding process, allowing patterns to surface organically from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The first phase of analysis involved an open and systematic thematic coding of the data. In the second phase, preliminary codes were grouped into broader categories by identifying patterns of similarity and difference. These categories were then refined into overarching thematic codes organized around central conceptual threads. During a subsequent in-depth recoding phase, these main codes were expanded to include sub-codes — and in some cases, sub-sub-codes — capturing the range of positions, interpretations, emotions and strategies articulated by participants in relation to each theme. This inductive process ultimately yielded nine major thematic areas: newsroom assignment dynamics; challenges encountered by journalists belonging to minoritized groups; perceptions of editorial treatment in their media outlets; understandings of professional commitment; relationships to journalistic ethics and norms; the influence of minoritized identities on professional practices; individual relationships to the profession; the structure of professional interactions; and efforts undertaken to "diversify content". Together, these themes comprise 76 codes and approximately 40 sub- and sub-sub-codes.

To protect anonymity, some details about the journalists cannot be individually reported, as they could make them too identifiable. Therefore, this paper only mentions their gender and their minoritized category.

4. Results

This research seeks to explore the consequences of the expectations placed on these journalists in relation to diversity work. Contradicting institutional discourses that present minoritized journalists as a solution to the lack of content on minoritized groups, three key findings emerged from the interviews: journalists feel they have minimal influence on content, efforts to diversify coverage lead to additional work and this work carries an invisible professional cost.

4.1. Professional Routines *versus* "Diversification" Work

It was not possible to conduct statistical analysis to verify correlation between the presence of the minoritized journalists interviewed and the editorial treatment of their respective social groups within their media outlets, as doing so would have risked compromising their anonymity in a small and centralized professional market (Bersipont, 2020; Lecrit et al., 2025). Instead, minoritized journalists were asked to assess how their

outlets portray their social groups and if they felt they could have any influence on this. When evaluating coverage of non-White and LGBT people in their media, many journalists struggled to respond, overwhelmingly highlighting a persistent underrepresentation, with an exception for crime-related stories. Non-White individuals were said to be predominantly depicted in the context of migration and crime, as this racialized woman journalist notes:

> these are topics that don't really exist. I mean, when they talk about minotirized people, it's never to say anything good about them. That's a bit painful and that's also why being part of an editorial team, writing or doing things that don't fit with my values, with my experience, putting the names of foreign people who commit crimes every time... it's really hard. In general, in the media, I feel that when we talk about racialized people, it's mostly in terms of migration or crime, and it's a bit difficult to get away from that. Sometimes with sports, music and culture, we have other representations, but it's rare. (J25, interview, march 2023)

In contrast, LGBT individuals were described by LGBT journalists as significantly less visible and often stereotyped. Therefore, journalists' perception suggests that their presence in their newsroom has little effect on the portrayal of non-White and LGBT people, whether in terms of quantity or quality.

After being asked to assess the representations in their media outlet, journalists were asked to explain why they felt they could not have a strong influence and what obstacles they faced. They identified recurring newsroom discourses that tend to frame minoritized-related issues as too time-consuming or difficult to address within standard production routines.

The first -and main- routine bias identified by the minoritized journalists is the assumption that the media's audience is predominantly from the majority group and would not be interested in minoritized-related content. After being repeated several times that those subjects were not interesting for the whole population, some minoritized journalists seem to have internalized this logic, abandoning their efforts to diversify content, as this queer woman observes:

> a queer bar had just opened. So I said, "it would be nice to think together about how we could approach this topic for the journal". And so, my boss wasn't reluctant, he was curious, but still, he said to me, "remember that our audience is over 55, I don't think there are any LGBT people among them". And so, even though he said, "give it a try, suggest something to me", I held back on the subject. (J14, interview, September 2022)

These kinds of interactions reveal that the public is viewed as uninterested, incapable of taking an interest because it is perceived as not being concerned, with the risk of even stopping consuming news media due to prejudices.

Secondly, topics concerning minoritized groups seem to suffer from the categorization of news into a binary system that distinguishes between hard news and soft

news (Gans, 2004). Even when the news concerning minoritized groups meets the criteria for "hard news", the subject is not always considered to be urgent, as this gay journalist points: "they won't say 'it's not interesting', they'll say 'it's not relevant enough'. It'll be 'it's not hot news', 'there's nothing new about it', 'we don't have enough people'. It's never a priority" (J6, interview, June 2022).

