



MODULE 10

Professional Migration Coverage: Best Practices and Ethical Dimensions

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MODULE AIMS

- To alert participants to the need to critically access and assess sources for migration coverage.
- To sensitize participants for correct wording and perspective.
- To offer advice for professional reporting on migrants and refugees with best practice cases and experienced journalists' advice.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this module, participants should be able:

- To recognize different factors (e.g. news values, relevance of choice of sources) in the process of producing news on migrants and refugees.
→ **Affective LO: Responding**
- To use norms from guidelines for ethical reporting on migration.
→ **Affective LO: Receiving**
- To select credible sources and work towards an ethical perspective in migration coverage. → **Cognitive LO: Evaluating and Creating**

Outline

“Scholars of migration journalism have argued that migration is hard to cover because it’s a story that oozes, rather than breaks – so the breaking news of a smuggling ship sinking is easier to do than the massive sociopolitical, demographic and economic challenges of the entire phenomenon.” (Dell’Orto, n.d.)

Breaking news about migration may also be easier to consume for the audiences, and more attractive to publish for editors. However, this module aims to encourage participants to cover migrants and refugees in a more complex and nuanced perspective – because so much is needed to understand the phenomenon.

Covering migrants and refugee matters requires specific skills. Journalists need to know adequate research techniques, and also to assess which sources are reliable. They have to be sensitive about the choice of protagonists, focus, frames and information, as well as the forms of presentation in general. Knowing ethical guidelines developed specifically for the coverage of migrants and refugees¹ may help journalists facing the frequent ethical dilemma in coverage of these issues.

1 For definitions, please consult the glossaries recommended in Module 2 (European Migration Network, 2018; IOM, 2019a; UNHCR, n.d.).

Hence, this chapter includes statements from journalists, who report on migration matters worldwide and refer to their practical experience, listing what is important for responsible coverage.

Migration as news

Profound research starts with a professional selection of the news item to be pursued. Limited by time and space, editors have to decide which news and stories might interest their audience. “Relevance is the paramount driver of news consumption” (Schrøder, 2019). People value those stories as the most relevant that influence their personal lives at the local, national, and international levels; often coupled with shareability of news. The selection of the news by the audience is discussed when working on the aspect of “selling a story” in Module 13. However, it should be kept in mind at this point, that there could exist a gap between what journalists and the public deem newsworthy (Boczkowski & Mitchelstein, 2015; Chakraborty et al., 2019). But research findings also “indicate that users do not always use what they prefer, nor do they prefer what they use” (Swart et al., 2017, p. 1343). The selection of the stories is therefore decisive, as it is already decided during the selection process that some stories about migrants and refugees never reach the recipients.² This selection, when analysed, can be attached to certain news values³. News values indicates which content journalists select as newsworthy and are also used for media-criticism.

In 1965, Galtung & Ruge (2016) developed their seminal 12-factor system of news values, which has been further developed by other scholars⁴. Harcup & O’Neill (2017) have added news values relevant for the digital age, like exclusivity, bad news, conflict, surprise, audio-visuals, shareability, entertainment, drama, follow-up, the power elite, relevance, magnitude, celebrity, good news and the news organisation’s agenda. Galtung & Ruge (2016) argue that news values are not universal and can differ between cultures. For Conley & Lamb (2006, p. 56), news values are “fluid and can be altered by social, economic and cultural trends”, too. On the one hand, Lee (2010, p. 377) argues that “[m]any of the journalists working at English-language newspapers in Asia tend to be Westerners and/or Western-trained and may be more likely than their vernacular counterparts to subscribe to Western news values and norms including newswriting standards”. On the other hand, Masterton (2005, p. 42) studied journalism values in “Western” countries and in Asia and concluded that “journalists around the world accept that there is a three-element core of newsworthiness without which no information can become news. They are Interest, Timeliness and Clarity”.

2 The report “Moving Stories. International Review of How Media Cover Migration”, published by the Ethical Journalism Network (EJN) lists some stories about migration that often go uncovered (White, 2015).

