



Journalist Fellowship Paper

# The Invisibles: On the coverage of ethnic minority women in Norway

By **Shazia Majid**

July 2020

Trinity Term

Sponsor: Fritt Ord



# Contents

Acknowledgements	5
Introduction	6
The historical context	6
Women were not counted	8
A handful of news articles	10
Rule confirming the exception	11
Data analysis – ethnic minority women in VG and Aftenposten	13
Less than 1% of the news	13
Earlier research on ethnic minorities in media	14
Want coverage? Write an opinion	16
Not a single cover	18
Excelling in sports	19
Where is normal life?	21
Women who make it to the news	23
Lapped up by the media	24
Being at both ends of the table	25
‘We are being fetishized’	27
Answer to a call	34
Key lessons	40
Addendum A	
Experiment design and data queries	43
Sample selection	43
Defining variables	44
Ethnic Minorities	44
Methodology	46
Results	51
Final sample	51

Aftenposten published more news	52
Sports coverage dominates	52
VG big on lifestyle, Aftenposten on opinions	53
Gender representation	54
One in 10 stories include ethnic minority voices	54
Ethnic minorities as a representative sample	56
Norwegian ethnic minorities under-represented	56
Ethnic minority women present in less than 1% of all stories	58
What sort of stories do ethnic minority women feature in?	60
Ethnic minorities in pictures	64
Mentioned or quoted?	65
Age of minorities in the media	66

# Acknowledgements

This paper was made possible through the generous sponsorship of The Fritt Ord Foundation. I am grateful for their belief in me.

Without the flexibility of my employer *Verdens Gang (VG)*, I would not have been able to accept the opportunity. In particular, I am grateful to Anders Sooth Knutsen and Lars Håkon Grønning for their constant support since the day I sat my foot in the *VG* newsroom in 2011. Their ongoing mentorship has been essential.

My gratitude also for the patient guidance of RISJ fellowship director Meera Selva and RISJ director Rasmus Kleis Nielsen. You kept your faith in me, challenged and encouraged my work. Especially during the pandemic and the delay caused by it. Your support has been crucial.

A special thanks to Retriever and their country manager Guro Dahl Lindebjerg for providing me with the dataset. Thank you as well to Sumaya Jirde Ali and Nancy Herz who gave their time, trust and honesty in a topic that is challenging to address. I am also grateful to Zoë Todd for proofreading and support.

The time at RISJ was enriched by its fellows, 15 brilliant journalists from around the world – Kate Bartlett, Daniela Pinheiro, Jaakko Lyytinen, Tejas Harad, Zoë Todd, Kohei Tsuji, Consuelo Dieguez, Darkhan Umirbekov, Emily Tsang, Gulmira Amangalieva, Maryana Drach, Nalan Koçak, Nana Ama Agyemang Asante, Saleh Al-Batati and Wei Du.

Finally, thank you to my sons Zain and Shan. None of this, not my career as a reporter, my time in Oxford or the countless hours of analysing 3,956 articles would have been possible without your unwavering support, love and patience.

# Introduction

The first generation of ethnic minority women from Asia and Africa were missing from Norwegian history pages for 50 years. The Norwegian press played a major role in their invisibility. They failed in writing “the first rough draft of history”.

Now, to a large extent, history is repeating itself.

Last year, I conducted a quantitative analysis to determine the level of representation of ethnic minority women in Norwegian news.<sup>1</sup> The results show that ethnic minority women accounted for less than 1% of news coverage in Norway’s two leading newspapers, *Verdens Gang (VG)* and *Aftenposten*, in 2018. These same women account for 4% of the total population of Norway, meaning a woman of colour is four times less likely to see someone who looks like her in print than she would in real life.

The paradox of our times, however, is that while ethnic minority women in general are grossly under-represented in Norwegian media coverage, a handful of them are hugely overexposed. In both cases, women tend to get the short end of the stick.

## The historical context

Before I delve into the findings of the quantitative analysis – where I have analysed 3,956 news items published in *VG* and *Aftenposten* in 2018 – it is important to place the research in a historical context.

This part of the Norwegian history is bleak and, because it was not told until recently, it seems to be repeating itself.

---

<sup>1</sup>When using the term “ethnic minority women” in this paper, I am referring to women with a background from Asia (including Turkey) and Africa.

Ethnic minority women were hardly written about in the newspapers in the 1970s. That was the time when they were immigrating to Norway (a predominantly white, homogenous country) in substantial numbers (by the hundreds).

They came mostly from countries like Pakistan, India, Morocco and Turkey. Norway was at the dawn of its status as the most gender equal, gender progressive country in the world. The sudden presence of non-white women was such an anomaly at the time that it should have been an obvious news story – but it was a story almost no one chose to tell.<sup>2</sup>

They did, however, tell the stories of “*fremmedarbeidere*”. The immigrants who were known as guest workers in other European countries were called “alien workers” in Norway. These were the ethnic minority men. The Norwegian press documented their struggles, and rightfully so. From discrimination and exploitation in the workplace, hate crimes, the horrible conditions they were living under, and not least the ongoing heated political and public debate about how to stop the influx of the immigrants from “alien cultures.” Hundreds of stories were written, dozens every week. The men were photographed, filmed, got to speak, they had a name. They were seen and heard and documented.

Women were not.

What that entails became apparent to me while writing my non-fiction book, *Ut av skyggene* (Stepping out of shadows), published in 2019. It is the first book documenting the 50-year history of ethnic minority women in Norway. I promised myself then that I would document how the Norwegian press is covering this group of women today. And I have tried to do that with the quantitative analysis which is the basis of this essay.

---

<sup>2</sup> Majid, Shazia (2019), “*Ut av skyggene*” (Stepping out of shadows), Oslo: Aschehoug forlag

## Women were not counted

In 2017, when I started to write the book, I went into the project with the mind of an investigative reporter. I set out to find as much historical documentation as I could, so that I could tell an honest, comprehensive story of the women of my mother's generation. For me the story became not about what I found documented. The story was of what I didn't find documented anywhere. Not in books, not in research, not in statistics, not in official documents, and not in the press. As simple a fact as how many they were.

Born and bred in Norway, with a degree in economics and journalism, and a professional career crunching numbers and reading statistics, I assumed that women immigrating to Norway from Pakistan, India, Morocco and Turkey in the late '60s and '70s were counted. I found out that they weren't. And this in a country where the first census was done in [1769](#). The police, who granted them visas and entries through "*fremmedkontoret*", kept a record but those documents are closed to the public for 50 more years. The crux of the matter is that no one knew how many they were, at a time when it was essential to know how many they were in order to make policies that could protect them in a welfare state, in line with policies made for ethnic minority men and children. The Norwegian government didn't know, and neither did the National Statistics bureau (SSB).

The only evidence of ethnic minority women in the statistics was a table named "Aliens working in Norway 31. August 1971 by occupation and country of citizenship." It contained two columns, one called "total" the other "Of which males". The difference between these two numbers would be women. That was the first sign of women in an official document. But these were women guest workers. I

knew that most of the women were not guest workers. They were granted visas as spouses. Hence, the statistic showed just a small number of them.

The very first time ethnic minority women’s existence was acknowledged by the National Statistics bureau with a column of their own was in 1977. Approximately 10 years after the first one arrived in Norway. A few months after I contacted the SSB for the first time in 2017 and asked for statistics over ethnic minority women in the ‘60s and ‘70s, they published the numbers. “Why now,” I called and asked. “Because no one had asked for the numbers before you did,” was the answer. We know now: 40 to 50 years too late.

**yrke og statsborgerskap**  
*Aliens working in Norway 31 August 1971 by  
 occupation and country of citizenship*

Statsborgerskap Country of citizenship	I alt Total	Av disse menn Of which males	Tekn., vitenskap., humanitært arb., adm. arb. m.m. Professional, technical, admin. workers	Kontor- og handelsarbeid Clerical and sales workers	Jord-, skogs- og bruks- og fiskearbeid Farmers, loggers, fishermen	Gruve-, industri-, bygge- og anleggsarbeid Mining, manu- fact. and construc- tion workers	Transport og kommunika- sjonsarbeid Transport and commu- nication workers	Service- arbeid Service workers	Uopp-gitt Unknown
Danmark Denmark . . . . .	5 032	3 481	993	471	485	1 940	277	841	25

*A screengrab of SBB immigrant data from the 1970s.*

If you are not counted, it is as if you do not exist. When you are not seen and not documented, the government will not make policies for your group. Researchers will not get the funding to do the research, the public will not react and demand changes.

It affects journalists too. The role of the free press should be to be the voice of the invisible and the vulnerable. There are numerous examples of how a single well-told news article has changed the course of history in Norway, through causing an uproar, getting the public and politicians engaged in changing laws, initiating

governmentally funded scientific research and ultimately changing the lives of marginalised groups and individuals.

The question is why the Norwegian press at the time wasn't as interested in the women as they were in the ethnic minority men? The answer is threefold. In the early '70s Norway was still somewhat of a patriarchal society. Ethnic minority women were looked upon as an accessory to men. Second, the newsroom was heavily male-dominated. More women, more women-stories. Thirdly, ethnic minority men did to a large extent keep women hidden away from the Norwegian society, confined to their homes.

### A handful of news articles

The two newspapers I have chosen to analyse in my quantitative analysis are *VG* and *Aftenposten*. The obvious reason is that these are the largest, most prominent and respected newspapers in the country, but also because these two were the first ones to write articles about ethnic minority women – albeit only a handful over a period of 10 years.

In July 1971, *VG* wrote the first article mentioning an ethnic minority woman. There is a small personal solace in that. I have been on staff at *VG* for the past 10 years.