Among the journalists interviewed, many work in mainstream newsrooms focused on hard news and breaking news in their coverage, which makes it difficult to mention minoritized groups when their story is often perceived as soft news. Similarly, because these topics are not easily seen as hard news, they are more influenced by agenda-setting and source solicitation dynamics. Minoritized journalists pointed out the lack of minoritized voices among regular sources in their media outlets, highlighting unequal access to public discourse as well as the tendency to rely on elite sources. That is why the search for new sources from minoritized groups on conventional topics or the pursuit of new topics to highlight diverse voices was described as a necessity. But it was also described as more time demanding since this process cannot start with a simple phone call but demands personal implication, as this gay journalist insists:

> my colleague, who co-hosts the program with me, says he always has a hard time getting women and minorities to appear on the show. And I have no trouble getting them (...). But he, he has a topic and will call an institution, saying, "hello, we need an expert on that topic, a woman preferably". But it doesn't work like that! It's more like: you meet someone, and you decide that you'd like to make room for them on the show. (J16, interview, September 2022)

Notably, when sources come from minoritized groups, journalists often observe that their statements are not taken seriously. Their discourse is commonly considered *niche*, unrepresentative of broader social issues, and reduced to community concerns seen as disconnected from the interests of the majority population. This can result, as this racialized woman journalist notes, in the delegitimization of certain groups:

> there is a form of contempt as well. Like, those issues, they're minor. They see it as the fight of extremists. It's always minimized as if it wasn't important. When I suggest topics related to decolonial issues, when there's a collective doing something, I think it's still worth talking about. And every time I'm told: "oh no, but it's a small group, it's just a few extremists". (J32, interview, April 2023)

Directly connected to the ideological bias that assigns minoritized individuals an inherently engaged stance, journalists' testimonies highlight a tendency to treat minoritized voices as requiring extra verification, resulting in additional work. Journalists acknowledge a significant shortcoming in the verification process when discussing minoritized groups' experiences. Minoritized individuals' statements are seen as inherently insufficient, not considered factual, tangible, or verifiable. This routine skepticism aligns with "epistemic injustice" (Fricker, 2007), a term that refers to the unequal credibility assigned to an individual's statements based on their real or presumed membership of certain social groups.

4.2. Producing Content on Diversity: An Unpaid and Invisible Work for Minoritized Journalists

Despite the structural constraints mentioned, over a third of the surveyed journalists actively aim at diversifying media content, increasing coverage of minoritized issues and improving its quality. However, due to the obstacles outlined, it quickly became apparent in the interviews that those efforts entail additional, unpaid, and unrecognized labor, which falls into two categories: work done for others and work imposed by the context.

The extra work for others involves tasks that journalists are asked to perform by their colleagues. This work benefits the professional careers of others, often consisting of support and supplementary tasks. However, the accumulation of these auxiliary assignments adds to the workload of individuals and falls into the category of "invisible labor", for which the minoritized individual receives little or no personal credit. A common example is the use of their personal contacts, assumed to facilitate access to minoritized communities. However, this reliance can be experienced as an enforced ascribed identity, as expressed by this lesbian journalist, which can sometimes take the form of being reduced to one's supposed social group:

> it's often me they turn to, when there's a question, or when they need a contact, or when they need something proofread, or whatever. Sometimes, I do it willingly, but over time, I'm kind of... it pisses me off that it's always me, the fucking Rolodex! It's always me they ask for contacts! (J61, interview, December 2023)

This journalist expresses even greater frustration as she is rarely asked to cover LGBT topics and thus cannot leverage her expertise on the matter. The minoritized journalists recognize that their socialization constitutes a journalistic resource for finding contacts and story ideas. However, these resources are not acknowledged as the result of full-fledged work: they are seen as natural, as they rely on elements related to their personal experiences and socialization. Similarly, racialized journalists are often expected to act as cultural experts. One describes being the "Africa consultant" in his newsroom, constantly asked to verify terminology and provide context:

> in terms of micro-violences — it's both good and bad — they often ask me if a term is appropriate when it's about something African. When we talk about Africa, I'm the "Africa consultant". Overall, I do my best to ensure that it's not mishandled. That we don't confuse Somalia with Islamist violence in Mali. Also, that we pronounce the names of guests with African ancestry correctly. Sometimes it's not very complicated, but they don't make the effort. (J13, interview, September 2022)

The term "both good and bad", which he uses to describe his informal role, reflects the ambivalence noted by nearly all journalists who report such tasks: soliciting them is often a form of reduction to ascribed identity, yet at the same time, it can help improve the media representation of a social group with which they feel empathy for and an affinity. The presumption of expertise attributed to minoritized journalists sometimes extends

beyond journalistic productions. Four of the journalists interviewed were invited to undertake official tasks related to embodying and working on "diversity" from a human resources perspective, due to their interest and recognized expertise on these issues.

Another recurring role is that of the "corrector". Some journalists voluntarily review published content to ensure more respectful representation. This is no longer about journalists being solicited by colleagues, but about journalists who choose to position themselves as guardians of the quality of content produced by others. This corrector role entails constant vigilance over the publications of their media outlet and a strong sense of responsibility even when not actively working, as this queer journalist relates:

> I was at home, scrolling through Instagram, and I came across the story of a journalist who was sharing a screenshot of a news item reported by my newspaper, about a woman who had been shot in the head by her ex-partner. (...) I didn't double-think. I saw "killed by a bullet in the head by her ex-partner", I went into the editing software, removed the word, and put "femicide". I didn't notify anyone, I just changed the term. (J14, interview, September 2022)

This task is experienced by the minoritized journalists who perform it as a mission on behalf of a group for which they have strong empathy and in place of which they analyze media productions. The situation of the "correctors" thus highlights the well-known intersections between free labor and the ethical responsibility felt by those who undertake it (Simonet, 2018). In a context where professional norms do not particularly value the invisible work of these "correctors", their verification efforts also take on the character of subtle forms of resistance.

