JOMEC Journal
Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies

Circulating Cities of Difference: assembling geographical imaginations of Toronto's diversity in the newsroom

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Keywords
actor-network theory
circulation
cities
journalism
materiality
multiculturalism
news form
social practices

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Abstract

This paper concerns the relationship between media and the framing of ethnic diversity as a central condition of contemporary urban life. Rather than focusing on how media represent ethnic diversity, this paper relies on a conceptualisation of news media as cultural forms which become entangled in the various interpretive communities partaking in their circulation. Examining the practical milieus of news editors at the *Toronto Star*, the paper focuses on a case example of editors' work on a special section related to Toronto's projected ethnic diversity in 2017. The main argument of the paper is that the relationships between sites of mainstream media production and urban publics are more complex and contradictory – as well as more banal and everyday – than conventionally acknowledged. This suggests we take seriously the ongoing importance of increasingly fragile, unified mediated public forums through which different groups might encounter one another in and across contemporary cities.

Contributor Note

Scott Rodgers is Lecturer in Media Theory at Birkbeck, University of London. His research focuses on the intersections of cities, media, technology and politics. In recent years his work has sought to think through the lived spaces of journalism as urban practice. His in-progress book *Media and Urban Public Life* explores this theme via the transmuting relationship of the newspaper and the city, and he is developing related research on the rise of 'hyperlocal' networked and mobile platforms.

Introduction

This paper concerns the relationship between media and the framing of ethnic diversity as a central condition of contemporary urban life. Toronto, the urban context around which this paper is focused, has long been described and even mythologised[1] as an ethnically diverse and even 'hyperdiverse' city. Though often spoken of in its own right, such imaginations of Toronto's ethnic diversity also tend to get caught up in the common and relatively uncontroversial claim that Canada and Canadian cities more generally are somehow special when it comes to matters of ethnic diversity. While this distinctiveness can be expressed as a statistical reality, most often Canada is said to be special because of the ways in which multiculturalism has been framed in various policy and public discourses (Day 2000; Kelley and Trebilcock 2010). John Murray Gibbon's (1938) renowned 'Canadian mosaic' metaphor, for example, is often seen as the basis for naming a distinctively Canadian approach to cultural diversity, particularly in contrast to the American 'melting pot' metaphor. Indeed, claims to Canada's distinctiveness when it comes to multiculturalism have tended to carry a positive inflection. They stand for an image of openness to diversity in Canadian policy, and particularly in the social life of Canadian cities; the basis upon which Canada is claimed as leading on, even inventing, the very idea of multiculturalism (Wood and Gilbert 2005: 680).

While there have been a number of critical assessments of Canada's multicultural policy (e.g. Bissoondath 2002) and its more recent evolutions (e.g. Banting and Kylicka 2010; Blake 2013), it is the situation 'on the ground' in Canadian cities where the tensions of multicultural policy have received the most attention. Though cities such as Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal are often celebrated for their cultural mix, for many, this recognition of ethnic diversity too often serves to obfuscate wider inequalities with consoling images of cosmopolitan urban harmony (e.g. Croucher 1997; Goonewardena and Kipfer 2005; Mitchell 1993 1996). These critiques suggest that, instead of an urban diversity proclaimed or created from the ground up, more established actors and institutions dominate how diversity or multiculturalism becomes framed or constructed in relation to such cities. In other words, an 'urban diversity' from the perspective of the powerful, as expressed and represented, for example, through state policies, political speeches, staged festivals, aestheticised ethnic neighbourhoods and districts, and, of course, through the narratives of 'the media'.

My general point of departure in this paper is that there are more contradictions and nuances to such expressions and representations of 'the powerful' than usually acknowledged. I will pursue this contention by focusing in particular on the relationship between news media and the framing of urban diversity. There currently exists an extensive literature on media representations of ethnic minorities and

[1] Perhaps the most pervasive myth is that of the United Nations naming Toronto the world's most ethnically diverse city. In fact, staff in the Multicultural Relations Office of the then Metro Toronto bureaucracy had *used* UN data to suggest Toronto was amongst the world's most ethnically diverse cities. The genesis of the myth has been credited to a 1989 speech where Toronto Mayor Art Eggleton erroneously claimed that Toronto had been 'noted by the United Nations as being the most racially and culturally diverse city in the world'. (see Doucet 2001)

multiculturalism (e.g. Fleras and Lock Kunz 2001; Mahtani 2008; Shohat and Stam 1994). Despite the analytical and pragmatic merits of such research, one well-recognised problem with studies of representation is the implicit assumptions often made about the effects of media content. Though few analysts of media representation would consider their work to embody what Carey (1989) labelled a 'transmission view of communication', such research at least implicitly assumes media representation matters in political terms because of the uneven one-way projection of meaning from producers to audiences.

