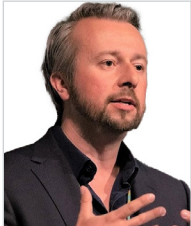


Journalism innovations as a driver for journalistic diversity and inclusion: International examples and editorial institutionalization

Las innovaciones periodísticas como motor de diversidad e inclusión: Ejemplos internacionales e institucionalización editorial



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Abstract:

We examine whether internationally relevant journalism innovations of the last decade support journalistic diversity and inclusion aspects and look at the degree of their editorial institutionalization. To approach an answer, thirty-eight guided interviews were conducted between the end of 2021 and summer 2022 along thirty-eight innovative journalism case studies among five European countries. We show that diversity is seen as a key journalism innovation in all five countries. We find that innovative journalism initiatives show

Resumen:

El propósito de este trabajo es analizar si las innovaciones periodísticas de relevancia internacional adoptadas en la última década fomentan la diversidad y la inclusión periodísticas, así como examinar su grado de institucionalización editorial. Con el objetivo de obtener una respuesta, se realizaron treinta y ocho entrevistas en profundidad en otros tantos estudios de caso de innovación en cinco países europeos, entre 2021 y 2022. Los resultados muestran que la diversidad se considera una innovación periodística clave en los cinco países. Comprobamos que las

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diversity-relevant references and influence the degree of diversity and inclusion accessible to the audience in a positive manner. Thus, efforts to strengthen innovation in the media industry are an important building block for ensuring future journalism that does not want to distance itself from social reality. However, based on structuration theory considerations, we conclude that large numbers of innovative journalism initiatives are not sufficient to institutionalize diversity and inclusion. Instead, these aspects need to be defined explicitly as editorial quality goals which are anchored in an editorial quality management system.

Keywords:

Innovation; journalism; diversity and inclusion; editorial quality management system; structuration theory.

iniciativas periodísticas innovadoras muestran referencias pertinentes a la diversidad e influyen positivamente en el grado de diversidad e inclusión accesible para la audiencia. Así, los esfuerzos para reforzar la innovación en la industria de los medios de comunicación son un pilar importante para garantizar un ejercicio futuro del periodismo orientado a la calidad, que no quiere distanciarse de la realidad social. Sin embargo, basándonos en consideraciones propias de la teoría de la estructuración, concluimos que un gran número de iniciativas de innovación periodística no son suficientes para institucionalizar la diversidad y la inclusión. En su lugar, estos aspectos deben definirse explícitamente como objetivos integrados en un sistema de gestión de la calidad editorial.

Palabras clave:

Innovación; periodismo; diversidad e inclusión; sistema de gestión de la calidad editorial; teoría de la estructuración.

1. Introduction

“The new business model in journalism is not content, because there is enough of that, but identification”, clarified an experienced media startup pioneer in Switzerland who has given thought on how to sell democracy-relevant, journalistic content economically well over the last ten years. Identification with a journalistic medium becomes more likely if the audience feels that its way of life, needs, views or concerns are not missed, but repeatedly addressed and represented in a correct and constructive way through mass media reporting (Douglas, 2022: 2109). However, the demographic heterogeneity is increasing, societal attitudes and viewpoints change through public discourses such as the gender debate, social movements like Black Lives Matter and #MeToo or society-wide events such as the Covid19 pandemic; editorial cost-cutting measures and media concentration put topic diversity under pressure (Hendrickx and Ranaivoson, 2021: 2800) and the audience is fragmenting in terms of media consumption habits, needs and content interests (Evers, 2021: 446; Slaets and Verhoest, 2020; Cherubini et al., 2020: 7; Horz et al., 2020: 34; Kümpel, 2020: 11). The awareness for editorial diversity and inclusion –which, with a practical lens, represent the precondition and consequence of the same demand– have therefore increased in recent years but so far seem to have been implemented in measures or institutionalized internationally only to a limited extent by editorial boards (Lugschitz and Kaltenbrunner, 2022: 137; Kaltenbrunner et al., 2021: 347; Horz et al., 2020: 26; Bayer, 2013). In Switzerland for example, legacy media house Tamedia has had a Social Responsibility Board for two years, which aims to provide editors with diversity-relevant tools in the form of manuals (Werbewoche 2020). The Swiss public broadcaster SRG lists diversity as a journalistic quality criterion in its journalistic guidelines under chapter 1.5 “Diversity and equality. The We.Publish foundation, which offers open source publishing tools to independent journalism content providers, runs a *Rethink Journalism Hackathon* to create digital solutions that will help promote national media diversity (Opendata 2022). In Austria, the “Wiener Medieninitiative” which has been providing financial support to media

startups as well as legacy media houses since 2019, will be extended until 2025 (ots.at 2022). Similar examples can also be found in other countries.

But the fact that internationally, only selective efforts can be observed to promote diversity and inclusion in the media industry systematically –from media practice, media education as well as from federal authorities– is remarkable; in order to further fulfill its democratic role, journalism must reach as large a segment of the population as possible and present a wide range of viewpoints (Finneman et al., 2022; Masini et al., 2018; Karppinen, 2013).

Without diversity efforts now starting, future journalism is supposed to come under pressure –both at the local and national level (Lugschitz and Kaltenbrunner, 2022: 137). Therefore, the question arises as to where new momentum can come from to counteract this status quo. Does the media industry recognize diversity and inclusion as a topic area that needs further efforts and are editorial resources invested for it? To approach these questions, we use current qualitative case study data from an ongoing journalistic innovation research in five European countries. We ask which internationally relevant journalism innovations of the last ten years intentionally address or unexpectedly support diversity and inclusion aspects. We will highlight innovative diversity initiatives in these countries, implemented between 2010 and 2020 and look at their societal intentions and editorial institutionalization. And we show how further relevant journalism innovations within the same period have driven diversity and inclusion, particularly on a micro level. We will base our approach on structuration theory considerations and find that diversity and inclusion is seen as a key journalism innovation in all five countries. However, we also conclude that large numbers of journalism innovation initiatives are not sufficient to institutionalize diversity and inclusion. Instead, these aspects need to be defined explicitly as editorial quality goals which are incorporated by corresponding assurance instruments anchored in an editorial quality management system.