Translation tasks were also frequently mentioned, particularly by racialized journalists who possess rare linguistic skills. This journalist shares her pride in being able to contribute by translating into her mother tongue, the language spoken daily in her family:

> I was super happy to be able to value a skill, because it's still "rare" to have that skill, there aren't 10,000 people who speak that language in a newsroom. And I was also happy to think that if Moroccans come across it and they see the translation, they will think that we did a good job. (J33, interview, April 2023)

These translation tasks thus allow individuals for the conversion of elements related to their experiences and histories into valuable skills, but also for the valorization of personal heritage, which adds an emotional dimension to the task. However, as this journalist points out a few minutes later while discussing other translation tasks she had to perform in Dutch, possessing rare linguistic skills within a professional space tends to assign journalists to tasks that add to their main work.

Beyond external demands, minoritized journalists also undertake additional self-imposed labor to push diversity-related topics through editorial barriers. They face obstacles that compel them to develop strategies to navigate these difficulties, thus spending

a considerable amount of personal time preparing. They prepare extensively for meetings, anticipating resistance and tailoring their arguments. This overinvestment is justified by the anticipation of critiques and objections. The journalists reflect a meticulous analysis of the interactions and the functioning of their workspace, to ultimately — despite everything — bring the topics they wish to see covered, as this queer racialized journalist points:

> I prepare a lot beforehand, I make sure to be irreproachable, not to be attackable. So, I'm very careful about how I present this kind of topic. There are words that are forbidden: "inclusive", "kindness", "feminist". These are words I don't say. And I present things in a way that they see the benefit for them directly. So, I present it in a way that seems relevant, with numbers. I try to have numbers beforehand, because they *loooove* numbers. They love it when it's objective. Because it shouldn't be just about feelings. Feelings are invalidated. (J11, interview, August 2022)

This preparation, done outside working hours, reflects a significant cognitive load imposed by newsroom skepticism toward minoritized-related issues. Post-production, journalists also spend extra time reviewing content they produced, re-reading and questioning any potential biases left in the material, as well as anticipating possible biases that supervisors and colleagues might identify. But journalists mostly seem to tolerate this additional work, because they see it as a professional commitment that benefits their minoritized group, as this lesbian journalist explicitly acknowledges while stating she would not accept the situation for any other topic:

> you accept things because you want the message to get through, you want visibility... you just want the message to spread. This show is like my baby. It's not the first show I've done, but I've never put so much enthusiasm and energy into making it a success. (J7, interview, June 2022)

Invisible work thus becomes a strategic choice for her: she consents to it in the name of a message she wants to convey and the "visibility" she wishes to give to the LGBT community. That is why this journalist finds satisfaction in potential symbolic recognition from her community, which replaces monetary compensation or, at the very least, acknowledgment of her work. The concept of "minority tax" helps underscore the paradox faced by minoritized journalists: they are expected to diversify content because they are supposed to have special competencies, and they consent to it in the name of helping their community, but through unpaid and unrecognized labor.

4.3. The Professional Cost of Diversity

In journalism, a supplementary and specific cost to this minoritized tax manifests in accusations of "bias" faced by half of the interviewees. Beyond the workload, content diversification is perceived by minoritized journalists as posing a professional risk: being

labeled an "activist", which can undermine credibility and career prospects. Journalists describe experiences that could be termed as "presumption of activism": their interest in certain topics or efforts to develop different professional practices are interpreted as an indicator of a lack of neutrality — or even as evidence of a hidden political agenda. Their ascribed identities are frequently used as proof of their supposed inability to be neutral. This racialized journalist has observed throughout his career a strong tendency to assume the political beliefs of non-White individuals in his newsroom:

> when a new journalist joins the newsroom, they start at a default point of neutrality of zero. Over the years, we see whether to categorize them as left or right. For us, simply because we are not White, we are already placed on the left. We have to work twice as hard to prove our neutrality. People think, "a right-wing non-White person doesn't exist. They must be a leftist; they're going to bring us societal issues, migration, etc. Of course, that's what interests them". We spend years proving that we are neutral, while others are perceived as neutral by default. (J46, interview, July 2023)

Thus, a contradictory double bind emerges: on the one hand, journalists are encouraged to use personal resources that are theoretically considered a professional value, but on the other hand, responding to this expectation confines them to a specific role within their newsroom. Being ascribed to an activist position based on their demographics, those journalists are seen as inherently non-neutral and therefore, less competent by newsroom standards. This perception limits career opportunities and reinforces the idea that minoritized journalists push hidden agendas within their media organizations. This bias appeared to be especially strong against Muslim individuals within the scope of this research in French-speaking Belgium. Additionally, minoritized journalists are often deemed too emotional, leading to assumptions that their personal investment compromises their objectivity.