The woman, an immigrant from Pakistan, was referred to as “his pregnant wife”. She had no name in the article, she was not quoted, and it is not known whether or not the reporter ever spoke to her directly. However, the reporter's description of her life would go on to become the story of these invisible ethnic minority immigrant women in a nutshell. He writes: “She feels as if she is in a prison. The husband is at

work during the day. She is confined to her home.”<sup>3</sup> The home was a shed in someone’s backyard.

And then in 1975 the second-largest newspaper in Norway, *Aftenposten*, wrote a groundbreaking series of articles – three in total – on the lives and challenges of ethnic minority women.

“There are in Norway today a group of women whose daily lives are characterized by lack of human touch, huge language-problems, isolation and depression,” the newspaper wrote.<sup>4</sup> This was the first story I found in which non-white women are quoted. They tell a story of debilitating isolation, lack of support, unable to speak the language, without work, without the basic knowledge of the Norwegian society, many of them both physically ill and struggling with mental health issues due to the isolation. The most poignant part is that it took a woman journalist to see the obvious story and tell it. Her name is Elisabeth Randsborg.

It is not a coincidence that this story was written in 1975, the United Nations’ International Women’s Year.

### Rule confirming the exception

These few instances of the press giving women a voice became crucial when I had to piece together the women’s untold story. The articles amplified the significance of the press. Even a paragraph, a brief, a tiny picture can be the missing piece of a puzzle when history is written. When the press fails, the repercussions are huge. There was no systematic coverage, nowhere near the coverage ethnic minority men

---

<sup>3</sup> Galaaen, Einar, 1 July, 1971. *300 kroner per month for a cubbyhole: Pakistani couple lives in a shed*, VG

<sup>4</sup> Randsborg, Elisabeth, 20 October, 1975. *Immigrant women in Norway: The women’s everyday life characterized by isolation and language problems*, Aftenposten.

and children got. Stories were never followed up on, resulting in the first generation of ethnic minority women being forgotten for 50 years.

Their daughters, on the other hand, got the centre stage in the public arena in the mid-'90s. They were just four or five young women in their late teens or early 20s. Most of them had broken ties with their families and were extremely vulnerable as they took up the fight against forced marriages and the "honour culture."

Norwegian press, as if on a mission to make amends, put them on news covers, on prime-time news on television, debate shows, in talks with government officials and their courage changed laws in Norway. This was the rule confirming the exception.

# Data analysis – ethnic minority women in VG and Aftenposten

Such was and is the exposure in news media of a few young ethnic minority women that one would believe the press is finally giving the group a proper representation. That is what I have believed over the years, up until now. My data analysis of a representative sample of 3,956 articles shatters that impression.

## Less than 1% of the news

A representative sample of newspaper editions published by *VG* and *Aftenposten* in 2018 show that less than 1% (0.92%) of the news was about or had quoted an ethnic minority woman.

According to the sample, an ethnic minority woman was four times less likely to appear in the news compared to her representation in the general population (4.1%).

She was eight times less likely to appear in the news compared to her representation in the female population. (216,332 women and girls in Norway originated from Asia and Africa in 2018. The total female population was 2,627,248).

Ethnic minority women were least likely to be in the news, compared to ethnic minority men (1.5 times less likely) and women in general (1.6 times less likely) .

Twelve newspaper editions each of *VG* and *Aftenposten*, in print, digital and behind a paywall, were chosen for the year 2018. For detailed specifics of how this analysis was conducted, please refer to Addendum A, which details sample selection, methodology and findings.

The data set contains 3,956 news articles in total. Every article was opened, read and mapped for 12 variables, and 2,926 (n) articles became part of further data analysis, as these were articles containing information about a person, thereby enabling further analysis of their background.

Of the 2,926 articles, 27 articles were written about – or included quotes from – a Norwegian ethnic minority woman.

The mapping of the articles was done in spreadsheets, the data analysis was conducted in coding program, R. R was used in order to produce a form of “white paper.” I wanted to document the entire process of the data analysis, and include it. The goal is transparency. The whitepaper is therefore a method report and is attached here.

### Earlier research on ethnic minorities in media

Extensive research on the media coverage of ethnic minorities has been conducted over the years. There are also numerous important studies on ethnic minority women and Muslim women in Norwegian media. Much research has been done on those few who are overexposed. These women are often termed as “victim-heroines” – young ethnic minority women who are victims of “honour culture” and/or severe social control by their own family (fathers and brothers) but who, despite the risk to their lives, choose to fight for emancipation by telling their stories in the media.<sup>5</sup>

A few recent studies have also been conducted on “heroines” who are not victims but are successful politicians or activists.

---

<sup>5</sup> Jahr, Erika (ed.) (2004), *Kjønn og journalistikk i mediene*, IJ-forlaget

Several books have been written on the subject of “immigrants” and “non-western immigrants”. But few if any have exclusively addressed the representation of ethnic minority women in the news.

In *Press and the Foreigners* (1999), six stereotype portrayals of foreigners were identified.<sup>6</sup> A distinction on gender was not made and no women stories were highlighted. In *Suspicious Foreigners – Minorities in Norwegian press through hundred years* (2007), 1,196 articles from seven different newspapers published between 1902-2002 were chosen, mapped and analysed.<sup>7</sup> The dataset was not analysed for gender. No distinction was made between the coverage of ethnic minority men and women. Distinction was made on the type of minorities, Jews, Sami, Romani, Africans, immigrants and refugees. The book however is one the most important ones written on the subject as it exposed how the coverage of “immigrants” for the most part consisted of crime- and sports news, both news stories driven by ethnic minority men. In *Of foreign descent – New Norwegians in the newspaper-columns* (2005), 1,538 articles were analysed but no distinction was made on gender in the book.<sup>8</sup> In one paragraph dedicated to genders it is however mentioned that men are in the news twice as often as women and that women had more favourable coverage than men who appeared in crime stories.

Newer studies are comprehensive and thorough, but have failed to map the representation of ethnic minority women in general. I would argue this is the case because governmental and research institutions who order and pay for such studies are not asking specifically for this type of research on gender and women. One such study conducted on behalf of the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDI) showed that ethnic minorities (people with immigrant background from outside

---

<sup>6</sup> Lindstad, Merete & Fjeldstad, Øyvind (1999), “*Pressen og de fremmede*” Nesodden: IJ-forlaget

<sup>7</sup> Eide, Elisabeth & Simonsen, Anne Hege (2007), *Mistenkelige utlendinger – Minoriteter i norsk presse gjennom hundre år*, Oslo: Høyskoleforlaget

<sup>8</sup> Lindstad, Merete & Fjeldstad, Øyvind (2005), *Av utenlandsk opprinnelse – Nye nordmenn i avisspaltene* IJ-forlaget

Scandinavia) were quoted in 2% of the news.<sup>9</sup> No distinction was made for ethnic minorities or ethnic minority women in the 954 newspaper articles that were analysed. The study however showed that the term “immigrant women” – a euphuism for non-white ethnic minority women, often Muslim women – was one of the most-used terms in Norwegian news when covering stories on immigrants and integration. The study also mentions that ethnic minority women were not as grossly under-represented in the news when it came to the coverage of Islam.

This is partly due to the fact that an overwhelming degree of media coverage on Islam in Norway is about the head covering, hijab, and is driven by women from Muslim families and partly the result of the work of a group of writers, dubbed the “Shameless Girls”. These are three young ethnic minority women Nancy Herz, Sofia Srour and Amina Bile, who came to the spotlight after writing a number of hard-hitting opinion pieces in *Aftenposten* in 2016. Their work raised another point, discussed below.

### Want coverage? Write an opinion

By far the most common way for an ethnic minority woman to be seen and heard in the Norwegian traditional news, at least according to my study, is through the opinion pages.

I would like to stress that 27 articles is a small number of articles to make inference from, and I take caution while drawing these conclusions. There is however reason to highlight some of the findings, which do support the general impression of what type of news ethnic minority women appear in.

---

<sup>9</sup>IMDI (2018). *Innvandring og integrering i norske medier 2017*, Retriever

External opinion pieces (writing submitted by non-staff writers) account for 33.3% (n=9) of the coverage given to ethnic minority women in *VG* and *Aftenposten* in 2018.

In other words, ethnic minority women are themselves putting in the effort to be visible in the Norwegian media. The newspapers themselves, *VG* and *Aftenposten*, do not have to do much beyond editing and proofreading their work. I would argue that this is an extension of how the Norwegian press has traditionally honed in on a few strong, often young ethnic minority women to represent the community.

In this sample, *Aftenposten* stands out in offering its opinion pages to ethnic minority women (seven out of nine opinion pieces in the total of 27 articles with minority women). *Aftenposten* published four times more opinions sent in by ethnic minority women, compared to *VG* and most of these are in their section for younger readers, *Si'D* (Say it). *Si'D* has been essential in giving Norway some of its strongest ethnic minority women rights' activists in recent times. Nancy Herz, Sofia Srour and Amina Bile, all wrote their opinion pieces in this section in 2016.

The natural consequence of this is that most of the opinion writers are young. The average age of ethnic minority women in all news categories in this study is 28 years.

The second-largest news category for ethnic minority women in my data sample is local/regular news articles (22%). In total, 6 of the 27 articles were regular news articles. Among the six articles there are two separate stories covered by both the newspapers with one article about each story. That means that the number of different stories in reality are four, not six.

One of the six stories is about an Afghani refugee girl Farida (age 12) who was deported from Norway after living for several years in the country. The article published was about the authorities denying her appeal to return to Norway. Both newspapers covered the story (see picture 1).