1.1. Theoretical considerations and research questions

Referring to (García-Avilés et al., 2018: 27) we define journalism innovation as *“the introduction of something new that adds value to customers and to the media organization, which reacts to changes in products, processes and services through the use of creative skills that allow a problem or need to be identified and solved.”* The foundation of our approach are the two premises that journalism innovation is understood as a central prerequisite for addressing current problem areas in journalism (Buschow and Wellbrock, 2020: 2) and secondly, that journalism innovations always reflect societal changes (Bruns, 2014: 13ff.). With this in mind, we understand organizational initiatives with the aim of better ensuring diversity and inclusion, be it as an explicit main objective or an unexpected side effect, as a journalism innovation. In this sense, the question arises whether journalism innovations –understood as independent variable– are drivers for diversity and inclusion.

Diversity and inclusion are societal topics that influence journalism production routines. The debate was largely dominated by gender equality in the past decades, but recently the debate became broader, referring to all groups neglected or discriminated in media representation or newsroom recruitment (Benson, 2020). Overall, there is insufficient and contradictory data from content analyses on whether a diverse newsroom really leads to more diverse or inclusive reporting: While some studies find no impact on reporting (Beam and Di Cicco, 2010), others state at least a partial or locally dependent impact on the representation of ethnicities or race (Sui et al., 2018; Meyers and Gayle, 2015). However, it seems reasonable to assume that without any diversity efforts at

all, little change will occur in the current reporting with its diversity and inclusion deficits. Diversity and inclusion in journalism therefore needs continued research (Jenkins, 2019: 230) and can be captured on different levels in journalism practice, whereas level a) and b) will provide the basis for the research questions 1 and 2 of this study.

- a) Exposure or content diversity in topic coverage asks at the micro level about the pluralism of media titles accessible to the audience, as well as the pluralism of opinions, perspectives or formats conveyed by mass media (Moe et al., 2021; Nef, 2020; Masini and Van Aelst, 2017).
- b) On a meso level, interest focuses on how diverse editorial teams are in terms of age, gender equality, minorities, the integration of employees with a migration background or of other ethnicities, religious and political affiliations (Lugschitz and Kaltenbrunner, 2022: 141; Thurman et al., 2016: 8ff.).
- c) On a macro level, diversity is considered in the context of regulating media policy –and thus linked to media promotion– or media ownership (Craufurd Smith et al., 2021; Brogi et al., 2020: 153ff.; Hoffmann et al. 2015: 1360).

Various studies on diversity in reporting as well as in the personnel structure of editorial departments reveal that there are often insufficient institutionalized procedures for improving diversity, or institutional commitments do not correspond with the daily experience of editorial boards (Douglas, 2022; Lück et al., 2022; Lugschitz and Kaltenbrunner, 2022: 156; Wenzel, 2021). Looking for reasons for a low institutionalization degree, especially in regional and local media, we must consider that –along with entrenched ideas, weak leadership, skills shortage or amplifying cost pressures (Grubenmann and Weber, 2022: 22; Kueng, 2020)– a part of the established, journalistic work programs can be in tension with the demand for diversity and therefore complicate its implementation. This includes the selection of news according to the principle of news values (Kepplinger, 2011: 56). Journalistic notions of quality can also be an obstacle: Using only easy-to-understand, short sentences, as often associated with tabloid journalism, can be conducive to inclusion efforts. Therefore, for a sustainable institutionalization of diversity and inclusion, it is not enough to employ diverse staff or to rely on actions by individuals, but a reorganization of the editorial culture is required, led by a clear commitment by the management and institutional support through the provision of resources (Douglas, 2022: 2110; Cottle, 2000). If diversity and inclusion is understood for what it is, a long-term and complex (Kueng, 2020: 46) organizational quality goal, editorial culture can be slowly shaped –but not imposed– by implementing diversity efforts in an existing editorial quality management system. Though institutionalization through the establishment of an editorial quality management system –not only with a focus on diversity and inclusion– can also be considered a journalism innovation, this thought is situated in Giddens' structuration theory. From this theoretical point of view, structures –in our case an implemented editorial quality management system– determine options for action (Giddens 1984). Thus, a first step to institutionalize diversity and inclusion is to write it down in basic editorial documents, as such documents like quality policies or ethical guidelines form the basis for further quality instruments during the daily production routine (Saner and Wyss, 2019: 157). This includes among others the personnel development dealing with training opportunities, the production process consisting of briefings or acceptance as well as corrective measures like internal or external feedbacks or audience involvement dealing with audience perception (Saner and Wyss, 2019: 154). In the planning of broadcasts or contributions, in fact-checking as well as in acceptance tests or in feedbacks, recursive reference can be made to formulated rules that sensitize editorial members to the topic of diversity (Wyss, 2021: 4).

Such implementation can help diversity leave behind its status as innovation and become the norm (Schwelger, 2020). Moreover, institutionalization makes diversity measurable and data provides the foundation for editorial debates (Kueng, 2020: 47).

Based on these considerations, we pursue the following research questions:

RQ1: Do internationally relevant journalism innovations support established, journalistic diversity and inclusion aspects, such as *variety of topics and opinions* or *variety of accessible media titles* on a micro level, or *age, gender, ethnicity* or *religious affiliation* on a meso level?

RQ2: Do international, innovative journalism initiatives show diversity or inclusion aspects that go beyond the classic items mentioned in RQ1 and have received fewer empirical attention so far, but could have effects on the audience?

RQ3: Do international, innovative diversity initiatives show signs of written editorial basic documents which explicitly institutionalize diversity and inclusion aspects?