As several minoritized journalists emphasize, labeling them as having an inherently activist position serves to disqualify them from practicing their profession while using their demographic characteristics as evidence of their lack of neutrality. One journalist, a racialized woman, interprets the presumption of activism she faces as an attempt to undermine her credibility as a competent journalist but, most of all, as a tactic for those making these remarks to assert their own professionalism:

> my former web boss called me an "activist". It was precisely to defend his neutrality. Because he considered himself to be neutral. Like, he was *neutrality*! [laughs] It was about how we titled a paper, which I found sexist and stigmatizing towards women. And so, he said that I was the one carrying an activist discourse. As if, he, wasn't. (J52, interview, October 2023)

These forms of disqualification, which affect all minoritized women and racialized men, are thus described by several journalists as a mechanism to reaffirm and protect the epistemic privilege (Quiroz, 2019) enjoyed by White men.

The presumption of activism varies among minoritized journalists based on their demographic intersections. Racialized journalists and women, seen as socially "discredited", face heightened scrutiny, presumption of activism and assumptions of partiality based on identity rather than actual views (Goffman, 1963). All racialized journalists interviewed reported this bias. White LGBT women — regardless of their visibility as LGBT individuals — encountered, too, a systematic presumption of activism linked to their perceived identity, often reducing them to an inherently feminist position. Conversely, White LGBT men faced fewer credibility challenges and were less frequently presumed to be activists. When asked about experiencing presumption of activism, two-thirds indicated that they had not encountered such accusations. Some even appeared unaware that such presumption could exist, as reflected by this White gay journalist when asked if he ever felt assigned to certain topics or subjects:

> I feel like no, because this characteristic doesn't take up much space: I don't highlight it much. Sometimes people say to me, "this topic might interest you", but it's more because it's a bit of an offbeat subject. I like to stay informed about things related to gay issues, but... I'm not an activist. (J30, interview, April 2023)

In the interviews, White gay journalists rarely brought up that they were perceived as non-neutral from the outset, and two-thirds of this subgroup even equate discussing minoritized topics with activism, as this journalist does. Still, they are not entirely exempt: those covering topics linked to the LGBT community do encounter this presumption of activism.

The presumption of activism has significant consequences for journalists who experience it, but also for those who fear they might. Journalists who fear accusations of activism despite not having faced them tend to engage in self-censorship. They remain discreet about their personal lives, avoid social media engagement and sometimes erase signs of their minoritized identity. Some go to the extent of trying to erase any signs that might associate them with a minoritized group. Some racialized women straighten their hair, while other persons avoid clothing that could be linked to the other gender, some specific cultural background, or geographical region. Some even physically distance themselves from the other members of their minoritized group by avoiding them. These strategies closely resemble deliberate passing techniques (Kanuha, 1999).

These self-censorship practices also shape editorial positioning by discouraging journalists from addressing diversity-related topics, fearing accusations of activism. One journalist illustrated this by admitting she deliberately avoids stories that, even indirectly, involve Black individuals:

> actually, I'm afraid... well, it's not fear, because that's a big word, but I don't want people to say, "ah, here's a Black topic, of course, she will do it", or "she's proposing this, she doesn't know how to propose anything else". (J36, interview, May 2023)

Therefore, not only do those journalists avoid being assigned subjects that concern their own social group, but they also actively resist proposing such subjects, as this lesbian journalist explains:

> I don't dare, I don't want to have that "LGBT activist" label. Even though I have better knowledge on LGBT topics, or feminist topics and all that. But when I arrived in this media, my boss was a journalist who defended these issues a lot. And she was labeled as "the journalist who would *only* propose feminist topics" and... I don't want to go through the same thing. All the ones who defended those topics, they are no longer here today. (J47, interview, August 2023)

Around a third of interviewees described adjusting their workplace behavior to avoid being labeled as activists or non-neutral journalists. This often leads to hyper-vigilance and self-censorship, driven by the fear of presumed bias or hostility. This professional strain mirrors minority stress (Meyer, 2003), a stress that arises from regular and prolonged exposure to discrimination and rejection, as well as the fear of becoming a victim of such treatment. To cope, people develop long-term self-adaptation strategies to avoid stigma (Rault & Trachman, 2023). Thus, the presumption of activism impacts both media coverage and the long-term retention of minoritized journalists. Some respondents reported feeling journalism was incompatible with their identity due to these biases.

5. Discussion

This study, conducted in French-speaking Belgium, sought to examine the consequences of the expectations placed on minoritized journalists with regard to diversity. Based on 61 interviews, the research demonstrates that engaging with diversity-related topics entails not only additional, often invisible labor but also a professional cost for minoritized journalists. It also reveals structural tensions between discourses on diversity — that contribute to reifying identities by attributing specific skills to minoritized journalists and supposedly celebrate their specific knowledges — and the persistent presumption of activism in newsrooms, whereby this very knowledge is framed as evidence of a lack of neutrality. These tensions contribute to the naturalization of journalists' identities while simultaneously discrediting their expertise, potentially constraining their career trajectories within the profession.

