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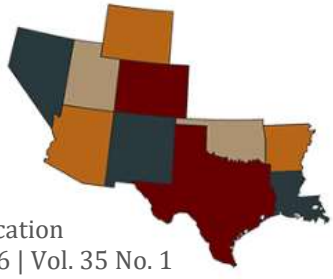

Does a More Diverse Newspaper Staff Reflect Its Community? A Print and Digital Content Analysis of *The Dallas Morning News*

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This qualitative analysis of print and digital content in *The Dallas Morning News* examines racial, ethnic, and gender diversity in a regional newspaper's coverage after it made a commitment to diversify staff. It also serves as an example of collaboration between scholars and a professional news organization. Using a constructed week from fall 2017, the study employs a qualitative approach to research bylines, text sources, and visual subjects in the newspaper's print and digital editions. Results show that content on both platforms did not match the diversity of the surrounding community, which is 40% Latinx. People of color and women are symbolically annihilated through the coverage, which results in stereotypical framing of these groups. The authors presented the study's findings to the newspaper's senior leadership team, offering recommendations to increase diversity of staff, sources, and subjects of news coverage to provide fairer coverage and better represent the surrounding community.

Keywords: diversity, sourcing, content analysis, newspapers, digital news

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In 2014, *The Dallas Morning News* hired its first editor since the 1980s from outside the media organization, Mike Wilson, from FiveThirtyEight.com. A few months later, the newspaper hired its first-ever female managing editor, Robyn Tomlin, from the Pew Research Center. She and the other editors—aware that while the population of the United States has diversified, news organizations barely have changed their racial and gender makeup—initiated an effort to hire a more racially, ethnically, and gender diverse staff. A majority of newspapers across the nation employ

white-dominated staffs and produce white-dominated content (American Society of News Editors, 2017a; Stewart, 2015; Wilson, Gutiérrez, & Chao, 2013). Given that gender also is a factor in diversity, it is important to note that newsrooms continue to be male-dominated, with men representing two-thirds of newsroom staffs in the U.S. (ASNE, 2017b).

In summer 2017, Tomlin asked the authors of this paper to study the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of the newspaper's content. Thus, the current study conducts a diversity audit via a content analysis of bylines, sources, and subjects. While the authors conducted this analysis with the newspaper's cooperation, they gathered the data and analyzed the results independently. They were not paid consultants. Print and digital content was gathered during a constructed week in fall 2017 to evaluate how inclusively *The Dallas Morning News* was covering the surrounding community. In spring 2018, the authors presented results to the newspaper's senior leadership team with the hope the editors would use the findings to better serve the community. This study was driven by the overall research question: *How does a large U.S. regional newspaper committed to newsroom diversity reflect its community in print and digital content?* For the purpose of this study, the word "newspaper" refers to both print and digital news operations. We examined diversity in both the producers of the content (the journalists on the newspaper staff) and the sources (the people in the community) used in the content produced. The study also aims to serve as a model for professional-academic collaboration at a time when news media's future financial survival will depend on serving the information needs of an increasingly diverse population.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research on newsroom diversity has found that employing a small percentage of people of color on newspaper staffs does not ensure diverse content (Gandy, 1997; Johnston & Flamiano, 2007). For instance, in interviews with journalists of color (mainly Black and Latinx) at newspapers that had diversity programs, Johnston and Flamiano (2007) found that the journalists believed coverage at their newspapers did not adequately reflect their communities, representing them in a negative light. They also said that management was not doing enough to hire, support, and promote people of color. The journalists spoke of subtle racism and bias that led to stereotypical and unfair news coverage, such as portrayals of African Americans and Latinx people as criminals and as living in poverty.

U.S. newspaper staffs also underrepresent women. Women are 51 percent of the American population, yet newspaper staffs remain about 38 percent female, a percentage that has held steady since the 1980s (ASNE, 2017b; Becker, Vlad, & Simpson, 2013). On the other hand, women make up two-thirds of journalism students in the United States (Becker et al., 2013, Willnat & Weaver, 2013). Women are studying journalism, but are not working in newsrooms in the same proportion. *The American Journalist in the Digital Age* study showed that women tend to leave journalism earlier than men do. Men and women entered the profession at about the same rate, but after five years, women began to leave. Only one-third of journalists with 20 years of experience or more are women. The same study showed a persistent gender pay gap in journalism, with women earning about 83 percent of men's salaries, which could explain why women leave (Willnat & Weaver, 2013).