2. Methodology

Literature on diversity research shows that theoretical embedding needs to catch up and qualitative methodological approaches have been neglected in the past twenty years (Joris et al., 2020; Loecherbach et al., 2020: 605). Especially diversity on a meso level is frequently determined by quantitative journalist surveys, focusing on classic diversity aspects such as age, gender, or race (Thurman et al. 2016; Weaver and Willnat, 2012). Dietrich-Gsenger and Seethaler (2019: 68f.) conducted an international study on the professional field of journalism and the socio-demographic characteristics of journalists in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. They found that journalists in these countries are overwhelmingly male, have often studied, are between forty and fifty years old and work as full-time editors. Women continue to be underrepresented in the editorial departments of the three countries. With reference to gender diversity, the authors conclude that “*the glass ceiling*” is still a reality and that in media systems that have grown historically over long periods of time, it can probably only be broken through targeted control measures. However, this focus on quantitative studies neglects other aspects of journalistic diversity. Thus, in this paper, we apply a qualitative approach using guided expert interviews. Our approach is in the first step based on a pioneering inventory of the most relevant journalism innovations of the last ten years in the five European countries Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Spain and the United Kingdom (Meier et al., 2022). Both authors are part of the international research consortium who conducted this inventory. During the first half of 2021, the five country project teams conducted one hundred expert interviews in total, where the interviewees named the ten most important innovations in journalism and media in their respective country for the period 2010–2020. From this international inventory, each country selected the twenty most important journalism innovation categories. This resulted in a total of thirty-five innovation categories. For further details on the methodology and the country selection, see Meier et al., 2022. From these thirty-five innovation categories, only eight categories are among the twenty most important innovations *in all five countries* (see Table 1). To be able to compare as many project countries as possible, these eight categories were selected for the present analysis. The extent to which these categories show references to journalistic diversity or inclusion aspects was examined.

Table 1: Innovation categories among the twenty most important journalism innovations in all five countries

Name of Innovation	Austria Position	Germany Position	Spain Position	Switzerland Position	United Kingdom Position
Data journalism	3	5	1	4	1
Collaborative/Investigative	1	1	15	11	3
Engagement (data)	16	2	12	9	3
Social media	11	3	4	8	20
Diversity	4	10	15	14	9
Paywalls/Paid content	4	12	8	16	13
Automation	11	16	12	7	10
New organizational teams	10	12	15	3	19

Source: (Meier et al., 2022; 709)

Included are *data journalism*, *collaborative (investigative) journalism*, *engagement on the basis of data*, *news on social media*, *paywalls and paid content*, *automation*, *new organizational teams* and *diversity* itself. For each of these eight innovation categories, all five country project teams selected as a case study an innovative journalism initiative that had excelled in the specific category in their country; either because the initiative was frequently mentioned by the consulted experts, because it was pioneering or because it has specialized in this innovation field and is therefore able to represent the innovation category for the whole industry. The organizations that have been mentioned during the expert interviews for each specific innovation category were given priority in the selection. Within this framework, additional attention was paid to organizational, thematic and geographic diversity: If possible, representatives from legacy media, journalistic start-ups, digital native organizations and entrepreneurial initiatives should be represented. If more than one organization was suitable as a case study candidate in one category, consideration was given to those initiatives that stand out for their specialization in this field. Thirdly, if possible, the case study initiatives chosen should be from different geographical areas of a country to avoid centralization in the (media) capital cities. Nevertheless, the fact that in the selected countries a pronounced media-centrism exists in cities such as Madrid, London, Vienna, or Zurich can be seen in the case study sample.

Thirty-eight, approximately one-hour guided interviews were conducted between the end of 2021 and summer 2022 along thirty-eight innovative journalism initiatives, mainly via digital conference tools. For two case studies no interviews were conducted by the time this paper was finalized. Twenty-three case studies cover legacy media (including two news agencies), the remaining are digital natives or entrepreneurial initiatives. Therefore, the sample covers both established, systemically relevant media organizations as well as promising new media startups and includes initiatives that are widely discussed and observed in the country's media industry (see Table 2). While legacy media dominate the national samples of all three central European countries,

digital native and entrepreneurial initiatives are more strongly represented in both Spain and the United Kingdom. Within an innovation category, different media genres and media types can be analyzed, as the purpose of the analysis is not a comparison of performance between the countries, but an international inventory.

Those responsible for the initiative and people who regularly work on it were selected as interviewees. This includes founders, CEOs, heads of division, Chief Product Officers, Chief Revenue Officers, editors in chief as well as programme directors, editorial managers, consultants and (specialized) editors. The questions of the case study interviews covered the following dimensions related to the initiative: strategic goals and quality aims, resources invested, preconditions that supported or inhibited the establishing and growing, quality management tools, professional role perception of the persons involved and the perceived impact on the industry and society (see appendix 9.1). Afterwards, the interview statements were transcribed in each country along these dimensions.

Referring to our research questions, we thereafter searched the transcripts for diversity and inclusion references that were explicitly mentioned by the interviewees and assigned the findings to the micro or meso level. At the micro level, in times when quality journalism is under pressure due to advancing media concentration and content cooperations, the question of diversity of topics, opinions and media titles available to the audience is of interest. On a meso level, it is analyzed whether classical editorial diversity demands on gender, age, ethnicity or religion affiliations, as well as other diversity-relevant aspects can be found.

Diversity itself was identified as one of the twenty most relevant journalism innovations in all five European countries between 2010 and 2020 and is seen in all these countries as an innovation that has a radical impact on society (Meier et al., 2022). However, the fact that diversity made it onto this list at all is largely thanks to this broad-based, societal attribution of importance. On average, the aspect of diversity was mentioned only three times per country. This fact cannot necessarily be taken as evidence for a general, deep degree of institutionalization, but it may at least be an indication of a still modest diversity awareness in the media industry. Five of our thirty-eight case studies focus explicitly on the topic of diversity and inclusion. This includes in the five countries the following initiatives:

Spain: *Pikara Magazine*, an entrepreneurial project with a gender perspective born in November 2010 out of the Basque network of journalists. It is committed to an intersectional feminism.

Germany: *Auf Klo*, a digital native which was founded in 2016 to raise awareness of feminist issues and cover a variety of topics for teenage girls. To be depicted are queer-feminist and diverse topics and the programme is designed inclusively.

United Kingdom: *Black Ballad*, a digital native which began as a free blog in 2014 and fights against how poorly black women writers, their stories and experiences are represented across women's media. They give black women opportunities and support their journalistic talent while also delivering content and articles addressed to black women.

Austria: The *Biber academy* has been part of the Viennese magazine *Biber* since 2012. The magazine targets young people with a migration background. Every year, the academy offers about twelve scholarship holders –almost all with migration background– mentoring, workshops and practice for entering journalism to make newsrooms more diverse.