5.1. Naturalization of Skills, Knowledge and Perspectives

A first tension emerges from the additional labor performed by minoritized journalists. This extra work stems from dominant newsroom discourses framing issues related to minoritized groups as overly time-consuming or too complex to address within standard production routines — a dynamic documented in previous studies conducted in North America (Clark, 2014). This study also reveals that, in order to challenge these

structural routines, minoritized journalists often engage in invisible and unrecognized labor aimed at diversifying journalistic content. As noted in previous research, this additional work frequently takes the form of proofreading colleagues' articles, translating materials, drawing on personal networks to identify sources, promoting minoritized sources (Correa, 2010; Meyers & Gayle, 2015; Owens, 2008), taking on personal times to ensure the presence of minoritized stories and voices in the media (Bhowmik et al., 2024; Garbes, 2024; Oh & Min, 2023).

Yet, this additional labor remains largely invisible — rarely acknowledged, let alone recognized as legitimate work. The expertise mobilized by minoritized journalists is often framed as innate or identity-based knowledge — something they are presumed to possess naturally and effortlessly — thus undermining its status as professional expertise and limiting its translation into professional or symbolic capital (Okuwobi, 2025). As a result, the application of such knowledge or skills is not considered labor, but rather viewed as stemming from personal background or lived experience (Simonet, 2018). In this context, the situation observed in French-speaking Belgian newsrooms can be understood as a journalistic form of the "minority tax" (Mizzi, 2024; Rodríguez et al., 2015). The goal in foregrounding this labor is not merely to reclassify these activities as "work", but rather to highlight a critical blind spot in prevailing diversity discourses: the hidden burden placed on minoritized journalists in the production of inclusive content. By making this labor visible, this study seeks to interrogate the institutional mechanisms that generate and sustain it.

5.2. A Tension on Minoritized Expertise

A second tension within diversity discourses lies in the inconsistent recognition of the specific knowledge and expertise attributed to minoritized journalists. While diversity narratives often celebrate the idea that these journalists bring unique perspectives or skills, this supposed expertise is not consistently acknowledged — nor legitimized — in professional settings, as evidenced by the experiences of the journalists interviewed. This contradiction reveals a deeper ambivalence: the very knowledge and topics associated with minoritized identities are simultaneously praised in discourse and devalued in practice. As a result, both the topics these journalists seek to cover and the expertise they bring are often perceived as lacking legitimacy within newsroom hierarchies.

Perspectives and knowledges of minoritized journalists in French-Speaking Belgium are often considered non-neutral, non-objective. As numerous studies on minoritized journalists have shown, these individuals face a paradox in which their purported expertise is symbolically praised, yet they themselves are frequently accused of advancing an activist agenda (Awad Cherit, 2008; Clark, 2022; Hultén, 2009; Nishikawa et al., 2009). Their ability to be objective is therefore often questioned when they try to work mobilizing this expertise (Beazer et al., 2025; Bhowmik et al., 2024; Haq, 2024).

In this research, this assumption is particularly visible in the case of racialized journalists and women, who are more frequently perceived as inherently biased or politically

engaged, irrespective of their actual professional stance. This dynamic significantly constrains their capacity to shape or diversify editorial content as mentioned in many studies examining minoritized journalists already showed (Bhowmik et al., 2024). As a result, engaging with these issues is perceived by minoritized journalists as a possible threat to their professionalism and may put them at a disadvantage within their newsrooms. Some journalists even express a sense of not belonging and frustration over their limited ability to influence media content — feelings that, in some cases, contribute to decisions to leave the profession. While efforts have focused on increasing minoritized representation in journalism, retention remains a critical issue, as highlighted in Canada, Germany, France, or the United States of America (Awad Cherit, 2008; Colisson, 2023; Lück et al., 2020; Wilson, 2000).

This is not to suggest that minoritized journalists lack agency or passively accept the presumption of activism. On the contrary, many actively develop strategies to navigate, contest or even reappropriate the roles and expectations imposed upon them. As demonstrated in studies conducted in other national contexts, minoritized individuals often engage in forms of mediation and resistance that allow them to exert influence over content, despite structural constraints (Douglas, 2022; Garbes, 2024; Meyers & Gayle, 2015; Rodriguez, 1999). Similar dynamics have also been observed in a previous research on minoritized journalists in French-speaking Belgium (Louazon, 2024): some journalists reappropriate the concept of "situated knowledge" to counter accusations of lacking objectivity, asserting that their perspectives constitute legitimate and valuable forms of knowledge (Haraway, 1988). Others choose to engage in additional labor — often unpaid and invisible — not only as a means of supporting their communities, but also as a political act aimed at affirming the relevance and legitimacy of their specific expertise within the journalistic field.