Women give up full-time journalism jobs because of low pay, lack of mentoring, and inflexible work schedules (Everbach & Flournoy, 2007). Women who have left journalism report that the male-oriented culture of newsrooms failed to encourage or inspire them to succeed (Brown & Flatow, 1997; Everbach & Flournoy, 2007; Hardin & Shain, 2005; Walsh-Childers, Chance, & Herzog, 1996). Online-

only news organizations may be offering new opportunities, since half of these staffs are made up of women (ASNE, 2017b).

News Coverage of Women and People of Color

While many newsrooms lack diverse employees, inaccurate portrayals of people of color and women have posed a persistent problem in U.S. news media. Longstanding research shows a tendency to portray African Americans and Latinx communities in stereotypical ways, often as violent, as criminals, or as immigrants (Dixon & Linz, 2000; Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2013). Women are portrayed as less authoritative than men in mass media and make up only one-third of news sources (Armstrong & Boyle, 2011; Harp, Loke, & Bachmann, 2011; Len-Rios, Rodgers, Thorson, & Yoon, 2005; Poindexter, 2008). When they do appear in stories, women often are portrayed as victims of crimes, as wives and/or mothers, or by their connection to a man (Creedon & Cramer, 2007; Norris, 1997; Wilson et al., 2013). Women are minimized by news media, according to Pat Mitchell, president and CEO of the Paley Media Center. "Media treats power as defined by men," she says in the documentary *Miss Representation* (Siebel Newsom, 2012). Erica Falk of Johns Hopkins University notes that news media tend to focus on women's appearances, particularly their faces and bodies, rather than on what they say, which strips them of power (Siebel Newsom, 2012).

Symbolic annihilation (Tuchman, Daniels, & Benet, 1978) posits that when women, people of color, and other marginalized groups are stereotyped, absent from, and/or trivialized in news coverage, they are seen as less important in society. When a majority of newsroom employees and leaders are white and male, news skews toward their perspectives and interests. This is not necessarily intentional, but it is a bias nonetheless. The theory of incognizant racism notes that journalists cover people of color differently from the dominant white community by ignoring, marginalizing, or stereotyping them (Owens, 2008). Incognizant racism (coined by Heider, 2000) is not an intentional bias, but an assumption that the dominant white values of society at large are adopted by news organizations and practiced through day-to-day news production.

Few Black and Latinx news consumers believe U.S. news media cover their communities accurately, which can lead to a lack of trust in journalism (American Press Institute, 2014). Only one-third of Latinx people and one-fourth of African Americans believe they see fair portrayals of people like themselves in news coverage. African Americans are overrepresented as crime perpetrators and underrepresented as crime victims in media coverage, and whites are overrepresented as crime victims (Dixon, 2013; Dixon & Linz, 2000; Entman, 1992). Asians and Native Americans also are frequently subject to stereotypical coverage (Ramasubramanian, 2007; Wilson et al., 2013). It is important that newspapers serve their communities with accurate and fair information for several reasons, including the truth-telling, social responsibility mission of the press (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007), the building of trust with audiences, and ethical responsibilities, such as the "voice to the voiceless" tenet of the SPJ Code of Ethics (SPJ, 2014).

News Framing

News framing constitutes the process by which journalists, learning from established news practices taught in newsrooms and journalism schools, create familiar narratives to "make sense of everyday life," as noted by sociologist Erving Goffman (1974). These news frames, based on societal and cultural norms, become ingrained in journalists' minds through their training, and subsequently are repeated in news content. Such frames may reflect cultural bias. Implicit bias based on race, gender, and

other factors is present in society as a whole. For example, Entman has shown that mainstream journalists create frames that have the effect of "directly and indirectly undermining the collective political influence and life conditions of African Americans" (2010, p. 335). This framing occurs despite the fact journalistic ethics promote objectivity and fairness. Framing places importance on certain ideas and issues, usually those that relate primarily to the producers of media content, who tend to be of similar backgrounds, education, race/ethnicity, and gender. These issues become the topics considered newsworthy by society. While journalistic norms dictate that news content be accurate and fair, research shows otherwise. News as a whole in the U.S. reflects a white, educated, middle- to upper-class male perspective, which upholds the status quo (Entman, 1992; Entman & Rojecki, 2000).