Switzerland: *Chance 50:50*, a project launched by the British Broadcasting Corporation BBC which primarily revolves around ensuring that women are better represented in reporting. The idea for editorial teams is to participate voluntarily. Since about 2019 the Swiss German Public Broadcast station SRF has been part of that international initiative.

Table 2: The selected case study initiatives and their media organizations

Innovation category	Switzerland	Type of media
Data Journalism	Visuals team Neue Zürcher Zeitung NZZ	legacy media
Collaborative (investigative) journalism	Research desk Tamedia/TX Group	legacy media
Engagement on the basis of data	Digital Platform “Star-Sherlock”, Ringier	legacy media
News on Social Media	TikTok News channel, SRF/SRG	legacy media
Diversity	Media format “Fifty-fifty”, SRF/SRG	legacy media
Paywalls and paid content	Paywall Tamedia/TX Group	legacy media
Automation	Software LENA, Keystone-SDA	news agency
New organizational forms and teams	Newsroom “Südostschweiz”, Somedia	legacy media
Innovation category	Spain	Type of media
Data Journalism	Datadista	digital native
Collaborative (investigative) journalism	Civio	digital native
Engagement on the basis of data	El Español	digital native
News on Social Media	Sphera Sports	digital native
Diversity	Pikara Magazine	entrepreneur
Paywalls and paid content	El Mundo	legacy media
Automation	Newtral.es	digital native
New organizational forms and teams	El Pais	legacy media

Innovation category	United Kingdom	Type of media
Data Journalism	Our World in Data	digital native
Collaborative (investigative) journalism	Bellingcat	digital native
Engagement on the basis of data	no case study	-
News on Social Media	BBC TikTok channel	legacy media
Diversity	Black Ballad	digital native
Paywalls and paid content	Financial Times	legacy media
Automation	Urbs Media/RADAR	entrepreneur
New organizational forms and teams	The Bureau of Investigative Journalism	digital native
Innovation category	Germany	Type of media
Data Journalism	Bayerischer Rundfunk	legacy media
Collaborative (investigative) journalism	Süddeutsche Zeitung	legacy media
Engagement on the basis of data	Ippen Digital	entrepreneur
News on Social Media	ARD-Tagesschau	legacy media
Diversity	Auf Klo	digital native
Paywalls and paid content	BILD Zeitung	legacy media
Automation	Rheinische Post	legacy media
New organizational forms and teams	Main-Post	legacy media
Innovation category	Austria	Type of media
Data Journalism	ORF	legacy media
Collaborative (investigative) journalism	Dossier	digital native

Engagement on the basis of data	no case study	-
News on Social Media	ZIB Zeit im Bild, ORF	legacy media
Diversity	Biber academy	legacy media
Paywalls and paid content	Kleine Zeitung, Styria Media Group	legacy media
Automation	APA Austrian Press Agency	news agency
New organizational forms and teams	Kleine Zeitung, Styria Media Group	legacy media

Source: authors' own research and compilation

3. Results

3.1. References of journalism innovation categories to diversity and inclusion

The following section examines the extent to which the eight journalism innovations categories mentioned above, which are among the twenty most relevant in all five countries (see Table 1), show relations to diversity and inclusion. All references that were explicitly mentioned during the interviews are summarized below per innovation category.

Table 3: Diversity and inclusion reference levels and items

Innovation category	Switzerland	Spain	United Kingdom	Germany	Austria
Data Journalism	Micro and Meso: Journalistic added value through new, quantitatively based stories/issues; need for interdisciplinary teams (journalists, designers, programmers); Greater importance of visualizations: visualizations must be comprehensible for colour blind people.	Micro: Dealing with issues with less public attention; thereafter, dissemination of the topics covered through legacy media.	Micro and Meso: Offer longer, detailed stories on important issues as social inequality which are less fast and short than what is usually produced; media organizations write articles that are enabled by our data; need for interdisciplinary teams (developer, technicians, researcher, data journalists).	Micro and Meso: Different thematic focus than other editorial offices, because we infer the topics from evidence-based data; need for interdisciplinary teams (e.g. designers).	Micro and Meso: Data- and thus fact-based stories; need for interdisciplinary teams (graphic designers and programmers).

<p>Collaborative (investigative) Journalism</p>	<p>Micro and Meso: Publish lighthouse stories that no other national medium can produce; the public is bombarded with short news, which means there is a need for more in-depth stories; the data journalism team has partly been a part of the research desk and has also been outsourced from time to time.</p>	<p>Micro and Meso: Collaboration is enriching for opening up perspectives; make agreements with people who make podcasts and documentaries to reach more people.</p>	<p>Micro and Meso: Provide a better and transparent information, especially for delicate topics (e.g. war in Ukraine); Bellingcat is about creating a network in which the diversity of sources and people is the strong point of editorial work.</p>	<p>Micro and Meso: Investigative journalism is by definition journalism about topics that not everyone else has (unique selling point); learning to work with lawyers.</p>	<p>Micro: Dossier is a supplement because the gap in the field of research and investigative journalism has widened; the aim is to expand the diversity of opinion in society.</p>
<p>Engagement on the basis of data</p>	<p>Micro and Meso: Respond to a more diverse audience by collecting audience data; need for interdisciplinary teams: (product owners, data scientists, engineers, overhead).</p>	<p>Meso: The innovation strategy is led by a multidisciplinary team.</p>	<p>no case study</p>	<p>no reference</p>	<p>no case study</p>
<p>News on Social Media</p>	<p>Meso: The channel requires young hosts, but the overall launch effort is higher with young hosts under the age of 25.</p>	<p>Micro: Networks democratize, eliminate barriers and allow to develop personal brands, either as an individual or as a corporate brand.</p>	<p>Micro: Production of more religious journalism to reach younger audiences more frequently on ethical and religious issues.</p>	<p>Micro and Meso: Counterpoint to Fake News; motivator and enabler for other media houses to imitate us; we also have younger voices and people with a migration background on social media; we also gender. Diversity must become more present on social media.</p>	<p>Micro and Meso: There is little meaningful and serious information journalism available for under-16s; counterbalance to fake news: social media platforms need their own journalistic social media experts.</p>