3 Bednarek & Caple (2017, p. 438) define news values as “the ‘newsworthy’ aspects of actors, happenings and issues as established by a set of recognized values such as Negativity, Proximity and so on” and relate the term to news writing objectives and selection factors.

4 However, research and discussions on news values are always changing and updating. Some researchers have been rethinking the concept like Donsbach (2004) who describe news values as involving subjective judgements. Others like Harcup & O’Neill (2017, p. 1482) propose that new news values have shareability, which refers to “stories that are thought likely to generate sharing and comments via Facebook, Twitter and other forms of social media”. Furthermore, other scholars focus on different perspectives like Bednarek & Caple (2017) who propose a visual analysis of news values in news photography.

Figure 30: News values

<i>Exclusivity</i>	<i>Bad News</i>	<i>Conflict</i>	<i>Surprise</i>	<i>Audio-Visuals</i>
<i>Shareability</i>	<i>Entertainment</i>	<i>Drama</i>	<i>Follow-up</i>	<i>The Power Elite</i>
<i>Relevance</i>	<i>Magnitude</i>	<i>Celebrity</i>	<i>Good News</i>	<i>News Organisation's Agenda</i>

Source: Own illustration. Based on Harcup & O'Neill (2017).

This is in line with a review of the literature, which shows that there is a remarkable amount of coherence and congruence regarding news values (Caple & Bednarek, 2013). Agunda (n.d., p. 4) argues that news values in African journalism can be similar to news values in “the West”, because they are “just an extension of the western journalism”. In East African countries, he observes an obsession with the political elites, who are key decision makers. Besides, media systems may have a strong impact on the news values impacting a specific journalism culture. Agunda (n.d., p. 4) raise the example of Tanzania:

“Tanzania with a relatively new tradition in private media, following the economic liberalisation since the 1990s, has tended to ignore these new celebrities, who have a lot of influence among youth, thus continuing the old tradition of the State-owned media covering party leaders and cadres almost exclusively.”

What does the fact that news values are critical for selecting and thus reporting tell us about the status quo in covering migration and refugee matters? In Module 4 we learn that reporting on this topic is often associated with conflicts and crises in European media and under-represented in the media in general. Several scholars have focused on the newsworthiness of migration and forced displacement. An overview from Eberl et al. (2018, p. 210) shows: “[Real world events, such as elections or terroristic attacks, can increase salience of immigration related issues in the media.” This indicates some crucial news value: bad news, particularly negative incidents and drama such as shipwrecks. The model developed by Harcup & O'Neill (2017) offers a wider range of news values (see Figure 30), which might be inherent in migration news stories.



SUGGESTION FOR A CLASSROOM DEBATE TO ADDRESS THE COGNITIVE SKILLS OF ANALYSIS AND THE AFFECTIVE SKILLS OF RECEIVING OR RESPONDING:

Compare news stories about migrants and refugees from different countries; e.g. from your home country and a neighboring country. Look at examples from various media segments (online, broadcasting, print etc.) for each country, too. Which news values from Harcup & O’Neill (2017) do you detect in which media? Discuss your results.

SUGGESTION FOR A CLASSROOM ACTIVITY THAT ADDRESSES THE COGNITIVE SKILLS OF APPLYING AND THE AFFECTIVE SKILLS OF RECEIVING:

The students should formulate short news in such a way that they contain as many news values as possible. Keep in mind specific news values to be selected by the class leader or through class discussion. Then the results should be discussed in the class with a focus on the various news values.

It is important to be aware of the key news values. It can be helpful for journalists to ask themselves about the news values they follow in their own news coverage when selecting news. Of course, selecting news is much more than just a pure focus on values. It may also be important to know “who is selecting news, for whom, in what medium and by what means (and available resources), [...] as whatever news values may or may not be inherent in any potential story” (Harcup & O’Neill, 2017, p. 1483). Besides the individual decision (which is consciously or unconsciously oriented towards news values inherent in any event or issue), the medium, media systems, journalism cultures etc. also might play a role in whether a story becomes news.