In addition, Entman (2010) notes that decision-making biases, both on the individual level and in the process of journalistic practices within newsrooms, lead to framing of media texts. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) have shown in their examination of newsroom content and processes that the backgrounds of journalists and the training they receive in newsrooms may influence the content of their reporting, although the scholars acknowledge that increasing newsroom diversity does not necessarily increase diversity of coverage. Other research has concluded that journalists of color are more likely to seek out sources of different races/ethnicities than Caucasian journalists are, and women are more likely to seek out female sources than men are (Armstrong, 2004; Owens, 2008).

Often it takes a concerted effort to defy learned journalistic practices and norms that may reflect bias. For instance, in 2018, *The Atlantic* science writer Ed Yong detailed his initiatives to diversify his sources (Yong, 2018). Keeping track of his work, Yong discovered that he was quoting male sources 75% of the time, although he knew many women were doing important scientific work. He began compiling lists of women sources he could contact, helped by resources such as an online database of diverse scientists.[1] Yong eventually balanced his stories with an average of 50% women sources. Also in 2018, *New York Times* columnist David Leonhardt acknowledged he was not quoting an equitable amount of women in his work and pledged to increase women sources (Leonhardt, 2018).

Dallas Morning News Efforts

To increase newsroom diversity, editor Wilson and managing editor Tomlin implemented hiring practices that made changes to the demographic composition of the staff. The newsroom in 2017 was more racially and ethnically diverse (28% non-white) than the national newsroom average at the time (17% non-white). The percentage of women working in the newsroom also increased under the Wilson-Tomlin management team from 39.9 % to 44.1%. (Note: Tomlin left the paper in February 2018 for another job.)

However, compared to the demographics of the surrounding community, the numbers are not comparable. The *News*' journalistic staff remains 72% white and 56% male. Dallas County's largest ethnic group is Hispanic/Latinx, at 39.9% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Dallas County is 29.8% white, 23.5% Black or African American, 6.3% Asian, 1.1% Native American and Alaskan Native, and less than 1% other.[2] In addition, the Dallas County population is 50.6% female. As Texas' demographics continue to diversify, some of the state's news outlets are developing strategies to

[1] https://diversesources.org/

[2] These percentages add to slightly more than 100 percent because the identities are self-reported and because ethnicity and race may overlap; for example, a person who identifies as Hispanic/Latinx may also identify as Black, or a person may identify as two or more different races.

prioritize diversity as a matter of future financial survival. For example, the nonprofit Texas Tribune unveiled a strategic plan "aimed at reaching and reflecting Texas' fastest-growing populations: young and ethnically diverse Texans" (O'Connell, 2018, para.16).

This research asks the following questions regarding text and visual content in *The Dallas Morning News'* print and digital versions:

RQ1: What is the gender makeup by section of the journalists who produced the newspaper's print content?

RQ2: What is the racial and ethnic makeup by section of the journalists who produced the newspaper's print content?

RQ3: What is the gender makeup by section of the sources used in the print content?

RQ4: What is the racial and ethnic makeup by section of the sources used in the print content?

RQ5: What is the gender makeup by section of the journalists who produced the newspaper's digital content?

RQ6: What is the racial and ethnic makeup by section of the journalists who produced the newspaper's digital content?

RQ7: What is the gender makeup by section of the sources used in the digital content?

RQ8: What is the racial and ethnic makeup by section of the sources used in the digital content?

RQ9: What are some of the news frames used by the journalists in their content?

METHODS

This study was a logistical challenge, undertaking a simultaneous qualitative diversity content analysis of a newspaper's print and digital coverage. The authors used traditional content analysis methods to examine the print content, but employed real-time data gathering and subsequent hand coding to analyze the digital content. As Karlsson and Sjøvaag (2016) note, communication scholars have not reached consensus on a standard blueprint for digital content analyses, so this study may provide foundations for future research.

