Moving Stories

International Review of How Media Cover Migration

Ethical
Journalism
Network

EDITED BY **AIDAN WHITE**

Moving Stories

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FOREWORD

Beyond the headlines

» JAN EGELAND

For years, the Norwegian Refugee Council and other humanitarian actors have called out – too often in vain – to the international community, to the media, the decision makers and the public opinion about the sufferings of millions of civilians fleeing war in Syria.

As the conflict escalated, and the humanitarian disaster with it, creating the biggest refugee crisis in our generation, our appeals for wider media attention, with some notable exceptions, fell on deaf ears with an apparent lack of interest on the part of the vast majority of television and radio companies and major newspapers.

It was arguably only with the tragic death of Aylan Kurdi and the publication of pictures of his body on a beach in Turkey that Western public opinion and global media finally woke up. Immediately, media lenses focused sharply on the humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean and both politicians and ordinary people had to respond.

What about the many other humanitarian crises beyond the media's radar? Every two minutes another South Sudanese child becomes severely malnourished. But these stories are seldom told.

But this incident only raised another question. What about the many other humanitarian crises beyond the media's radar? In war-torn South Sudan, for example. This country is rarely in the limelight. In 2011, it gained independence from Sudan ending a generation of war. Two years later, the civil war broke out resulting in massive forced displacement and today the country is one of the world's impoverished places. Every two minutes another South Sudanese child becomes severely malnourished. But these stories are seldom told.

A South Sudanese colleague told me it was strange to see how things can change from one day to the other only because of international media attention.

"In Europe, it was that boy on the beach. Maybe we need a picture of a boy like that in South Sudan," she said while preparing to go on a new mission to one of the world's hardest-to-reach areas where dropping food from World Food Programme airplanes is the only way to provide hungry people with something to eat.

Too often not even stories about children dying of starvation are enough to make headlines on the nine o'clock news. Humanitarian disasters that deserve our attention often go uncovered because there is no photographer or journalist on the ground to tell the story. Only a couple of conflicts receive our attention at any given time, while most dramas get none at all. Why is that?

The reasons are complex. It is not just a lack of humanity on the news agenda or a matter of luck or a matter of caring more about some people at the expense of others. We need a broader lens to see what really is going on.

In the Norwegian Refugee Council we annually publish a list of the world's 10 most neglected displacement crises. This year the Rohingyas have topped the list. This minority Muslim community under pressure in Myanmar is also found in neighbouring Bangladesh where hundreds of thousands have sought protection.

One criterion to be on the neglected crises list is a lack of media attention. Other factors include lack of funding, little humanitarian presence and difficult access to the victims of the conflict. Often, there is a strong correlation between the different factors: access problems can lead to lack of media attention, which again can lead to lack of donor concern, which again leads to even bigger access issues. This completes a vicious circle that is not easily broken.

But there is an important truth in all of this – decision makers pay attention to the media, and independent journalists reporting with care, humanity and professionalism have enormous power to tell stories that create a new path.

But, as this report reveals, mainstream media is currently under pressure with news companies struggling to adapt to a new reality with plummeting revenues and competition from new media. Often media will simply say they cannot afford to cover these stories.

But this should not be an excuse for adopting a herd mentality – where media follow each other to cover a small cluster of the most obvious stories. Media around the world are now reporting on the disastrous humanitarian consequences of the civil war in Syria and the exodus to Europe and they are going beyond the numbers story which has dominated news coverage so far.

Yet as the poignant human tragedies from Syria takes centre stage, where is the coverage of the second largest humanitarian crisis and war on our watch: in Yemen? Here, around 21 million people are in urgent need of emergency relief. They suffer from external and internal bombardment, blockade and totally inadequate assistance and protection.

Also the journalists themselves need to be protected to be able to report on the atrocities. For journalists reporting from conflict and war 2015 is another deadly year. Like humanitarian workers, journalists are not only at risk of becoming so-called collateral damage during military operations, they are also increasingly targeted.

It is therefore essential that the international community focus on the protection of journalists in armed conflicts to allow for less casualties in the imminent future.

In Europe we talk about a sharing of responsibility in terms of coping with the growing influx of migration. Maybe it is time to talk about a media "burden sharing" where media institutions, rather than chasing the same stories, divide the coverage of the human suffering so that children in grave risk in South Sudan or Gaza do not continue to stay in life-threatening situations without the world knowing.

This EJN report *Moving Stories* is a welcome step to allow journalists get an overview of the problem areas as well as promoting best practices when it comes to reporting on the wider migration story.

Without media attention, humanitarian crises, with their horrifying impacts, will continue to be learned by the outside world way too late.

Jan Egeland *is the Secretary-general of the Norwegian Refugee Council*

Without media attention, humanitarian crises, with their horrifying impacts, will continue to be learned by the outside world way too late.

MACTA

INTRODUCTION

Moving stories

» KIERAN COOKE AND AIDAN WHITE

Migration is part of the human condition. Ever since humankind emerged out of East Africa it has been on the move – searching for a better climate, looking for supplies of food and water, finding security and safety.

Migration has suddenly jumped to the top of the news agenda. During 2015 journalists reported the biggest mass movement of people around the world in recent history.

Television screens and newspapers have been filled with stories about the appalling loss of life and suffering of thousands of people escaping war in the Middle East or oppression and poverty in Africa and elsewhere.

Every day in 2015 seemed to bring a new migration tragedy: Syrian child refugees perish in the Mediterranean; groups of Rohingyas escaping persecution in Myanmar suffocate on boats in the South China Sea; children fleeing from gang warfare in Central America die of thirst in the desert as they try to enter the US.

In response to this crisis the Ethical Journalism Network commissioned *Moving Stories* – a review of how media in selected countries have reported on refugees and migrants in a tumultuous year. We asked writers and researchers to examine the quality of coverage and to highlight reporting problems as well as good work.

The conclusions from many different parts of the world are remarkably similar: journalism under pressure from a weakening media economy; political bias and opportunism that drives the news agenda; the dangers of hate-speech, stereotyping and social exclusion of refugees and migrants. But at the same time there have been inspiring examples of careful, sensitive and ethical journalism that have shown empathy for the victims.

In most countries the story has been dominated by two themes – numbers and emotions. Most of the time coverage is politically led with media often following an agenda dominated by loose language and talk of invasion and swarms. At other moments the story has been laced with humanity, empathy and a focus on the suffering of those involved.

What is unquestionable is that media everywhere play a vital role in bringing the world's attention to these events**.** This report, written by journalists from or in the countries concerned, relates how their media cover migration.

They tell very different stories. **Nepal** and the **Gambia** are exporters of labour. Thousands of migrants, mostly young men, flock from the mountain villages of Nepal to work in the heat of the Gulf and Malaysia: often the consequences are disastrous. People from the Gambia make the treacherous trip across the Sahara to Libya and then by boat to Europe: many have perished on the way – either in the desert or drowned in the Mediterranean.

In these countries reporting of the migration of large numbers of the young – in many ways the lifeblood of their nations – is limited and stories about the hardship migrants endure are rare. Censorship or a lack of resources – or a combination of both – are mainly to blame for the inadequacies of coverage. Self-censorship, where reporters do not want to offend either their media employer or the government, is also an issue.

The reports on migration in **China, India** and **Brazil** tell another story. Though large numbers of people migrate from each of these countries, the main focus is on internal migration, a global phenomenon often ignored by mainstream media that involves millions and dwarfs the international movement of people.

