



# Diversity Matters: An Assessment of Diversity Content in Communication and Media Studies Monographs

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**abstract:** Diversity is an important issue in higher education communication and media programs. This study shows how librarians can use audit data to assess and strive for diversity in their library's print monographic collections. This article explores aspects of diversity within two fields of study, communication and media, and discusses the results of a diversity audit of communication and media monographs published between 2013 and 2022. The author analyzes thirteen diversity-related topics and their coverage within communication and media. A discussion of the current landscape as well as implications for researchers, librarians, and publishers are provided.

## Introduction

**B**rown University's Philosophy of the Office of Institutional Diversity asserts that "Diversity is the foundation of the academic enterprise. Exposure to a broad range of perspectives, views and outlooks is key to fostering both breadth and depth in intellectual knowledge."<sup>1</sup> Just as diversity is important in higher education broadly and is a fundamental part of the human experience, diversity plays an important role in higher education media and communication programs and, ultimately, communication and media studies library collections. However, if researchers are to contribute to the literature and librarians are to develop library collections that reflect diversity in media and communication, they need information that informs them of the current and recent literature landscape. It is important that we assess the current environment so that our

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media and communication. Answers will guide us to determine how well we are doing, what is needed, where the opportunities lie, and how to avoid uninformed assumptions and decisions.

### Background and Literature Review

Communication is a field that focuses on how people use messages to generate meaning within and across various contexts, cultures, channels, and media. The field promotes “the effective and ethical practice of human communication” and a “process that produces and reproduces shared meaning.”<sup>2</sup> Communication is a relevant topic of interest for researchers in numerous fields such as sociology, social psychology, and political science.<sup>3</sup> It has become a relevant and popular area within academia with over 1,600 doctoral, masters, bachelor’s, and community college communication programs in the United States.<sup>4</sup> While many disciplines within the humanities have experienced a decline in the number of degrees awarded since 2012, communication has seen an increase in the number of degrees issued from 2012 to 2018.<sup>5</sup> With communication’s relevance to human behavior, communication programs are a necessary focus of a liberal arts education and “well positioned” to contribute to interdisciplinary research.<sup>6</sup>

Closely related to the communication field, is the study of media, often referred to as “media studies.” A relatively new field established in the 1940s and gaining popularity in the 1960s, like communication programs, university media courses and departments have increased rapidly in size and scope, becoming an area of interest to academics, researchers, and the public. The study of media has also evolved into an interdisciplinary mode of inquiry, drawing from disciplines such as anthropology, semiotics, linguistics, psychology, and sociology.<sup>7</sup> A consistent focus of study and research has been the role mass media plays in people’s lives, how this role changes continually as society develops and new forms of mass media emerge, and the nature of the audience in producing and consuming media content.<sup>8</sup>

The US Department of Education’s Classification of Instructional Programs includes the educational category “Communication and Media Studies.” The category includes

future collection developments efforts are well informed. How much diverse content is being published, which subjects are or are not being covered, and who is publishing the content?

Unfortunately, there is no information available documenting how well communication and media publishing output—specifically books—reflect diversity. The goal of this study is to examine how well diversity is reflected in the media and communication monographic literature, whether trends exist over the past ten years, and whether certain publishers stand out regarding diversity output in

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“programs that focus on how messages in various media are produced, used, and interpreted within and across different contexts, channels, and cultures and that prepare individuals to apply communication knowledge and skills professionally.”<sup>9</sup> With the communication and media fields’ relationship to the study of human beings and cultures, interdisciplinarity, and increasing relevancy, media and communication scholars have an opportunity to impact society by clarifying questions, illuminating reality, and exploring solutions to problems.<sup>10</sup>

### **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Higher Education**

The 2020 US Census reveals increases in ethnic and racial populations between 2010 and 2020 for Black (5.6 percent), Latino (23 percent), American Indian and Alaska Native (27.1 percent), and Asian (35.5 percent) groups and a decrease within the White population of -8.6 percent.<sup>11</sup> For decades, US colleges and universities have focused on and invested in diversity in numerous ways. Affirmative Action programs were established to ensure more diverse hiring, retention, and enrollment. Researchers have improved their respective disciplines and fields with research output addressing diverse issues and perspectives. Instructors have integrated and acknowledged the importance of diversity in classroom learning. Campus climate, leadership, accountability, intergroup relations, and discourse have become a priority for universities and colleges. Libraries have also invested in diversity by ensuring that their collections reflect both the importance of diversity and the numerous perspectives of diverse groups.<sup>12</sup> As Betty Overton points out, diversity, equity, and inclusion “represent a larger goal than *just* diversifying the campus.” DEI is also about transforming higher education into its best self by “reimagining the teaching-learning process.”<sup>13</sup> Ellen R. Cohn and John W. Mullennix provide four reasons why diversity and multiculturalism in the classroom should be a key initiative: diversity outcomes cut across multiple curricular competencies; globalization and population trends demand diversity competencies; diversity competencies are relevant across the lifespan; and ethics, and diversity and equity matter.<sup>14</sup>

Going hand-in-hand with demands to “decolonize” higher education and scholarship are efforts to “De-Westernize” the field of communication studies, which has been a priority of the International Communication Association (ICA) for many years. Among ICA’s efforts are increasing representation of non-US scholars within ICA, launching the journal *Communication, Culture, and Critique*, and hosting internationally located conferences to “reimagine our normative ways of doing research, organizing ourselves, and being colleagues.”<sup>15</sup> In addition, the importance of diversity competency is especially relevant for communication and media students. As John W. Gareis, Ellen R.