Rather than studying news media in these terms, as texts or forms that contain constructions which are outwardly disseminated, I direct my attention in this paper to how news media forms become entangled in various interpretive communities which partake in their *circulation*. The case for cultural circulation over transmission has been well argued by Lee and LiPuma (2002). Drawing inspiration in part from Warner's (2002: 67) suggestion of a 'chicken-and-egg circularity' to public-ness, they argue that all cultural 'forms' (which can include bodies, ideas, artefacts and commodities) should be seen as circulating through, rather than emanating from, related communities of practice. Cultural forms are therefore both premised on such communities of practice, through which they are interpreted and evaluated, and at the same time, are enacted through these same communities of practice (ibid: 195). We can think of the newspaper, as well as the news website, as such forms; but we can think of concepts such as 'diversity', and named cities such as 'Toronto' as forms also. My aim here is to investigate how these various forms come together and are temporarily stabilised through sites of news media production, and how this helps to create a geographical imagination of the 'diverse city' as a social totality (cf. LiPuma and Koelble 2005).

This coming-together of forms through sites of news media production necessarily calls attention, in the first instance, to questions of organisational setting and its associated working conditions. In this paper, I draw upon a multi-year (2005-2013) research study of the *Toronto Star*, Canada's largest newspaper by readership, and the dominant metropolitan newspaper in Toronto. At the core of this research are two ethnographic field studies: the first field study involved six months of research in early 2005, comprised of six weeks of participant observations and 58 interviews; and the second field study involved two months of research in 2011, comprised of four weeks of participant observation and 23 interviews. The case example that I will introduce later emerges from the earlier 2005 field study. Although eight years may appear to be a long time in a changing media environment, the specificities of the case example have been largely unaffected by recent technological and industry changes, and thus remain of continuing importance. Research into the longer eight year period encompassing the two studies was fulfilled through in-depth archival research, the collection of a wide range of secondary documentation and online material, and the tracking of news content at selected junctures. All collected data (observation diaries, interview transcripts, collected textual and visual documentation and materials, selected news stories) were coded and recoded at several stages during the multi-year study, using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis

software. This larger study has been oriented around two major lines of research inquiry: first, how the *Toronto Star*, as metropolitan newspaper *organisation*, was made and re-made through everyday journalistic practices and material arrangements which inherently create urban spatialities; and second, how the *Toronto Star*, as a metropolitan newspaper *medium*, helped to inflect certain geographical imaginations of Toronto as an urban public space.

The term 'metropolitan newspaper' has a fairly particular meaning in North America. It typically denotes newspapers that have evolved from the big city newspapers of early 20th Century North America, which defined their readers as the mass public of the city, rather than in narrower terms, such as class, ethnicity or politics (see Barth 1980; Nord 2001; Schudson 1978; Wallace 2005). Contemporary metropolitan newspapers, oriented to comparatively diversified and dispersed urban regions, are often seen as having a more contrived, symbolic orientation to the city, focused on for example downtown politics, sensational property redevelopment projects, or crime (see Kaniss 1991, p. 71-100). They are therefore often seen to fit a more general pattern characterising local and regional print media: standardised, packaged news 'products' selling a rather superficial localism, based on capturing media markets (e.g. Aldridge 2003; Franklin 2005; 2006). At the same time, others have analysed the ways such organisations have struggled to maintain their regional monopolies within the emergent news ecologies wrought by digital and networked media (e.g. Anderson 2013; Barnhust 2002; Rodgers 2010).

While the state of contemporary metropolitan newspapers is relevant to this paper, I would like to open the black box a little further. In accord with recent studies and theorisations of journalism which draw upon actor-network theory (e.g. Anderson 2013; Hemmingway 2008; Plesner 2009; Turner 2005), I will emphasise how a metropolitan newspaper such as the *Toronto Star* is a media form and organisation continuously made and remade through heterogeneous associations. In other words, my account will not assume metropolitan newspapers to be predictable mediums, but rather will see them as complex mediators (cf. Latour 2005: 38-39) made through manifold associations of activities and material objects. Such an approach potentially opens up a wide range of interconnected phenomena which render the metropolitan newspaper coherent as both media organisation and media artefact. A small and somewhat eclectic selection of such phenomena might include for example reporter interviewing, digital recorders, computer networks, graphic design, advertising, printing presses, delivery trucks, highways, reading practices, and conversations about the news between friends and family. Here, however, I will direct my attention specifically to the working milieus of news editors in the *Toronto Star*'s City Department, which I will regard as a particularly important interpretive communities of the circulating forms of the newspaper and the city.

In order to examine city editing (as I will call it) as an interpretive community, I will draw not only on actor-network theory but Schatzki's (2002) ontology of 'sites'. Schatzki's site ontology is founded upon a sympathetic critique of actor-network theory, in which he affirms the

agency that 'material arrangements' have in the social world, yet argues that we understand such arrangements via a strong analytical emphasis on social practices, drawing especially on Wittgenstein and Heidegger. Sites, in short, refer to the intrinsic nexus between particular types of social practice (e.g. journalism) and material arrangements. Considering city editing as a site therefore opens up a new way to study media production practices, by joining actor-network theory with recent interests in theorising media as practice (e.g. Couldry 2004; Bräuchler and Postill 2010). More importantly in the context of this paper, it turns conventional assumptions around the relationship between mainstream media and the framing of urban diversity on their head. Rather than assuming media project constructions of 'diversity' or multiculturalism outward, in a one-way direction, it provides a way to understand how the milieus involved in media production are also constructed, in a sense, through their multiple associations with the diverse city to which they orient and respond.