Professional reporting: best practice criteria

Shapiro et al. (2006, p. 431) examined what excellence means in journalism. Their multisource analysis resulted in some of the following criteria:

- “provide a benefit to society in terms of public impact, relevance, or service provided by the story”,
- “provide thoughtful and logical analysis of reported material, to bring clarity to complicated subjects, and to place the facts in the context of their background and of the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions behind the news”,
- demonstrate integrity (“that is, behaving with fairness and independence from their sources”),
- “be transparent in method – that is, the audience should be able to understand where the information comes from”,
- “demonstrate exemplary storytelling technique”.

As with any topic, these quality criteria also apply to journalists covering matters of migrants and refugees – the relevance of this reporting for society is evident, particularly in light of Module 5. A look into the Modules 1 to 3 confirms that this topic is a complicated one that needs to be worked through carefully and thoughtfully. It is also important to work independently and transparently on such a diverse topic, as the various case studies of Modules 6 to 9 show the distinctions between countries.

When reporting on migration and matters concerning refugees, journalists should ensure technical accuracy, produce stories with a good structure and a story arc, surprise the audience and show creativity with the choice of topic and production. Of course, basic principles of ethical journalism – fairness, humanity and accountability – should be kept in mind (Ethical Journalism Network, n.d.c).

Journalists and news organizations may be well advised to respect codes that outline best practices for reporting on migrants and refugees. There are many international codes like the Greece Charter of Idomeni (“Charter of Idomeni,” n.d.) or the Charter of Rome (“Charter of Rome,” n.d.), as well as the international EJN’s ethical guidelines on migration reporting (Ethical Journalism Network, n.d.a), the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights’ e-Media toolkit (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2020) and many more to enhance journalists reporting skills on migration (European Federation of Journalists, 2016). Working through the various guides gives journalists valuable rules for reporting.



SUGGESTION FOR AN EXERCISE TO ADDRESS THE COGNITIVE SKILLS OF KNOWLEDGE:

As an introduction to the topic, students should collect and discuss important quality criteria for professional reporting. Tentative goals for discussion can be found in the paragraph above.

Choice of sources and relevant interviewees

Covering migrants’ and refugees’ stories with professionalism and sensitivity requires additional competences. Practitioners and researchers agree: Journalists should prepare well for such assignments. They should start with profound preparation for special research into one story. The journalist should start to review the previous coverage from several media to get a general overview, to know the political, cultural, and social context of countries. To do so competently, journalists need to identify and read reports and relevant data by international, national and local organizations, institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGO) involved in the issue, as well as monitor

social media, politicians and officials, and talk to migration experts (among others: Abu-Fadil, n. d.; Terceros, 2018).

This research can proceed in a variety of ways: Journalists can access information both actively and passively. The use of internet sources is dominant in many newsrooms who are reporting on migration issues. The Erich Brost Institute for International Journalism (EBI) at the TU Dortmund University conducted training seminars on migration reporting in Africa and Europe (see Introduction). In the training conducted in Dakar/Senegal in 2018, the participants indicated that online sources seem to be the most frequently used ones. Press releases, interviews (face-to-face and telephone), other media, and information from governments and other authorities, are used rather frequently. Rarely, however, are blogs used, or do journalists ask their colleagues. Press conferences and social media are less frequently used. These results are in line with the scholarly observation that newsrooms are often rather passive recipients of information – they use press releases or information from news agencies (among others: Machill & Beiler, 2009; Neuberger et al., 2009). A considerable part of “journalistic attention focused on only a few internet offerings” (Machill & Beiler, 2009, p.178). “Search engines, in particular Google, dominate the source-determination process and thereby have a decisive influence on the entire course of journalists’ research” (Machill & Beiler, 2009, p. 178).