What's considered to be the biggest movement of people in history has taken place in China over the last 35 years. Cities are undergoing explosive growth, with several approaching 20 million inhabitants. Similar movements are happening in India and, to a lesser extent, in Brazil.

In Africa the headlines focus on people striving to leave the continent and heading north, but there is also migration between countries, with many people from the impoverished central regions heading for **South Africa** – a country where media also deal with problems of xenophobia and governmental pressure.

In Europe migration and refugee issues have shaken the tree of European unity with hundreds of thousands trekking by land and sea to escape war and poverty. The reports here reveal how for almost a year media have missed opportunities to sound the alarm to an imminent migration refugee crisis.

Media struggle to provide balanced coverage when political leaders respond with a mix of bigotry and panic – some announcing they will only take in Christian migrants while others plans to establish walls and razor wire fences. Much of the focus has been on countries in South Eastern Europe which has provide a key route for migrants and refugees on the march. In **Bulgaria,** as in much of the region, media have failed to play a responsible role and sensationalism has dominated news coverage.

In **Italy**, a frontline state where the Mediterranean refugee tragedy first unfolded, the threat of hate-speech is always present, though this is often counterbalanced by an ethical attachment of many in journalism to a purpose-built charter against discrimination. In **Britain** the story has also often been politically-driven and focused, sometimes without a sense of scale or balance: this has been particularly evident in reportage of the plight of refugees in Calais.

In **Turkey**, seen by many European politicians as a key country in stemming the onward rush of migrants, most media are under the thumb of a government that punishes dissident journalists, so the public debate is limited.

Like their Turkish colleagues, journalists in **Lebanon** live with the reality of millions of refugees from war-torn Syria within their borders which makes telling the story more complex and it is not helped by confused mixing of fact and opinion by many media.

At the same time in the **United States** media have helped make the migrant and refugee issue an explosive topic in debates between Republican Party candidates for the presidency. Media time has focused on heated and often racist exchanges. This has obscured much of the good reporting in some media that provides much-needed context. South of the border, in **Mexico** media also suffer from undue political pressure and self-censorship.

"Open the world more equitably so we all may walk freely. Or close the borders and let each one return to his house and see how much poorer and drearier and darker the world is when we all stay at home." – Chibundu Onuzo

In **Australia** the media in a country built by migrants struggles to apply well-meaning codes of journalistic practice within a toxic political climate that has seen a rise in racism directed at new arrivals.

These reports cover only a handful of countries, but they are significant. The problems of scant and prejudicial coverage of migration issues exist everywhere. Even reporting of migration in the international media – with a few notable exceptions – tends to be overly simplistic.

Migrants are described as a threat. There is a tendency, both among many politicians and in sections of the mainstream media, to lump migrants together and present them as a seemingly endless tide of people who will steal jobs, become a burden on the state and ultimately threaten the native way of life.

Such reporting is not only wrong; it is also dishonest. Migrants often bring enormous benefits to their adopted countries.

How would California's agricultural industry or the Texan oil fields survive without the presence of hundreds of thousands of Mexicans and Central American workers, often labouring on minimal wages? How could the health service in the UK continue without the thousands of migrant nurses and doctors from the developing world? How would cities like Dubai, Doha or Singapore have been built without labourers from Nepal or Bangladesh – or how would they function without the armies of maids and helpers from the Philippines and Indonesia?

These reports underscore why media need to explain and reinforce a wider understanding that migration is a natural process. No amount of razor wire or no matter how high walls are built, desperate migrants will find a way through. People will still flock to the cities, drawn by the hope of a better life.

The migrant crisis is not going to go away: the impact of widespread climate change and growing inequality is likely to exacerbate it in the years ahead.

The inescapable conclusion is that there has never been a greater need for useful and reliable intelligence on the complexities of migration and for media coverage to be informed, accurate and laced with humanity. But if that is to be achieved we must strengthen the craft of journalism.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND USEFUL LINKS

1. Ethical context

Migrants and refugees are a vulnerable minority who can quickly become scapegoats for the ills of society – social and economic decline, crime and unemployment, pressure on health and welfare services and lack of security.

Media can counter this threat and help people better understand the complex migration story by applying ethical principles, avoiding crude stereotypes, developing good newsroom practice and engaging with the audience. In particular, journalists should apply and respect the following five core principles of journalism in their work:

- Accuracy: fact-based reporting, analysis and commentary;
- Independence: journalism free from self-censorship and political pressure;
- Impartiality: fair reporting that tells all sides of the story;
- Humanity: sensitive and careful journalism that avoids doing undue harm;
- Accountability: media transparency and commitment to correct errors.

2. Newsroom practice

Media companies and journalists' unions and associations should prepare concise guides to best practices for the reporting on refugees and migrants. In addition, all media should examine their internal structures to make sure they are telling the story in the most effective way.

News organisations can:

- Appoint specialist reporters with good knowledge of the subject to the migration and refugee beat.
- Provide detailed information on the background of migrants and refugees and the consequences of migration. It is especially important to note that some major studies reveal how migration can strengthen national economies in the longer term, even where there are short-term challenges.
- Avoid political bias and challenge deceptive handling of the facts and incitement to hatred particularly by political, religious or other community leaders and public figures.
- Respect sources of information and grant anonymity to those who require it most, particularly those who are vulnerable and most at risk.
- Establish transparent and accessible internal systems for dealing with complaints from the audience over coverage of migrant and refugee issues.
- Review employment policies to ensure newsroom diversity with reporters and editors from minority communities.
- Provide training for journalists and editors covering everything from international conventions and law to refugee rights and what terms to use while covering refugee stories.
- Monitor coverage regularly. Organise internal discussions on how to develop and improve the scope of migration coverage.
- Manage online comments and engage with the audience to ensure that migration stories are not used as a platform for abuse or intolerance.

Media associations and journalists' unions can also support national structures for independent regulation or self-regulation of journalism, such as press councils. Where there are industry-wide codes of conduct and guidelines dealing with non-discrimination these should cover reporting migration.

3. Engage with the media audience and connect with migrants

Refugee groups, activists and NGOs, many of which provide vital information for media, can be briefed on how best to communicate with journalists and media can explain to the audience their policies and editorial approach which may encourage readers, viewers and listeners to contribute useful additional information.

4. Challenge hate-speech

Hate-speech is widespread in the media. Often it can't be prevented when it comes out of the mouths of prominent public figures, but journalists should always remember that just because someone says something outrageous doesn't make it newsworthy. The Ethical Journalism Network has developed a 5-point text for hate-speech as a useful tool for newsrooms. (See below).

5. Demand access to information

Media cannot report without access to reliable information and facts. When access to information is restricted, such as not being allowed to enter

refugee camps, media and civil society groups should press the government both nationally and internationally to be more transparent. Media and journalists' unions should meet regularly with police and state authorities and agencies to ensure journalists have safe conditions in which to work and access to the information they need.