However, several limitations of this study must be acknowledged. First, the use of snowball sampling enabled access to the experiences of minoritized journalists who are typically underrepresented in quantitative research on journalism in French-speaking Belgium (Libert et al., 2023; Lits & Standaert, 2024). Despite the demographic diversity of the sample, its size and recruitment method constrain the generalization of the findings and preclude definitive conclusions about the wider population of minoritized journalists in the Belgian context. This recruitment method may have introduced a selection bias by disproportionately attracting journalists who are more actively engaged in critical reflection on their professional experiences. Consequently, minoritized journalists who report more positive trajectories or who do not view their identity as a salient factor shaping their work may be underrepresented in the sample — although it is worth noting that a substantial number of the White gay journalists interviewed fall into this latter category, as well as some older male racialized journalists.

Second, this study deliberately refrained from focusing on one specific subgroup — such as White gay journalists or heterosexual journalist racialized as Black for example

— instead opting for an inclusive approach that encompassed all individuals who identified with the broader categories of "racialized journalist", "LGBT journalist", or "minoritized journalist". The decision to pursue a broader and more general analysis was guided by the context of French-speaking Belgium, where no minoritized group of journalists had previously been the subject of dedicated study. The aim was to provide an initial, comprehensive overview that could serve as a foundation for future research, offering a general assessment of the field upon which more targeted investigations might build, despite the rich potential an analysis on subgroups could offer.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study strongly challenge the hypothesis of a direct link between the presence of minoritized journalists and the improvement in the representation of minoritized groups in the media due to work routines and ideological bias. Although organizational discourse has, since the 2000s, embraced an approach framing "diversity" as an asset (Bereni, 2009), the data collected show that minoritized journalists interviewed perceive themselves as having a very limited impact on journalistic production. Within this study, work related to "diversity" emerged as a professionally unrewarding assignment, one that is often perceived as a liability rather than an asset in career advancement strategies due to tensions inherent to diversity discourses.

It does not mean that minoritized journalists do not possess specific skills, expertise and perspectives that could, in theory, enhance the quality and inclusivity of coverage related to minoritized groups. But this study highlights the need to move beyond a solely recruitment-focused approach to the lack of diversity in journalism. Achieving genuine representativity in media content requires a profound re-evaluation of journalistic practices. This includes rethinking entrenched news production routines, recognizing and formally valuing the additional labor disproportionately borne by minoritized journalists, and critically addressing the professional biases that sustain the presumption of partiality and activism attached to their identities.

References

Alemán, S. (2017). A critical race counterstory: Chicana/o subjectivities vs. journalism objectivity. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*, *16*(1), 73–91. https://doi.org/10.31390/taboo.16.1.08

Alvarado, M. (Ed.). (2021). *Diversidad en el periodismo latinoamericano*. Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas.

Awad Cherit, I. (2008). Cultural diversity in the news media: A democratic or a commercial need? *Javnost - The Public*, *15*(4), 55–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2008.11008982

Baillargeon, D., Bizien, T., Brulois, V., Millette, J., Seurrat, A., & Yao-Baglo, N. (2023). Communiquer sur la diversité et communiquer la diversité: Défis et perspectives de l'équité, de la diversité et de l'inclusion pour la recherche et le milieu professionnel. *Revue Communication & Professionnalisation*, (14), 178–202. https://doi.org/10.14428/rcompro.v14i14.83393

Beazer, A., Walter, S., & Eldridge, S. A., II. (2025). Space for solidarity? Studying women journalists' experiences of covering minoritized groups. *Journalism Practice*, 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2025.2487522

Bereni, L. (2009). Faire de la diversité une richesse pour l'entreprise. *Raisons Politiques*, *35*(3), 87–105. https://doi.org/10.3917/rai.035.0087

Bereni, L. (2023). *Le management de la vertu. La diversité en entreprise à New York et à Paris*. Presses de Sciences Po.

Bereni, L., & Jaunait, A. (2009). Usages de la diversité. *Raisons Politiques*, *35*(3), 5–9. https://doi.org/10.3917/rai.035.0005

Bersipont, R. (2020). La diversification des groupes de presse écrite quotidienne payante situés dans le petit marché belge francophone (2000-2019). *Les Cahiers du Journalisme*, *2*(5), R19–R36. https://doi.org/10.31188/CaJsm.2(5).2020.R019

Bhowmik, S., Smith, M., & Wenger, D. (2024). Then and now, newsroom diversity matters for Mississippi's Black journalists. *Journalism Practice*, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2024.2418912

Bravo, V., & Clark, N. (2019). Diversity in news organizations. In T. P. Vos & F. Hanusch (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of journalism studies* (pp. 1–9). John Wiley & Sons. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118841570.iejs0225

Campbell, C. P., LeDuff, K. M., & Brown, R. A. (2012). Race, myth and the news revisited. In C. P. Campbell, C. D. Jenkins, K. M. LeDuff, & R. A. Brown (Eds.), *Race and news: Critical perspectives* (pp. 3–21). Routledge.