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Cohn, and Janet Skupien explain, communication is central to being human, and how the human condition shapes our perceptions, thinking, and the ways we relate to oth-

ers.<sup>16</sup> The importance of making diversity awareness or education a priority in higher education communication and media programs is well documented and involves more than diversity enrollment. As far back as the early 1970s, journalism educators have expressed concern over the lack of diversity and argued that programs should hire more diverse faculty and instructors, enroll students from diverse backgrounds, establish diversity-focused programs, and address diversity issues in the classroom and within assignments.<sup>17</sup> In 2015, the National Communication Association's Learning Outcomes in Communication Project published *What Should a Graduate with a Communication Degree Know, Understand, and Be Able to Do?* which outlines the core education standards of the communication discipline through a set of learning outcomes.<sup>18</sup> The document includes a list of nine Learning Outcomes in Communication (LOC). Notably, LOC number four is "Create Messages Appropriate to the Audience, Purpose, and Context" and LOC number eight says that students should be able to "Utilize Communication to Embrace Difference," addressing the important relationship communication has with concepts such as culture, diversity, human rights and dignity, and global perspectives.<sup>19</sup>

Equally important to diversifying the classroom experience for students is ensuring commitment and competency among the teaching faculty.<sup>20</sup> More specifically, research output for the disciplines of communication and media should also reflect diversity, equity, and inclusion. The communication and media fields abound with research on race, gender, ethnicity, religion, and similar topics. This research often examines media content to determine how often, and accurately the subject "diversity" is portrayed in the media and how these portrayals impact media audiences.<sup>21</sup> Related to this effort, communication and media researchers have conducted content analyses of published research. They assess what research has been conducted, the foci, methodology, what is lacking, and, oftentimes, make recommendations for future scholarship. Their efforts inform communication and media researchers and help ensure that future scholarship remains timely and contributes to academia and society. Most of these analyses are longitudinal and focus on content within academic journals.<sup>22</sup>

Much of the older analyses of communication and media research focused on methodology, subject, or analysis of a particular media type within scholarly research but lacked substantial examination or recommendations relating to the academy's focus on diversity. However, more recent studies identify an absence of focus on social and cultural frameworks and perspectives related to diversity and a prevalence of whiteness and colonialism within communication and media research. In an effort to "transform scholarship," some note the lack of non-white and non-male representation in communication and media scholarship and academia and provide insight and direction that contribute to the discipline and society.<sup>23</sup> Other studies provide an audit of specific research areas within the discipline, discuss relevance and focus on diversity, and provide recommendations that address the important relationship the media has with society.<sup>24</sup> It is important to note that the majority of the studies examining diversity in communication and media research focus on journal literature and not research published in books.

### **Academic Libraries, Collections, and Diversity**

Like the rest of academia, academic libraries' track record in reflecting the importance of diversity has shifted "from the inadvertent to the (somewhat) more deliberate." Libraries



realized that if they were to serve the research and teaching interests of their institutions, they would need to “build a corresponding collection of library resources.”<sup>25</sup> Recognizing and supporting the needs of diverse library patrons is a core value set forth in the American Library Association (ALA) *Policy Manual’s* “Library Bill of Rights.” Section B.2.1.12 “Diverse Collections” outlines the importance of library collections representing the diversity of people in our society and asserts that librarians have an “obligation” to provide access to content that meets the needs of the community the library serves.<sup>26</sup>

The library literature discusses ways librarians may assess and ensure their monographic collections reflect diversity. These studies use a variety of approaches, such as bibliographies, awards, and annual publication lists, to evaluate or improve collections relating to diversity. Some studies focus on a specific type of diversity (Latina/o, Women, LGBTQ) while others focus on numerous areas of diversity, addressing religion, ethnicity, race, access, and so on.<sup>27</sup> In their examination of diversity-related collection assessment methods, Matthew P. Ciszek and Courtney L. Young discuss several assessment tools and provide directions for librarians. They recommend that libraries develop a working definition of diversity for collection development; develop proactive methods of measurement; ensure staff are trained in how diversity relates to the collection; and create tools, procedures, and policies to ensure a diverse collection.<sup>28</sup> Their findings contribute to libraries’ efforts to improve collections and further diversity.