Diversity	Micro: Systematic survey of the proportion of women in reporting. It is journalistically not correct not to hear women's voices. Thirty-five editorial boards are now involved, compared with only eight to ten in the beginning.	Micro: Taking into account minorities, such as racialized people or those with functional diversity in the coverage; Pikara has opened the doors to reflection about the diversity topic of much larger media with much more visibility.	Micro and Meso: Create a platform where black women can write whatever they want and express themselves freely, while also writing about topics that often go uncovered or are relatively ignored by mainstream women's media; to present a diversity of opinions; since we made a focus on increasing the representation of black writers and stories from outside of London, highlighting the regional voices and experiences in our communities, we have seen others follow suit.	Micro and Meso: To raise awareness of feminist issues and cover a variety of topics for girls aged 14-17; taking a different perspective to make different points of view more clearly; diversity of opinion is strengthened, people are made more aware of marginalized groups; we have a structurally diverse team.	Micro and Meso: The aim is to let refugees have their say, to be a mouthpiece for refugees; we were an icebreaker and there are many initiatives that do it similarly by now. We have infected them with our ideas; we had editorial meetings with external people with all kinds of backgrounds from former Yugoslavia or Turkey.
Paywalls and paid content	Meso: Need for interdisciplinary teams: new skills are required, e.g. from the tourism industry.	Meso: In order to innovate here, you need product managers, developers; loss of diversity for readers as content is locked away.	no reference	no reference	Meso: Need for interdisciplinary teams

Automation	Micro and Meso: Strengthening media diversity at the regional and local level. Customers who do not have the resources to do automated evaluations ask, if we can supply them with individualized data; need for interdisciplinary teams.	Micro: What other media do is to be direct clients of the tools or technologies that use artificial intelligence for example for content distribution.	Micro: Newspapers were closing, areas being left without local news, so a new methodology needed to be found to facilitate the production of that content; they are able to give readers a regular and precise idea of things that are happening in their community in a very verifiable, provable, data driven way; RADAR created a whole stream of content which was not being created.	Micro: Audience's need for hyperlocal information is satisfied; We have articles written for geographical areas for which we could not offer any result coverage before.	Micro: Strengthening content diversity at the regional and local level.
New organizational forms and teams	Micro and Meso: The goal was to strengthen the breadth of reporting and to make better use of resources in order to report in a more diverse way; the newsroom concept means that more opinions are available at an editorial meeting. More available opinions can help to make a story broader, to shed light on different aspects or perspectives.	Meso: We have incorporated profiles who have promoted the culture of data and graphics in the newsroom. These are cross-cutting teams that work closely with the sections.	Micro: Tell stories that were going underreported, mainly because they were from vulnerable communities. We see ourselves very much as a team who still holds power to account, tell untold stories and keep democracy strong...equality and diversity, not only for the contents but also in organizational terms.	Micro: Create non-substitutable content (exclusive stories).	Meso: We are in the company now moving towards cross-functional teams; it is the theme of "letting go and letting decide where the deep expertise really lies."

Source: authors' own research and compilation

Data Journalism: This journalism innovation is both focusing on the society's gain in diversity of topics as well as on the increased need of diverse skills in editorial boards. It therefore supports journalistic diversity both on a micro and a meso level, but also shows a rather unexpected inclusion aspect: Traditionally, journalism works mainly based on qualitative data. According to the case study initiatives in Switzerland (*NZZ Visuals Team*), Germany (*Bayerischer Rundfunk*), Austria (*ORF*) and the United Kingdom (*Our World in Data*), with data-based and thus increasingly verifiable, quantitative journalism, a second track is opened that enables new kinds of stories. For the digital native *Datadista* in Spain it is becoming apparent that data journalism is intended

to produce thematic contributions that have so far received less public attention. Longer, more detailed thematic contributions are produced for *Our World in Data* in the United Kingdom as a counterweight to the current short news journalism. Moreover, contributions that thematically distinguish themselves from other editorial teams and that place more emphasis on visualizations are on the spot for the German and Swiss initiatives. But visualizations involve new kinds of inclusion requirements as they must as well be comprehensible for colour-blind people. In Spain, a multiplier effect is mentioned in the sense that topics are taken up by other media houses, disseminated further and thus given access to more diversity of topics to an even larger audience. On a meso level, except *Datadista* all initiatives emphasize that data journalism requires a more diverse team of skills, including journalists, graphic designers, programmers, technicians, developers, or researchers.

Collaborative (investigative) journalism impacts diversity on a micro level and editorial diversity as well, but it also has an inclusive effect: According to the two digital natives *Civio* in Spain and *Bellingcat* in the United Kingdom, collaborations in the context of investigative research increase the diversity of perspectives in editorial offices, as more (international) people and sources contribute to the production of articles. To make the often document- and number-heavy research more attractive and to reach a larger audience, for the Swiss *Tamedia Research Desk*, *Civio* and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in Germany, collaboration is needed with data teams and people from other product formats such as podcasts or documentary filmmakers. Besides, to reduce their own vulnerability, contributions must be approved by lawyers before publication. Furthermore, the variety of topics accessible to the audience is also influenced: The Swiss and the German initiatives suggest that investigative journalism per se covers (lighthouse) topics that most other media houses cannot offer. In addition, the digital native *Dossier* in Austria and the Swiss case study state a social need for in-depth stories that can serve as a counterbalance to the current “bombardment” with short news, mainly in delicate topics like the war in Ukraine.

From the point of view of the audience’s identification with a medium, efforts on *engagement on the basis of data* can play a role. The Swiss digital platform *Star-Sherlock* of Ringier states that a highly fragmented media audience needs a more diverse mix of topics which can be better personalized through the aid of collected audience data. Moreover, both the digital native *El Español* in Spain and the Swiss initiative confirm that efforts in this category require the presence of multidisciplinary teams, hence improving the editorial diversity. Therefore, in addition to the positive impact at the meso level, this innovation could also have an unexpectedly inclusive effect.