The four authors coded all content by hand. This was advantageous because the authors are familiar with the area and two of them worked as city reporters at the newspaper for several years. The authors examined a constructed week of days randomly generated from seven consecutive weeks in September and October 2017, a period of time after the newspaper's request for the analysis: Wednesday, September 13; Sunday, September 17; Friday, September 29; Thursday, October 5; Tuesday, October 10; Saturday, October 21; and Monday, October 23. A constructed week is a commonly used research method to study news coverage and enables researchers to analyze a manageable sample of content, while including a sample from each day of the week (Connolly-Ahearn, Ahearn, & Bortree, 2009; Riffe, Aust, & Lacy, 1993; Wang & Riffe, 2010). While a constructed week spanning six months or a year may have yielded a more representative sample, the authors designed the seven-week approach in service of the *Morning News* editors' desire for timely insights into the diversity of their coverage. The journalists were unaware of which days the researchers were examining.

The authors determined a subject's race and ethnicity several ways in the coding. For staff members, if gender or race/ethnicity was unclear, the authors sought out the staffer's self-identification or coded the person as "unknown." For story sources and visual subjects, the authors were able to confirm gender, race, and ethnicity for public figures such as politicians, city officials, business

executives, athletes, and entertainers. If follow-up research could not reasonably determine a quoted source's gender, race, or ethnicity, the source was coded as "unknown." In the rare case that "unknown" entries amounted to more than 5 percent of a sub-sample, the researchers checked internal reliability by comparing and confirming the results among the four authors. In qualitative coding, this is an accepted form of validity (Hesse-Biber, 2017).

Print Content

Two of the authors coded print content on the chosen dates, examining each section front and jumps to inside pages on stories that began on the section front. Section fronts were chosen because the front page of each section is considered to contain the most important content (Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978). The coding was divided into five categories, per sections of the newspaper: Page One, Metro, Business, Sports, and Arts/Life. The coders counted the number of identifiable text sources and visual subjects in each story by race/ethnicity and gender. The total number of stories examined was 124 and the total number of visual subjects was 169. The coders then conducted a count of the gender and race/ethnicity of all content producers. The coders also logged qualitative observations, according to coding strategies outlined by Hesse-Biber (2017) for analyzing themes in content. The coders read and viewed the section fronts, each taking notes on the story placement, story topics, sources used, headlines, photographs, photo subjects and photo placement. These constituted the descriptive codes. To take the analysis further, the authors then met to discuss categorical codes (overall themes of the coverage), and finally, analytical codes: specific meanings and categories based on the literature review of framing analysis (Hesse-Biber, 2017).

Digital Content

Gathering, coding, and analyzing a constructed week's worth of digital content required adjusting the method based on factors specific to online platforms. As noted above, Karlsson and Sjøvaag (2016) have observed that while traditional content analysis methods do not neatly correspond to new media platforms, common methods for digital content analysis have yet to be established. Analysis of digital content presents different time and space considerations from fixed daily print content. For this study, the authors chose to collect digital content in real time because the *Morning News'* online archive does not comprehensively store every digital piece it publishes. Taking these factors into account, the authors cooperated with editors to identify the newspaper's most comprehensive RSS feeds, although the editors did not know which days the researchers would analyze.

Using seven RSS feeds, the authors gathered 75 to 125 story links per day and combined them into three groups: News/Business (*n=227*), Sports (*n=362*), and Arts/Life/GuideLive (*n=83*). The four authors coded and analyzed the final data set (*n=672*). Karlsson and Sjøvaag (2016) suggest that human coding is most appropriate when analyzing digital content because of the detail and attention required. The researchers hand-entered the data to obtain descriptive statistics. Because digital stories often have multiple additional visual elements (supplementary photos, embedded social media, video, etc.) the authors limited visual coding to each story's dominant lead image featuring six people or fewer. The authors also limited coding of stories to the first six sources quoted, to make the data manageable.