Amalia Monroe-Gulick and Sara E. Morris conducted a diversity audit of the University of Kansas (UK) Library’s monograph collection. Consulting 57 book award lists covering 90 years, the goal of the study was to identify gaps in the collection and underrepresented publishers; determine whether current selection practices result in a diverse collection; assess whether demand-driven acquisition influences holdings; and identify ways to change the process to improve diversity. The study’s most significant finding is that most of the diverse titles in the UK library were acquired by a “passive form of collection development” via an approval plan, which omitted “materials covering underrepresented groups” that were not available via the plan. Approval plans provide a method of acquiring library materials whereby a vendor selects material for a library based on a profile, which is provided by the library. This issue brings to light the importance of selectors making individual title selections and not relying solely on approval plan profiles. Monroe-Gulick and Morris also discovered that many award-winning diverse titles were published by small presses that are not included in GOBI, a commercial vendor that provides an online ordering system. Their findings echo the need for librarians to actively seek out diverse publishing resources and consider small press publishers.<sup>29</sup> Strengths of the Monroe-Gulick and Morris study include that it examined diversity award book titles from the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries, included ten diverse subject areas, and examined monographs in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences.

According to Annabelle Mortensen, who has organized collection audits for the Skokie Public Library, many diversity audits of collections result in a greater awareness of the collection strengths and weaknesses and assist with setting future diversity goals. However, the biggest impact from this increased awareness is on future collection development efforts. When staff are more aware of collection strengths and weaknesses, they are incentivized and more determined to select diverse materials.<sup>30</sup> Both the Mortensen

and Monroe-Gulick and Morris studies shed light on the important role that publishers play in how libraries can diversify collections. While diversity audits provide insight for librarians regarding collection strengths and weaknesses, equally important is the role that publishers play. There is a need for publishers to take initiative and “champion” writers and researchers from marginalized groups in an effort to increase output of diverse materials.<sup>31</sup>

Whether these studies focus on identifying collection weaknesses, provide us with suggestions of resources for collection development, utilize different analysis methodologies, or shed light on the reciprocal role of libraries, researchers, and publishers, they all advocate for diversity audits of library collections. However, none of the studies focus on the importance of diversity within communication and media monograph collections or provide an assessment of the current landscape.

### Methodology

The following questions guided the research for this study:

- What is the publishing output for each of the diversity subject areas within communication and media monographs for the past ten years? (insight for publishers and researchers)
- What, if any, are the publishing output trends for each of the diversity subject areas within communication and media? (insight for publishers and researchers)
- Which publishers publish the most diversity-related books in communication and media? (insight for librarians)

### Definitions of Diversity Areas Included in Study

Like many subject areas, diversity, equity, inclusion, and access have developed over time. In addition, as Ciszek and Young discuss, diversity has numerous definitions and many of the related terms are “used interchangeably to represent racial, ethnic, gender and physical differences.”<sup>32</sup> Because the *ALA Policy Manual* stresses the importance of libraries providing access to information to all people, the author included diversity subfields addressing race, gender, culture, ethnicity, religion, and access in their assessment.<sup>33</sup> The following is a list of the diversity subfields included in the current study, with background information on each area.

**Asian American Studies:** Asian American Studies in higher education grew out of social movements of the nineteen-sixties and seventies with a goal to reclaim the histories and experiences of people of color.<sup>34</sup> The term “Asian American” represents a variety of races, religions, and languages, with this group comprising one of the major ethnic groups in the United States.<sup>35</sup>

**Black Studies:** The field of Black Studies is also referred to as African American Studies, African Diaspora Studies, Africana Studies, and Africology.<sup>36</sup> The field emerged primarily because of political demands by Black students and the Black community on White institutions to end the racist silence and gross misrepresentations of the Black experience. Scholars believe that the field’s establishment coincides with its concept within the “institutional academy” and was founded within academia in the 1960s.<sup>37</sup>



**Chicana/o Studies:** Chicana/o Studies departments and programs (also referred to as Latina/o Studies departments) resulted from the civil-rights era of the 1960s and the Chicano movement engaging in dialogue with academia. It focuses on recovering lost histories and Chicana/o and immigrant-centered scholarship on new and ongoing developments in the economy, cultural formations, and identities. The research originates both from Latina/o Studies departments and mainstream disciplines such as anthropology, history, education, sociology, and so on.<sup>38</sup>

**Disability Studies:** Disability Studies traces its origins to the organizations of disabled people in the late 1960s. Three key elements contribute to the development of Disability Studies. First, was the idea that people with disabilities are marginalized and disadvantaged; second was the idea that these individuals constitute a minority group; and third, was the idea that disability be reconstructed as a social problem rather than a medical one.<sup>39</sup>

**Ethnic Studies:** The expansion of Ethnic Studies as a field of research has taken place both in sociology and related social science disciplines as well as in the humanities.<sup>40</sup> It emerged as an academic field in the 1960s from the belief that the higher education curriculum was biased from a Eurocentric perspective, ignoring the history and culture of other ethnicities.<sup>41</sup>

**Islamic Studies:** Islamic Studies is the study of Islam as a textual tradition, inscribed in historical and cultural contexts. It provides an introduction to and specialization in Islam through a variety of expressions (literary, poetic, social, and political) and methods.<sup>42</sup>