My argument will move through three progressively linked sections. First, I briefly outline Toronto's changing urban media environment from the perspective of news editors at the *Toronto Star*, before introducing a specific case example around which the remainder of the paper will focus: editors' work on a news feature and special section on Toronto's projected ethnic diversity in 2017. I then turn, secondly, to consider how city editing practices inherently involve the expression of certain geographical imaginations of the diverse city. This leads into a final section; where I discuss how such practiced geographical imaginations were orientated to and ordered by the processes of assembling the newspaper as material artefact. Many aspects of my analysis is characterised by highly situated descriptions, so I conclude by reconnecting with broader debates around the mediated urban politics of diversity, difference and multiculturalism.

'The way we'll be'

For much of the 20th Century, and certainly for most of the postwar years, metropolitan newspapers such as the *Toronto Star* thrived in urban regions characterised by a relatively stable constellation between the times and spaces of work, family and leisure. To be sure, this 'fit' between the metropolitan newspaper and urban public life was something requiring constant attention, maintenance and renegotiation. But it was stable enough that it was largely taken for granted. Yet, as many *Toronto Star* editors conveyed in interviews and newsroom exchanges, this constellation had ruptured, or at the very least, was unravelling rapidly. Editors faced a city region which had reached nearly six million people, depending where one drew the line, and projected to grow by 100,000 more annually. For Irwin Connelly[2], the *Toronto Star*'s Editor-in-Chief, this meant that:

> …you've got readers … who are just very different than what they were twenty years ago, in the sense that, well two factors. One, they're working a lot harder, probably, than they were twenty years ago, because, to stay ahead you gotta work harder, longer hours. And number two, because

[2] The names used herein are pseudonyms, both for actors mentioned in observation passages and attributions of interview quotes.

> of urban sprawl, they're living, often, some distance from where they work. And two income families, almost, pretty much the norm now. Or single families, single parent families, another, almost, norm. So time-pressed readers, a thing that we never even talked about twenty years ago: a huge, *huge* issue. And maybe a third element there, related to the second, is the family formation appears to be later now … and family formation was always one of the triggers for a newspaper subscription. So, it used to happen at twenty-one, now it's happening at thirty-one. Well, I'm making that up, but if that's the case, in a decade, when, if people really aren't buying newspapers, you know, [that] is it.

This multifaceted, shifting montage of urban life in Toronto was increasingly being addressed by a range of emergent media tailored to the differentiated lives, time and interests of urban audiences:

> … you know, you've got … drive-home radio, you got, drive-to-work radio, you got … instant news there, people are saturated with that. You've got, you know, 24-hour cable TV news channels. You got … an abundance of magazine titles that rise and fall. You've got the web – you know, instant stuff, and tons and tons of different choices on the web. And then in the newspaper, in our market, you know, seven newspapers now. Uh, three of which are free. (Irwin Connelly, Editor-in-Chief, *Toronto Star*)

Irwin Connelly was, in 2005, an organisational outsider At the *Toronto Star*, arriving in Toronto after a stint as a newspaper editor in a smaller Canadian city, and before that as the business editor at one of Canada's national newspapers. So on arrival, he was not only confronted by a city with an increasingly differentiated, mobile and networked news environment, but also a corporate and editorial management culture which projected a intimate and historicised entanglement between the *Toronto Star* and Toronto's public life. This historical entanglement was not necessarily imagined to be linear, extending back to the newspaper's founding in 1892, nor was it singular[3]. Indeed, projections about the relationships of the newspaper and the city tended to oscillate across three prominent organisational histories: first, as a newspaper positioning itself editorially from a broadly 'left' standpoint; second, as a sometimes-sensational, campaigning newspaper of the mid-20th Century, in an emotionally significant and even emotionally charged relationship with its urban publics; and third, as a postwar 'modern' metropolitan newspaper of self-conscious responsibility, accuracy and fairness, oriented to a city becoming more middle-class, characterised by services industries, and ethnically diverse.

[3] The participant observations and interviews undertaken during this research highlighted a much more detailed account of the complex 'histories' of the *Toronto Star* than can feasibly be outlined here. Readers may however wish to consult secondary materials (many suggested to the author by organisational members) dealing with the *Toronto Star* and its history, such as: historical accounts partly or fully sponsored by the *Toronto Star* (e.g. Atkinson Charitable Foundation 2005; Harkness 1963; contributions to Honderich *et al.* 2002); the autobiographies of former *Star* employees (Cranston 1953; Templeton 1983); and various scholarly and journalistic writings on Canadian media and the *Toronto Star* (e.g. Cobb 2004; Hayes 2004; Stewart 1980).