The wide range of sources – phone calls, social media, face-to-face and digital meetings, other media outlets, scrutinizing (big) data, investigative research and so on – is far too often unexploited. NGOs as well as established sources such as governments, political parties, judicial authorities, police departments, local governments, business organizations, trade unions, churches, international actors, and many more can be consulted. But journalists reporting on migration and forced displacement should not only rely on official and elite sources but should work with a diversity in sources of information – an aspect often lacking in European as well as North-African media (International Centre for Migration Policy Development, 2016).

An prime source for reporting matters of migrants and refugees are the affected people themselves. Indeed, stories that give migrants and refugees and local communities a chance to explain their situation comprise a favourable option for journalists (European Federation of Journalists, 2016). There are many voices outside politics which are important, because politicians are disproportionately often represented in the media coverage about this issue (see Module 4). The Ethiopian Africa News Channel guideline “Editorial Policy on Migration Reporting”, published in Amharic, advises journalists to inquire more deeply into key issues: How are people on the ground affected? Try to find ways of reporting on the almost invisible effects, such as the long-term consequences of psychological damage and trauma of migrants and refugees, perhaps increasing the likelihood that those affected will be a danger in the future, either against other people or, as a group, against other groups or other countries (Africa News Channel, 2019). This is important, because migrants and refugees are more than actors in stories. They are humans – with individual stories and feelings, as further discussed in Module 11.

Ulriikka Myöhänen, Finnish multimedia journalist

“Go to the field with an open mind, talk with different kinds of people, listen as many perspectives as possible and look for strong factual proof for your story. Also, make it clear from the very beginning in your story, why it is important to talk about these issues. And most importantly: avoid carefully the trap of stereotypes and keep the gender balance in mind!”



Source: Private.

Gloria Laker Adiiki Aciro, Ugandan journalist coordinating the Uganda Refugee Online News Network

“Reporting by refugees about refugees and for refugees themselves: Hire, train and engage young refugees and migrants’ journalists themselves to tell their own stories. [...] There is a great need to incorporate Peace Journalism into refugee and migrants reporting given the complexity of conflicts and poor economic situation driving Africans away from their homes. And by encouraging reports about local peace, dialogues and reconciliation efforts among refugees in settlements will in the long run drive refugees in contributing to peace back home.”



Source: Private.

Jelena Prtoric, Croatian freelance journalist

“When it comes to reporting, spending more time with migrants, on-the-ground, is still as important as ever. We need to spend enough time in the field in order to understand the complexities of their situation, their personal stories, the situation of the countries through which they are passing and the context in their countries of origin, to be able to tell the full story.”



Source: Private.



SUGGESTION FOR AN EXERCISE TO ADDRESS THE COGNITIVE SKILLS OF EVALUATION AND THE AFFECTIVE SKILLS OF RECEIVING:

Please watch the video “Choosing Credible Resources for Research” (Osinski, 2016) and discuss. A few essential characteristics of good data and good sources are mentioned in this module and in the video.

Let the participants list these characteristics and discuss whether they wish to add or omit, based upon their experience and their cultural background. You can also carry out this assessment using a journalistic example. Examples can be found in the section “Covering migrants and refugees: Practical examples” in this module.

Credible information and reliable research

Obviously, the quality of the collected data is also important: Journalists should research impeccable data and details (see Module 2), so that they can fill a gap of quality information when writing about human stories (European Federation of Journalists, 2016). Generally, it is important to check the information.