**Jewish Studies:** Jewish Studies examines Jews, their cultures, and civilizations across time and space. It includes Jewish history; literatures and linguistics in Hebrew, Yiddish, and the other Judaic and vernacular languages of the places Jews have lived; Judaism, the religion; and Jewish thought, theology, philosophy, and mysticism.<sup>43</sup>

**LGBTQ Studies:** LGBTQ or Queer Studies is a field of study focusing on issues relating to gender, human sexuality, and sexual orientation with emphasis on LGBTQ issues and culture.<sup>44</sup>

**Men's Studies:** The study of gender has increased in recent decades and, with it, studies of issues around maleness. The research interests reflect a growing interest in men's and boys' identities, conduct, and problems ranging from male violence to boys' difficulties in school. The field of gender research has made the subject of masculinity visible and recognized. As a result, "masculinity" as an area of study has increased over the past 20 years, producing a large body of research.<sup>45</sup>

**Multicultural Studies:** The term multiculturalism came into use to describe a society characterized by a diversity of cultures. Religion, language, customs, traditions, and values are all elements of Multicultural Studies.<sup>46</sup> Multiculturalists consider culture and history through the prisms of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexual orientation.<sup>47</sup>

**Native American Studies:** Native American Studies, sometimes known as American Indian, Indigenous American, Aboriginal, Native, or First Nations Studies, is an interdisciplinary academic field that examines the history, culture, politics, issues, and contemporary experience of native peoples in North America or, taking a hemispheric approach, the Americas.<sup>48</sup>

**Palestine Studies:** Palestine Studies focuses on Palestinian history and the origins and evolution of Palestine. This includes identity and heritage, the Zionist movement, Israel, and international diplomacy.<sup>49</sup>

**Women's Studies:** Women's Studies emerged as an area of study in the United States in the late 1960s and focuses on research and theories that have developed around women and, more recently, gender in every field.<sup>50</sup>

### Description of GOBI Database as Collection Development Tool

As discussed, librarians use a variety of tools to assist in diversity audits of collections. One of these tools is the GOBI database, which includes access to an extensive list of titles. According to the EBSCO website, GOBI Library Solutions is “the leading provider of e-books, print books and workflow services to academic libraries worldwide.”<sup>51</sup> As a customer of GOBI, library staff have access to more than twenty million titles via the GOBI online interface. Over seventeen million are print and more than three million are ebooks.<sup>52</sup> Library selectors can search the GOBI database for books and book series. Using the extensive bibliographic information provided, selectors may make collection decisions and place orders via the database.<sup>53</sup> As of March 2023, GOBI had more than 6,000 active customers and includes publishing output of over 1,500 English language publishers in print and digital formats. The list of GOBI’s publishers includes large academic, university, trade, and specialty.<sup>54</sup> There are numerous benefits to using the GOBI database for the current study. Because GOBI includes publishing output for so many publishers, the database provides access to a large sample of book titles and publishers. GOBI allows searching by broad subject area such as communication or media and limiting searches by time period and by “interdisciplinary topics.” The author particularly focused on GOBI as a resource because it currently includes thirteen diversity-related subjects covering race, ethnicity, religion, gender, lifestyle, and access. In addition, GOBI search results may be downloaded into an Excel file, which includes bibliographic information such as title, author or editor, imprint name and date, subject area, and diversity-related subject area.

### Data Collection

Using the GOBI database and the subject areas provided by the database, the author identified the primary subjects Communication, Film, and Media (henceforth referred to as Communication and Media) and thirteen diversity-related subfields: Asian American Studies, Black Studies, Chicano Studies, Disability Studies, Ethnic Studies, Islamic Studies, Jewish Studies, LGBTQ Studies, Men’s Studies, Multicultural Studies, Native American Studies, Palestine Studies, and Women’s Studies. A “report,” or search, was run for all print books in any of the primary subject areas that also had one or more of the diversity subfields within the subject field for the years 2013 through 2022. It is important to note that EBSCO and GOBI did not begin identifying the diversity subject area Disability Studies until 2019. The report was downloaded as an Excel file with worksheets for each of the ten years representing publication dates. Each worksheet consisted of a list of books and included columns for several fields such as author/editor, title, publisher, publication date, subject fields, and diversity subfields. Focusing on the research questions for the study, the author coded the data so that publisher information, publication date, and diversity subfields could be identified for each book title and sorted by diversity subfield and publication year. After coding was completed, it was discovered that none of the books in the study focused on the diversity subject “Palestinian Studies,” decreasing the number of diversity subject areas included in the study to twelve.