Some Useful Links

Glossaries

International Organization for Migration (IOM Key migration terms)

United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

(UNAOC) Media Friendly Glossary for Migration

Statistics

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Statistics and Operational Data

International Organization for Migration (IOM) World Migration Report

Internal Displacement Monitoring Center

Global Estimates 2015

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) Resources Publications

Sources

International Refugee Law – Everything you need to know from the UNHCR

Institute for the Study of International Migration (ISIM)

Refugee Studies Centre (RSC)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Council of Europe (COE)

European Network Against Racism (ENAR)

European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)

Forced Migration Online

The Journal of International Migration and Integration (JIMI)

The Global Migration Centre (GMC)

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Red Cross Global Campaign on Migration

Middle East Migration Issues (Migration Policy Institute)

Resources for journalists

Accountable Journalism Database

Africa's Media Silence over Migration Crisis

BBC: Migration in Figures

Climate News Network

Dart Centre Covering Migration Tips for Journalists

Ethical Journalism Network: Migrants or Refugees?

Ethical Journalism Network Five-Point Test for Hate-speech

Europe: The Migrant Files

Jean Paul Marthoz: "How to cover migration"

Getting the Facts Right: Ethnicity and Religion (ARTICLE 19)

Media Diversity Institute

Statewatch

UK NUJ Migration Reporting Guide for Journalists

Data-Based Study into Characteristics of Migration Coverage in Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States – Summary report and Full presentation

Why Al Jazeera will not say Mediterranean Migrants

David Cameron: "Swarm" of Migrants crossing Mediterranean

Ten myths about migration

Guardian Special Report:

Hardline Australia, confused Scandinavia and tense Russia: The global immigration picture

Generation E – Data Driven Project Report on Youth Migration from Southern Europe

The Med: One final danger in a migrant´s odyssey

The Arduous Journey of Colombian Migrants Headed for Chile

What crime have I committed to be held like this? Inside Yarl´s Wood

Risking their lives to cross the border: Europe or Die

Jimmy Breslin: "The Short Sweet Dream of Eduardo Gutierrez"

Giovanna dell'Orto/Vicki Birchfield: "Reporting at the Southern Borders Journalism and Public Debates on Immigration in the U.S. and the E.U."

Peter Andreas/Kelly Greenhill: "Sex, Drugs and Body Counts"

Fabrizio Gatti: "Bilal"

THE VIEW FROM BRUSSELS

Missed opportunities to call the European Union to account

» TONY BUNYAN

For millions of people across Europe the refugee crisis became "real" when the image of three-year-old Aylan Kurdi, a drowned Syrian child found on a Turkish beach, went viral world-wide at the beginning of September 2015. But the scale of the crisis was already was already widely-known if not widely-reported a year earlier.

On 5 January, 2015 *Malta Today*, from one of the European Union's smallest members, but a frontline state in the Mediterranean, reported: "270,000 asylum seekers sought entry to EU in 2014: Frontex deputy executive director says numbers for 2014 nearly doubled the previous record of 141,000 registered in 2011."[1]

European Union institutions were well-aware that the continuing conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Libya and growing refugee camps in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, would bring an even greater exodus in 2015. And if media were unaware of the internal planning, a European Commission Factsheet published on 13 January, 2015 alerted them with: "Questions and Answers: Smuggling of Migrants in Europe and the EU response.[2]

"In 2014, more than 276,000 migrants irregularly entered the EU, which represents an increase of 155% compared to 2013. Syrians together with Eritreans were the largest group apprehended at EU external borders trying to enter the EU in an irregular manner."

In 2014 the main refugee routes were largely from Libya to Italy (170,816) and, in the eastern Mediterranean, mainly from Turkey to Greece (50,561). These figures reversed in 2015 with most refugees arriving in Greece. But if the mainstream media were largely ignoring the gathering storm, social media and civil society reported and forecast what we were to witness in 2015. Médecins sans Frontières reported in December 2014 from Greece:

"Thousands of refugees … are being welcomed with a dysfunctional reception system and inhumane living conditions. Greece and the European Union (EU) must urgently improve living conditions … and offer them adequate medical assistance and protection." [3]

Despite numerous documents and reports on "migration flows" the EU institutions utterly failed to plan ahead. EU humanitarian aid on the Greek islands did not start until late September 2015. When it did it was tied to registration, fingerprinting and closed detention centres for those to be returned in so-called "hot spots" in Greece and Italy. The gap from April 2015 was filled by visiting civil society volunteers and local people.

The European story was there to be told, but media failed to alert their audience or to challenge the readiness of the European Union and its member states to deal with the crisis that was about to break upon their shores.

This lack of touch by the mainstream media community to raise the alarm highlighted the weakness of media and further underscored the problems facing many journalists and media as they grappled with the responsibility of covering this humanitarian crisis professionally.

The test for them was to report with accuracy and humanity, to treat government and political rhetoric with caution and ensure that refugees were treated fairly and as human beings who have travelled great distances to find safety. This is no easy task when politicians conjure up images of "swamping" or "mass invasion by illegals".

Journalists know they must be cautious and report what politicians say but question intemperate language. The ethics of their trade mean journalists are responsible not just for accurately reporting political discourse but also for weighing the impact of what they publish.

Words matter

Across the European media landscape media and journalists have struggled to strike the right note in the tone and the language of discussion of the crisis. A debate emerged on whether the EU faced a "refugee" crisis or a "migrant" crisis. In August 2015 *Al Jazeera* said: "There is no 'migrant' crisis in the Mediterranean. There is a very large number of refugees fleeing unimaginable misery and danger and a smaller number of people trying to escape the sort of poverty that drives some to desperation."[4]

Despite the online debate that followed, a web search of the media in early October showed that the BBC widely used the term "migrant crisis" together with most other TV and online organisations, *The Guardian* and *The Independent* and the Brussels-based *Euractiv* and *EUobserver*.

The term "migrant" is perceived and used in the media as meaning an "economic migrant" a person who is simply seeking a better life, whereas all the aid agencies said that most were fleeing from war and persecution in Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia and Eritrea. The terms "refugees", "asylum-seekers" and "migrants" have distinct meanings and cannot be used interchangeably.

Help for journalists is available. The Charter of Rome and the glossary of terms developed for Italian journalists and covered elsewhere in this report are useful as is the glossary provided by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM):

- "A migrant refers to someone who moves, temporarily or permanently, from one place or country to another. A migrant is someone who moves freely."[5]
- A refugee is forced to move because of persecution,[8] or they are displaced by war or a humanitarian disaster or some other external and compelling factors. States are obliged to provide them with protection under international law.[9]
- Asylum seekers are refugees seeking protection from war or persecution who apply for refugee status under international and national laws.

And it is important to remember that in law there is no such thing as an "illegal" migrant. A more valid term is "undocumented" migrant.

Other loaded terms that have been used interchangeably in the media are "smuggling" and "trafficking". What we are seeing is predominantly not trafficking but people smuggling on a major scale.

As an article in *The Guardian* explained: "Smugglers are paid by people to bring them across borders. After the border has been crossed, the transaction between smuggler and migrant ends. Trafficking is a very different crime. Trafficking means bringing people into an ongoing situation of exploitation and then profiting from their abuse in the form of forced labour or forced prostitution.

"Migrants usually consent to being smuggled. A trafficked person usually does not consent or their consent is meaningless because they have been coerced. Smuggling always happens across international borders. Trafficking does not. People can be trafficked from Coventry to Manchester."[10]

This distinction squares with the United Nations Protocol against the smuggling of migrants which says that smuggling, contrary to trafficking, does not include exploitation, coercion, or violation of human rights.

If the European media have struggled to get the terminology right, they have also provided widely-contrasting national perspectives, often driven by governmental and political policy objectives.