MÅ BLI I AFGHANISTAN: VG møtte Farida og familien i 2017. Nå er det bestemt at hun ikke får komme tilbake til Norge. Foto: Helge Mikalsen

## **Farida får ikke komme til Norge. Situasjonen i Afghanistan er forbedret, mener UNE.**

*Picture 1: Farida, 12, was deported from Norway after living in the country for several years*

Another story was about a man being convicted for threatening the labor party deputy leader, Hadia Tajik, a woman of Pakistani origin.

### **Not a single cover**

In the representative sample, every article and every cover was analysed. Not a single one of the 24 editions had an ethnic minority woman on the cover of the newspaper.

*Aftenposten* came the closest with a text referral on the front cover of the print edition on February 13, 2018. The story is also the only human-interest story in the

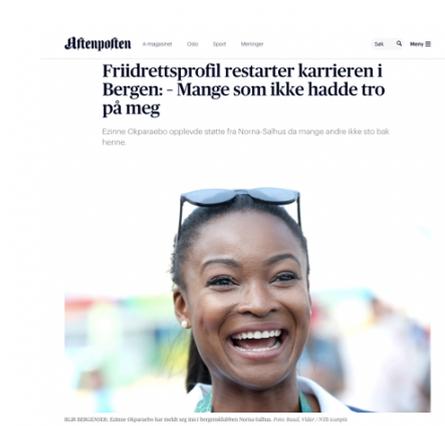
sample about an ethnic minority woman. The strapline on the cover reads: “She came from Somalia as an illiterate aged 15. She had five children. Got divorced. This is what happened” (see picture 2). The story itself is a two-page spread about Rama Jama (33) who has made it in Norway against all odds. The single mother of five went from illiterate to finishing Norwegian high school and landing a job in a matter of a few years.

Picture 2: The only story about an ethnic minority woman to make the cover. The teaser headline reads, “She came from Somalia as an illiterate aged 15. She had five children. Got divorced. This is what happened.”

Excelling in sports

In this analysis I have omitted articles about ethnic minority women who are adopted (more details on the selection can be read in the attached data analysis report) and this has knocked out a substantial amount of sports news. Half of the sports coverage containing ethnic minority women in my sample were stories about boxing champion Cecilia Brækhus, an adopted woman of Colombian descent.

A small number of ethnic minority women with immigrant backgrounds from Asia or Africa are excelling in sports and made the news during 2018. Below are some examples of the stories in the representative sample, containing women who were adopted and those who are not.



*Picture 3: A sampling of sports stories featuring ethnic minority women (clockwise from top left): Ezinne Okparaebo, Grace Bullen, Cecilia Braekhus, Veronica Losvik*

### Where is normal life?

Amongst the analysed sample of articles there was not a single lifestyle story that mentioned, depicted or quoted a Norwegian non-white ethnic minority woman.

When ethnic minority women do feature in Norway, they appear in hard news stories, controversial opinion columns and in the sports pages, where they are often denoted as “Norwegian”: “The Norwegian wrestler Grace Bullen.”

This is progress of sorts. The Norwegian media is, to a large extent, doing the job they failed to do a generation ago. In recent times, they have been shedding light on the issues of forced marriages, “honour culture”, and the social pressures on these women. These efforts should be lauded.

The problem however is that these issues do not represent the whole lives of the common ethnic minority woman. The news media helps create ideas of what communities are like. Someone living away from urban centres, who have never met a woman from an ethnic minority will have this media stereotype of her: She does not have agency. She lives under huge social pressures and needs to be saved.

But there is a generation who wants the answers to a different set of questions: What are the stories that are not being told, what is not being shown, what is not being documented?

The answer would be the normal lives of ethnic minority women. The press is not normalising non-white women and making them a part of everyday society. This can only be achieved by telling “lighter stories” about them, by depicting them in

illustration photos (in my sample I mapped all images, and almost none of the illustrations depict non-white women). By asking them about arts, politics, literature, travel, food, fashion, home tours, cushion covers, best buys, music, weather and how they spend their holidays, Christmasses, Easters and Eids.

The normal lives of ethnic minority women are totally absent from *Aftenposten* and *VG*. Their absence is striking and disturbing. I would guess the resources required may be at the root of this problem. Contrary to popular belief, lifestyle stories demand intensive resources and time. Good lifestyle coverage requires reporters who have, over time, built trust with different groups of people in order to gain access to them. There have to be clear policies in place that encourage diversity in newspapers, not only in newsrooms, although these two are significantly interlinked. You need knowledge, time, and good groundwork – all of which require money and clear leadership. The payoff – in the form of new audience – might be low, because the community is small.

Finally, it is worth mentioning there was not a single column written by an ethnic minority woman in my sample. None of the newspapers in Norway have had an ethnic minority woman columnist on staff until recently. This changed in 2021 when, in February, I went from investigative reporter to becoming an op-ed-columnist for *VG*. In May this year, Afghan-Scottish Nazneen Khan-Østrem will join *Aftenposten* as their columnist on the Oslo-edition of the newspaper. A new local newspaper “Avisa Oslo” has recently hired Pakistani-descended Fawad Ashraf as its columnist and head of the external opinions section. He will be joining later this year.

## Women who make it to the news

My quantitative analysis found a gross underrepresentation of non-white ethnic minority women in *Aftenposten* and *VG*.

The low numbers came as a surprise to me, and they will come as a surprise to some ethnic minority men who have dubbed the Norwegian media the “heroine-industry”. It’s a term coined to criticise both the press and the few ethnic minority women who consistently make headlines for their activism and determination. It is true that a small number of women make a huge impact due to their novelty in the press. This is the paradox of the group being under-represented while a few are overexposed.

I, as a non-white ethnic minority woman, am in an unusual position of being both a journalist and a source in the press. I've interviewed ethnic minority women, and I've been interviewed as an ethnic minority woman. In my daily life, I am surrounded by journalists who go to great lengths to protect their privacy. They are interviewed for internal trade magazines like *Journalisten* and *Medier24* and talk almost exclusively about journalism. There are good reasons for that: we know better than most that becoming the news is a heavier reality, and that a quote is never just a quote. That quote may have implications you didn't anticipate, and that the story will live forever on the internet and might affect your surroundings and everyday life. Journalists understand this, they usually have genuine sympathy with their sources, but once the story is published, the job is done.

Every journalist should experience some of that fear and uncertainty ordinary people feel when they become news. I've seen that fear from a distance, and I've known it personally. But there is something else that has driven both the ethnic minority women I have interviewed, and myself, to allow ourselves to become news.

## Lapped up by the media

In her book *Becoming the news: How ordinary people respond to the media spotlight* by Ruth Palmer writes about how journalists and academics tend to look at ordinary people who end up as sources in the news as short-sighted and naïve, or worse, blinded by self-interest and narcissism, allowing journalists to exploit them.<sup>10</sup>

They rarely recognise that ordinary citizens can have good reasons to talk to journalists, reasons that can be both practical and morally justifiable — and most likely worth the risk. The decision to talk to a journalist is not a simple cost-benefit analysis; it is much more messy and less rational than that. Many have specific goals they hope to achieve with the news coverage, and virtually all of their motives are related to the large number of people the news will reach. At the same time, it is often difficult for them to predict the ripple effects their exposure in the news can have on their goal, their reputation and their loved ones. These are by far the biggest concerns such sources have.

Two of Norway's most prominent ethnic minority columnists are a case in point. They were living ordinary lives, barely out of their teenage years, when both of them decided to write ground-breaking opinion pieces that were published in *Aftenposten's* "Si'D" section. What happened next catapulted them into the Norwegian public eye. Today they are considered by far the most prominent ethnic minority women of their generation.

Nancy Herz, 25, was born in Lebanon and has written two books, hosted the TV-documentary *Shameless*, won multiple Freedom of Expression awards and has been on the advisory boards of numerous committees for the betterment of the lives

---

<sup>10</sup> Palmer, Ruth, (2018). *Becoming the news - How ordinary people respond to the media spotlight*, Columbia University Press

of ethnic minority women and youth. She has also chaired the Norwegian Youth Forum for Freedom for Freedom of Expression.

Sumaya Jirde Ali (24), born in Somalia, has also won several prominent awards for her courage. She also went on to become one of Norway's most lauded poets, with four poetry books published since she first came on the scene. At the age of 22 she won The Norwegian Authors Union Freedom of Expression Award (*Ytringsfrihetsprisen*), an award traditionally given to courageous writers/journalists working under authoritarian regimes outside Norway.

### Being at both ends of the table

I have watched the rise of Ali and Herz and other women of their generation firsthand with fascination but also with some anxiety.

My own experiences as a writer and commentator made me worry about these ethnic minority women who found themselves in the spotlight as young adults, front and centre in the public debate on the most controversial issues of our times. In Norway those issues have been immigration, integration of immigrants and Islamic extremism.

The debate often has boiled down to visible markers such as Muslim women's head coverings, whether or not they are marrying outside their communities and their personal autonomy. I belong to the first generation of daughters of immigrant women. Many women of my generation have been ostracised for speaking up. The wins are numerous, but so are the losses.

At the same time as admiring these courageous young women from a distance, I have also wondered what their secret is. How do they manage to stay in such a

position of both power and vulnerability over time? Moreover, what has been their experience with the Norwegian media? Do they feel exploited? Do they regret their bluntness when writing those first opinion pieces? How were they treated by the media which lapped them up? How good or bad were the journalists they have met through the years?

I finally got to sit down with both of them, on different occasions during the pandemic in 2020. They spoke to me as honestly and openly as I expected – and made me reconsider my worries and prejudices.