Certainly, journalists are not able to guarantee the truth in all cases, but getting the facts right is “the cardinal principle of journalism” (Ethical Journalism Network, n.d.c). On the one hand, the increasingly toxic and contested surroundings framing the reporting on migrants and refugee matters in parts of the world, where journalists should be aware that sources might have their own agenda (see professional challenges in Module 5 for examples in migration reporting). On the other hand, “attacks on the media as purveyors” of bias, dis-information or false information, should be more than sufficient arguments for journalists to thoroughly check their sources (Abu-Fadil, n.d., p. 34). This does not only apply to official sources, such as governments with their own hidden political agenda, private companies that may have economic interests when spreading information or organisations and institutions with own interests. It also applies of course to civil society and migrants and refugees as part of the society as they can also pursue their own agenda with their information. Journalists need to choose their sources carefully and report with awareness of own preconceptions and subjectivity objectively and truthfully. “Journalism [...] needs to proactively detect and uncover new cases and forms of disinformation” (Berger, 2018, p. 11). Research on the internet can lead to webpages whose information is sketchy, obsolete or incorrect. That is why “caution on using online information is necessary. Particularly when algorithms increasingly govern the rapid spread of information online by sharing and liking information on news sites and social media” (Vergeer, 2018, p. 49). A journalist should check if a website is trustworthy, if it is transparent about where the information comes from, and if the source is indicated, how old the information is, and if the provided information sounds plausible.

This thoroughness does not only apply to the internet. In general, journalists should check the relevance, the validity, the usefulness and the logic of information – online and offline. In that sense, journalists should carry the self-awareness of everyday investigative journalists, who do background-research on all sources and issues and give “thorough analysis of the context in which the information is delivered [...] as much as one can on deadline” (Quinn, 2018, p. 6). Fact checking websites, guidelines and handbooks on disinformation are e.g. the “Journalism, ‘Fake News’ and Disinformation. Handbook for journalism education and training” (Ireton & Posetti, 2018) or “Factfulness” (Rosling, 2018). Exchange and cooperation with other journalists (see Module 13), and trustworthy sources (see Module 2) are key factors in order to find professional ways to check information.

In addition to the credibility of sources, an accurate understanding of the source for journalists and the audience must be considered. First, there is the aspect of the journalists’ understanding: For example, statistics can be tricky for journalists to deal with. Data and statistics from governments,

NGOs, and international institutions – but also civil society organisations – could provide inconsistent information. It is important to provide the proper context and sources (see Module 2 & Module 3) in reporting the story (Abu-Fadil, n.d.).

The example of Sofia Papadopoulou, a journalist from the Athens News Agency-Macedonian Press Agency (ANA-MPA), who reported from the refugee camp in Idomeni, Greece exemplified that the journalists' understanding of interviewees is as relevant as the journalists' understanding of data and statistics:

“One day, a young man came holding his newborn baby in his hands, sat at the centre of the tracks and, with the help of another young refugee who was speaking some English, he started protesting about the living conditions in the camp. The baby was obviously only a few days old and a TV journalist popped the question: Was the child born in the camp? ‘Yes,’ the man translating replied. When the father told him, in Arabic, that the baby was born in the hospital but brought to the camp only a few days after, he said ‘ma’leesh’ (It’s ok/never mind).” (Fronista & Papadopoulou, 2018, p. 138)

Aida Alami and Salaheddine Lemaizi, international journalists from Morocco

“Facts first: Be accurate, impartial, act independently, fair and transparently. **Avoid writing what you can’t verify for yourself. Don’t let either the authorities or organizations influence your reporting.**

Travel as much as you can to where the story is happening. Try to see things for yourself. [...] Journalism on migration is an opportunity because it is imperative that journalists return to the field. Media productions on migration can only succeed and



Sources: Private.

achieve professionalism if they manage to do field work through investigation, reporting and interviews, a lot of interviews. [...] As a journalist, you should keep distance and stay focused on the issue and the facts. However, treat your subjects with the right ethics and always keep in mind the bigger context and allow their stories to be heard. Connect with the migrants that you interview, write about the up-close and personal stories that explain the bigger issues. [...] Beware of the racial slurs and make sure you promote evidence-based coverage. Challenge hate-speech by going straight to the facts and avoid stereotypes and clichés. Independently check the facts and evidence presented to you. Always try to get your subjects to corroborate their stories as much as they can. [...] Gender-based violence and discrimination is part of migration stories. Looking at these issues through the lens of gender can only enrich the reporting and add to existing narratives.”