News on social media: This innovation example shows on a meso level that diversity efforts need resources: To increase young people’s identification with a channel, it can be useful to hire younger hosts. However, this strategy entails hurdles as the Swiss initiative *SRF TikTok News Channel* emphasizes: To work with adults under the age of twenty-five is demanding for an editorial team, especially the overall launch effort is higher, because you have to offer them journalistic training first. Mostly, a full-time job will not be possible, as younger people still are in education. Furthermore, it is time-consuming to clarify what their journalistic independence will require in terms of accepting advertising or influencer contracts. Finally, young people often are quickly enthusiastic for something, but then leave again soon and so the whole effort becomes necessary all over again. The Austrian *ZIB Zeit im Bild* pleads for skill diversity, i.e. not to let journalism on social media be done on the side by other editorial teams, but to use social media experts for it. Moreover, at the *ARD-Tagesschau* in Germany awareness arises that social media is the very right place for journalism to make diversity more present and for more diverse voices to be heard. On a micro level, the digital native *Sphera Sport* in Spain sees news on social media as democratizers, allowing more voices to launch low-cost journalistic brands,

increasing the variety of media titles. In addition, the initiatives of Austria, Germany and of the *BBC TikTok Channel* in the United Kingdom agree that social platforms allow a younger target audience to be reached with a wider range of seriously prepared topics, such as ethical or religious issues, and thus to counter fake news. In terms of an ongoing field of experimentation, initial successes of media on social media channels can also serve as a role model for other media, according to the *ARD-Tagesschau*. This in turn can multiply the diversity effect for society.

Diversity: One interviewee sums it up: “*The driver for diversity projects was not the requirement to be innovative, but to do what is right. Besides, “this idea is not from the moon, but corresponds to the zeitgeist; no one in their right mind can say that this topic is not important.”* At the micro level, explicitly diversity-driven innovations focus mainly on traditional aspects of diversity, such as gender, ethnicity or members of a minority group. It becomes clear, that these innovations are mostly a reaction to the deficient reporting felt of legacy media: On the one hand, the aim is to increase the proportion of women’s voices in mass media coverage; whether because women are generally less likely to have their say (Swiss initiative *Fifty-Fifty* of the legacy media house SRG) or because they are specifically tailored to black women, who have fewer opportunities to speak out and, among other things, are booked as black freelance journalists primarily for diversity issues, but less frequently for other social issues (initiative *Black Ballad* in the United Kingdom). On the other hand, it is about giving more visibility to minorities such as refugees or people who are exposed to racism (Austrian initiative *Biber academy*). Frequently appearing at the same time is the aspect of increasing diversity of topics and opinions available to society, since there are topics receiving less media attention, such as feminist topics for teenagers or reports on marginalized social groups (German initiative *Auf Klo*).

There is also the increase of media title diversity in general, which is due to the mere establishment of new media players with a focus on diversity. Most of the five organizations presented here are digital native startups or entrepreneurial initiatives that have been detached from legacy media. At the same time, the “multiplier” effect is also important here at the micro level: Three of the initiatives – *Pikara Magazine* in Spain, *Black Ballad* and the *Biber academy* – see themselves as icebreakers who exert social pressure in the sense that larger media houses become aware of new topics and pay more attention to them. At the meso level, three of five initiatives systematically incorporate more diverse voices into the journalistic production or education process, whether through more black female journalists in the case of *Black Ballad* or people with international background, i.e. from countries like the former Yugoslavian Republic or Turkey in the case of *Biber academy* or with *Auf Klo*.

Paywalls and paid content: At the meso level, in three countries this category reveals a strong diversity connection concerning interdisciplinary teams: With the *Tamedia-Paywall* in Switzerland, *El Mundo* in Spain and with the *Kleine Zeitung* in Austria which all are legacy media. Paywalls today are more than mere payment barriers. If you change your business model radically, you cannot just do it with existing employees, but you need new people. Employees from the tourism industry are being recruited as well as product managers or developers. However, a loss of diversity for the community is also mentioned at *El Mundo*, as editorial contributions become locked away behind pay barriers.

Automation: In particular, diversity at the micro level as well as the inclusion of local residents are strengthened with this journalism innovation: The news agency initiatives of Switzerland (*LENA*) and Austria (*Austrian Press Agency APA*), the entrepreneurial initiative of the United Kingdom (*Urbs Media/RADAR*) and the legacy media initiative of *Rheinische Post* in Germany state that automated news production is particularly useful for producing local or even hyperlocal content that has

previously been lost due to increasing media concentration or that could not be offered previously due to a lack of resources. In this way, access to local information and thus the regional-local diversity of topics and the inclusion of a local audience is broadened again. According to *Urbs Media/RADAR*, like data journalism, data sets often serve as a basis for reporting and thus appear more credible. It is mentioned twice - with *LENA* and the Spanish digital native initiative *Newtral.es* - that media houses not developing automated content on their own ask whether they can receive individualized data on specific events. This extends the benefits of an automation initiative to the audience of other media. The fact that interdisciplinary teams are also necessary on a meso level for automated journalism is only mentioned in the Swiss case study.

New organizational teams: Four of five initiatives examined in this category are legacy media - with the exception of *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism* in the United Kingdom. According to the German initiative *Main-Post*, the ongoing reorganization of editorial teams - be it in newsrooms like the *Südosstschweiz* initiative in Switzerland or with *El Pais* in Spain, or other intensified, interdisciplinary cooperation between inhouse departments like with the *Kleine Zeitung* in Austria - is also an opportunity to produce non-substitutable stories, i.e. stories that other media do not have and tell stories that were going underreported elsewhere. This is to increase the diversity of stories for the audience on a micro level. The *Südosstschweiz*, *El Pais* and *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism* reveal, that this diversity gain is achieved through the fact that in newsrooms more opinions are available at an editorial meeting. More available opinions help to make stories broader, to shed light on different aspects or perspectives. Both case studies in Spain and Austria confirm, that interdisciplinary teams are increasingly needed to distribute tasks according to competencies, hence expand editorial diversity on a meso level.