## ‘We are being fetishized’

Sumaya Jirde Ali has been ruffling feathers since she wrote her first opinion, published in *Aftenposten* “Si’D” in October 2016. She was 19 years old at the time and was publicly reprimanding governmental institutions at the time for their lack of diversity.<sup>11</sup> She tells me she had been to London that summer and was awestruck by women like her being on huge billboards, magazine covers, newspapers and television.

“My aunt and I were travelling in the tube in London when I suddenly saw a billboard of a woman in hijab. I was staring at her as if she was from a totally different time. I was dumbstruck. My aunt said this is totally ordinary, and that she took it for granted. This was her reality. I went home with that insight,” Ali said.

“Sometimes it is when a need is met that you realise you had a need. That something was amiss.”

Ali, who is a daughter of refugees and came to Norway as a baby, lives in the northernmost town of Bodø. A town of the midnight sun and northern lights, with 55,000 inhabitants – 384 of them originating from Somalia. She has grown up as the odd one out. That shaped her as a person. And after coming home from London she couldn’t keep quiet. Her teacher suggested she use *Aftenposten*’s “Si’D” as the platform for her voice.

“I wrote an opinion piece, but I didn’t have the courage to send it. I already knew that if you stick your head out, it will be chopped off – that you will get exposed. So, I made my friend press the ‘send’ button,” Ali said.

---

<sup>11</sup> Ali, Sumaya Jirde 11 October, 2016. *Mangfold i det offentlige ligger mange år etter*, Aftenposten

She got a huge amount of feedback from the piece and loved it, even though much of it was negative – not derogatory, but dismissive. She was told there was diversity aplenty, with many references to one of the most powerful women in Norway, the deputy leader of the Labor party, Hadia Tajik. She was ridiculed for her age and her stance. But she didn't mind. "I liked that I could write something which could set the agenda nationwide. Something people could write a response to," she said.

Ali had become the news, but without using journalists to access the media. Her opinion pieces gave her a direct path to the public debate. She made a splash; her early opinion pieces broke records for readership in the *Si'D* section. And the more she was read, the more *Aftenposten* encouraged her to write for them for free. "In hindsight I see that at times *Aftenposten* were just ordering me to write opinion pieces. At one point I decided to leave *Aftenposten* and went to the newspaper *Klassekampen*. For the first time I was paid for my opinion pieces. That is when I understood the exploitation of young writers in *Si'D*," she said.

Media outlets did in-depth interviews and features on Ali. She was "everywhere". In 2018 – the year I analysed, where a mere 0.92% of the news contained ethnic minority women – there were 953 news stories mentioning "Sumaya Jirde Ali" in all digital, print, television and radio news publications in Norway.<sup>12</sup>

"It is so very interesting. You are looked upon as a rare species when you have an ethnic minority background and are a young girl/woman. You are fetishized. You are lauded and romanticised, it gets sickening at times. An elderly woman I didn't know wanted to bequeath me her house. Upon asking her why, I understood she was obsessed with me as a media figure, an illusion of who I was, not me," she said.

---

<sup>12</sup>Retriever.no, Search word "Sumaya Jirde Ali", done September 2020

With the immediate recognition came unavoidable and unprecedented online harassment, threats and hate mail. Ali was young and inexperienced. She is pleased she was a bit naïve about the dangers at the time, otherwise she might not have taken the plunge. She says that it was a rollercoaster ride, but for the most part she felt she was in control.

“I got more and more influence in society. I got more space, and I took more space in the public debate. I started travelling and holding talks. You write one opinion piece and the next day you are on television talking about stuff you know, but you are also asked questions on issues you don’t know anything about. Suddenly you are the ‘expert.’ It doesn’t take a lot for a young ethnic minority woman to hog the limelight,” she said.

This reminds me of a story I wrote in my book *Ut av skyggene*. In the mid ’90s, a 13-year-old Norwegian-Pakistani girl wrote an opinion piece about being a brown child in Norwegian society. Suddenly, she was being interviewed in the newspaper about what she feels about Norwegian-Pakistani fathers not allowing their daughters to participate in swimming lessons in school. It is an example of journalists honing in on the first person who sticks her head above the parapet. And it always helps if the person is a young (pretty) girl.

“Imagine a huge table where every seat is taken, barring one. Those sitting have all very similar identity markers. You are offered the empty seat at the table. You have a unique background; the missing perspective. You get such a huge responsibility on your shoulders,” Ali said.

And by this analogy, she gets to the crux of the matter – because ethnic minority women are so under-represented in the Norwegian media in general, the few who get the spotlight carry an immense burden of representation.

This resonated with me, both as someone who has been interviewed on such issues for decades and as an ethnic minority woman coming from an industry struggling with ethnic diversity in the newsroom. The burden of being “the one” is emotional labour in addition to the work you are paid for. It gets exhausting at times, even self-destructive. You no longer put your well-being first, but feel obligated to do what is right, what is expected of you – on behalf of those who don’t have a voice.

“At some point I noticed that I was doing a lot, not because I personally wanted to do it, but as if by a spinal reflex telling me to react, write something, say something, intervene as a necessary correction, in order to control the debate, to add nuance, to add my perspective. And that has been tiring,” Ali said. “There is a time when you realise that there is a lot you are doing which is not for yourself but which you have to do for the greater good, because it is needed. And if you don’t do it, no one will.”

At the start, the 24-year-old engaged with all the trolls in the comment sections and *Aftenposten* lauded her for her stamina. But soon enough, she understood she couldn’t keep up with the onslaught. She appreciates her editor at *Si’D* for taking good care of her when this was happening. The editor did whatever she could to protect her. Talking to the police, counselling her, but at the end of the day Ali was alone facing the trolls and prominent right-wing politicians taking digs at her. This was the time I stood on the sidelines and got worried. I was hoping she had a robust network of loved ones around her to support her through it all.

“My mother was my first reader, she read everything. We watched the news together. She was interested, it was her I discussed issues with, it was my mother who met me with intellectual resistance. She would challenge my arguments, so that my arguments got more robust and could withstand the dangerous resistance out there,” Ali said.

In her small family, Ali was safe. She was encouraged and backed by her mother, her siblings and even her father. But despite the support, the harassment, blatant racism, and threats got to such a level that Ali became ill.

**VG** SPORTEM VG LIVE TV-GUIDE VG+ TIPS OSS Søk



ÅRETS BODØVÆRING: Sumaya Jirde Ali (19) ble årets bodøværing. Reaksjonene på tittelen går på at hun er somalisk, og bruker hijab. Foto: RUNE NILSEN/BODØ NU

## «Årets Bodøværing» hetses grovt

**Sumaya Jirde Ali (19) ble stemt frem av lokalavisens lesere. Reaksjonene preges av hets og rasisme.**

Av **RUNA RØED**  
Oppdatert 9. desember 2017

*News about Ali's harassment: the headline reads, "The Bodø citizen of the year, severely harassed"*

"I was bedridden for a prolonged period in 2018 due to the pressure, exposure and scrutiny I was under. It is as if it was all a blur. I can't seem to remember everything chronologically. The death threats posted at my home address became my undoing. I hid them from my mother and my family. But it wasn't just these extreme expressions of hate. It was all those everyday small jabs in school, among classmates, in the comment sections, from prominent right-wing politicians, which compounded and made it intolerable. But I was hell-bent on making it, not letting

anyone know how badly this was affecting me. I didn't want to scare my parents. I had anxiety and at times I was paranoid, fearing for my life at all times," she said, adding that she never got any professional help for what she was facing.

On the Women's Day March in 2018, dozens of women were carrying a cut-out of Ali's face and placing it in front of their own in solidarity with the young poet and activist. Ali found even this outpouring of love exhausting. It was all too much.

She has been carrying an alarm device on her at all times ever since, in case anything should happen.

Today the 24-year-old is a university student. Writing poetry and opinion pieces at her own leisure. Living a more normal life. Having been to hell and back, she realises she didn't owe anyone anything. She decided to take a step back. She is open and honest about enjoying the position of power she has acquired. The importance of having a voice. The conscious decision of seeking the spotlight, of having the support system, and also of spineless reporters who have treated her as a fragile daisy.

"Reporters I have met are in awe of me. They ask me weak questions, as if they are talking to a species threatened by extinction, whom they have to touch with utmost care. I have never really felt resistance from Norwegian journalists. They act as a microphone to the sources, not asking challenging questions," she said.

I asked her if it is a case of them underestimating you, or are you underestimating them.

"It is not a case of underestimating, rather overestimating. They talk to me as if I am an expert, because that is the role I have been given.

I asked her if she felt journalists were going easy on her because of the pressures she was under, and because they have sympathy with the harassment she faced.

“That might be the case, but it has been really annoying. What annoys me even more is when the interview is about something else entirely and the reporter wants me to talk about the harassment. Yes, I have faced harassment but not all resistance a young person in the spotlight faces is harassment. It is plain freedom of expression. The harassment has become my identity,” she said.

Before publication, I shared my findings with *Aftenposten* news editor Tone Tveøy Strøm-Gundersen. Reacting to criticism from Sumaya Jirde Ali that she felt exploited as an opinion writer, she said, “It is very sad if Sumaya Jirde Ali perceives that she was exploited. It is not usual to pay external opinion writers. In *Aftenposten* we only pay columnists. But it is also good to hear that she felt taken care of when she received unpleasant messages in the comment sections.”