Mistakes or misunderstandings in translation and interpretation of foreign-language statements, confusing sources or misleading information can lead to mistakes or incorrect information in the news. Therefore, because interviewees can be misunderstood for various reasons (e.g. see Module 11), it is important that information is checked very carefully. Also, it is important that it is not dealt with in the same way as in the case cited by the Greek ANA-MPA journalist, who pointed out to some colleagues a mistake in the translation and one said: “As long as he said that and I have it on camera, I will not let your truth ruin a good story!” (Fronista & Papadopoulou, 2018, p. 138).

Second, a correct understanding of sources is also important for the audience. Journalists can help their audience to better understand the complex issue of migration. This can promote transparency in sources to counter ‘fake news’ or propaganda (European Federation of Journalists, 2016). The responsibility for news content also means correcting errors (White, 2015). Also, being transparent with sources and research methods is one crucial aspect, but another just as important is to provide context and background information to news events (Abu-Fadil, n.d.). Taking account of the bigger picture of a story avoids victimization, over-simplification and a narrow humanitarian framing of coverage (Ethical Journalism Network, n.d.b).



SUGGESTION FOR AN INTERACTIVE ELEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM TO ADDRESS THE COGNITIVE SKILLS OF UNDERSTANDING AND THE AFFECTIVE SKILLS OF RESPONDING:

After introducing a variety of sources and their value for migration and refugee reporting please do the following exercise, which is called “rating line”.

1. Formulate statements such as “Press releases are important sources of information for the journalistic migration coverage” or “In migration reporting, I often use press releases as sources.”
2. Place two posters in the room. On one are the words “I fully agree” and on the other “I don’t agree by any means”.
3. Ask the participants to position themselves according to the statement and discuss with them their positions. Let them argue why they use a specific source.
4. Contextualize the attitudes with hints on what aspect of each source requires focused attention.

In this way, participants learn to argue and reflect on their own use of, and attitude toward, sources.

Correct wording and perspectives

Certainly, not every politician's press release about migrants and refugees should be believed, and not every news item on the internet on migration is true; reporting on those issues should also mean to challenge myths (European Federation of Journalists, 2016) and stereotypes. Remembering the correct wording is one working method that can be used by journalists to avoid myths and stereotypes. For "instance, instead of writing 'migrant or refugee crisis' which makes the people a problem it's better to write 'crisis of migrant policy'; instead of talking about the 'EU/national values' or 'moral values', it's better to talk about the 'universal values which Europe hold dear'" (European Federation of Journalists, 2016). In expert interviews about covering immigrants and immigration, journalists are advised to stay away from using labels like "illegal" or "undocumented". Rather, journalists should describe the situation or a person's status as precisely as possible and provide context. For instance, no person is illegal – he or she is only currently living in the country illegally. The same goes with victimization: Migrants or refugees are not "victims", and so they should only be quoted as such if they describe themselves that way (Carcamo et al., 2014). Also "victimizing" language such as "destitute", "devastated", "defenceless", "pathetic" and "tragedy", should be avoided. Such wording disempowers the migrants and refugees and limits the options for change (Africa News Channel, 2019). But on the other hand, any imprecise use of emotive words to describe what has happened to people is also not supportive. Migrants should not be reported as heroes. News coverage should not portray only the success of some migrants' journeys, according to the guidelines from the Ethiopian African News Channel (Africa News Channel, 2019). The Five Point Guide developed by the EJN requires journalists to know the legal framework, in order to avoid false wording when speaking of migrants and refugees (Ethical Journalism Network, n.d.c). With words, journalists can also correct misleading images. When journalists think of the images that many people have in their minds of migrants and refugees, and about the fears they associate with them, they can show that "refugees and migrants are not young strong men using smartphones or tourist family members travelling with expensive luggages [*sic*]" (European Federation of Journalists, 2016). Many of them are (unaccompanied) children.⁵