Editors at the *Toronto Star* invoked these histories to speak of both the past as well as the present. In so doing, they could be seen as making sense of the *Toronto Star* as a coherent and 'held together' organisation (see Czarniawska 1997; M.S. Feldman and Pentland 2005; R.M. Feldman and Feldman 2006), and at the same time, affirming a symbiotic relationship between their newspaper and Toronto as a social totality (cf. Iveson 2007: 32-47; Lipuma and Keolble 2005):

> [T]here are people for whom this paper is very, very important, and this paper is very important to this city. And it has been, you know, like this, with this city, growing up together. (Vince Quinn, Saturday Editor, *Toronto Star*)

> I think that newspapers help create a sense of community. And by setting something of an agenda, a common agenda for discussion, I think we are one of the increasingly few places where, that can actually do that. (Osborn Chamberlane, Publisher, *Toronto Star*)

> … in a democracy, you know … you have one medium where most people, or a good number of people, in the community, make reference to, or … follow. (Irwin Connelly, Editor-in-Chief, *Toronto Star*)

> … if you live in Toronto, you want to know what's going on in your city, the only paper that you can read is the *Toronto Star*. (Thomas Laval, President and CEO, Torstar Corporation)

This does not mean that Toronto's urban publics were addressed as an undifferentiated whole. Indeed, much attention was directed to specifically-targeted audience groups, even though the general objective of such targeting was incorporation into the newspaper's imagined citywide public (and media market). Alongside potential audiences in the growing suburban and exurban areas of the city region, and amongst younger people, were the rapidly-changing publics of multicultural Toronto, which editors often struggled to define:

> So, [we're targeting] the young, 905 [suburban telephone area code], and um, I don't know how to phrase this but, in a multicultural city like this, we've wrestled with this for twenty, thirty years, um, uh, how to appeal to, um, the growing number of immigrants. There are, each year, about seventy-five thousand people who arrive at Pearson [International Airport], immigrants, to settle in … Toronto and [the] greater Toronto area. That's a *massive* audience. (Lloyd Dover, Deputy Managing Editor, *Toronto Star*)

Though potentially a 'massive' audience, recently-arrived immigrants to the Toronto region were also seen to pose difficult issues for editors, around for example local attachments, preferred languages and preferred formats of media consumption.

I will now turn my attention to a particular case example which illustrates how editors in the *Toronto Star* City Department oriented to the 'new' populations of a multicultural Toronto, as both audience and an object of journalistic concern. On 23 March 2005, the newspaper ran a special feature, led by a Statistics Canada study commissioned by the Department of Canadian Heritage, which projected the

growth of so-called 'visible minorities'[4] by 2017, the 150th anniversary of Canadian confederation. The feature appeared prominently on the front page, above the fold, and comprised of: a large black headline spanning the page just below the *Toronto Star* masthead, reading 'The way we'll be'; a sub-headline below, reading 'VISIBLE MAJORITY |By 2017 more than half of Greater Toronto will be non-European. How will this change our city?'; a white background stock photo, extending across the page, showing six naked babies of mixed ethnic appearances; a short introduction to the feature of around 120 words; and a neatly-organised graphic which highlighted eight key statistics related to Toronto's ethnic diversity past, present and future. These textual and graphical arrangements also pointed readers toward a five-page report in the GTA section[5] on a range of issues arising from one of the study's main implications: that visible minorities would comprise the majority population of the Toronto urban region in 2017. This special report included a wide range of stories and other content on such matters as Toronto's demographics, schooling, immigration, social services, entertainment, culture and the arts. A pointer was also provided toward an additional feature story in the Sports section, on newly-prominent sports in diverse Toronto (e.g. cricket).

The use of the word 'we' and 'be' in the headline, and 'our city' in the sub-headline, immediately invokes readers or audiences as holding a common urban experience as well as concern. This mirrors the often-noted and fairly banal newspaper practice of claiming 'we-ness' (as studies of nationalism have argued, see Anderson 1991; Billig 1995). Yet such invocations of commonality cannot be explained as a purely instrumental move to capture market share. They are also imbued with performances of the *Toronto Star* histories mentioned in the previous section, which envision the newspaper as a vital passage point for the communicative space of the city:

> So that's why we're putting a great deal of emphasis now on 'new' Toronto, that being, you know, the cultural communities, and certain cultural communities … what can we do to really attract those people into the paper. So they themselves in the paper and so that other readers see them too. So it's part of the conversation. (Irwin Connelly, Editor-in-Chief, *Toronto Star*)

Moreover, there are limits to what a discursive or semiotic analysis might tell us about this fairly evocative range of news content, which clearly embodies a very particular framing of Toronto as a diverse city. As I have already indicated, my aim here is to both avoid a discrete analysis of media representation, as well as an underlying assumption that studying such representations is politically important either because of its production in concentrated sites of power, or because of its perceived effects on audiences. Instead, I will focus

[4] Statistics Canada is a Canadian federal agency which collects and analyses population and other data, most notably through the national census undertaken every five years. The term 'visible minority' is largely a Canadian invention, defined through the Canada *Employment Equity Act* as: 'Persons other than Aboriginal peoples who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour'.

[5] 'GTA' (an abbreviation of Greater Toronto Area) is the regional news section of the *Toronto Star,* which much like similar sections in many North American newspapers is usually inserted as the second ('B') section immediately after the main news section.

here on the how this feature emerges through the practical work and material settings of journalism at the *Toronto Star*. Thus, rather than deconstructing this content further, I will now turn to consider the situated practices of city editing which partook in the production of this particular special feature.