For instance, one of Europe's leading tabloids the German daily *Bildt* surprised many both in Germany and abroad when it launched a high-profile "We Help" campaign with its positive message of welcome to the hundreds of thousands of refugees clamouring to get into Germany after Chancellor Angela Merkel announced that the government would open its doors to all Syrian refugees.

This contrasts with the hate-speech of many media in the Western Balkans, Hungary and other East European countries where tens of thousands of refugees were met with political hostility and physical

"There is no 'migrant' crisis in the Mediterranean. There is a very large number of refugees fleeing unimaginable misery and danger and a smaller number of people trying to escape the sort of poverty that drives some to desperation." – *Al Jazeera*

barriers were erected to slow their route march to northern Europe.

In Britain the equivalent of *Bildt*, the Rupert Murdoch-owned *Sun* newspaper, and another tabloid the *Daily Mail* were unrelenting in their opposition to joining the German call for major European countries to share the burden of taking in refugees. The media narrative changed dramatically in favour of a more humane approach with the Aylan Kurdi story, but second thoughts by political leaders in Germany and continued intransigence in the UK and elsewhere have seen a return to media coverage focused on refugee numbers rather than human interest.

Europe's need for functioning fourth estate

Media face a constant balancing act, to give voice to the refugee community and to reflect legitimate concerns over migration in the community at large, and this can be achieved through fact-based reporting that provides context, background and thoughtful commentary.

But more than this it is arguable that today the media – print, TV, online and apps – have more chance than ever to hold those in power to account, and to be the Fourth Estate in the EU. Media stories only emerge from effective, questioning and probing journalism that flows from hard preparatory work; reading lots of mainly boring official documents and following a paper-trail. It can be frustrating but is rewarding in terms of high-quality journalism and provocative stories. The problem is that on so many occasions media have failed to hold the European Union and its members to account.

Here are examples of stories that could have been explored in depth the issues, put the institutions on the spot and better informed civil society at large.

Why, for instance, was the European Commission not pinned down back in January 2015 when all the evidence pointed to more refugees arriving this year?

Its fact sheet said they were going to tackle smuggling – which "generally takes place with the consent of the person willing to move" – and get support from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

(AMIF) to set up "reception centres, with adequate conditions for families, minors, and other vulnerable groups … in the Member State", with Greece getting €259 million in 2014-2020. So why, media might ask, were there no reception centres providing humanitarian aid in Lesbos, Kos and Samos and other Greek islands from April 2015 onwards?

A second question concerns the myth fuelled by European Union leaders, national politicians and media that all the refugees arriving in Europe are from Syria. The Council of the European Union on 22 September set the priority as being to recognise people from Syria, Iraq and Eritrea, thus seeking to exclude the second largest group of refugees – from Afghanistan, which is far from being a stable country.

Other arrivals include people from Somalia, Libya, sub-Saharan Africa and Kurds from Syria and Iraq passing through Turkey.

So are the institutions seeing people from Syria, Iraq and Eritrea as "good refugees" to be relocated in the EU, and the rest as "economic migrants", to be returned to their country of origin, and would this in the context of international law be mass "refoulement" (returning them to potentially threatening situations)?

A third question concerns coercion in fingerprinting all refugees in "hot spots", a process to which people fleeing persecution might be reluctant to submit. Guidelines drafted by the European Commission have suggested that "officials trained in the proportionate use of coercion may apply the minimum level of coercion required," including, if necessary, to "vulnerable persons, such as minors or pregnant women". What, media might ask, is the "proportionate use of coercion" on minors or pregnant women?

But what is the role of EU agencies in "hot spots"? Refugees will be pre-screened in what is called "nationality screening" by Frontex (the European Agency for management of external borders) teams supporting national officials who conduct the first stage. Refugees who pass the "nationality" test will be transferred to open camps awaiting relocation to another European Union country. Those who fail, because they come from the "wrong" country, will be held in closed camps awaiting return to their country of origin.

Is it legal to determine who is to be returned simply on the basis of the country they come from, especially as most of those arriving come from countries which are not on any national EU Member State list? [13]

Another important question came up on 23 September when the Commission announced that only five member states were correctly applying EU asylum rules. Eighteen member states have not implemented the Asylum Procedures Directive which concerns "international protection" and 19 have not implemented the Receptions Directive which sets out minimum standards for applicants for international protection, including "housing, food, health care".

"Not implemented" means they have not transposed the measures into national law, allocated funds and staff, let alone become operational (which is months away). Why did the Commission not accelerate the adoption of the new asylum law which would have put in place humanitarian aid?[15]

The European Union set the priority to recognise people from Syria, Iraq and Eritrea, thus seeking to exclude the second largest group of refugees – from Afghanistan, far from a stable country.

Lastly, there is the numbers game. By the beginning of October 2015, 533,591 refugees and migrants have arrived in the EU and most have moved on from the countries where they entered, especially Greece. As so-called "hot spots" had not started it can be said around 522,000 have relocated themselves in another EU country or are in transit: by the end of August 148,000 asylum applications had been made across the EU (EASO).

Relocation quotas – a "total of 160,000 people in clear need of international protection in the coming two years" – will only begin to come into operation as the "hot spots" in Greece and Italy come online over the next few months. Does this mean there will be an EU-wide sweep for refugees who have not been registered and fingerprinted?

All of these questions and the stories that flow from them highlight the failures and missed opportunities of European media in reporting the migration and refugee crisis. There has been a record of official decisions and some useful commentary from mainstream European Union news services such as the Brussels-based *Euractiv* and *EUobserver* and the weekly *Politico* (which took over the much missed *European Voice*) provides commentaries but patchy news.

And there has been some compelling television coverage which picked up after the death of Aylan Kurdi and began telling the "human story", documenting the journeys northwards and providing horrific images of hastily constructed "walls", and pepper sprays, gas and water cannon used to push back the

thousands trying to cross borders. A A particularly courageous report by a Sky journalist showed her joining a crossing from Assos in Turkey to Lesbos, which was intercepted by a Turkish coastguard vessel with shots fired to get the boat to turn back, but it crossed safely into Greek waters.[16]

But across the mainstream media a toxic mix of challenges remains. There has been a "debate" about definitions and "Words Matter" but media continue to use "refugee" crisis and "migrant" crisis interchangeably. And the sharp political debate requires more sensitive and careful reporting. As the Director of the IOM told the UN at the end of September: "With populist leaders and elements of the media increasingly portraying migrants in a negative light, IOM points out that fear of the unknown is deepening community divisions and endangering the very people seeking a better or safer life."[17]

Nevertheless, media and civil society groups have shown themselves to be important players in the face of what is happening on the ground while EU institutions are adrift, seemingly powerless and incapable of providing humanitarian help on the landing beaches and at the start of a new journey north.

Civil society and social media for their part quickly rose to the occasion, beginning in April 2015, recording history as it happened and servicing a growing network of ways to help, sending money, clothes and volunteering nationally and especially to Lesbos.[18]

It is volunteers who welcome refugees, provide water and aid and advice as to where to go and give lifts to the elderly and the young where possible. And some airlines and delivery firms were persuaded to join in and offered reduced rates for packages going to Greece.

NGOs have equally been very active in Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia and then Austria, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. At the borders, rail and bus stations, volunteers are there to provide water, food and clothing. NGOs provided interventionist critiques of their government's actions, for example, the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, a human rights organisation, said "The right of asylum has practically vanished in Hungary".[19]

The media need to focus on the EU's response to the ongoing refugee-humanitarian crisis which will continue in 2016 and beyond, even if the signs are that we will see the construction of a new Fortress Europe.