3.2. Diversity case study examples in five countries and their degree of institutionalization

Three of five case studies with focus on diversity and inclusion cover digital natives or entrepreneurial projects. An analysis of the statements related to the quality assurance tools of all five diversity initiatives shows that diversity as a business model is conducted systematically, but mostly little institutionalized in writing in the form of basic editorial documents which serve as a basis for further quality assurance instruments. This lack is also since startups often claim few resources and the written documentation of editorial processes is not a top priority. However, if diversity and inclusion projects are implemented by legacy media houses, sometimes resources are a problem as well, as the following statement of an interviewee shows: *"The project has not yet had as much success as it deserves. We do it all on the side. We have strong moral support from the management, but so far there has been no financial support in the form of money or more staff."*

4. Discussion

In this paper, we examined whether internationally relevant journalism innovations of the last decade support on a micro level established, journalistic diversity or inclusion aspects, such as the variety of topics and opinions or the variety of media titles accessible to the audience, or age, gender, ethnicity and religious affiliation on a meso level. Secondly, we were interested if diversity and inclusion efforts emerge with innovative journalism initiatives that go beyond these classic items, that have received less empirical attention so far, but can have effects on the audience. Thirdly, we examined if innovative journalism initiatives with an explicit focus on diversity show signs of written editorial basic documents which explicitly institutionalize diversity and

inclusion aspects. The aim of this analysis was not to rank the countries regarding their diversity and inclusion performance, but to compare and take stock of all five countries.

We found for RQ 1 that, without exception, the analyzed innovative journalism initiatives of the last decade show diversity-relevant references and contribute to influence the degree of diversity and inclusion that is accessible to the audience in a mainly positive manner. The influence is distinct both on a micro and meso level in all five countries, but strongest on the micro level and differs in its range. It becomes clear that journalism innovations that were not founded primarily for diversity reasons contribute to several traditional diversity aspects on a micro-level, such as diversity of topics, opinions, formats or access to media titles. On a meso-level, the gain on classic aspects such as gender, age or the abundance of ethnic or religious minorities in editorial boards is recognizable but does not reach a high degree. Instead, these initiatives show an increasing interdisciplinarity of editorial teams as result of an increasingly datafied and community-driven journalism. Most explicitly diversity-focused initiatives address diversity and inclusion at both micro and meso level and thus show their double benefit for a pluralistic society. It also becomes evident that in most countries innovative, digital native and entrepreneurial media startups clearly support the further dissemination of diversity and inclusion and become therefore relevant to democracy. In this context, an observed “copycat or icebreaker effect” should be emphasized, leading to the societal impact of a single diversity initiative, mostly established with few resources, being multiplied by legacy media.

Concerning RQ2 some innovative journalism initiatives promote the inclusion of people who are less literate, have a reading disability or a colour-blindness as a sensory disability: this triple inclusion effect is mainly achieved through efforts on data journalism and collaborative, investigative journalism where media practitioners are aware of the increased importance of visualizations to be self-explanatory for their audience. For other sensory disabilities such as blindness, deafness, physically disabled people or people with mental health issues, no innovative approaches could be found in the sample. However, it can be assessed inclusive that longer and new stories of data journalism and international editorial collaborations can excite people for journalism again who have had enough of the short news spreading due to ongoing editorial cost-cuttings. Regarding a society with increasingly fragmented audiences, the collection of user data can help to better serve individual topic preferences and thus win audiences for journalistic offerings again. Automation is capable of strengthening the inclusion of local residents, as local and hyperlocal news can once again be increasingly reported.

Summarizing for RQ3, the indications are that explicitly diversity-related journalism innovations only show a weak degree of institutionalization when it comes to written diversity or inclusion standards in editorial basic documents like quality policies, editorial mission statements or ethical guidelines. Since the remaining innovation case studies presented do not have diversity and inclusion as their main purpose, it can be assumed that there as well these two aspects are not often explicitly represented in basic editorial documents. Our result of a lack of institutionalization is therefore in line with previous studies listed above in section 1.1.

5. Conclusions

Our results show that by systematically fostering journalism innovations, additional momentum could be created in the sample countries to meet the demand for more journalistic diversity. We conclude that promoting journalism innovation can have a

positive impact on various aspects of diversity and inclusion and thus on a democratic society's audience. Internationally, in addition to legacy media, digital native media start-ups and entrepreneurial journalism initiatives help disseminate and establish diversity and inclusion aspects and thus make an important contribution to democratic media societies. Hence, efforts from civil society and the regulatory body to strengthen innovation in the media industry as well as media laws that include financial support for online media are an important building block for ensuring future quality-oriented journalism that does not want to distance itself from social reality.

The case study interviews of the remaining twenty-seven journalism innovation categories which are relevant in "only" one, two, three or four of the participating European countries (see section 2), have not yet been analyzed. But even an initial review shows that further positive diversity and inclusion references are to be expected here. A wealth of even more media start-ups, journalism niche media or parajournalistic, entrepreneurial initiatives, brought to life through a wide variety of often combined funding sources, increase the number of available voices and opinions for the audience. Initiatives emerged, aiming at providing media startups with an open-source infrastructure, breaking up the ongoing impoverishment of media diversity, or initiatives dealing with new forms of digital storytelling, able to include people with reading difficulties in their journalistic products.

However, there is a shortage so far when it comes to embedding diversity and inclusion as editorial quality goals in (existing) quality management systems. Diversity and inclusion efforts mean additional editorial work and therefore require resources. The allocation of resources works more efficiently when diversity and inclusion are editorially institutionalized. Editorial quality goals cannot be implemented without reference to resources. Resources enable personnel development including recruitment. But they also enable access to knowledge. The quality goal of diversity and inclusion could be considered in quality assurance processes, such as the planning of journalistic services, in research processes, and in monitoring and feedback processes. Empirical results show that a quality management system can be perceived as a restriction of autonomy on the individual level of media professionals, but that the editorial department benefits from attempts to exert influence on the part of internal persons, but also extra-media actors from business and politics, thus strengthening journalism as an independent system (Keel et al., 2018: 76f.).

The methodological approach of this analysis provides international, comparative data on diversity and inclusion and combines these topics with journalism innovations. This has rarely been done until now. The results do not permit any conclusions on the journalistic output side as to whether editorial diversity efforts really impact the reporting performance. But combined with structuration theory considerations they provide starting points for where a content analysis of journalistic reporting with a diversity focus could begin: By comparing editorial offices with corresponding, written diversity structures in their editorial quality management and those without; by comparing editorial offices with automated reporting and those without or by comparing the reporting of media start-ups with legacy media. In a next step, the available interview data allow to determine internal and external accelerators and inhibitors for diversity relevant initiatives. These will be combined with empirical results on the media system characteristics in the five countries. Thus, it will be possible to make recommendations on how journalism innovation can be systematically promoted in the respective media industries.