## Answer to a call

At the end of 2016, I chose to put my pen down as an opinion writer in *VG*. I had been writing opinions from time to time since I joined the newspaper in 2011. But in 2016 I was tired of the emotional labour of being one of the few women of colour writing opinion pieces in Norway. Before I stopped, I wrote my yearly Women's Day opinion piece. In hindsight, I see it as a cry for help. "Those who stand alone are easy to harass, they are easy to gag, to exhaust. So, what do we do? We close ranks," I wrote.<sup>13</sup>

What I didn't know at the time was that a 20-year-old was reading it, and she was about to answer the call. "What you wrote inspired me, and I still remember it, so it must have made an impression. Well, I answered your call," Nancy Herz told me.

She told me this one summer evening in 2020, while showing me her cabinet of awards. The worries I had for Ali, I have never had for Herz. I knew she wasn't alone. I knew she was part of a trio: Sofia Srour, Amina Bile and her. They were all young, but they had each other. The community of ethnic minority female thought leaders in Norway is so small. It feels like a family. Close, yet distant. But before that evening in 2020, I had never sat down with Herz for a conversation like this. What she told me confronted me with my own prejudices.

I will firstly admit it is a huge compliment that a woman like Herz, now 25, was inspired by me. But it was just a matter of saying the right thing at the right time. She was already a rebel with a cause. This became her cue, she tells me.

---

<sup>13</sup> Majid, Shazia, 5 March, 2016. *Kvinnekamp i lenker*, *VG*

On April 25, 2016, she wrote the following in an opinion published in “Si'D” in *Aftenposten* (see picture below): “We are the shameless Arabic girls, and our time is now.”<sup>14</sup>



Vi ser stadig flere jenter fra minoritetsmiljøer som står opp og trosser våre «egne», skriver Nancy Herz (20). Foto: Vincent

*Nancy Herz' opinion piece that became the start of the “Shameless girls” in Norway in 2016.*

No one had written anything like that during the 50 years ethnic minority women have been in Norway. Shame has been at the heart of the public discourse on ethnic minority women. Since time immemorial the patriarchal societies have been placing the shame on women's shoulders. And Herz came along and just took ownership of the word by calling herself shameless. When she wrote “our time is now”, she was not joking. This was the start of a new era, the era of the “the shameless girls”, and the Norwegian public debate on ethnic minority women has never been the same.

---

<sup>14</sup>, Herz, 25 April, 2016). *Vi er de skamløse arabiske jentene, og vår tid begynner nå*, Aftenposten

Nancy Herz is daughter of Muslim immigrant parents from Lebanon. Her father came to Norway to work in the '80s. In the mid '90s he and Herz's mother were married in Lebanon, and shortly after her birth Herz and her mother moved to Haugesund, a small coastal city in western Norway, to join her father. Like Ali, Herz was the odd one out at school. She tells me she was a bit ashamed of her background, lying about what her father's job was, not telling her classmates that he was a factory worker. And it got even worse when he became disabled and out of work when he was 40. She was ashamed of her parents' accent, of the lunch her mother used to pack for her each morning. She liked her name, because people couldn't tell she was a Muslim. But she couldn't hide the colour of her skin. Even though Herz could pass for a south European. She struggled to fit in and make friends. She was a loner at school.

But she also found her cause. She became a passionate human rights activist when she was barely 14 or 15. She wasn't talking about immigrants or ethnic minorities, she was fighting for human rights in Russia and Saudi Arabia. She became a regular writer in the local newspaper and that is where, in 2015, she disclosed that she had decided to leave Islam.

When she made a splash on the national scene, she had already had years of experience with the media and reporters in the local newspaper. But nothing could have prepared her for the exposure and feedback she got after writing an opinion piece in *Aftenposten*.

“Not in a million years did I think what I wrote in a hurry on a train ride would cause such commotion. Sofia Srour, Amina Bile and I were angry about not being good enough for either of our communities, the Norwegian or the immigrant communities. Never did I imagine it would get this big. Never,” she said.

Herz was not naïve though. She had the same sort of goals and motivation as Ali, as etched out in Palmer's book.

“Even though I was not prepared for how big it got, I knew the minute I got feedback from *Aftenposten* that I needed to think ahead. I prepared answers in case anyone wanted to follow up on the opinion piece. I didn't want anyone taking ownership of the narrative. And making it into a case of 'those awful immigrants'," Herz said.

Hundreds of news articles followed, interviews were done, awards were received and, like Ali, “the shameless girls” and Herz were asked to comment on everything. They were lapped up by the Norwegian media and the Norwegian public. They were seen as the “victim-heroines” by Norwegians, while they were being termed as the “heroine industry” by patriarchal men in their own communities. What the latter meant was that women who were overexposed in the press were motivated by fame and money. That the media and the women were using each other.

Both of these assumptions were wrong. And from the sidelines I could see a new type of ethnic minority woman trope emerging. A lot bolder, a lot more courageous, talking about taboos, about not being willing to carry anyone's shame on their shoulders, about sex and orgasms on prime-time television. From the outside, they seemed untouchable. The Norwegian media seemed unable to stereotype them. They were fighting against Muslim patriarchs one minute and Norwegian racists and misogynists the next.

“I remember sitting on a news show with Sofia Srour, and the host was asking us how it is for the ethnic minority women. And each time she asked us a question like that we would stress it is not just about the ethnic minority women. The TV host was visibly irritated,” Herz said.

While Sumaya Jirde Ali is predominantly an anti-racist fighting for diversity through activism and as a writer, Herz is predominantly a feminist fighting against patriarchy and for intersectional feminism. Ali gets racial hate, Herz gets less hate, but more criticism from people who think she is not hard enough against the immigrant community or is too hard on the immigrant community. Herz has had her share of bad experiences with Norwegian journalists.

“I have experienced reporters coming to me with an agenda of their own, especially at the beginning. They want to tell the victim-heroine story. The poor oppressed ethnic minority girl going against her own trope. Reporters have told me either it is this story or no story. I won’t stand for that. There are prominent reporters I am skeptical to talk to, even off the record,” Herz said, and added: “I believe that our insistence on conveying the nuances in the debate has paid off though. I rarely experience this now.”

The boldness and maturity of Herz led me to believe she must have the backing of her family. How else could she be so blunt and talk about topics I would never dare touch? The truth is that her overexposure in the media led to a deep divide in her immediate family.

“My parents found themselves in the midst of it all. They didn’t know what was going on. They were confused, extremely angry and deeply, deeply hurt by what I was saying and doing. My mother stopped talking to me for months at the time. Each time I would go home to Haugesund, we would fight. She was scared for my life. She would say: ‘Whatever you are saying out there in public, women are killed for in Lebanon’. I would cry all the way back to Oslo. It has been painful,” Herz said.

Recently, Herz wrote a book about this phase of her life. In the book *Aren't you getting married soon? And all the things my mother and I should have talked about*

*instead*, she has an open conversation with her mother about the divide between them. They have now normalised their relationship.

I asked her what the past years had taught her.

“That the most important work is not done in the spotlight, it is done in countless homes. The change starts there. They are the ones who are not being written about. Being one of many voices is important. But the onslaught can be exhausting,” Herz said.

## Key lessons

My aim with this project was to answer two questions I have had at the back of my mind for nearly three decades. How well represented are (non-white) ethnic minority women in the Norwegian media? And what does the media exposure mean to those few who get media coverage? The answers to both of these questions surprised me.

Firstly, I truly believed representation was significantly higher than what the sample of representative articles showed. Had I chosen a different year, the representation might have been somewhat different. I suspect the representation was even lower in 2020 due to the pandemic, and higher in 2016 due to the arrival of “the shameless girls”. In that regard, I would argue 2018 was a more normal news year regarding the coverage of ethnic minority women, and therefore more relevant.

It is worrying that Norway’s leading newspapers are failing in their duty of making ethnic minority women a natural part of their coverage. The stereotyping is alarming. The tropes of “victim-heroine” and the successful “heroine” live on. All of this, however, is fixable. I would argue that both *VG* and *Aftenposten* need to publish more human interest and lifestyle stories with ethnic minorities. Also, the use of ethnic minority women in illustration images will assist in normalising these women. Although the solutions may seem obvious, they require leadership, clear strategies and groundwork. Newsrooms need to make a conscious decision and invest money and time.

The Norwegian media, here represented by *VG* and *Aftenposten*, must also be lauded for their reporting on the issues of social pressures and forced marriages.

The answer to my second question is closely linked to the consequence of gross underrepresentation. When the ethnic minority women are invisible to the extent they are, those who break through the sound barrier are disproportionately amplified. The media don't light them a candle; they turn their floodlights on them. These women become household names, camouflaging how seldom ethnic minority women actually make it to the news pages.

What has surprised me with regards to the women who make it to the news is how well aware and clear they are about their motivations, goals and the handling of the press. I have underestimated them exactly as Ruth Palmer says reporters tend to. I have to be honest and admit I have looked upon these young women as exploited by the press. That is only half the truth. Sumaya Jirde Ali and Nancy Herz have put a dent in my misconceptions. These women have agency, and even though they were young and inexperienced when they first became news, they have been fast learners and have used the media's preference for young ethnic minority women to benefit the causes they are fighting for.

I see the rise of a new generation of ethnic minority women. As opposed to the pioneers of the mid-'90s, these women are greater in number. They are supporting each other, making it easier to stay in the spotlight for longer than their predecessors. Most of the women of my generation either got burnt-out or were harassed or even physically attacked out of the public domain.

What is of great concern is how the underrepresentation in general is still endangering the lives of those few who get the spotlight and end up being overexposed. The story Ali tells of the hate, threats, and harassment she has experienced is disturbing.