The researchers also collected qualitative observations in all sections. As with print content, the authors conducted initial and follow-up checks among the coders to ensure internal reliability of the results (Hesse-Biber, 2017). As Hesse-Biber suggests, all four researchers discussed their findings while conducting the coding independently, then later compared results and re-examined possible outliers to

"engage in a dialogue with others who are also analyzing the same data" (p. 327). We used only results that team members agreed were valid themes gleaned from the examination.

RESULTS

Print Content

Producers of stories. This project examined the gender (RQ1) and racial/ethnic (RQ2) makeup by section of the journalists who produced the newspaper's print content. The journalists' sex varied by section. Interestingly, women wrote 78% of the Page One stories in this constructed week, mainly because of a number of breaking news stories, including a mass killing in Plano. A majority of the breaking news reporters at the *Morning News* at this time were women, even though 56% of the total newsroom journalists were men. Bylines in the Metro section during the constructed week were nearly balanced between women and men, with slightly more women (52%). Men wrote a majority of stories in Business (56%) and Arts & Life (60%). Sports featured no stories or columns written by women on its section fronts.

White journalists produced a majority of content on all five section fronts (69% of both Page One and Metro content, 92% of Business content, and 87% of Arts & Life). Most of the reporters who work for the newspaper identify as white, so this is reflective of the staff's makeup. In Sports, *all* of the content on the main section front was written by white men, primarily columnists covering the "big four" men's professional sports: football, basketball, baseball and hockey.

Sources and subjects of content. This project also examined the gender (RQ3) and racial/ethnic (RQ4) makeup by section of the sources used in the print content. Sources sought out for comment and interpretation (*n=357*) were primarily male (69.2%) (see Table 1). In Sports only *one* woman, a high school volleyball coach, was quoted in the entire week's worth of section front stories.

Table 1
Print Sources by Gender

	Women	Men	Total
Page One	36%	64%	100%
Metro	37%	63%	100%
Business	29%	71%	100%
Sports	2%	98%	100%
Arts/Life	33%	67%	100%
All Sources	30.8%	69.2%	100%

n=357

Sources across every section mainly were white (see Table 2). The highest percentage of Black sources was in Sports and consisted mostly of athletes.

Table 2
Print Sources by Race/Ethnicity

	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	Unknown	Total
Page One	78%	7%	8%	2%	5%	100%
Metro	62%	10%	17%	2%	9%	100%
Business	88%	0%	4%	6%	2%	100%
Sports	66%	32%	2%	0%	0%	100%
Arts/Life	67%	10%	3%	17%	3%	100%
All Sources	72.8%	10.1%	8.4%	3.6%	5%	100%

n=357

Visuals, which included photos and illustrations, featured a higher percentage of males (75.1%) as subjects (see Table 3). In Sports, not a single woman was featured in a section cover image throughout the entire constructed week.

Table 3
Print Visual Subjects by Gender

	Female	Male	Total
Page One	31%	69%	100%
Metro	40%	60%	100%
Business	42%	58%	100%
Sports	0%	100%	100%
Arts/Life	20%	80%	100%

All Subjects	24.9%	75.1%	100%

n=169

Visual subjects (*n=169*) also did not reflect the diversity of the community, with white people (65.1%) dominating the images (see Table 4). Sports featured the most Black subjects, and all pictured were male. Metro's visuals were the most racially and ethnically diverse.

Table 4
Print Visual Subjects by Race/Ethnicity

	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	Unknown	Total
Page One	64%	17%	12%	5%	2%	100%
Metro	57%	31%	10%	2%	0%	100%
Business	84%	5%	0%	5%	5%	100%
Sports	65%	35%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Arts/Life	65%	20%	5%	10%	0%	100%
All Subjects	65.1%	24.3%	5.9%	3.6%	1.2%	100%

n=169

Qualitative observations. Addressing the framing of journalistic content (RQ9), Page One and Metro were the most diverse print sections with respect to gender and race/ethnicity, both in producers and sources/subjects of content. Metro featured several women journalists and also was able to represent more diverse content, partly because the Dallas police chief, Dallas County district attorney, and Dallas County sheriff all were women of color during the period examined. Also, some major crimes occurred during the period, including a mass killing in Plano in which men, women, and people of different races died. Business and Arts & Life offered little racial diversity in content, and the Business section underrepresented women. One example of women's secondary treatment was a Business cover photo of an Apple event focusing on three people (two male, one female) but only identifying the two male executives by name. Sports content overwhelmingly featured male subjects; only one source was female. Sports writers were all white males, while Sports subjects often were Black males.