Apprehending diverse city publics: the practice of editing

Theorising media in terms of 'practices' has recently attracted significant attention amongst scholars in media and cultural studies (e.g. Couldry 2004; Warde 2005; Bräuchler and Postill 2010). The touchstones of a so-called practice theory are diverse – ranging from philosophers such as Wittgenstein (1953) and Heidegger (1927), to social theorists such as Bourdieu (1977), Giddens (1984) and Butler (1990), to more recent syntheses including Schatzki (1996) and Reckwitz (2002). In media studies, the most notable use of practice theory has, somewhat perversely perhaps, been to stake out a 'non-media-centric media studies' (see Couldry 2012; Moores 2012). This is an approach to media where the starting point is not media texts or technologies, but the ways in which media are folded into or anchor performances, routines and language in everyday pragmatic use. In line with my use of a site ontology here, I will follow in particular Schatzki's (1996; 2002) fourfold definition of 'integrative' practices[6] as comprised of: (1) understandings of how to do things (or 'doings'); (2) rules (or 'sayings'), meaning explicit statements setting out how to do something or that a state of affairs is the case; (3) a 'teleoaffective structuring', meaning a combination of normative ends and emotions that are customary or recognized amongst members of a practice; and (4) general understandings about the nature, conduct and common situation of a practice. Schatzki's notion of integrative practices is particularly helpful for thinking about organised contexts of media production, which are often ignored in media research making use of practice theories (see Ardèvol *et al* 2010: 260-250; Hobart 2010; Rodgers 2013 forthcoming).

City editing will be considered here as an integrative practice, and I would like to focus in particular upon its geographical imaginations. The concept of geographical imagination has a long and well-known pedigree in human geography[7]. I use it here to indicate the spatialized imaginaries – of urban spaces, audiences, markets, publics – expressed through both the implicit and explicit dimensions of city editing as an integrative practice, rather than in substantive representations of Toronto. Such imaginations were important for both tacit understandings of *doing* editing work, and overt *sayings* of what constituted such work and its good or proper conduct. In turn, these practical doings and sayings were the basis for both a *teleoaffective structuring* and sets of *general understandings* which oriented editing work to Toronto as an ethnically diverse urban environment and public.

Returning to the news feature introduced in the last section, let us move directly, via the accounts of my observation

[6] Integrative practices are organised activities, which for Schatzki (1996; 2002) can be distinguished from (yet still be dependent upon) 'dispersed practices', which are more open-ended actions often based on understandings alone (e.g. walking, handwriting).

[7] For some uses and discussion on the concept, see Prince (1962), Harvey (1990), Gregory (1994), and Massey (2005)

diaries, to the *Toronto Star* newsroom, on the day before the publication of that special feature:

> 3.15pm. I join a small coterie of four or five City Department editors crammed into the small office of Wilson Omstead, the Deputy City Editor. The editors discuss the possibilities and status of the city-related content underway for the next day's newspaper. Wilson listens, he asks questions, and he makes copious annotations in the margins of his City sked[8]. As I look over my own copy, it strikes me that the list of stories is much shorter than usual. What gives?
>
> 3.30pm. Wilson and I arrive at the Editorial Conference Room for the afternoon news meeting. Editors from various departments sit around a large table, about to discuss the range of developing stories and content for the next day's newspaper. It soon becomes apparent why the City sked was so short; after briefing the editors on other City offerings for the main news section, Wilson turns to a special sked that outlines a major feature on the implications of a recent Statistics Canada report, projecting the 2017 proportion of visible minorities across Canada. He outlines plans for the front page, and several planned stories and features to make up a special report in the GTA section. He points out the various visual elements and graphics under development, while mentioning the names of reporters and other staff assigned to or working on various elements, indicating their progress. Throughout, the other editors ask questions and make suggestions; a back and forth around the feature, its components, and the way it will be presented.
>
> For the editors, it seemingly goes without saying that the feature is appropriate and important. That it is destined for the front page is not discussed or debated, and I can only presume that it has been discussed elsewhere, prior to the meeting. Wilson notes that the Canada-wide report will be 'localized' to focus on the Toronto CMA. Another news editor asks: 'How will we be describing this Toronto CMA? Will it be 'Toronto', or what?' Wilson: 'We will say Greater Toronto, noting that we mean the CMA[9], and then explain briefly how it differs from the GTA'. (Observation Diary, 22 March 2005)

These short passages – though opening just a small aperture into the complex, daily work of city editing – point towards two facets of city editing and its geographical imaginations. First, let us consider the way city editing practices *implicitly* anticipated particular urban audiences. In the above meetings, editors undertook the practical work of formulating 'angles': those narratives or visual elements emphasised in news

[8] 'Sked' is short for schedule, and denotes printouts listing the stories being pursued over a specific time period, usually ordered by importance. There tended to be a daily sked for each department.