Therefore, journalists should stick to salient and specific facts, instead of bringing an exaggerated emotional direction into either the stories or the words. These ethical standards are especially important for sensitive topics like migration and matters concerning refugees. Frequently, media focus only on specific events, dramatize occurrences, and pay a lot of attention to tragedies (see Module 4). An alternative approach can also give a story a wider view – away from the often-used conflict and problem orientated focus to a certain extent. Constructive journalism⁶ is about looking into the

5 "Unaccompanied children remain a significant part of irregular migration flows" (IOM, 2019b, p. 105). The number of children among refugees is "very high, fluctuating" between 41 and 52% in the past years (IOM, 2019b, p. 39).

6 For further information about constructive journalism in general see Constructive Institute (2020), McIntyre & Gyldensted (2018), Mast et al. (2019), among others.

future. Journalists can point towards solutions instead of telling only about problems and drama. That includes for example focusing on the resilience and recovery of people who were survivors of trafficking in human beings in the context of migration and forced displacement. Policy issues and how these can be improved should be examined as well (White, 2015).

Therefore, it is important to reflect on one's own role as a journalist. A journalist should explore the story "with the same care, attention to detail and respect" that they would want "if roles were reversed" (Nobel, 2018). This also means that there is more than a national perspective. And, as already mentioned before, it is about more than one topic: Besides shipwrecks and border issues, housing, religion, employment, successful artists, professionals and entrepreneurs as well as background information can be relevant angles and issues to explore (Triandafyllidou, 2017).

Dr. Lydia Ouma Radoli, Kenyan broadcast journalist and media researcher



Source: Private.

"A constructive approach will help put migration in more a positive nuance. Migration is dynamic and we are likely to see continuous migration trends, probably looking at how migration can be tapped for international and regional cohesion, rather than a factor that brings about community disintegration and loss of identity. Editors and journalist could invest more in migration knowledge, especially **linking migration to other subjects like development, integration, cultural exploration,** unlike the focus that has always pegged to security threats, global populism politics and carnage. Not saying that these stories should not be covered, but rather there should be a balance in coverage to show that the migration story is not skewed but exposes a real human phenomenon."

Cécile Debarge, freelance journalist based in Italy



Source: Private.

"The majority of the stories about migration are about crossing. Crossing a border, crossing a river, a mountain, a desert, crossing the Mediterranean, everything but a story sticking to the border. It's a major mistake because migration is a process, a life-long journey. **The most original angles are the ones trying to dig deeper in the story before or after the border.** When people are not only defined by their movements. **This is where there is a space for a universal narrative focused on humans.** It usually enhances an empowering narrative, where migrants are not just suffering or receiving but are also actors of their own change. These are usually underreported features."

Dennis Kwadwo Peprah, Ghanaian news agency journalist

“**Dehumanizing words and phrases must be avoided.** [...] Migration stories must always be placed in a global context and a well-balanced coverage. Must include variety of sources – migrants, refugee groups, civil society, non-governmental organisation, relevance public institutions and human rights activists. General economic effects of migration for both sending and receiving countries, migration and technology (use of ICT to facilitate migration, most especially irregular migration involving smugglers), and gender/labour inequalities are good story angles that journalists can explore and place in international focus.”



Source: Private.

Tersoo Peter Zamber, Nigerian radio journalist

- “1. Humanizing migration stories by journalists.
2. **Being objective, stating both sides, the negative and positive sides of migration.**
3. Highlighting benefits of migration to the individual, country of origin, transit and destination.”



Source: Private.



SUGGESTION FOR AN EXERCISE TO ADDRESS THE COGNITIVE SKILLS OF CREATING AND THE AFFECTIVE SKILLS OF RECEIVING:

This module offers a wide range of best practices in migration and refugee reporting on the basis of which participants can develop good journalistic criteria themselves. Tentative goals are the mentioned tips above. Participants might also discuss the different assessments of the relevance of the criteria as journalistic benchmarks.