The authors noted some racial stereotypes, such as a Page One image of a Black man used to illustrate a story about low-income housing. A story about Latinx people focused on a Mexican drug cartel. Many of the positive stories about Latinx people were reported by Latinx journalists, such as a Metro feature story about a group of artists and poets that brought their work to a grocery store in the

Latinx-dominated Pleasant Grove neighborhood of Dallas. One of the most noteworthy photos was a large, Saturday front-page cover photo of a Black gun store owner holding an AR-15 rifle with a bump stock attached, soon after the Las Vegas mass shooting. Some may interpret this photo as playing into stereotypes of violent Black men; others may see it as positive portrayal of a business owner. A Black male staff photographer shot the photo.

Digital Content

Digital story producers. This project examined the gender (RQ5) and racial/ethnic (RQ6) makeup by section of the journalists who produced the newspaper's digital content. A total of 597 named bylines appeared on digital stories. Men represented a majority of bylines (68%), leaving less than one-third to women's bylines. Women's digital bylines represented a lower percentage (32%) than the presence of women on newsroom staff (44%). Sports contributed significantly to this discrepancy, since women wrote only 6% of digital Sports stories. Women wrote a higher percentage of digital stories than men in News/Business (56%) and Arts/Life (61%).

Of the 563 named digital bylines in which race/ethnicity could be determined, white journalists wrote 79.9% of the stories, followed by 6.4% Black, 5.2% Latinx, 5.9% Asian, 0.5% Native American, and 2.1% multiracial. It is important to note that white journalists wrote nearly all Sports articles (90%), with only 2% Black and 8% Asian bylines. No Hispanic or Native American authors wrote Sports articles in the sample. In Arts & Life, white journalists wrote 83.8% of stories. News/Business bylines were more diverse, but white journalists wrote two-thirds (66.2%) of the stories.

Digital content sources and subjects. This project also examined the gender (RQ7) and racial/ethnic (RQ8) makeup by section of the sources used in the digital content. Of the 407 stories that featured sources for comment and interpretation (see Table 5), 81.2% of those quoted were male. In Sports, only 2.4% of the sources were women. More women sources were represented in News/Business (31.3%) and Arts/Life (30.4%). Still, men dominated.

Table 5
Digital Sources by Gender

	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
News/Bus.	31.3%	67.7%	0.93%	100%
Sports	2.4%	97.4%	0.24%	100%
Arts/Life	30.4%	68.4%	1.27%	100%
All Sources	18.1%	81.2%	0.64%	100%

n=932

A majority of the 737 sources coded were white (58.1%). Among people of color, the race/ethnicity of subjects most commonly quoted in Sports stories was Black (23.9%), while Latinx people were quoted most often by both News/Business (9.7%) and Arts/Life (10.1%).

Table 6
Digital Sources by Race/Ethnicity

	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	Multirac.	Unknown	Total
News/Bus.	59.3%	8.7%	9.7%	4.2%	0.24%	17.9%	100%
Sports	58.8%	23.9%	2.7%	2%	1.57%	11%	100%
Arts/Life	49.4%	5.1%	10.1%	2.5%	0%	32.9%	100%
All	58.1%	13.6%	7.3%	3.3%	0.68%	17.1%	100%

n=737

Digital visual subjects. Many dominant images in digital stories did not depict people; instead, images often depicted buildings, landscapes, food, or generic settings such as a taped-off crime scene. Of the digital stories that did feature people in the dominant image (*n=454*), women were represented only in 13.2% of the images. In Sports stories, women were featured in only 7 total images (0.31%).