Media need to focus on pressure that will be applied on Turkey to hold back the hundreds of thousands waiting to come to the EU with maritime patrols "pushing back" refugee boats and Eurosur (satellite tracking movements) coming on-stream. Reporters and newsrooms also need to monitor the creation of an EU Border Police force, and dozens of new detention centres holding tens of thousands for "return" (especially in Greece and Italy) or

awaiting asylum decisions,[20] as well as an expected police operation to track down many of the 500,000 who entered the EU before October 2015 who are not registered or fingerprinted.

This will all be taking place in a European Union divided between those who welcome refugees and others who are opposed. Opposition has been on the rise for years and recent elections in many countries have seen racists and extreme right-wing politicians with echoes of the fascist era elected to parliaments and present in some governments. The EU power elite have manifestly failed to combat these dangerous forces which are present in countries like Hungary which leads the so-called Visegrad group – Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic – which is opposed to the relocation of refugees.

Even central EU figures are conceding to popular racist rhetoric. *The Times* reported that a senior Brussels official warned: "The European Union must close its 'open door' to prevent millions of migrants entering Europe unchecked or there will be a backlash leading to a surge in support for extremist and far-right parties."[23] And the EU Vice President Frans Timmermans said in an interview with BBC Radio 4 that: "Central European countries have no experience with diversity … making them susceptible to fears about Muslim refugees. If no sustainable solution is found you will see a surge of the extreme right across the European continent."[24]

As if the refugee crisis and the climate of racism and xenophobia were not toxic enough, media faced the additional challenge of telling these stories in the context of extensive European Union counter-terrorism operations to locate and neutralise "foreign fighters" going to support ISIS in Syria and Iraq. The Greek reception and relocation programme agreed with the European Commission includes: "Another action … is to identify and register all places of gatherings of potential radical or extremism groups such as worship areas, cultural and artistic heritage places in the Greek territory."[25] This echoes the ubiquitous UK Prevent programme which places Muslim communities under intense surveillance.

The need for careful, sensitive and informed journalism in Europe has never been greater and media that struggle to tell the story in context will need more support if they are to rise to the challenge.

Some practical work might involve helping media and journalist organisations to develop a set of European standards that will challenge the use of derogatory language and highlight the impact of words and images that incite racism and xenophobia. This should be backed by a media complaints mechanism, operating at national level, by which if standards have been abused the culprits can be publicly named.

At the same time there is an urgent need to strengthen investigative journalism committed to in-depth research. There are already some good examples of networks for investigative journalism in many countries and working across borders. These need to be provided with more resources to help mobilise the voices of authentic journalism, using both traditional and social media sources.

For too long the back story of the refugee crisis in Europe has not been told, with those in power not held to account and too much focus on the bias and prejudice of unscrupulous politicians. Only investment in ethical, public-spirited journalism will provide the stream of informed and reliable information that people need.

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BULGARIA

A study in media sensationalism

» ROSSEN BOSEV AND MARIA CHERESEHVA

In April 2014 a group of 17 Syrian refugees, including six children, were forced to leave the house they rented in the village of Rozovo after continuous protests by local people. The villagers were determined not to accept the Syrians because, they said, their safety was under threat.

Asked by a reporter why refugees were feared so much, a Rozovo resident answered**:** "We know they are danger. We have read the press, we have seen the news on TV."

This answer pretty well summarises both the media reaction to the refugee crisis in Bulgaria and the fearful social attitudes it provoked among the majority of Bulgarians. Even though other major factors may explain the widespread lack of solidarity with the asylum seekers in this part of Europe – such as the country's weak economic and social system, the inadequate administrative response and poor political leadership – the media largely failed to play a responsible role.

Instead of mediating the conflicting opinions and providing balanced and reliable information, the mass media plunged into sensationalism, and often in breach of basic ethical and professional principles of journalism in the process.

Bulgaria, like other Balkan countries, is experiencing the biggest refugee influx in its modern history. In the last quarter of 2013, it received more than 7,000 asylum applications – around 10 times the annual average for the past 10 years.

There was a steady increase in 2014 and 2015, too, from 11,081 to 11,630. The arrival of so many people, whether fleeing war, persecution or poverty, caught the country unprepared on every front – political, administrative, humanitarian and logistical. This resulted in a refugee crisis, which could have been less intense if the necessary steps at state and municipal level had been taken in advance.

Even though there were some grassroots initiatives and volunteers working through NGOs stepped in to provide essential support for the refugees, their arrival provoked a largely negative reaction within the public at large, warmed up by a loud far-right and xenophobic public discourse. This opened space for a surge in hate-speech, hate-crimes and discrimination. It was by any standards a massive challenge for media to moderate this intemperate and hostile reaction.

But there is a big question mark over whether the media itself was prepared for the task their journalists faced. Firstly, it quickly became apparent that there is insufficient knowledge and experience of covering migrant and refugees issues. In addition, newsrooms were hamstrung by a lack of well-trained and informed personnel able to provide high-quality reporting and analysis.

The media environment and political pressures on journalism didn't help. The deteriorating conditions for press freedom have been well recorded with Bulgaria ranking 106th in the Reporters without Borders Press Freedom index. The country's media operate in a small and heavily-concentrated advertising market with non-transparent media ownership, and undue influence from political and economic interests on editorial policies. The systems for self-regulation of media content and performance are dysfunctional. All of this has directly affected the quality of coverage.

The country's press and online media are governed by two separate ethical committees, each adopting a different code. The first, which might be considered authentic and independent, is only recognised by a small part of the media, and covers refugee issues in its standards. The other, which includes 80 per cent of publications, is practically inactive. In addition, there is the Council of Electronic Media, a state organisation responsible for radio and television, but it has a passive attitude and its lack of impact has, if anything, made the situation even worse.

The migration story becomes headlines news

By the end of 2012, the issue of migration of third-country nationals (both legal and undocumented migrants) in Bulgaria was a marginal topic for the local media. In fact, between 2009-2012, only 812 articles on the issue made their way into the press, electronic and online media in the country according to a survey by Proway Communications agency.

The topics they covered were diverse: state and EU policies, access to the social system and labour market, discrimination, and crime. Of the analysed stories some 82 per cent are neutral and purely informative, with only 5 per cent openly negative in tone.

The most common problem noticed by the researchers is that journalists generally failed to make a distinction between the different legal terms: immigrant, refugee, asylum seeker, undocumented migrant, etc.

One year later, the picture changed completely. With thousands of people crossing the Bulgarian-Turkish border to seek asylum in Europe, there was a dramatic peak in coverage. In one month alone,

Although major international news organisations such as AP and the BBC banned the term "illegal migrant" from their internal ethical codes, it is still broadly used in Bulgaria.

from mid-September to mid-October 2013, a total of 8,439 news pieces were registered in the online media. (*Sensika*, 17 October, 2013)

A brief content analysis shows a major shift in the discourse, with key topics identified as: national security, terrorism, disease and refugee camps.

The asylum seekers were largely framed as a homogeneous mass of people, who constitute a "problem", a "threat" for the integrity for Bulgarian and European societies.