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Discussion and conclusions	Mirco Saner & Vinzenz Wyss
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9. Appendix

9.1. Guiding questions of the case study interviews

Strategic goals

- Please give a brief introduction from the first steps to the “finished” product.
- What organizational or social problem/need did you identify that this innovation/project was intended to address?
- What were or are the core goals you are pursuing with the innovation?
- Do you feel that this innovation has impacted your own media company/organization/editorial staff in any way? If so, how?

Resources

- Which framework conditions have promoted the development of the innovation?
- Which framework conditions have inhibited it?
- Which framework conditions from outside the company have inhibited or promoted the development of the innovation?

Quality

- What did you primarily want to improve or achieve with this innovation/idea in terms of quality?
- Which of these goals with regard to increasing quality were achieved/not achieved and why?
- Does the innovation or its activity benefit the democratic function of journalism?

Social impact

- Do you think that this innovation has any social impact in terms of improving the situation for the population/community?
- What is your self-perception of your role? How would you describe your own role?

Impact on journalism

- Do you think this innovation has impacted the industry in any way?
- Do you think it has started any trends among other media companies?

9.2. Case study interviewees and their job titles

Innovation category	Switzerland	Interviewees
Data Journalism	Visuals team Neue Zürcher Zeitung NZZ	Nikolai Thelitz (Data Journalist)
Collaborative (investigative) journalism	Research desk Tamedia/TX Group	Oliver Zihlmann and Catherine Boss (both co-head of the Tamedia research desk)
Engagement on the basis of data	Digital Platform “Star-Sherlock”, Ringier	Merlin Bauer (Chief Product Officer)
News on Social Media	TikTok News channel, SRF/SRG	Ursula Gabathuler (Head of News Digital)
Diversity	Media format “Fifty-fifty”, SRF/SRG	Regula Messerli (Editorial director “Tagesschau” and Project Manager “chance 50:50”)

Paywalls and paid content	Paywall Tamedia/TX Group	Marc Isler (Chief Revenue Officer; Member of the Executive Board)
Automation	Software LENA, Keystone-SDA	Jann Jenatsch (CEO), Cornelia Jost (Editor), Simon Wolanin (Data Journalist)
New organizational forms and teams	Newsroom "Südostschweiz", Somedia	Philipp Wyss (Editor-in-chief online and newspaper)
Innovation category	Spain	Interviewees
Data Journalism	Datadista	Antonio Delgado and Ana Tudela (both co-founders)
Collaborative (investigative) journalism	Civio	Olalla Tuñas (Community and Participation Officer)
Engagement on the basis of data	El Español	Mario Vidal (Head of Innovation)
News on Social Media	Sphera Sports	Borja Pardo (Director), Adrià Campmany (Social Media Manager)
Diversity	Pikara Magazine	Andrea Momoitio (Coordinator)
Paywalls and paid content	El Mundo	Vicente Ruiz (Subdirector), Gabriela Bolognese (Digital Strategy Director)
Automation	Newtral.es	Rubén Míguez (Head of technology and innovation), Javier Beltrán (Machine Learning Lead)
New organizational forms and teams	El Pais	Mari Luz Peinado (Digital strategist)
Innovation category	United Kingdom	Interviewees

Data Journalism	Our World in Data	Edouard Mathieu (Head of Data)
Collaborative (investigative) journalism	Bellingcat	Elliot Higgins (Founder)
Engagement on the basis of data	no case study	-
News on Social Media	BBC TikTok channel	Sophia Smith Galer (ex-employee at BBC)
Diversity	Black Ballad	Janise Benson (Head of Editorial)
Paywalls and paid content	Financial Times	Aled John (Deputy Managing Director at FT Strategies)
Automation	Urbs Media/RADAR	Gary Rogers (Co-founder)
New organizational forms and teams	The Bureau of Investigative Journalism	Richard Fisher (Senior Journalist at BBC Future)
Innovation category	Germany	Interviewees
Data Journalism	Bayerischer Rundfunk	Steffen Kühne and Robert Schöffel (both Team Lead BR Data)
Collaborative (investigative) journalism	Süddeutsche Zeitung	Frederick Obermaier (Deputy Head of the Investigative Research Department), Elisabeth Gamperl (CvD Visual Task)
Engagement on the basis of data	Ippen Digital	Christoph Seidl (Head of Format Development)
News on Social Media	ARD-Tagesschau	Patrick Weinhold (Head of Editorial Social Media), Timo Spieß (Head of Innovation Lab at ARD-aktuell)
Diversity	Auf Klo	Anna Neifer (Product Owner and Team Lead), Annika Prigge (Lead-editorial board member)
Paywalls and paid content	BILD Zeitung	Daniel Mussinghoff (Director of Head Content), Leonie von Elverfeldt (Consultant)

Automation	Rheinische Post	Clemens Boisserée, (Head of Editorial Product Development)
New organizational forms and teams	Main-Post	Ivo Knahn (Deputy Editor in Chief), Julia Haug (Project Editor and Training Officer)
Innovation category	Austria	Interviewees
Data Journalism	ORF	Jakob Weichenberger (Head of Data journalism)
Collaborative (investigative) journalism	Dossier	Florian Skrabal (Founder)
Engagement on the basis of data	no case study	-
News on Social Media	ZIB Zeit im Bild, ORF	Patrick Swanson (Head of Social Media)
Diversity	Biber academy	Amar Rajkovic (Deputy Editor-in-Chief Biber and Academy), Director Simon Kravagna (Founder and publisher)
Paywalls and paid content	Kleine Zeitung, Styria Media Group	Walter Hauser (CEO Reader and Usermarket), Thomas Spann (CEO Kleine Zeitung), Sebastian Krause (Head of Strategy & Development, Member of the Editorial Board)
Automation	APA Austrian Press Agency	Verena Krawarik (Executive department Innovation management, Head of APA-medialab)
New organizational forms and teams	Kleine Zeitung, Styria Media Group	Sanda Lonar (Head of Product and Data), Sebastian Krause (Head of Strategy & Development, Member of the Editorial Board)

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest. The funders had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript; or in the decision to publish the results.