Table 7
Digital Visual Representation by Gender

	Female only	Male only	Female & Male	Unknown	Total
News/Bus.	18.8%	57.6%	18.8%	4.70%	100%
Sports	0.6%	97.5%	1.5%	0.31%	100%
Arts/Life	26.7%	53.3%	20.0%	0%	100%
All	6.6%	85.7%	6.6%	1.10%	100%

n=454

Within these dominant images, the visual subjects (*n=916*) for digital stories were predominantly white (47.8%) and Black (37.9%). Sports had slightly more Black visual subjects (44.4%) than white (43.1%). In News/Business, the most frequent visual subjects were white (59.2%).

Table 8
Digital Visual Subjects by Race/Ethnicity

	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	Multirac.	Unknown	Total
News/Bus.	59.2%	19.8%	11.1%	3.7%	0%	6.2%	100%
Sports	43.1%	44.4%	3.7%	0.6%	4.4%	3.7%	100%
Arts/Life	64.6%	19%	7.6%	2.5%	1.3%	5.1%	100%
All Subjects	47.8%	37.9%	5.3%	1.3%	3.4%	4.3%	100%

n=916

Qualitative observations. Addressing the framing of journalistic content (RQ9), in contrast to the print cover stories, which generally contained multiple sources, nearly one-third of the digital story sample (*n=672*) did not quote any identifiable people. This reflects a digital-first approach: Breaking stories often are published with minimal sourcing ("police said," "the company said") or by aggregating other news reports. With Sports, digital content often takes the form of quick analysis of games, aggregation from social media, or first-person takes offering predictions or statistical nuggets. Given the immediacy of digital news, these developments are understandable, but they take a collective toll on the deliberate efforts necessary to seek out diverse sources and visual subjects.

It should be noted that the constructed week fell during the heart of football season. This was the time frame the researchers were given by the newspaper editors, so they did not have the option to analyze a different period. Female athletes and coaches were represented only 2% of the time as quoted sources and visual subjects in digital Sports content. And while Sports content boosted Black representation in stories and images, Latinx people were underrepresented across the board when compared to their actual demographic presence.

DISCUSSION

This research sought to examine how a newspaper committed to diversity served its community through news, business, arts/life and sports coverage on print and digital platforms. Overall, the frames reflected in *The Dallas Morning News*' print and digital content did not accurately reflect the racial and gender makeup of its surrounding community. This is not surprising, because a majority of news organizations across the U.S. fail to represent the demographics of their communities. The largest ethnic group in Dallas County is Latinx, at 39.9% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017), but the coverage did not align with this. In addition, the Dallas County population is 50.6% female. Neither people of color nor women were proportionally represented in the coverage. Representations of women and people of color sometimes followed previously established stereotypical news frames: for instance, Black males as criminals and athletes; Mexican people as "drug lords." No coverage of Native Americans was included.

Most of the constructed week's analyzed content did not address diversity issues. Some coverage showed deliberate efforts to be inclusive, such as an LGBT parade from the perspective of disabled participants; local teams' decisions on whether to participate in the "take a knee" movement (including high schools); and others. However, many groups were symbolically annihilated from the coverage, meaning they barely were present.

Female sources largely were absent in Sports and made up only about one-third of the sources in News and Arts content. The authors acknowledge that this study was conducted during the middle of football season in Texas, which is one reason sports coverage focused overwhelmingly on male athletes. However, the virtual absence of women was conspicuous. When women and people of color are not represented, audiences are presented with news frames that may lead to assumptions that certain groups are not present or are not participating in news events, sports, arts or business. In turn, when women and people of color do not see themselves represented, they may assume content is not meant for them. The authors also acknowledge that the newspaper is working with a smaller staff than in previous years and that journalists have more work to do involving multimedia, social media, and other digital duties. During a digital-first transformation, investing the extra time necessary to seek out diverse sources may take lower priority than speeding up journalistic routines and overhauling business strategies.