## Discussion and Results: Publishing Output and Trends Among Diversity Subject Areas

First assessed was the number of communication and media books in each of the diversity categories. A total of 4,157 books were included in the study. Some titles focused on one diversity subject while others covered multiple subjects. Figure 1 provides the total number of communication and media books sorted by their focus on each of the thirteen diversity subject areas. The diversity subject with the most books is Women's Studies, consisting of more than a third of the books in the study. The diversity subject with the second most books is Black Studies with 22 percent of the sample. Over 58 percent of the books in the study focused on either or both Women's Studies or Black Studies. The remaining diversity subject areas each represent less than 20 percent of the total books included in the study. One explanation for the large number of books in the area of Women's Studies could be that the subject or population of women falls within each of the thirteen study areas, with the exception of Men's Studies. An explanation as to the lower number of books published in the remaining eleven areas might be that more books in these areas exist, but they are published by publishers not included by GOBI. More research would need to be done to assess the cross-over among the various diverse subject areas. Regarding the diversity areas with fewer books published than Black Studies and Women's Studies, an implication for researchers is that these 11 areas provide opportunities for research within communication and media. Accordingly, publishers should seek out scholars with research specialties or interests in these areas.

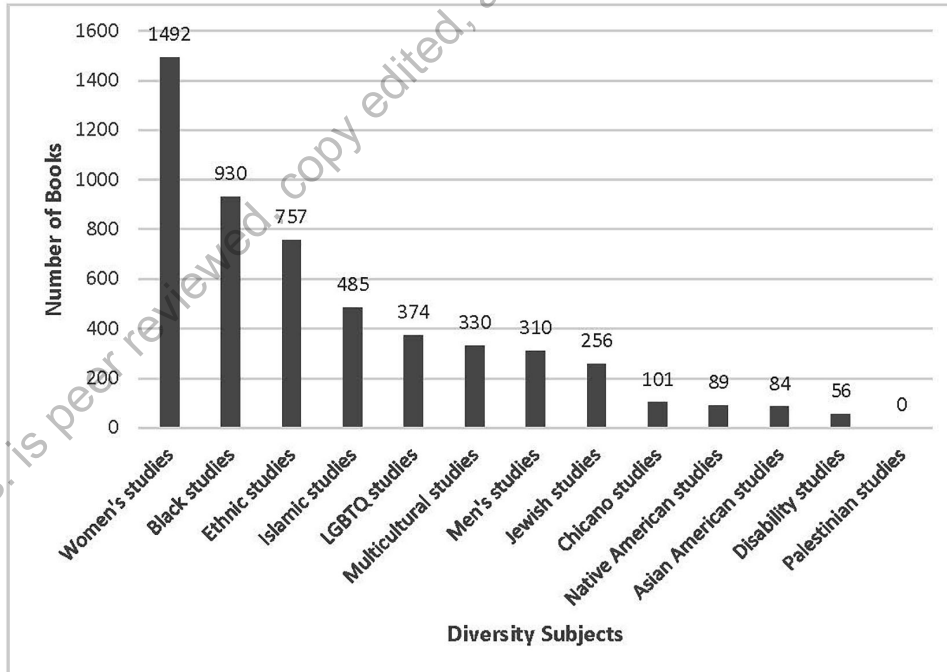


Figure 1. Communication and media books by diversity category, 2013-2022.

Another goal of the study was to examine any growth in publishing output among the diversity subjects within communication and media. In other words, did the various diversity subjects stay the same, increase, or decrease in publishing output over the ten-year period? Or, how quickly did the diversity areas increase or decrease in publishing output? Figure 2 breaks down publishing output for each of the diversity subjects by year and Figure 3 further contributes by showing publishing output for all diversity areas for each year, together. The rate of growth in publishing output from 2013 to 2022 varied among all the diversity subject areas. All of the subject areas increased and decreased in output during the last ten years at different times and rates. For example, some (Asian American Studies and Chicano Studies) exhibited small increases and decreases. While other areas (Black Studies, Ethnic Studies, and Women's Studies) exhibited greater fluctuations in publishing output.

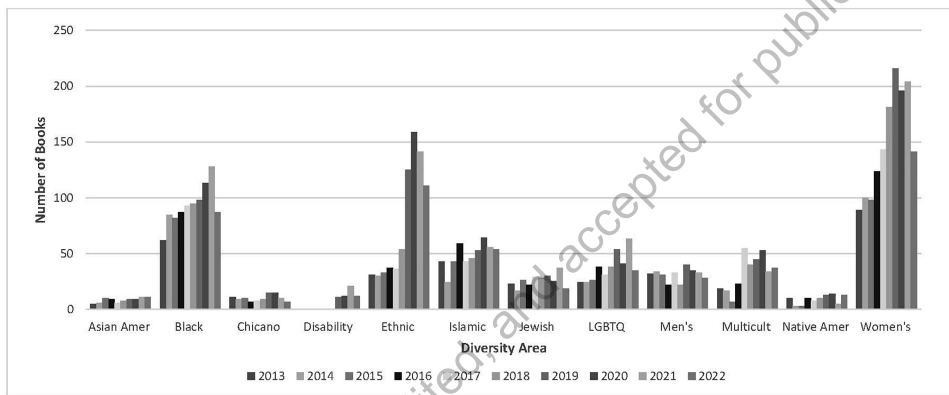


Figure 2. Diversity publishing output in communication and media by diversity category, 2013-2022.