[9] CMA refers to Census Metropolitan Area, a Statistics Canada definition denoting areas of one or more adjacent settlements situated around a major urban core. The Toronto CMA partially overlaps what editors took to be the more widely recognized GTA – Greater Toronto Area – generally denoting the City of Toronto and four adjacent regional municipalities.

content or groupings thereof; that which is understood as making a story more appealing, interesting, or engaging. Formulating angles was something editors almost always accomplished together, in meetings and in other interactions around the newsroom. They understood that such activities led to forms of *consensus*, which, in turn, acted as a proxy for tapping into what they anticipated as the consensual perspective of reading publics. Consensus-making proceeded, in other words, with implicit geographical imaginations of what might unify a diverse group of readers around truths acceptable to all[10].

Editing also involved an implicit anticipation of the need for adequate *explanation*. In the above example in the news meeting, we saw more explicit calculations about probable audience knowledge of specialised statistical geographies. Yet these also took place amongst a range of implicit considerations. For example, around the variable language abilities of diverse audiences:

> It's a really … an added complication now for us if English is a second language for so many people … how do we appeal to those people, who, kind of, have a shaky grasp of English, who may only have a thousand, two thousand words of English in their vocabulary? We use words all the time, we had a headline yesterday about somebody being in jeopardy … you worry about the language that you can use, you don't want to be offensive … It's very difficult to write to a English professor at the U of T [University of Toronto] and that immigrant. (Lloyd Dover, Deputy Managing Editor, *Toronto Star*)

Although recognized in an interview setting, Lloyd Dover refers here to audience considerations only rarely vocalized or explicitly set out in practical doing, even if informed by prior practical experience.

Such implicit anticipations were, secondly, the inferential basis (cf. Brandom 2000) upon which editors explicitly expressed particular geographical imaginations. For example, and although not necessarily captured well by the above passages, editorial meetings often involved making explicit, affirmative connections between particular angles and readers. Irwin Connelly, the Editor-in-Chief, would frequently ask other editors such questions as 'what does this mean for our [X] readers?' or 'why should [such and such] care about this?' Responses might be justificatory or explanatory talk implicitly and explicitly referring to the particular cultures, lifestyles, institutions, or places understood as emblematic (or not) of the newspaper's audience. How implicit practical anticipations translate into, or interplay with, things made explicit through the semantic and symbolic content of news deserves a deeper analysis than is possible here. What I will to turn to now, however, addresses this question at least in part: to consider how the newspaper as material artefact has agency or constitutive qualities in relation to the assembling of diverse city publics.

[10] As Muhlmann (2008) argues, unifying audiences around truths is one paradigmatic tendency of modern journalism; the other, opposing tendency is to decentre truths.

Assembling diverse city publics: the material arrangements of news

The site of city editing, as noted earlier, is not composed of social practices alone, but in Schatzki's (2002) idiom, is a nexus of practices and 'material arrangements', meaning material entities – humans, nonhuman life forms, artefacts, and things – that affect, are enrolled through and are the embodied constituents of practices. Such materialities have had at least a spectral appearance is my discussion thus far. For example, the editorial meetings discussed earlier were intrinsically constituted by the arrangement of bodies, offices and conference rooms, in which such practices became enclosed in time-space, enabling and responding to aspects of the world beyond that setting (cf. Boden 1994: 83). Indeed, it would be possible to list a multitude of other minute materialities of the newsroom (for further discussion, see Hemmingway 2008; Rodgers 2013 forthcoming). Here, I would like to narrow my attention to one important material arrangement – the newspaper as material artefact – and its ordering and orientating of editing practices, in particular towards a geographically-delineated, diverse urban public.

To conceptualize the newspaper as a material artefact affecting and effecting editing practices, it is helpful to adapt the notion of news *form*, originally deployed in the extensive historical research of Kevin Barnhust and John Nerone (2002). In their wide-ranging study of newspapers over the 20th Century, Barnhurst and Nerone use news form to indicate not only layout, design and typography, but the historically- and geographically-specific manifestation of, for example, illustration conventions, reporting genres, and department-alization of content. Newspaper form is not only a complex daily 'diorama' intended to convey ritualistic familiarity in spite of the unfamiliarity of news events; it is a series of represented relationships corresponding to the material relationships assembled through the newspaper (Nerone and Barnhurst 2003: 112). The relatively durable nature of news form effects and affects, for example, the division of responsibilities in the newsroom, and the organisation and conduct of content-gathering. For its own part, the site of editing is distinctive because it is placed at the very moment this dioramic material environment of news form comes together.

The most apparent instance of this coming-together for *Toronto Star* City Department editors (and the most relevant to the urban diversity feature under consideration) was the daily assembly of the GTA section. The GTA section was a dioramic environment setting out relatively durable page space dedicated to the Toronto region, presented through iterative relationships between form and content. It arranged regular columnists, scheduled features, news from established local beats, and allocated space for things like regional weather, television listings, and obituaries. Moreover, assembling the GTA section involved one important practical rule: its content had to relate to, or concern, events within the Greater Toronto Area. Broader, crosscutting issues placed in this page space were reformulated or re-edited to emphasize a Greater Toronto connection. As editors would say, they 'localised' the story, a common practice at many local newspapers, but also something with special provenance for editors at the *Toronto Star*:

> We used to have a saying back before amalgamation, when there was the City of Toronto, and what are, are now where the inner suburbs, that made up Metro Toronto. And, reporters, it was ingrained in every reporter, that when you were working on a story you always ask yourself, what's it mean to Metro? Meaning what's it mean to the people who are living in Metropolitan Toronto. What's the point of this story? Why, what are you going to do to this story that relates to their lives, that's gonna make them wanna read this story, or offer them something of value to their lives? (Dave Isaac, Day Assignment Editor, *Toronto Star*)

Much of the content related to the feature (on the 2017 census projections) was formulated through a process of implicit localised recognition and assembly:

> 7.25pm. Innes Witcar, an Assistant City Editor, sits at the City Desk[11] in front of his desktop computer. A digital proof of the developing front page for the next day is on the screen. Six babies, of different ethnic appearance, extend across the page. Less than an hour ago, black text above this photo read 'Toronto 2017'; now it pronounces 'The way we'll be': a change that apparently happened without discussion, or perhaps when my attention was momentarily elsewhere. Next to Innes is Ryan Dennis, serving tonight as City Assignment Editor. He and Innes discuss, back and forth, the planned content making up the special report in the GTA section. Ryan calls across the newsroom to Orlagh Keene, a newer city reporter working general assignment tonight. She briskly walks over from her desk. Innes tells Orlagh that they would like her to put together a profile of the South Asian and Chinese communities, the two largest 'visible minority' groups in the Toronto CMA. Innes: 'We have the numbers, all the stats, but we want a bit about the *people* making up these groups, like their historical immigration to Canada, famous people in the community, that kind of thing'. Orlagh takes notes, and heads off. Ryan calls after her – humourously but perhaps seriously – 'half hour would be great…'

A number of things are at play here. What is interesting for the moment is that despite a common (if largely accurate) image of newspapers being of limited page space, constantly demanding that content be reduced, distilled and selected, working practices of assembling and rearranging the dioramic environment of news form also entails filling in and fitting in:

> 9.10pm. Work continues on the feature. 80 minutes remain until the formal deadline for the paper to be sent to the newspaper's printing press facility in the Toronto suburb of Vaughan. Assistant city editors ferry back and forth to the Graphics Department; Wilson Omstead and City Editor Lee Bourrier circulate periodically to see how things are progressing. More and more, a

[11] A central hub for city editor activities, located in the centre of the newsroom, adjacent to the then-powerful News Desk.

> visually diverse arrangement is filling out the special section: charts, quick facts, voices, stats, tables, text boxes, photos and maps. Under the photo of the babies are eight, large red numbers that signify key facts related to the 2017 study. The final number – '8' – represents the gap in median age between immigrants and non-immigrants. At the News Desk, editors deliberate on whether they should replace it, perhaps with something less technical, but it stays in the end. (Observation Diary, 22 March 2005)

Thus, even as the above passages illuminate both implicit and explicit geographical imaginations expressed through the practical work of assembling news, these take place within a setting orientated around the material arrangements of news form. In short, the *Toronto Star* as media artefact had its own agency in relation to editing practices. It too *did things*; in its durable spatiality, it helped constitute the arrangement, nature and geographical orientation for content making up the special feature on Toronto's future diversity.

This durable spatiality of news form also helps think through a temporal dimension: how urban diversity or multiculturalism is circulated over time. News form, both printed and via digital interfaces, is not only a spatially organised object but also an object helping to constitute public discourse over time. Here I am drawing on Michael Warner's particular definition of publics, as something constituted by 'the concatenation of texts through time' (Warner 2002: 90). This definition is helpful here in two respects. First, harking back to the previous section, it points to how the geographical imaginations expressed in editing practices responded to and were informed by a complex, previously-existing space of discourse. Secondly, for our immediate concerns in this section, it points to the basic daily temporality through which the *Toronto Star* entered this discursive space (certainly in print, but also to a significant extent online). The spatiality of news form can be seen as interacting with this temporality because it arranges what Warner (2002: 96) calls 'feedback loops': the ways that mediums stake out a self-referential place within an unfolding public discussion. Obvious examples of feedback loops include the letters page, the opinion (Op Ed) page, and the editorial page[12]. A news feature such as the one discussed here comprises a looser, but no less important, type of feedback loop, indexed in relation to a pre-existing public discourse around Toronto and the GTA, and at the same time, constituting a particular public space for the re-circulation of ethnic diversity as common concern and everyday experience.

[12] Relatively specific to the *Toronto Star* was space dedicated to a Public Editor and a Community Editorial Board. The latter is particularly interesting as it underlines the ongoing relationship the *Toronto Star* projected between itself and its ethnically diverse publics. Selected with the aim of approximating the newspaper's diverse readers (ethnic, professional, lifestyle, etc), Community Editorial Board members met regularly with the Editorial Page Editor, and occasionally with other editors; during their one-year term each member had an option of publishing an opinion piece on the editorial page.