How sensation became the norm

A series of headlines in mainstream Bulgarian media reflected the change of mood and direction in media coverage:

- "The Prime Minister: 2 million refugees are waiting on the Bulgarian-Turkish border"
- "Expert: The newly arrived refugees are future ISIS fighters"
- "Islamic State floods Europe with refugees"

These headlines (all containing fact-based claims) were proven to be wrong or unverified. They did not come from unruly tabloids, but were from leading Bulgarian media: *Focus News Agency* and the two biggest private TV channels: *Nova TV* and *BTV*. The source for the last headline, quoted in the main news section of *BTV*, a market and opinion leader, is the British tabloid *The Daily Mail*.

Unfortunately, the reliability of sources, the level of knowledge and experience of the experts and analysts invited to comment on migration and the relevance of political statements such as the one by Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov have been rarely questioned by journalists.

Instead, unverified information easily finds a way into the headlines in the mainstream media, and is copied and replicated via news websites and social media.

A clear example of this phenomenon is the statement of the (ex) Vice-Minister of the Interior Vassil Marinov, who claimed that the monthly allowance for one refugee in the country is 1100 leva (approximately €550) – higher than the average monthly salary. This information was immediately disseminated through all media channels, with no attempts to verify its authenticity.

It provoked outrage among Bulgarians, 40 per cent of whom, according to the World Bank, live under the poverty line or are at risk of poverty. More than a month later, an investigation by *Sega Daily* newspaper proved that Marinov's clam was speculation and that a refugee in Bulgaria received only 65 leva per month (€33 approximately).

Currently, even those allowances are frozen, but the "Divide and Conquer" impact of this political provocation is still observed. Many Bulgarians feel undervalued and foreigners get more favourable treatment.

And there is, of course, a commercial interest in favour of sensational headlines that generate more hits in online media, which gains more and more influence both in terms of audience and advertisers. As a result, some editors are less inclined to strive for authenticity and objectivity.

Refugees or illegal migrants?

Although major international news organisations such as AP and the BBC banned the term "illegal migrant" from their internal ethical codes, it is still broadly used in Bulgaria.

A monitoring of press clippings, done by the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency BTA between 1 February and 1 March, 2014, shows that the term has been used in 49 out of 405 news pieces on migration, or more than 10 per cent. In most cases the media have quoted statements by the responsible public authority, a former Minister of the Interior Tsvetlin Yovchev, which leads to the conclusion that the politicians themselves are contributing to the negatively biased media content.

Still, no attempts have been made to clarify to readers that the phrase is inappropriate and why. But this reflects a widespread malaise in journalism where the different terms related to migration and seeking asylum are not used in their correct context.

Instead terms which have distinct meanings in international law and in common understanding are used out of context and often as synonyms. Headlines and reporting will refer to "the

fugitives", "immigrants" and "refugees" without any clarity or distinction creating both confusion and ignorance for unwary and uninformed readers, viewers and listeners.

Hate-speech on the march

Even more alarming is the rise in hate-speech expressed by politicians and some journalists and channelled through the media without criticism or context. And it has broadly penetrated the public discourse. Some 45.6 per cent of the participants in an Open Society survey from November 2013 claim to have witnessed aggressive statements against minorities – ethnic, religious and sexual – in the previous 12 months.

The main medium for spreading hate-speech, according to the respondents, is television, referred to by 75 per cent. The second most important is the internet, where the forums have turned into a nest of openly xenophobic comments. Despite the recent decision of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Delfi vs Estonia, which stipulated that the operators of internet sites are responsible for content in their user forums, the field remains largely unregulated and few newsrooms bother to moderate online comments and discussions.

Two of Bulgaria's far-right parties represented in the national parliaments have private TV channels, *SKAT* and *Alpha*, which predominantly base their content on racist and xenophobic rhetoric, naming asylum seekers "Taliban's", "jihadists", "terrorists" and so on.

Recently, the Council for Electronic Media issued 11 adjudications on violations of the Law on Radio and Television against *Alpha* TV, including hate-speech, but all of them went without any legal consequences.

Unfortunately, not only the politically related channels give a platform to hate-speech. Extremist politicians, journalists and popular figures are often invited to television and radio studios to comment, while the voices of the refugees themselves are rarely heard.

Typical of the hateful political speech given media exposure is that from Magdalena Tasheva, a far-right MP who on BTV accused refugees of being cannibals: "The society doesn't care if the refugees are eating human flesh or just chewing it, there are international conventions that they have breached," she said, "We cannot love murderers. No one loves mass murderers."

Although Bulgaria criminalised hate-speech with the introduction of Article 162 (amended in 2011), its implementation is rare and insufficient. In its latest report, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), has expressed concern that between 2008 and 2013 only 55 pre-trial proceedings were initiated under Article 162, including both paragraph 1 on incitement and paragraph 2 on the use of violence or damage to property. Of these cases 11 went to trial and 10 accused were convicted (none of them on the grounds of hate-speech).

This creates a feeling of impunity among politicians and public figures, who tend to express their extremist views in order to benefit from greater popularity. This places a great responsibility on journalists and editors who have to make their own judgments on what is hateful and potentially illegal.

But that is only part of the media challenge. Journalists and editors sometimes appear to forget that behind the plentiful numbers and statistics surrounding the migrant and refugee story are thousands of human-interest stories charting experiences that are profoundly important to creating a fuller understanding of the crisis within Bulgarian society.

This understanding is also vital to finding solutions at civil and state level. And although there have been many distortions and deficiencies in coverage, some stories have served as a call to action and to bring positive change in attitudes. A report by Irina Nedeva on the suffering of the Syrian family Hawash, broadcast by Bulgarian National Radio, for instance, was one of the first to shed light on non-existent state support for refugees fleeing Syria.

It led to the creation of the Facebook group "Friends of the refugees", a civil initiative for humanitarian and integration support for migrants and asylum seekers, unprecedented in scale and activity for Bulgaria.

The group gained substantial media popularity, which helped attract more supporters and accelerated state reaction to the humanitarian challenge of providing shelter and care for the thousands entering the country in search of protection.

Positive examples of high-quality and compassionate reporting include *Slavi's Show*, the most popular evening show in Bulgaria, which made a documentary series dedicated to the Syrian refugees with a focus on their perspective and *Nobody's kids*, a documentary by a *Nova TV* reporter, dedicated to

unaccompanied minors in Bulgaria. Some positive items in *Capital Weekly* included the features "Germany, end of the trail" and "Wall of punches."

There is little doubt that coverage of reporting migrant and refugee issues would improve if serious attempts were made to strengthen the media landscape in Bulgaria. The dismantling of current media concentrations and the increased transparency of financing mechanisms would ensure fair competition and a dynamic market, which will improve quality and adherence to ethical standards, including those related to the refugee crisis.

On a broader level it is within the European Union's mandate to advocate fairer criteria and increased transparency and the government's programme has included steps in this direction, by proposing it will only do business with media that adhere to the industry's ethical code.

But urgent steps need to be taken towards media education in asylum law, in order to increase understanding of the subject and media would be helped with more effective action from police and prosecutors to uphold laws countering hate-speech. More also needs to be done to counter online hate.

But in all of this journalists are wary. They want to be able to tell their stories ethically and professionally, however they are cautious about the use of law to restrict free speech.

There is no doubt that fresh initiatives to support critical and ethical journalism are urgently needed. Bulgarian media, like their counterparts across the Balkans, are in the frontline of the European migrant and refugee crisis, and if it is to be resolved without social conflict it will require a renewal of professional commitment to reporting that tells the story accurately but with lashings of compassion and fact-based analysis.