Although *The Dallas Morning News* hired journalists that made its staff slightly more diverse during this period and should be praised for this effort, the results of this study show that these attempts were not enough to produce equitable coverage, echoing past research (Gandy, 1997; Johnston & Flamiano, 2007; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). This is not to say that *The Dallas Morning News*' predominantly white and male staff cannot cover stories about perspectives other than their own. But incognizant racism may affect coverage, and having more voices of women, people of color, and other marginalized groups in newsrooms can offer perspectives from personal experiences that may not occur to the dominant group. More diverse staffing expands perspectives in the newsroom, which may help a media organization avoid framing news coverage that can be perceived as sexist, racist, xenophobic, or homophobic. More aggressive hiring strategies to diversify newsrooms also may help boost readership by building trust with new audiences.

Limitations and Recommendations

While using a constructed week allows researchers to examine content across seven different days, it is only a relative glimpse of an entire year or history of a newspaper, and does not necessarily generalize to larger samples. Also, as noted earlier, while a constructed week spanning a longer time period may have been more representative, the study was designed to provide the *Morning News* with timely insight. To further the results of this study, another step researchers could take would be an ethnography of the newsroom, including in-depth interviews with the staff and management about how they used the research results. The researchers note that they were asked only to conduct a "diversity audit" for this study. Additionally, readership perceptions could be assessed using large-scale surveys. Or a follow-up study could be conducted in a year or two to determine whether these results have changed. This study did not take economic or business considerations into account; instead, results focused solely on diversity of the staff and content. *The Dallas Morning News* may be following a prescribed business strategy when, for example, it concentrates overwhelmingly on male athletes and male sporting events in Sports content.

That noted, the authors of this study offer several recommendations for news organizations to improve diversity in news coverage. First, the authors acknowledge that college journalism professors can do more to teach students about covering diverse communities, and encourage more women and people of color to enter the business. However, women have been a majority of journalism college students for decades. Past research shows that many choose to leave newsrooms for other jobs out of frustration, as do some people of color. Therefore, employers must do more to encourage women and people of color to succeed in the business by supporting their work, providing pathways to promotion, paying them equally to white males, and making newsrooms more family-friendly. Some of the problems newsrooms face are problems of society and culture: the entrenchment of incognizant racism and of sexism in a patriarchal society that generally favors white men.

Second, if employers want to create more diverse staffs, they must go out of their way to resist cultural forces and make efforts in recruitment and retention. When Tomlin was at the newspaper, she tracked down specific women and people of color who were talented and recruited them. This proactive approach, and a cultural embracing of diversity, is what it will take to attract and retain a diverse staff. Another option is for news organizations to partner with universities to provide internships and encouragement to women and people of color, as *The Dallas Morning News* currently does. More voices in the newsroom can open the coverage to serve a larger audience.

Third, based on findings from this study, individual journalists are urged to diversify their own sources. Multiple studies (Gans, 1979; Poindexter, 2008; Reese, 2010; Tuchman, 1978) have shown that journalists tend to contact the same sources again and again because they are accessible and easy. However, these sources often are white males, quoted by a mainly white male-led staff. Diversifying sources and coverage must be encouraged and emphasized in newsrooms.

One concern at *The Dallas Morning News*, even with the recent efforts to add people of color and women, is a lack of diversity among upper management. If people of color and women do not hold positions of power, it is more unlikely their interests will be represented in newsrooms and in content. *The Dallas Morning News* in 2018 was led solely by white males at the publisher, editor, managing editor[3] and editorial page editor ranks. Not one person of color holds a top position at the paper in a city that is minority-majority. This is a problem of the entire industry, not only of *The Morning News*. When readers look at the masthead of the newspaper and see homogeneity, it could have a silencing effect. The results of this study show that diversifying the staff slightly from 2015 to 2017 was not enough to represent the Dallas region's demographics. More diversity is recommended to introduce enough voices into the newsroom to produce content that reflects the surrounding community.

The authors wish to thank *The Dallas Morning News* for its openness, transparency, and willingness to participate in this research. As news organizations search for sustainable strategies to serve increasingly diverse audiences in the digital age, future collaborations between journalists and academic researchers may produce insights that inform newsroom strategy while also advancing our conceptual knowledge of diversity.

[3] The managing editor job previously held by Tomlin initially was announced as being split into two jobs, one held by a white man and the other by a white woman. However, only the white man received the title of managing editor and only his name appears on the newspaper's masthead. This means all of *The Dallas Morning News'* top leaders are white and male.

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