Clark, B. (2014). "Walking up a down-escalator": The interplay between newsroom norms and media coverage of minority groups. *InMedia. The French Journal of Media Studies*, *5*, Article 5. https://doi.org/10.4000/inmedia.749

Clark, B. (2022). *Journalism's racial reckoning: The news media's pivot to diversity and inclusion*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003261544

Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel. (2006). *Collège d'avis. Avis n°07/2006*. https://www.csa.be/document/presence-et-representation-des-minorites-culturelles-dans-les-medias-audiovisuels/

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2014). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. SAGE.

Colisson, P. (2023). *La diversité dans les médias: Identités et pratiques des jeunes journalistes en rédaction* [Doctoral dissertation, Université Paris Dauphine].

Correa, T. (2010). How Latino reporters' ethnic identification with sources affects newspaper content. *Newspaper Research Journal*, *31*(3), 75–82. https://doi.org/10.1177/073953291003100 3

Demart, S. (2025). *La fiction postraciale belge. Antiracisme afrodescendant, féminisme et aspirations décoloniales*. Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles.

Derinöz, S., Chkiri, L., El Massaoudi, S., & Wathieu, N. (2024). *Étude de la diversité et de l'égalité dans la presse quotidienne belge francophone*. Association des Journalistes Professionnels. https://www.ajp.be/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/diversite-2022SiteLight.pdf

Desterbecq, J., Laville, C., Ghanim, Y., Ngouebeng, L., & Salque, D. (2023). *Baromètre Diversité & Egalité: 10 ans*. Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel. https://www.csa.be/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/CSA_barometre-10ANS-2023-WEB.pdf

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/10.1177/14648849211001778

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2023). *Being Black in the EU — Experiences of people of African descent*. https://doi.org/10.2811/4285140

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2024a). *Being Muslim in the EU — Experiences of Muslims*. https://doi.org/10.2811/2893

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2024b). *Jewish people's experiences and perceptions of antisemitism*. https://doi.org/10.2811/292167

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2024c). *LGBTIQ equality at a crossroads — Progress and challenges*. https://doi.org/10.2811/920578

Fricker, M. (2007). *Epistemic injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing*. Oxford University Press.

Gans, H. J. (2004). *Deciding what's news: A study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News,* Newsweek*, and* Time. Northwestern University Press.

Garbes, L. (2024). Sonic double consciousness: Public radio voices of color. *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*, *12*(4), 677–697. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41290-024-00215-x

Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigmate. Les usages sociaux des handicaps*. Les Éditions de Minuit.

Gross, L. (2001). *Up from invisibility: Lesbians, gay men, and the media in America*. Columbia University Press.

Guillaumin, C. (1972). *L'idéologie raciste: Genèse et langage actuel*. Mouton.

Haq, N. (2024). "Whether that's truly objective journalism, probably not". Professional retreatism and professional dilemmas when reporting on Muslims. *Journalism Practice*, *18*(9), 2357–2373. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2024.2323063

Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, *14*(3), 575–599. https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066

Hicks, G., & Warren, H. (1998). Whose benefit? Gay and lesbian journalists discuss outing, the individual, and the community. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, *13*(1), 14–25. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327728jmme1301_2

Hultén, G. (2009). Diversity disorders: Ethnicity and newsroom cultures. *Conflict & Communication Online*, *8*(2), 1–14.

Jackson, T. L. (2022). Stories that don't make the news: Navigating a White newsroom as a Black female reporter. *Journalism Practice*, *18*(6), 1349–1364. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2022.2110926

Johnston, A., & Flamiano, D. (2007). Diversity in mainstream newspapers from the standpoint of journalists of color. *Howard Journal of Communications*, *18*(2), 111–131. https://doi.org/10.1080/10646170701309999

Kanter, R. M. (1977). *Men and women of the corporation: New edition*. Basic Books.

Kanuha, V. (1999). The social process of "passing" to manage stigma: Acts of internalized oppression or acts of resistance? *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, *26*(4), 27–46.

Lecrit, N., Libert, M., Le Cam, F., & Bersipont, R. (2025). *Évolution des médias belges d'information 2011-2025. Perspectives socio-économiques*. LaPIJ. https://lapij.ulb.ac.be/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Evolution-des-medias-belges-dinformation-2011-2025-Perspectives-socio-economiques.pdf

Libert, M., Le Cam, F., Lethimonnier, C., Vanhaelewyn, B., Van Leuven, S., & Raeymaeckers, K. (2023). *Portrait des journalistes belges en 2023*. Academia Press.

Lima Pôrto, J. I. (2023). *Marcas de resistência das jornalistas LGBTQIA+ à cisheteronormatividade na profissão* [Master's dissertation, Universidade de São Paulo]. Biblioteca Digital USP. https://doi.org/10.11606/D.27.2023.tde-02042024-110929

Lima Pôrto, J. I., & Alves Feitosa, S. (2017, September 9). *"Põe a cara no sol, mona" : A heteronormatividade no exercício da profissão do jornalista gay* [Conference presentation]. Anais do 7º Encontro de Jovens Pesquisadores em Jornalismo, São Paulo, Brazil.