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ITALY

A charter for tolerant journalism: Media take centre stage in the mediterranean drama

» YASHA MACANNICO

The first wave of global media coverage of the tragedy of migrants and refugees risking their lives to escape war and poverty in the Middle East and elsewhere was played out in Italy where in the year to August 2015, several shipwrecks led to more than 5,200 deaths.

During the year several Mediterranean island destinations well-known to European holidaymakers, particularly Lesbos in Greece and Lampedusa in Italy, took centre stage as media rushed to cover the tragedy of the Syrian refugee crisis.

Italy has been at the heart of the story. The reality of covering migration in Italy's mainstream media has seen a range of approaches reflecting a complex political context amidst a cascade of events and circumstances which has produced markedly different editorial biases in newspapers. As the crisis developed it became clear that while the government puts its focus on rescue efforts, for the media it was the human side of the story that attracted greater attention.

At the same time there was no lack of alarmist discourse about immigration, with the number of arrivals described as an "invasion" and the use of the language of war, typified by the front page of the Milan newspaper *Il Giornale* on 24 August, 2015:

"Immigration chaos. Invasion by land. The landings continue but the alarm is now mainly on the Macedonian front: thousands of refugees push to enter Europe. It is an endless emergency."

But media were quick to respond to the developing story. This showed clearly in September 2015 following Chancellor Angela Merkel's announcement that Germany was willing to receive an unspecified number of Syrian refugees and asylum seekers. There was a sudden shift in newspapers reporting acts of kindness and solidarity, with Austrians and Germans welcoming them as they arrived from Hungary.

This contrasted with previous coverage where acts of solidarity with the migrants and refugees had been overshadowed by protests, and more space given to politicians whipping up tensions and the concerns of people fearing for their neighbourhoods due to the presence of migrants.

Libero

Sindacati fuori dal mondo

L'Italia affonda, loro scioperano

la Repubblica

Renzi-Berlusconi, c'è il patto

LA STAMPA

Fra Grillo e Berlusconi le europee degli insulti

Some negative reporting can be understood – and criticised – when it is motivated by commercial considerations in newspapers, but uncritical reporting without context of racist speech by leading political figures is inexcusable.

Some negative reporting can be understood – and criticised – when it is motivated by commercial considerations in newspapers, but uncritical reporting without context of racist speech by leading political figures is inexcusable.

The threat of hate-speech increases at election time, particularly when the centre-left is in power. And media coverage of Matteo Salvini of the Lega Nord (the right-wing Northern League) who is supported by the extremist group Casa Pound has inflamed matters. Salvini has stood out for his frequent public appearances and the violence of his messages, which appear tailored to the sensationalism that ensures media exposure, even if it is to criticise him.

The daily *Il Giornale* regularly carries articles that undermine the position of migrants and call for tough policies. It targets Roma people, Muslims and the arriving migrants and refugees as threats. Such an approach mirrors that of politicians like Salvini, who insisted on calling migrants and asylum seekers "clandestines", that is, "illegals", and has called for Roma camps to be razed to the ground.

In its coverage *Il Giornale* has presented him as a victim, because of the hostility he has drawn from sections of the public, while providing an optimistic reading of his prospects. On 12 May, 2015 it proclaimed: "Eggs and teargas at Salvini's public meetings. In the meantime, the Lega's support grows."

The Lega Nord's MEP, Gianluca Buonanno, has also distinguished himself with some outrageous comments: on 29 August, 2015, he spoke of using electrified barbed wire "if and when illegals come around these parts" to stop them, "like you do with boars".

Other media and politicians have been more tolerant. Figures such as Italy's president Sergio Mattarella provided a contrast. As *La Repubblica*, reported on 10 June: "Migrants: Mattarella tells the EU, 'more solidarity'"

A test for the Rome Charter

The migration and refugee story has proved to be a testing ground for Italian media and for the Carta di Roma, a code of conduct on reporting of asylum and immigration issues drafted by media owners and journalists, the Ordine dei Giornalisti (OdG) and the Federazione Nazionale della Stampa Italiana (FNSI) in collaboration with the UN's refugee agency, the UNHCR and which was adopted on 12 June, 2008 (see Annexe 1).

The charter was drawn up following a letter written by UNHCR to leading Italian editors in January 2008, in response to the media's treatment of the gruesome murder of four people in the northern town of Erba a few weeks earlier. The murders were initially blamed on the victim's Tunisian husband, Azouz Marzouk, whose two-year-old

son also died in the attack. Mazouz was widely depicted by media as a monster, with press and television interviews featuring aggressive criticism of the Tunisian immigrant community. It was then revealed that he was in Tunisia at the time of the attack. Subsequently, two neighbours confessed to the murders and were prosecuted.

The charter seeks to discourage discrimination, and calls for "maximum care when dealing with information concerning asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants". It calls for appropriate legal terminology, for accurate verified information, and safeguards for those who speak to the media. It recommends media consult experts in order to provide information in context in their reporting.

The charter also led to the creation of an observatory to monitor media coverage and to provide analysis on these issues, as well as training programmes for journalists by the OdG and FNSI. The observatory has produced two in-depth reports on this issue in January and December 2014.

Significantly, the charter also produced a glossary to define "asylum seeker", "refugee", "beneficiary of humanitarian protection", "trafficking victim", "migrant/immigrant" and "irregular migrant", to encourage their appropriate use.

The Observatory's analysis and comment on the treatment of migration-related issues in the media, which includes fact-checking reports and highlighting cases of overt violation of the charter, is accompanied by regular engagement with news media over their coverage.

It has also faced down media critics. *Il Giornale* journalist Magdi Allam, for instance, challenged the charter's "prohibition" on mentioning the nationality of perpetrators of crimes and use of the term "clandestino".

Giovanni Maria Bellu, editor of Cagliari's daily *Sardegna 24* and national president of the Carta di Roma association, says that mention of nationality is not prohibited, but it should only be used if it is relevant to a news story and for better understanding of a news item. As for the negative term "clandestino," he said there were cases in which it is clearly inappropriate, especially when a news item concerns refugees or potential refugees.

In May 2015, television programmes were invited to refrain from engaging with those political parties' attempting to whip up xenophobia during the campaign for regional elections. In April, there was a call to investigate a television interview on *Canale 5* in which a young Roma woman explained that crime paid better than work and exhibited disregard for victims before claiming, in another interview a fortnight later, that she had been paid to say what she said. In March, a letter was sent to Rome's *Il Messaggero* newspaper about the inaccurate use of "clandestini" in a headline.

Hate-speech and violence

These incidents illustrate how journalists and media sometimes struggle to identify, isolate and eliminate information that is distorted and unreliable and this is a particular problem when it comes to hate-speech.

The situation of refugees, migrants and Roma people is often juxtaposed with the position of Italians. Too often media present the former as privileged or as undermining the latter's living conditions and accepted standards of behaviour, for instance by washing in public fountains.

Italy's Roma ethnic minority have suffered frequent attacks in the media and from disproportionate coverage of crimes committed by Roma.

On 3 September, 2015, *Il Messaggero* carried an article headed: "Millions of pilgrims expected, less than one hundred days to the Jubilee and this is what Termini station looks like. The metro's ticket machines are controlled by Roma gangs." The article goes on to note that this situation happens "every day, in the midst of absolute indifference".

Earlier, on 21 August, *Il Giornale* published a catalogue of news items presenting Italians as victims, endangered by refugees and migrants.

