

## **Global Antiracism. What about the Press?**

The murder of George Floyd and other blacks by the police has caused broad antiracist solidarity, both in the USA as well as in many other countries, also among white people and institutions. The Black Lives Matter movement has explained police violence as one of the manifestations of systemic racism. Beyond solidarity with the victims and survivors of police violence, this means that politically relevant antiracism requires critical analysis of systemic racism in all institutions and organizations. Also the *Guardian* and a few other progressive media have published on such systemic racism. But what about the press more generally?

Decades of research in many countries have shown that most newspapers are part of the problem of racism, rather than part of the solution. Most newsrooms, especially in Europe, are predominantly white, even when black or other minority journalists are searching for a job. An analysis of journalism programs of universities all over the world shows that there are hardly courses on racism, and none on racism in the press. Most sources of news about blacks or other minorities are white elites and institutions, and so are most voices heard in news reports and op-ed pages. From overall topics to local descriptions of minority or migrant actors and actions the bias is generally negative, with exception of the coverage of sports – or when they are victims of police violence, as is the case today. Until recently, if racism was covered as a topic, this was often about the past or in other countries, and seldom about ‘our own’ institutions. Like today, police violence against blacks, since the Civil Rights movement, was covered, but not explained in terms of broader systemic racism. All this is more pronounced in right-wing tabloids, such as those in the UK. Although there is today a tendency of real change, past research also has shown that progressive quality newspapers have not dealt much with systemic racism either. Our data of many countries show that there is one topic hardly ever covered in the press: racism in the press as a serious problem. Except as incidental accusations of the press. For obvious reasons. Journalists are the only profession seldom covered negatively in the press.

Real antiracism should always begin at home. In our own institutions. In our police as well as our governments, parliaments, schools, universities and business corporations. And of course, especially in our official and social media. Among all these institutions the press has a special role and responsibility. Racism is not innate but

learned, not only by police officers. The cognitive basis of racism, prejudice and stereotypes, is learned from public discourse in politics, the media and education, and from the everyday talk or social media posts derived from such discourse. Despite the influence of the social media and their frequent hate speech today, the press is still the direct or indirect main source of our dominant knowledge and attitudes about the racially and ethnically diverse societies in Europe and the Americas. Unless most of the press becomes *systemically antiracist*, critically examines its own practices and gives the good example, together with the other symbolic elites, white society will remain systemically racist.

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*PS. This article was submitted to the Guardian on June 16, 2020. No reply as yet except an automatic one. It remains to be seen whether it will ever be published even in a progressive newspaper – for reasons explained above.*