When comparing publishing output fluctuations from year to year, annual fluctuation patterns differed among the diversity areas (See Figure 2). Two areas, Black Studies and Women's Studies increased their output during the majority of the ten years (seven years for Black Studies and six years for Women's Studies), with most of the other areas increasing publishing output five of the ten years. For the years 2017, 2018, and 2019, eight of the twelve areas all increased in publication. While output increased consecutively for several years in most of the subjects, output for Jewish Studies decreased and increased every other year. Regarding decreases, publishing output in Men's Studies decreased in six of the total years while two areas, Asian American Studies and Black Studies saw decreases in only two years. Six of the twelve areas decreased output at the end of 2021, and nine of the twelve diversity areas decreased their publishing output in 2022. The only three areas that did not decrease that year were Asian American Studies, Multicultural Studies, and Native American Studies. The above-mentioned data and trends provide researchers and publishers with information on diverse areas that might provide opportunities for research. As mentioned previously, diverse populations and enrollments in higher education continue to increase, indicating opportunities for research and an interest among students.

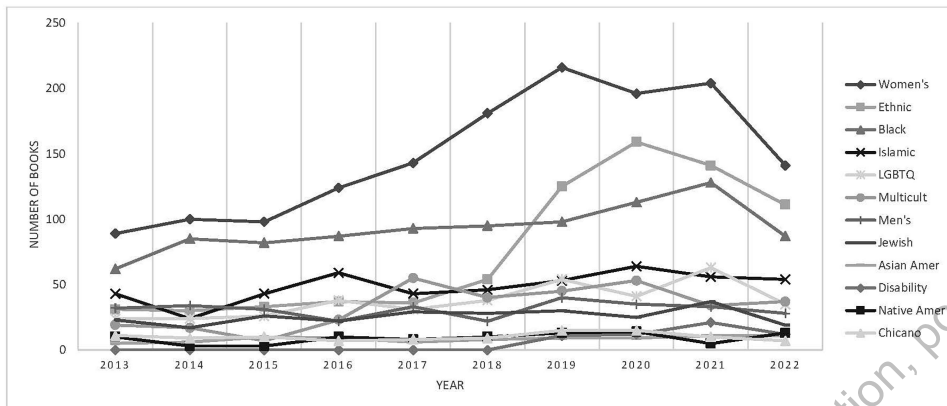


Figure 3. Diversity publishing output in communication and media by diversity category, 2013-2022.

To gain a better understanding of the trends experienced in diverse content within communication and media over the past ten years, it is helpful to examine all GOBI publishing output in communication and media during the same time period. Figure 4 shows the annual output of diverse content in communication and media. Figure 5 shows the annual output of all content in communication and media. There are several similarities between diverse content and total content. Output remained relatively similar during 2013, 2014, and 2015. Then in 2016, output began to increase until 2019 in total content and until 2021 for diverse content. The years 2020 and 2021 remained relatively stable for diverse content and total content. Then, in 2021, both areas experienced a decline, with a larger drop among diverse content.

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### Impact of the Pandemic

Publishers globally have expressed the myriad ways the COVID-19 Pandemic has impacted the publishing industry, from 2020 to present. In many ways, the pandemic also impacted academic researchers. With a move from in-person to online teaching consuming more educators' time and less access to print library collections, academics had both less time and means to conduct research and writing, which translates to fewer academic books being published. However, publishers were impacted on a larger scale and for a longer period of time due to a stifled supply chain and decreasing output of print books and periodicals. The pandemic impacted virtually every aspect of the publishing process, including labor availability, lack of paper supplies and containers,