While writing this paper, I have been considering whether or not the media outlets who publish young women in their opinion sections should take greater responsibility for their wellbeing and safety – as they do with staff reporters by offering them debriefs, safety measures and even professional counselling. That is one way of keeping invaluable voices in the media for longer.

I am however unsure if that is the right way to go about it. I think a better, more correct and obvious solution for the Norwegian press is to do its duty and normalise ordinary ethnic minority women and their lives in the news pages. That way, a woman is less likely to be threatened and harassed each time she opens her mouth. The more women, the larger the diversity in opinions – and the more sharing of the burden. A pack is harder to attack than the lone individual.

*VG* and *Aftenposten* have great potential. They have the resources to increase the representation of ethnic minorities in general and ethnic minority women in particular. As the most financially robust, lauded and prominent newspapers, this is their time and opportunity to lead.

## Addendum A

### Experiment design and data queries

The purpose of this quantitative analysis was to examine how frequently ethnic minority women are either interviewed as sources or mentioned in Norway's two leading daily newspapers. The analysis also looks at what types of stories these women are featured in.

### Sample selection

The newspapers I chose for the analysis are *Verdens Gang* (VG) and *Aftenposten*. VG is a tabloid and *Aftenposten* is what is usually referred to as a broadsheet newspaper. It is worth noting that – although VG includes some content traditionally associated with the popular press, like celebrity news and human interest stories – the concept of a tabloid is somewhat different in Norway compared to the UK. In the last few years, VG has been the highest grosser of prestigious journalism-awards, including numerous awards for excellence in investigative journalism. VG and *Aftenposten* both enjoy high levels of trust in the Norwegian public and both should be considered part of “the quality press”.

By readership, VG is the largest news media outlet in Norway, with a daily readership of 2.1 million and 2.8 million daily unique users of their website – the equivalent of 45% of all Norwegians over 12 years of age. *Aftenposten* is the second largest print newspaper in Norway, according to data from the first half of 2020.<sup>15</sup>

Analysing these two newspapers will therefore give a fairly accurate picture of the representation of ethnic minority women in Norwegian newspapers.

---

<sup>15</sup> Mediebedrifters landsforening, 23 September 2020 “Lesertall medienhus 20/2”

# Defining variables

## Ethnic Minorities

In Norway it is prohibited by law to register a person's ethnicity, political affiliation, religion and other such sensitive information, meaning that – unlike the U.S. and the UK – Norway has no official data based on identifying features like race.

However, when talking about ethnic minorities, Norwegians have found a work-around: by compiling data on the basis of “country of origin”.

In the most recent example of this, during the Covid-19 pandemic, each week the health ministry publishes numbers on “people born outside Norway”, and which country they are born in. Instead of defining data on ethnic minorities, the national statistical institute of Norway (SSB) defines the group as “persons with immigrant background, and Norwegian-born with immigrant parents”. And, in some cases, also “Norwegian-born with one or two Norwegian-born parents and foreign-born grandparents”.

Immigration from Asia and Africa to Norway began about 50 years ago, hence there are only three generations of this group in the country. When talking about ethnic minorities, the variable for country-background is chosen, followed by the grouping “Continents, alternative grouping”. Here, one can choose “Africa” and “Asia including Turkey”. These statistical groupings are used extensively and are, for all practical purposes, statistics on ethnic minorities/ Norwegians of colour.

For this project I have looked at images accompanying the article (is the person featured white or non-white) and/or the person's name as an indication of their background. In cases of uncertainty I have researched the name further to be sure of their origins.

The closest resemblance to the group analysed in this study would be the British grouping “Black, Asian and minority ethnic” (BAME). In the UK this group consists of Arab, Asian or Asian British people, Black or Black British people, people of mixed heritage and Roma, Romany and Travellers.

Norway does not have an established grouping equivalent to BAME (the commonly used term is “people of non-western background”) but the ethnic minorities analysed in this project are the same as listed under BAME, apart from Roma and travellers. These groups are not part of this analysis. People of Afro-Caribbean descent are also in extremely small numbers in Norway, and their addition does not affect the analysis. They are not included when calculating representation. (As of 2020, there are 80 people of Afro-Caribbean descent in Norway according to SSB<sup>16</sup>.)

I have also made a distinction between those who have an immigrant background and those who are part of an ethnic minority but adopted by white Norwegian parents. There are a few cases where there is uncertainty about whether a person is adopted or not. In these cases I have researched each person’s name, checked their social media accounts and made a discretionary assessment. A traditional Norwegian surname on young people (in this case, athletes) is often a strong indication the person is adopted.

In similar research in Norway, the same distinction is usually made and adopted people are omitted while analysing data on people of immigrant backgrounds. SSB also omits adopted persons from their statistics on immigrants. I analysed my data both with and without persons that have been adopted from Asia or Africa.

---

<sup>16</sup> PX-Web SSB. 2021. *Table 05183: Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, by sex and country background 1970 - 2021*-PX-Web SSB. [online] Available at: <<https://www.ssb.no/en/statbank/table/05183/>> [Accessed 9 April 2021].

While calculating representation I have used SSB-statistics for “Immigrants and Norwegian-born with immigrant parents” from Asia, as well as Turkey and Africa.

## Methodology

The dataset contains a representative sample of newspaper-editions, both printed, digital, and behind paywall for 2018. I excluded articles after 2019 to avoid articles about myself being subject to the analysis. (In 2019 my non-fiction book was published and garnered a significant amount of press with reviews, interviews and mentions.) With the overall number of articles about women of colour being so low, I decided to go back a year, to avoid any form of bias.

The dataset was collated using Retriever, a private company which maintains a comprehensive database of all print and digital news in Norway. Retriever’s subscription-based site is used extensively by academic researchers and journalists.

For the extraction of data I have used a method called “newsweek”. This is a method based on a representative sample of articles. This method was first introduced by Sigurd Allern in his book *Nyhetsverdier: Om markedsorientering og journalistikk i ti norske aviser* (in English, *News Values: On Market Orientation and Journalism in Ten Norwegian newspapers*).<sup>17</sup>

I chose newspaper editions from the widest possible spread: the first Monday in January, the second Tuesday in February, the third Wednesday in March, the fourth Thursday in April and so on through the whole year, for both *VG* and *Aftenposten* and sampled from VG print, vg.no, VG+ and Aftenposten print edition and aftenposten.no (articles behind paywall). The resulting sample includes 12

---

<sup>17</sup> Allern, S., 2001. *Nyhetsverdier: Om markedsorientering og journalistikk i ti norske aviser*. 1st ed. Kristiansand: IJ-forl.

newspaper editions from two newspapers (*VG* and *Aftenposten*), for a total of 24 editions.

The following dates were analysed:

- 01.01.2018
- 13.02.2018
- 21.03.2018
- 26.04.2018
- 04.05.2018
- 09.06.2018
- 15.07.2018
- 27.08.2018
- 04.09.2018
- 09.10.2018
- 15.11.2018
- 28.12.2018

These yielded URLs for 3,956 pieces of news and editorial information (not ads). Each link was opened, read and analysed. The following variables were mapped for each article (four of the variables were provided by Retriever in the dataset. The rest of the variables were determined as a result of the analysis of each URL/article):

- Date (provided)
- Headline (provided)
- Source (provided)
- URL (provided)

- Category (Type of news; local, foreign, sport, art/culture, cover, briefs, lifestyle, etc)
- Background (The ethnic background of person(s) quoted/mentioned - white/non-white)
- Name of the person(s)
- Illustration image (If an illustration image has been used in the article, does it contain white/non-white person(s))
- Name of the person in the illustration image
- Statement/mention (Is the person giving a statement in the article, or is she being mentioned)
- Gender (Man, woman, or both men and women)
- Age (Of the main source(s), if given)
- Main image (Who is in the main image to the story, white/non-white)
- Additional images (white/non-white)
- Adopted (yes/no - is the person with ethnic minority background adopted/not adopted)
- Norwegian - ethnic minority (yes/no - articles containing Norwegians of ethnic minority background)
- Lead (Lead in the article where a Norwegian ethnic minority person is quoted/mentioned)

## The query code

```
newsweek <- read_excel("/Users/shazia.majid/Downloads/ENDELIG_NYHETSUKE
2018_VG_AFTENPOSTEN.xlsx",

                      skip = 1,

                      col_names = c("id", "date", "headline", "news_source", "url",
"news_category", "background_person", "name_person", "ill_image", "name_ill_image",
"statement_mention", "gender", "age", "main_image", "additiona_images",
"sitat_ikkesitat", "adopted", "norwegian_poc", "lead"))%>%
```

```

select(date, headline, news_source, news_category, background_person, name_person,
ill_image, name_ill_image, statment_mention, gender, age, main_image,
additiona_images, adopted, norwegian_poc,lead) %>%

  mutate(news_source = ifelse(news_source == "Aftenposten - Login", "Aftenposten",
news_source)) %>%

  mutate(news_source = ifelse(news_source == "VG Nett", "VG", news_source)) %>%

  mutate(news_source = ifelse(news_source == "VG Pluss", "VG", news_source)) %>%

  mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "fødselsdager", "notis",
news_category)) %>%

  mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "Forbruk", "forbruk",
news_category)) %>%

  mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "Kultur", "kultur",
news_category)) %>%

  mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "Notis", "notis", news_category))
%>%

  mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "reise", "forbruk",
news_category)) %>%

  mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "Sport", "sport", news_category))
%>%

  mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "Urix", "urix", news_category))
%>%

  mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "Leder", "leder", news_category))
%>%

  mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "bilde", "notis", news_category))
%>%

  mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "cover", "forside",
news_category)) %>%

  mutate(gender = ifelse(gender == "mann/Kvinne", "mann/kvinne", gender)) %>%

  mutate(background_person = ifelse(background_person == "Hvit", "hvit",
background_person)) %>%

  mutate(background_person = ifelse(background_person == "hvit/Ikke-hvit",
"hvit/ikke-hvit", background_person)) %>%

