

Plans for a German diversity survey: challenges and perspectives

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Recent counts such as Frauenzählen and Vorschauenzählen have triggered an (overdue) process of reckoning with the gender imbalance in the German book industry. However, we lack reliable data on the make-up of the German book industry beyond these snapshots of gender imbalance. Other forms of diversity have not been studied whatsoever, though discussions surrounding e.g. the Prize of the Leipzig Book Fair (Preis der Leipziger Buchmesse) in 2021 have highlighted the whiteness of the German book industry.

Together with an interdisciplinary group of scholars in book, publishing and literary studies, we are planning to study the (lack of) diversity in the German book industry. One element will be to conduct a diversity survey inspired by the US “Lee and Low Diversity Baseline Survey”. This informal paper will outline the status quo and describe challenges and perspectives for this project.

Speaker bio:

Corinna Norrick-Rühl is Professor of Book Studies at the University of Münster (WWU), Germany. Her research interests revolve around book culture and publishing in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, with a special focus on mass-market formats. Recent publications are “Bookshelves in the Age of the COVID-19 Pandemic” (Palgrave 2022, co-edited with Shafquat Towheed) and “Book Clubs and Book Commerce” (Cambridge University Press 2019).

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