Lits, G., & Standaert, O. (2024). *Étude de la diversité au sein de la profession de journaliste (2012-2023)*. Association des Journalistes Professionnels. https://www.ajp.be/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Diversite-UCLouvainCover.pdf

Louazon, E. (2024). Combattre les assignations à l'engagement: Stratégies de résistance de journalistes minorisé.e.s. *Sur le Journalisme, About Journalism, Sobre Jornalismo*, *13*(1), Article 1. https://doi.org/10.25200/SLJ.v13.n1.2024.510

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*, *16*(4), 561–581. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2020.1815073

Marthoz, J.-P. (2011). *Couvrir les migrations*. De Boeck Supérieur.

Metykova, M. (2016). *Diversity and the media*. Red Globe Press.

Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological Bulletin*, *129*(5), 674–697. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674

Meyers, M., & Gayle, L. (2015). African American women in the newsroom: Encoding resistance. *Howard Journal of Communications*, *26*(3), 292–312. https://doi.org/10.1080/10646175.2015.1049760

Mizzi, R. C. (2024). Understanding homoprofessionalism and the political context: Lesbian and gay leaders of international schools. In J. Gedro & T. Rocco (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of LGBTQ identity in organizations and society* (pp. 42–56). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003128151-5

Nesbitt, P. D. (1997). Gender, tokenism, and the construction of elite clergy careers. *Review of Religious Research*, *38*(3), 193–210. https://doi.org/10.2307/3512083

Nishikawa, K. A., Towner, T. L., Clawson, R. A., & Waltenburg, E. N. (2009). Interviewing the interviewers: Journalistic norms and racial diversity in the newsroom. *Howard Journal of Communications*, *20*(3), 242–259. https://doi.org/10.1080/10646170903070175

Oh, D. C., & Min, S. J. (2023). *Navigating White news: Asian American journalists at work*. Rutgers University Press. https://doi.org/10.36019/9781978831452

Okuwobi, O. F. (2025). *Who pays for diversity: Why programs fail at racial equity and what to do about it*. University of California Press.

Owens, L. C. (2008). Network news: The role of race in source selection and story topic. *The Howard Journal of Communications*, *19*(4), 355–370. https://doi.org/10.1080/10646170802418269

Pritchard, D., & Stonbely, S. (2007). Racial profiling in the newsroom. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *84*(2), 231–248. https://doi.org/10.1177/107769900708400203

Quiroz, L. (2019). *Le leurre de l'objectivité scientifique. Lieu d'énonciation et colonialité du savoir*. HAL Open Science.

Rault, W., & Trachman, M. (Eds.). (2023). *Minorités de genre et de sexualité. Objectivation, catégorisations et pratiques d'enquête*. Ined Éditions.

Rivas-Rodriguez, M., Subervi-Vélez, F. A., Bramlett-Solomon, S., & Heider, D. (2004). Minority journalists' perceptions of the impact of minority executives. *Howard Journal of Communications*, *15*(1), 39–55. https://doi.org/10.1080/10646170490275747

Rodriguez, A. (1999). *Making Latino news: Race, language, class*. SAGE.

Rodríguez, J. E., Campbell, K. M., & Pololi, L. H. (2015). Addressing disparities in academic medicine: What of the minority tax? *BMC Medical Education*, *15*, Article 6. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-015-0290-9

Sénac-Slawinski, R. (2012). *L'invention de la diversité*. Presses Universitaires de France.

Shoemaker, P. J., & Reese, S. D. (1996). *Mediating the message: Theories of influences on mass media content*. Longman.

Simonet, M. (2018). *Travail gratuit: La nouvelle exploitation?* Textuel.

Skrentny, J. D. (2014). *After civil rights: Racial realism in the new American workplace*. Princeton University Press.

Verhoeven, E., Dhoest, A., & Paulussen, S. (2022). 'No room for hate in our country': Constructing the LGBTI-friendly nation in news discourses after the murder of a gay man in Belgium. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, *26*(1), 69-86. https://doi.org/10.1177/13678779221131080

Wilson, C., II. (2000). The paradox of African American journalist. In S. Cottle (Éd.), *Ethnic minorities and the media* (pp. 85–99). Open University Press.

Biographical Note

Elena Louazon is a journalist and a PhD candidate at the Université libre de Bruxelles. Her doctoral work investigates how "diversity" has emerged in journalism in

French-speaking Belgium, and analyzes the lived experiences of minoritized journalists within newsrooms.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1187-2632
Email: elena.louazon@ulb.be
Address: Faculté de Lettres, Traduction et Communication, Campus du Solbosch - CP 123, Avenue Roosevelt, 50, 1050 Bruxelles (Belgium)

Submitted: 30/03/2025 | Accepted: 22/10/2025