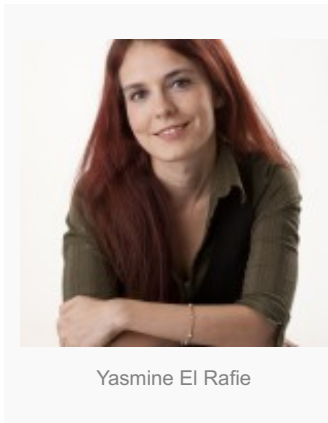


New research: how can social media help journalists connect to black and minority communities? (guest post)

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The UK has never been more diverse than today, with all the positives and problems that go with having lots of different cultures and communities. But is that range of interests reflected in mainstream media? Is it possible that social media could help connect journalists with the full variety of audiences out there? At Polis we've got a new [Journalistfonden research fellow](#) who will be looking at this.



Yasmine El Rafie

Yasmine El-Rafie from Swedish public radio has just written a handbook on social media for journalists and as she explain, this project will be a good case study of how it can work in practice in media markets beyond Sweden.

Wherever I have worked in newsrooms or given lectures at Stockholm university, no teacher or student has ever said that a minority perspective ISN'T important in journalism. Nevertheless, in practice representation and news selection tends towards a majority perspective.

Sweden is a country where 19,1 % (2011) are either born abroad or have two parents that are. That is close to 2 million individuals, specially when including those with one parent born abroad, not to mention viewers/listeners/readers who are raising a family with someone from a minority.

Sweden also has five national minorities (Finns, Tornedaelians, Sami, Roma and Jews) with special privileges – according to law. This law is not always enforced, as has been shown by [Sisuradio](#), one of the few minority media active in Sweden.

There are many topics concerning minorities that rarely get picked up by mainstream media. Common explanations I have heard from mainstream journalists are for example that “I don't know anyone in these groups” or “we need a reporter from a minority”. Personally, I find these explanations strange since men are, to my knowledge able to report on issues concerning women.

So – where does social media come into all of this? It is clear that social media allows us to tap into circles we are not necessarily parts of ourselves. Large [facebook groups](#) can discuss Srebrenica falsification propaganda and [point to places](#) where they suspect racial profiling from policemen looking for immigrants without papers.

And what is the useful content you can find on forums such as [Schwedentor](#), that covers all things Swedish, in German? How can journalists use social media tools to become more relevant to their audiences and create a more justifying view of their society?

This is the topic I will be investigating while at POLIS/LSE. Any recommendations on suitable persons to interview or good sources of information, or examples of interesting media practice, will be greatly appreciated.

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