Circulating cities of difference: sites, power, publics

In examining the relationship between media and framings of urban diversity, this paper has engaged only indirectly with diversity or multiculturalism as something substantively represented. My attention has instead been directed to a relatively detailed understanding of city editing practices and their material constitution, and how this site mediated Toronto as a particular type of polity and social body. Through this, I have proposed an alternative way to examine the framing of urban ethnic diversity, via its enactment and mediation through particular sites. With respect to the site of city editing at the *Toronto Star*, I explored three ways diversity was enacted and mediated: as something consumed within practical references to and enactments of the organisational histories of the newspaper; as an implicit and explicit geographical imagination expressed through practices of editing work; and as something ordered and orientated through the material assembly of newspaper form across space and time.

A basic conclusion to be made from this analysis is that the relationships between the *Toronto Star* and its reading publics were much more complex than conventional claims around media representation might tend to suggest. I have sought in particular to avoid an image of the *Toronto Star* constructing Toronto's diversity in a hegemonic, one-way direction. I hope in so doing this paper opens up new questions around the mediation of difference and diversity in cities in Canada and elsewhere. Media are too often tidily swept into a conceptual black box in otherwise commendable critical inquiries, falling victim to simplistic theorisations, or bypassed in a fixation to deconstruct representations.

In a recent commentary, Wood and Gilbert (2005) argue that analyses of Canadian multiculturalism should focus less on emblematic figures like former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, or the discourses of official state policies. They suggest that scholars should instead explore the particularities of diversity and difference in Canada through the interactive qualities of urban practices as they unfold in such public spaces as Toronto's downtown streets and transit system. Though they offer an insightful critique and hopeful way forward, their argument suffers from two common problems. First is a vision of urban practices too romantically tied to everyday city life and implicitly juxtaposed against abstracted orders such as 'the media'. The analysis of this paper has fundamentally regarded sites of mainstream media production to be just as relational and practiced as any urban social setting (cf. Thrift 2000: 235). Second is a corresponding vision of public space as concrete and locally-bound; where cultural differences are seen as negotiated more so through 'real' city spaces than abstracted discourses. My consideration has focused on the negotiation of urban diversity across a circulatory space of mediated communication. However, in situating this circulatory space via an analysis of the site of city editing at the *Toronto Star*, what I have sought to present here is an *actual* – and not merely metaphorical – public space that is not so easily segmented off from interactions in more spatially-bounded or localized public milieus (cf. Barnett 2004 2007; Iveson 2007; Warner 2002).

Some of the limitations presented by focusing on diversity seen through

spaces of local urban encounters have been addressed by a growing literature on everyday media uses by urban diaspora (e.g. Georgiou 2006) I have sought here to bring a situated analysis of mainstream media more fully into view. Arguably, mainstream media are too often understudied, simply treated as elite centres of power, in relation to which more marginalised groups must devise tactics of resistance. My starting premise, however, has been that a detailed understanding of the practices taking place at such sites is not only important, but enables greater possibilities for change (cf. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 195-200). As Latour (1993: 125-126) puts it:

> Take some small business owner hesitatingly going after a few modest shares, some conqueror trembling with fever, some poor scientist tinkering in his lab, a lowly engineer piecing together a few more or less favourable relationships or forces, some strutting politician: turn the critics loose on them, and what do you get? Capitalism, imperialism, science, technology, domination – all equally absolute, systematic, totalitarian … The actors in the first scenario could be defeated; in the second they no longer can.

Some authors, such as Mitchell (1996), have claimed to apprehend multiculturalism 'on the ground' via an examination of discourses of multiculturalism 'appropriated' by particular interests, such as those representing capital and state. I would argue that the approach deployed here apprehends such groundedness in different and potentially more useful ways. In focusing on the sites of city editing at the *Toronto Star*, I have tried to illustrate just how banal and everyday certain actualizations of political power in relation to Toronto may be. Power here is seen as a *relational* effect of the practices and materialities constituting such sites, rather than something possessed by certain actors or organisations (cf. Allen 2003; Law 1994; Schatzki 2005: 479). This understanding of power cannot rely on a simple opposition of hegemony and resistance, or elites versus publics. The site of city editing was at once performed in particular milieus inhabited by very select members, while also being oriented to, even subjugated by, its need to anticipate the dispositions and daily rhythms of subjects variably understood as readers, publics, markets, citizens and so on (cf. Bourdieu 1984: 231; Radcliffe 1999: 237-238; Scannell 1996).

A final argument I have sought to make in this paper is that we should take seriously sites partaking in the circulation of the diverse city as a social totality. In discussing the possible futures of public service broadcasting, Born (2005) convincingly argues that, despite the importance of making space for multiple, layered publics, counterpublics and micro-publics, there remains a need for unified spaces in which groups can talk across cultural differences about shared concerns. For her, this suggests an enduring place for a re-imagined, yet still institutionalised, public service communication. Though there are limits in drawing comparisons between public service and mainstream commercial media, we should be cautious of too-readily dismissing the ongoing import of more unified mediated public forums through which groups might encounter one another in and across contemporary cities. Towards this, at the very least, we should endeavour to study and theorise the increasingly-fragile interstices

between mainstream media production, such as that embodied by the metropolitan or city newspaper, and the circulation of the wider communicative spaces of diverse cities.

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JOMEC Journal
Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies

This article was first published in *JOMEC Journal*

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ISSN: ISSN 2049-2340

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