```

```

mutate(background_person = ifelse(background_person == "Hvit", "hvit",
background_person)) %>%

  mutate(gender = ifelse(gender == "kvinne", "female", gender)) %>%

mutate(gender = ifelse(gender == "mann", "male", gender)) %>%

  mutate(gender = ifelse(gender == "mann/kvinne", "male/female", gender)) %>%

mutate(background_person = ifelse(background_person == "hvit", "white",
background_person)) %>%

  mutate(background_person = ifelse(background_person == "ikke-hvit",
"non-white", background_person)) %>%

mutate(background_person = ifelse(background_person == "hvit/ikke-hvit",
"white/non-white", background_person)) %>%

  mutate(ill_image = ifelse(ill_image == "hvit", "white", ill_image)) %>%

  mutate(ill_image = ifelse(ill_image == "ikke-hvit", "non-white", ill_image)) %>%

mutate(ill_image = ifelse(ill_image == "hvit/ikke-hvit", "white/non-white",
ill_image)) %>%

mutate(main_image = ifelse(main_image == "hvit", "white", main_image)) %>%

  mutate(main_image = ifelse(main_image == "ikke-hvit", "non-white", main_image))
%>%

mutate(main_image = ifelse(main_image == "hvit/ikke-hvit", "white/non-white",
main_image)) %>%

  mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "404", "404_error",
news_category)) %>%

  mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "forbruk", "lifestyle",
news_category)) %>%

  mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "forside", "coverpage",
news_category)) %>%

  mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "kommentar", "op-ed",
news_category)) %>%

  mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "kronikk", "external-opinion",
news_category)) %>%

  mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "kultur", "art/culture",
news_category)) %>%

```

```

mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "leder", "editorial",
news_category)) %>%

mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "nekrolog", "obituary",
news_category)) %>%

mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "notis", "briefs",
news_category)) %>%

mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "nyhet", "local_news",
news_category)) %>%

mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "reportasje",
"human_interest_story", news_category)) %>%

mutate(news_category = ifelse(news_category == "urix", "foreign_news",
news_category))

```

## Results

### Final sample

The dataset consisted of a total of 3,956 articles, of which 41 of the URLs had errors and were excluded from the analysis. The total number of articles analysed is therefore 3,915. Of these, 2,926 refer to or quote at least one individual, thereby allowing their background to be categorised. Of the news items, 1,030 do not contain that information. When calculating representation, variables have been compared to the total of 2,926.

```

dim(newsweek)

## [1] 3956  16

#Number of articles with white or non-white resources/mentioned

table(newsweek$background_person)

##

##          na      non-white      white white/non-white
##          1030         289      2566          71

```

```
(2566+71+289)
```

```
## [1] 2926
```

## Aftenposten published more news

The majority of the news items in my sample were published in Aftenposten (56%).

```
table(newswEEK$news_source)
```

```
##
```

```
## Aftenposten      VG
```

```
##      2219      1737
```

```
barplot(table(newswEEK$news_source)) %>%
```

```
title(main = "Porportion news items VG/Aftenposten 2018", xlab = "News Source",  
ylab = "Number of articles", cex.main = 1, font.main = 4, col.main = "red",
```

```
      cex.sub = 0.75, font.sub = 3, col.sub = "green",
```

```
      col.lab = "darkblue")
```

```
1737/(2219+1737)*100
```

```
## [1] 43.90799
```

```
2219/(2219+1737)*100
```

```
## [1] 56.09201
```

## Sports coverage dominates

The largest number of articles were sports stories (956 stories in total), followed by Norwegian news (823 articles, of which 699 were local news stories and 124 were human interest stories).

Briefs accounted for the third largest group of news items sampled (716 stories). In this analysis, briefs also include a small number of "other" pieces of information published in the print editions, such as quizzes.

```
table(newswEEK$news_category)
```

```
##           404_error      art/culture      briefs
```

```
##           41           369           716
```

```

##           coverage           editorial           external-opinion
##           126                21                374
##   foreign_news human_interest_story           lifestyle
##           364                124                93
##           local_news           obituary           op-ed
##           699                30                43
##           sport
##           956

barplot(table(newsweek$news_category)) %>%

title(main = "News Categories - VG and Aftenposten representative sample 2018",
xlab = "News categories", ylab = "Number of articles", cex.main = 1, font.main= 4,
col.main= "red",

      cex.sub = 0.75, font.sub = 3, col.sub = "green",

      col.lab ="darkblue"

)

```

## VG big on lifestyle, Aftenposten on opinions

*Aftenposten* yielded significantly more sports stories and external opinions articles compared to *VG*. Both newspapers had about the same number of local news articles in the sample. *VG* had more lifestyle articles.

```

table(newsweek$news_source, newsweek$news_category)

##           404_error art/culture briefs coverage editorial external-opinion
##   Aftenposten      17      188      391      61      13                277
##   VG                24      181      325      65       8                97
##
##           foreign_news human_interest_story lifestyle local_news obituary
##   Aftenposten                176                56      35      366      30
##   VG                188                68      58      333      0
##

```

```
##           op-ed sport
##  Aftenposten      24  585
##  VG                19  371
```

## Gender representation

Of the total articles sampled, 74% were about or quoted a man, and only 30.1% of the overall news was about a woman or had quoted a woman. Some articles contain both male and female resources (160 articles). This number is added to each gender when compiling.

```
Women <- newsweek %>%
  filter(gender == "female" | gender == "male/female")
dim(Women)
## [1] 882  16

Men <- newsweek %>%
  filter(gender == "male" | gender == "male/female")
dim(Men)
## [1] 2169  16

882/2926*100
## [1] 30.14354

2169/2926*100
## [1] 74.1285
```

## One in 10 stories include ethnic minority voices

360 or 12.3% of the total number of articles in our sample (2,926) had a non-white person either quoted or mentioned. VG has a slightly higher number of news stories containing non-whites (13.6%). However, the representation of people of colour in our sample is a lot smaller when foreign news is omitted.

```

table(newsweek$background_person)

##
##          na      non-white          white white/non-white
##          1030         289          2566          71

poc_total <- newsweek %>%
  filter(background_person != "na")

dim(poc_total)

## [1] 2926  16

table(poc_total$background_person)

##
##      non-white          white white/non-white
##          289          2566          71

table(poc_total$background_person, poc_total$news_source)

##
##                Aftenposten  VG
## non-white                148 141
## white                    1472 1094
## white/non-white           39  32

barplot(table(poc_total$background_person))%>%

title(main = "Propotion white and ethnic minorities - VG and Aftenposten 2018",
xlab = "Ethnic bakground of person(s) mentioned/quoted", ylab = "Number of
articles",cex.main = 1, font.main= 4, col.main= "red",

      cex.sub = 0.75, font.sub = 3, col.sub = "green",

      col.lab ="darkblue"

      )

#Ikke-hvite

(148+141+39+32)

## [1] 360

```

```

#Totalt
(148+141+39+32)/2926*100

## [1] 12.30349

#Aftenposten:

(148+39)/(148+1472+39)*100

## [1] 11.27185

#VG:

(141+32)/(141+1094+32)*100

## [1] 13.6543

```

## Ethnic minorities as a representative sample

Of the total Norwegian population in 2018, 8% had a background from Asia (including Turkey) and Africa, according to SSB (431,201 out of 5.3 million Norwegians).

Of these, 4% are classified as Women from Asia or Africa. (Granddaughters of immigrants are not included in the statistic, but the number is relatively small.)

When calculating the representation of ethnic minority women in *VG* and *Aftenposten*, I compare the group's general representation in the population.

As already noted, 12% of the news coverage in our sample quotes or mentions a person of colour. That high representation is mainly due to foreign news coverage. When news stories from outside Norway are omitted, ethnic minority women are significantly under-represented in Norway's two largest media outlets.

## Norwegian ethnic minorities under-represented

Norwegian ethnic minorities (both sexes combined) were significantly under-represented in our sample. Of the total number of news articles in our sample (2,926), only 3.5% quoted or mentioned a Norwegian person from an ethnic minority background (3.9% if adopted individuals are included).

When compared to the number of ethnic minorities that make up the general population (8% of the total population), ethnic minority individuals received less than half the coverage required for *Aftenposten* and *VG* to be considered representative.

```
non_white <- newswest %>%
  filter(norwegian_poc == "ja")

dim(non_white)

## [1] 114 16

table(non_white$gender)

##
##      female      male male/female
##           32          77          5

32+5/114*100

## [1] 36.38596

77+5/114*100

## [1] 81.38596

barplot(table(non_white$gender)) %>%

  title(main = "Proportion ethnic minority women in VG and Aftenposten 2018", xlab =
"Gender", ylab = "Number of articles", cex.main = 1, font.main = 4, col.main =
"red",

  cex.sub = 0.75, font.sub = 3, col.sub = "green",

  col.lab = "darkblue")
```

```
114/2926*100

## [1] 3.896104

non_white_ex_adopted <- newsweek %>%

  filter(norwegian_poc == "ja" & adopted == "nei")

dim(non_white_ex_adopted)

## [1] 102 16

102/2926*100

## [1] 3.485988
```

### Ethnic minority women present in less than 1% of all stories

Of the 2,926 news articles in the sample, 37 quoted or mentioned an ethnic minority woman – 1.2%.<sup>18</sup> However, adopted women have a skewing impact on the data because of one individual: Cecilia Brækhus is a Norwegian boxer, adopted from Colombia in Latin-America. She is both adopted, and not from Asia or Africa. She is nevertheless included in the analysis, due to the initial selection criteria being on the sole basis of white/non-white. Out of 37 articles, six were about her.