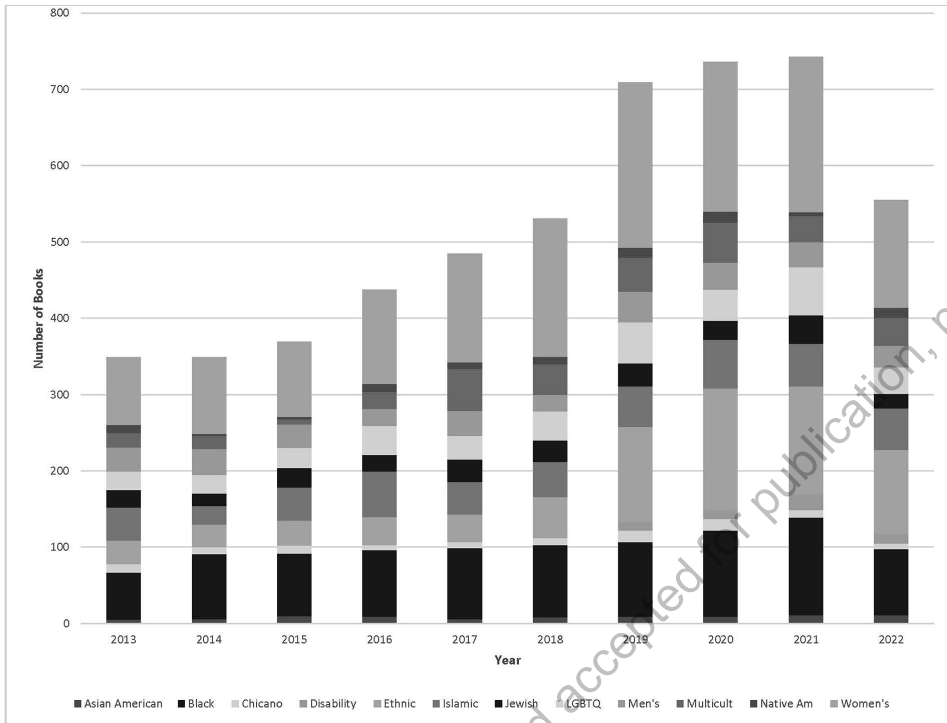


Figure 4. Total diversity content in communication and media monographs by year (each column lists diversity area alphabetically from the bottom).

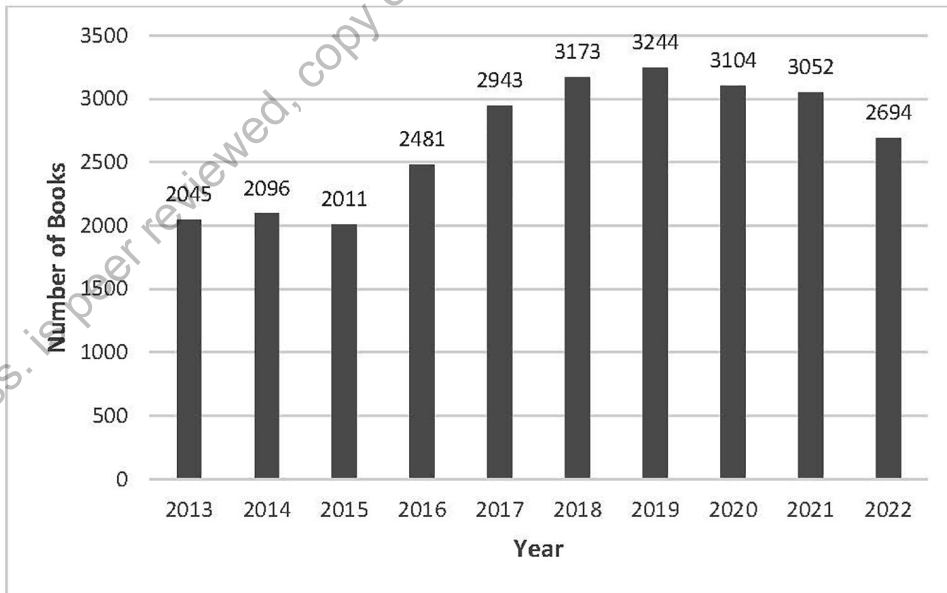


Figure 5. Total communication and media monographs published, by year.

shipping issues, and increased energy costs. The effect of the pandemic on the publishing industry understandably caused a ripple effect for library collections, with fewer books available for purchase.<sup>55</sup>

From 2013 to 2022, a total of 584 publishers produced books in communication and media with a focus on diversity. Figure 6 provides a list of the top 25 publishers of diversity content in communication and media books. These publishers produced a total of 2,393 books during the ten-year period, or 58 percent of the total 4,157 books. Routledge was the publisher with the largest output (499 books or 12 percent). Palgrave Macmillan was second, with 434 books or ten percent of the total. The number of books per publisher then drops to 190 or fewer per publisher over the ten-year period. Among the top 25 publishers, 14 are university or academic publishers and 11 are commercial. Sixteen are US publishers and nine are non-US, with the top two publishers being non-US. None of the publishers within the top 25 are considered small press publishers.

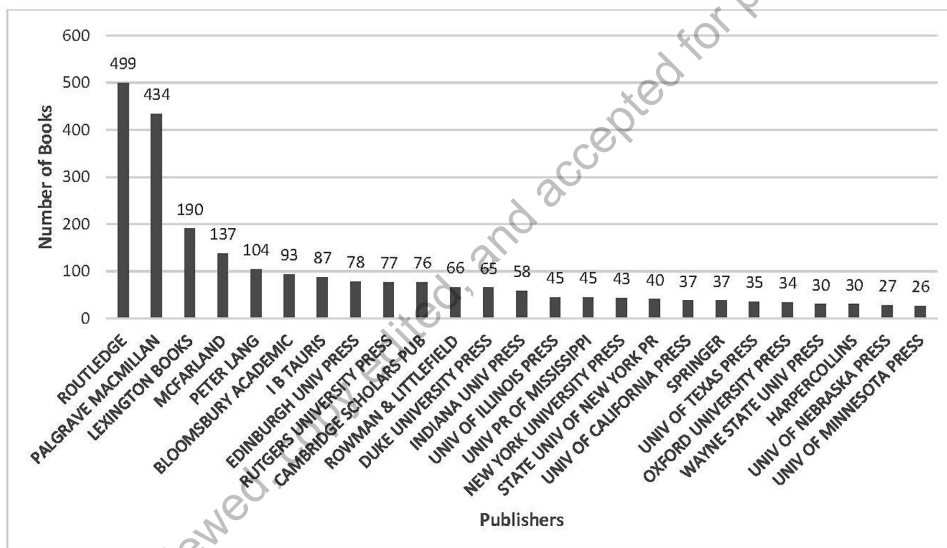


Figure 6. Top 25 publishers of diversity content in communication and media, 2013-2022.