Covering migrants and refugees: practical examples

There are excellent best practice cases for migration coverage around the globe. The following examples are suggested to study sensitive and innovative ways to cover the topic.

- “The war on my phone” is a film which offers an intimate insight into life in war-ridden Syria and four refugees torn between Syria and Europe. It looks beyond politics and tells personal stories of refugees. The film covers the topic in a human way, but keeps the emotions in check (“The war on my phone”, 2018).⁷
- “Workers in Spain’s Strawberry Fields Speak Out on Abuse” is a report on an aspect of migration that is partially neglected: under what conditions do migrants live in host countries? It covers the political, cultural and personal backgrounds in which the events occur. The report offers fact-based and personal insights and tries to provide a multi-perspective view. In addition, it discloses to the audience the sources and explains why some of the individuals are anonymized. Particularly relevant, it attempts to provide a wealth of background information (Alami, 2019a, 2019b).
- “Assad’s Victory. What Comes after War in Syria?” from the German magazine *Der Spiegel* is about the situation in Syria after the regime has largely won the war against the insurgents. Migration is addressed in this article, and the background stories are told. Political positions are set out, events and facts are covered in a wider – also historical, international and cultural – context. Protagonists are accompanied, presented and quoted. The journalist follows a multi-perspective approach (Koelbl, 2017; Koelbl, 2018).
- The Deutsche Welle (DW) Documentary “The gatekeepers of Europe. Outsourcing border controls to Africa” is focusing on Europe “paying African states billions of euros to act as its new border police”, and on development aid used “as a bargaining chip to control immigration” (Schäfer & Schlindwein, 2019). The DW documentary shows a fact-based background research which also includes people who are affected. It focuses on the underreported experiences of migrants and refugees who risk their lives in the Sahara Desert (Schäfer & Schlindwein, 2019).
- With “Émigration irrégulière. À bord des zodiacs de la mort” the Moroccan news website of the *journal Les Inspirations éco* provides a best practice example for compelling and informative reporting on the topic. The article recounts a boat tragedy which only 11 out of 56 migrants survived. Through interviews with survivors and relatives of the victims, the journalists uncover the tactics of the smugglers. Also due to a lack of information and knowledge, the migrants had fallen for the smugglers’ false and fatal promises. Additional sources put the story in perspective and show its relevance. The article cites official statistics, state authorities as well as national NGOs and mentions the measures seized by the UN, European Union and others (Les Inspirations éco, 2019).

⁷ There are versions available in English, German and Spanish at Deutsche Welle (DW) online. English: <https://www.dw.com/en/the-war-on-my-phone-lifeline-to-syria-1/av-46642884>, German: <https://www.dw.com/de/the-war-on-my-phone-1/av-46642882>, Spanish: <https://www.dw.com/es/la-guerra-en-mi-celular-noticias-de-siria-1/av-46642906>.



SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENT TO ADDRESS THE COGNITIVE SKILLS OF CREATING AND EVALUATING AND THE AFFECTIVE SKILLS OF RECEIVING AND RESPONDING:

(A) Let participants produce a report on a current event on the subject of migration and refugee, in which they apply all the (ethical) quality criteria discussed in this module.

(B) Let participants write a paper to reflect on different factors in their own process of producing news on migration (e.g. news values or values from guidelines for ethical reporting).

(C) Let participants exchange their news reports and identify selected sources. Let them judge if the sources are credible and the research reliable.



RECOMMENDED READING:

Academic:

Harcup, T. & O'Neill, D. (2017). 'What is news? News values revisited (again)', *Journalism Studies* 18(12). 1470-1488. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2016.1150193>

Journalistic:

Ruz, Camila (2015). *The battle over the words used to describe migrants*. Retrieved November 25, 2020, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-34061097>

Institutional:

Ethical Journalism Network. (n.d.) *Media and Migration*. Retrieved November 25, 2020, from <https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/what-we-do/media-and-migration>

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