It is, therefore, correct to omit her from further analysis when determining the representation of ethnic minority women as outlined at the beginning of this quantitative analysis. Excluding adopted minority women means only 27 of 2,926 news items were about ethnic minority women – 0.92%.

By comparison: ethnic minority women account for 4% of the total population of Norway. This means an ethnic minority woman is four times less likely to see someone like herself in print than she would in real life.

---

<sup>18</sup> Note: due to the fact that there are stories where both men and women are represented, the combined number of stories counted for each gender will be higher than the total.

Of the total 114 stories classified as including ethnic-minorities, only 23.7% included women (32.5% if adopted women are included). The total representation of both white and minority women in the sample was 30.1%, meaning women of ethnic minorities were less likely to be included in the news when compared to women in general.

Ethnic minority men fare slightly better: of the total stories written, they are included in 2.8% (82 stories out of 2,926). That makes men 1.5 times less likely to be in the news compared to their size in the population. Their underrepresentation is at the same level as all women in general.

Hence, Norwegian women of colour are the least likely to be featured in the news. They may be considered highly under-represented.

```
women_of_color <- non_white %>%  
  
  filter(gender == "female" | gender == "male/female")  
  
dim(women_of_color)  
## [1] 37 16  
  
table(women_of_color$adopted)  
##  
##  ja nei  
## 10  27  
  
woc_ex_adop <- women_of_color %>%  
  
  filter(norwegian_poc == "ja" & adopted == "nei")  
  
dim(woc_ex_adop)  
## [1] 27 16  
  
27/114*100
```

```

## [1] 23.68421

37/114*100

## [1] 32.45614

27/2926*100

## [1] 0.9227614

882/2926*100

## [1] 30.14354

men_of_color <- non_white %>%

  filter(gender == "male" | gender == "male/female")

dim(men_of_color)

## [1] 82 16

table(men_of_color$adopted)

##

## ja nei

## 2 80

moc_ex_adop <- men_of_color %>%

  filter(norwegian_poc == "ja" & adopted == "nei")

82/114*100

## [1] 71.92982

82/2926*100

## [1] 2.802461

```

### What sort of stories do ethnic minority women feature in?

In a nutshell: if you are an ethnic minority woman in Norway, the easiest way to get onto the page of *VG* and *Aftenpostens* is to write and submit an opinion piece. If you

can't write, you can try excelling in sports, which in this sample is mostly achieved by adopted ethnic minority women (Cecilia Brækhus).

The biggest news category for ethnic minority women in *VG* and *Aftenposten* is external opinions (33.3%) – these are opinion pieces submitted by non-staff writers. Of the 27 news items, nine were external opinions.

If we include adopted women of colour, sport is the largest category (12 stories), mainly due to the coverage of Cecilia Brækhus.

*Aftenposten* published four times more opinions sent in by ethnic minority women, compared to *VG*. This is mainly due to their section for younger readers, “Si'D”. *Aftenposten* also published more stories about Cecilia Brækhus than *VG*.

In other categories, the two papers were about the same. Only in local news did *VG* publish one story more than *Aftenposten*.

There was only one instance in the sample where an ethnic minority woman's story was on the front page of the newspaper. It was in *Aftenposten*. The story was about a Norwegian Somali woman and the referral was in text. No image accompanied the frontpage referral.

There was not a single lifestyle story quoting or mentioning an ethnic minority woman. There was not a single op-ed written by an ethnic minority woman. By comparison, ethnic minority men either have to be athletes (football) or commit crimes to be part of the news in this sample.

The two largest categories for this group was sport and local news, which is mainly hard news about criminal activity or suspected criminal acts.

```
table(women_of_color$news_category, women_of_color$news_source)
```

```
##
```

```
##                Aftenposten VG
```

```
## art/culture           3  1
```

```
## briefs                 1  0
```

```
## coverpage             1  0
```

```
## external-opinion      8  2
```

```
## human_interest_story  2  0
```

```
## local_news            3  4
```

```
## sport                 8  4
```

```
table(woc_ex_adop$news_category, woc_ex_adop$news_source)
```

```
##
```

```
##                Aftenposten VG
```

```
## art/culture           3  1
```

```
## briefs                 1  0
```

```
## coverpage             1  0
```

```
## external-opinion      7  2
```

```
## human_interest_story  2  0
```

```
## local_news            3  3
```

```
## sport                 3  1
```

```
table(moc_ex_adop$news_category)
```

```
##
```

```
##          art/culture          briefs          coverpage
```

```
##              5              4              1
```

```
## external-opinion  foreign_news human_interest_story
```

```
##              11              1              6
```

```

##           lifestyle           local_news           sport
##           1             28             23

table(woc_ex_adop$news_category)

##
##           art/culture           briefs           coverage
##           4             1             1
##           external-opinion human_interest_story           local_news
##           9             2             6
##           sport
##           4

barplot(table(woc_ex_adop$news_category)) %>%

  title(main = "News categories ethnic minority women (excluding adopted) - VG and
Aftenposten 2018", xlab = "News Categories", ylab = "Number of articles",cex.main =
1,  font.main= 4, col.main= "red",

        cex.sub = 0.75, font.sub = 3, col.sub = "green",

        col.lab ="darkblue")

barplot(table(moc_ex_adop$news_category)) %>%

  title(main = "News categories ethinc minority men (excluding adopted) - VG and
Aftenposten 2018", xlab = "News Categories", ylab = "Number of articles",cex.main =
1,  font.main= 4, col.main= "red",

        cex.sub = 0.75, font.sub = 3, col.sub = "green",

        col.lab ="darkblue")

table(woc_ex_adop$main_image)

##
##           na           non-white           white white/non-white
##           3             17             3             4

```

## Ethnic minorities in pictures

In 10% of the articles containing ethnic minorities, the main image was of a white person. Not all stories had a main image. In cases where there were multiple images 21% of the additional images were of a white person.

There are generally few stories where illustration images are used. In stories containing ethnic minorities and where an illustration image is used, more than half of the images were of white people.

The numbers are about the same for ethnic minority women (excluding adopted).

```
table(non_white$main_image)
##
##          na      non-white          white white/non-white
##          16          75           9          14

table(non_white$additional_images)
##
##          hvit hvit/ikke-hvit  ikke-hvit          na
##          10          21          16          67

table(non_white$ill_image)
##
##          na non-white  white
##          40   4       5

table(woc_ex_adop$main_image)
##
##          na      non-white          white white/non-white
##          3          17           3          4

table(woc_ex_adop$additional_images)
```

```
##
##          hvit hvit/ikke-hvit  ikke-hvit          na
##          1          3          5          18
table(woc_ex_adop$ill_image)
##
##    na non-white
##    11     3
table(woc_ex_adop$statment_mention)
##
##          na      omtalt uttaler seg
##          2          9      16
```

### Mentioned or quoted?

One in three times women in these stories were talked about, not talked with. The ratio is a bit higher for ethnic minority women compared to women in total: in 35% of the news stories about ethnic minority women they are mentioned, not quoted in the story. The ratio is about the same for men in total and men of colour.

```
table(Women$statment_mention)
##
##          na      omtalt uttaler seg
##          37          277          568
277/(277+568)*100
## [1] 32.78107
568/(277+568)*100
## [1] 67.21893
table(woc_ex_adop$statment_mention)
##
```

```

##          na      omtalt uttaler seg
##          2          9      16

9/(9+17)*100

## [1] 34.61538

17/(9+17)*100

## [1] 65.38462

table(Men$statment_mention)

##

##          na      omtalt uttaler seg
##          73      728      1368

728/(728+1368)*100

## [1] 34.73282

table(moc_ex_adop$statment_mention)

##

##          na      omtalt uttaler seg
##          3          26          51

26/(26+52)*100

## [1] 33.33333

```

## Age of minorities in the media

The average age of ethnic minority women quoted or mentioned in this sample is 28. However the sample size (27 stories), is too small to make many inferences here.

Very few of the total number of stories sampled included the age of the person quoted or mentioned. When an ethnic minority woman was present in the story, her age was gathered from other sources, using Google or social media accounts.

Due to lack of information in the total sample, it is not possible to compare the average age of women of colour with the average age of women in total, or men in total.

```
table(woc_ex_adop$age)

##

## 12 17 20 21 23 27 30 33 34 37 40 45 46 na
##  2  3  1  3  1  1  2  3  1  2  1  2  1  4

table(as.numeric(woc_ex_adop$age))

## Warning in table(as.numeric(woc_ex_adop$age)): NAs introduced by coercion

##

## 12 17 20 21 23 27 30 33 34 37 40 45 46
##  2  3  1  3  1  1  2  3  1  2  1  2  1

result.mean <- mean(table(as.numeric(woc_ex_adop$age)), na.rm = TRUE)

## Warning in table(as.numeric(woc_ex_adop$age)): NAs introduced by coercion

print(result.mean)

## [1] 1.769231

result.mean <- mean(table(woc_ex_adop$age), na.rm = TRUE)

print(result.mean)

## [1] 1.928571

write.csv(women_of_color, "innvandrerkvinner.csv")

women_of_color %>%

  kable(escape = F, align = "c") %>%

  kable_styling(c("striped", "condensed"), full_width = T)
```