### Implications for Librarians, Researchers and Publishers

The data from the current study provides librarians with an indication of which diversity subfields within media and communication have the greatest and least publishing output. While GOBI includes a significant number of publishers, not all publishers are included which means that librarians should actively seek out others, especially small presses, for diversity output from those areas with less representation in GOBI. On the flip side, the data relating to specific publisher output helps librarians identify publishers with strength in diversity content that they might want to include in their approval plan profiles.



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The information on publication output among the various diverse areas is useful to researchers because it indicates gaps in research and possible opportunities for research. One obvious subject area with research opportunities is Palestinian Studies, which was not represented in any communication and media books from 2013-2022. In addition, the list of publishers and their diversity-related output outlines which ones might have a better track record in producing diverse content as well as those publishers whose output might be lacking, presenting opportunities for both researchers and publishers.

This study also provides insight for publishers. Publishers that do not appear on the top 25 list may want to invest more effort in seeking out manuscripts that focus on diversity in an effort to become more competitive in media and communication research. More importantly, the study results reveal which diversity subject areas are lacking in publishing output, providing opportunities for publishers to seek out researchers and contribute to the academy.

### **Opportunities for Future Research**

Diversity plays an important role in communication and media research and instruction.

As such, there are numerous opportunities for future research. Regular assessments are necessary to provide librarians, publishers, and researchers with information on developments and opportunities for research and publishing. In addition, communication and media are diverse fields with several important sub-fields that could be examined more thoroughly without having to include the larger fields of communication and media. This is especially the case since many of the more specific fields, such as advertising, journalism, communication, and public relations, have their own nuances within academia and the industry. Another opportunity might be an examination of a specific area of diversity to assess its coverage within the broader fields of communication and media. Library collections consist of a variety of

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resources (books, periodicals, media, databases, and reference sources) and it is important that the different kinds of resources address the role of diversity in communication and media. Therefore, diversity audits of these types of resources would also be valuable.





## Conclusion

A variety of agencies have documented the increase in diversity enrollment in US higher education. According to the US Census Bureau, enrollment has increased for students of color since 1964. While the gap in enrollment between white students and students of color has also increased, enrollment for minorities is still on the rise.<sup>56</sup> In addition, as detailed in a 2023 report by BestColleges.com, “diversity on college campuses extends past racial and ethnic diversity” finding that women have outnumbered men in college since 1979.<sup>57</sup> While enrollment data regarding students with disabilities only became available recently, those numbers are also on the rise. The US Department of Education reported that in the 2015-2016 school year 4,178,000 students with disabilities were enrolled in higher education.<sup>58</sup> This figure is an increase of 491 percent from the 2008-2009 enrollment of only 707,000.<sup>59</sup> Regarding LGBTQ identity and religious affiliation, the National Center for Education Statistics does not currently compile data for either area. However, a 2020 report conducted by the Association of American Universities found that within a sample of nearly 182,000 students, 0.9 percent of undergraduates identified as nonbinary or genderqueer, and 0.4 percent identified as transgender.<sup>60</sup>

As Cohn and Mullennix state, diversity is inescapable in our world and is an intrinsic part of the human experience. Embracing diversity prepares us to work in a diverse and global society.<sup>61</sup> With the increased growth of diverse populations in the US, the “complexion of education” will most likely mirror this change, with diverse student populations demanding more and more information about their culture, heritage, and lifestyles while also challenging the traditional Eurocentric education.<sup>62</sup> We can assume this would also be the case within communication and media higher education programs. These changes in focus should trigger a response from libraries, driving library selectors to include more resources on diverse topics and perspectives.

Faculty, instructors, and students are the agents that promote and maintain a diverse media. To ensure that faculty and instructors have the resources necessary for teaching and research, publishers must work to establish publishing portfolios that are relevant and reflect diversity. In turn, librarians are the mediators who address the needs within the discipline and facilitate access to resources necessary for research and instruction. Collection audits are crucial to providing librarians, publishers, and researchers with a better understanding of which perspectives and voices are underrepresented in print monograph collections. Audits of diverse content help measure librarians’, researchers’, and publishers’ progress in the effort to ensure diversity of collections, research, and society now and in the future. The current study provides data relating to strengths, weaknesses, and trends relating to diverse content within communication and media monograph collections. While many studies examining diverse content in collections provide important information for librarians, this study provides librarians, researchers, and publishers with valuable information. It informs publishers and researchers of what is needed and highlights opportunities for researchers to make an impact. It also helps librarians who manage communication and media collections keep apprised of publishing progress and be aware of which publishers are key players in diverse output.

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