The first article quoted a homeless Italian mother who said: "The refugees are spoiled, I'm in the street", and ending, "Obviously, being Italian at present is unfortunate." A second focused on a fight between migrants in Venice: "The residents: We are exasperated. We welcome them and they dare to do this." The fourth item was alarmed by arranged marriages between poor Italians and refugees: "there is a danger of terrorism". It went on: "Antiterrorist services investigate the arranged marriages racket, artfully organised to conceal foreign terrorists…." A final article on the same day simply records the "Muslim threats" against a young woman with Moroccan origins participating in the Miss Italy beauty pageant and insults she received on Facebook.

The past year was also marked by attacks on reception centres for migrants in Tor Sapienza on the outskirts of Rome in November 2014 by local residents alongside far right groups. The media (with exceptions) initially found it difficult to call things by their real name – racial prejudice. *Il Messaggero* showed no ambivalence in their message on 12 November: Hunt against migrants: "We'll set them alight." On 14 November, there was critical commentary on the attacks and aftermath, including a noteworthy heading by *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, which commented on the decision to move the refugees from Tor Sapienza and linked the disturbances to right-wing agitators: "The State surrenders to the fascists."The right-leaning newspaper *Libero* welcomed the decision to move refugees from Tor Sapienza on 14 November, with an ironic use of inverted commas: Hurrah, Rome's "racists" have won. The immigrants will be moved from Tor Sapienza.

Positive developments – online and offline

But in spite of an often politicised and negative tone there have been positive developments involving journalists including, for instance, the "No Hate Speech Campaign" (http://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2015/09/07/nohatespeech-sign-our-petition-now/) launched on 7 September, 2015 by the Associazione Carta di Roma, with support from the European Federation of Journalists, Articolo 21, the Federazione Nazionale della Stampa Italiana, the Ordine dei Giornalisti and the USIGRAI public broadcasting company trade union.

The campaign's online petition calls on journalists not to be passive in cases of hate-speech, arguing that "Discrediting racist statements and clarifying why they are misleading constitutes a duty for journalists". Readers are invited to isolate promoters of hate-speech and not to engage in dialogue with them, while media, publishers and social network administrators are invited to remove messages of hate and ban their authors.

An example the campaign had in mind was the report on 9 August, 2015, in Turin's daily *La Stampa* which published a positive news article about Nicole, a young Roma girl who lived on a camp site in the United Kingdom and was found to have an extremely high IQ. Racist comments about the article posted on its Facebook page led the newspaper's social media team to intervene, warning that such comments would no longer be tolerated and that whoever insisted in posting them would be banned, inviting fellow readers to isolate them and report them privately to the team.

Significantly, the issue of under-representation of migrant voices in the higher echelons of newsrooms was highlighted on 7 August, 2015. When Domenica Canchano successfully challenged article 3 of law no. 47 of 1948, which states that the editor in charge of a newspaper or periodical must be an Italian citizen. Following the judgement in her favour, the Peruvian journalist has become

CHARTER OF ROME

CODE OF CONDUCT REGARDING ASYLUM SEEKERS, REFUGEES, VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING AND MIGRANTS[1]

The National Council of the Journalists' Association (Consiglio Nazionale dell'Ordine dei Giornalisti, CNOG) and the Italian National Press Federation (Federazione Nazionale della Stampa Italiana, FNSI) invite Italian journalists to:

exercise the highest care in dealing with information regarding asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants living in Italy and elsewhere and, in particular, to:

a. Adopt an appropriate terminology which reflects national and international law so as to provide readers and viewers with the greatest adherence to the truth as regards all events which are the subject of media coverage, avoiding the use of inappropriate terms.

b. Avoid spreading inaccurate, simplified or distorted information as regards asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants. CNOG and FNSI call all their colleagues' – and those responsible for editorial content in particular – attention to the negative effects of superficial or unprofessional behaviour on those who are the object of news coverage, on readers/viewers and, as a consequence, on media professionals' credibility. Superficial behaviour may include associating different news items in an inappropriate manner and may engender unwarranted apprehension among the public.

c. Safeguard those asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants who choose to speak with the media by adopting solutions as regards their identity and image so as to ensure that they are not identifiable. Asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants who are identifiable – as well as the latter's relatives – may face reprisals on the part of the authorities in their country of origin, of non-state entities or of criminal organisations. Moreover, individuals who belong to a different socio-cultural context, where the press plays a limited role, may not be aware of global media dynamics and may thus not be able to foresee all the consequences of their decision to appear in the media.

d. Whenever possible, consult experts and organisations with a specific expertise on the subject so as to provide the public with information which is clear, comprehensive and also analyses the underlying roots of phenomena.

COMMITMENTS TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY CNOG, FNSI AND UNHCR

i. The National Council of the Journalists' Association (CNOG) and the Italian National Press Federation (FNSI), in collaboration with the Journalists' Association's Regional Councils, the Regional Press Associations and all the other organisations which have promoted this Charter, pledge to insert issues relating to asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants among the topics covered in training courses for journalists, ranging from those organised by journalism schools to seminars held for prospective reporters. CNOG and FNSI also pledge to hold regular study seminars on the way asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants are represented in the press by print, radio and TV media outlets.

ii. CNOG and FNSI, in collaboration with UNHCR, support the establishment of an independent Monitoring Centre which – working with universities, research institutes and stakeholders – will monitor developments in media coverage of asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking, migrants and members of minority groups so as to:

   a) provide qualitative and quantitative analyses of asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants' image in the Italian media to Italian and European research institutes and universities as well as to relevant European Union and Council of Europe agencies dealing with discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance;

   b) provide material on media coverage of these issues and on trends underway in this field to the Journalists' Association's Regional Councils, to editors and reporters and to media and communications specialists so as to stimulate debate and discussion.

iii. The National Council of the Journalists' Association and the Italian National Press Federation will work towards the establishment of awards specifically dedicated to media coverage of asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants, drawing on similar initiatives at the European and international level which have proven to have positive effects.

The Charter has been drafted drawing on input from a Consultative Committee whose members include representatives of the Interior Ministry, the Social Solidarity Ministry, UNAR (Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali – National Office Against Racial Discrimination)/Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Department for Equal Opportunities, 'La Sapienza' University and Roma III University, Italian and foreign journalists.

the first third-country national to become the editor of an Italian publication, Carta di Roma's online newspaper.

The positive side of media coverage is reflected in the work of *La Stampa* and the weekly *L'Espresso* which were responsible for two positive examples of coverage of the migration story from perspectives which broke the media mould.

In the first case, as part of a cooperative effort involving *The Guardian*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *El País* and *La Stampa* and an investigative team, reports were produced which traced the journeys of several migrants along some important migration routes. They recounted the difficulties encountered, the prices they paid in different stages of the journey and moments of hope and despair, including shipwrecks and friends lost at sea.

They also contextualised the situation in terms of deaths, arrivals and the nationalities of those who arrived, showing that there were considerable numbers of likely refugees, particularly from Eritrea and Syria. Most of all, they provided valuable details which helped clearer understanding of the journey.

La Stampa's editor, Mario Calabresi, had earlier broken with the herd mentality of Italian media reticent to cast a positive light on the Italian refugee crisis. In a comment piece four days before the European elections on 21 May, 2014, entitled "A bridge to be proud of" he spoke of the Italian Mare Nostrum operation involving the navy, reporting

CHARTER OF ROME GLOSSARY

An **asylum seeker** is a person who is outside the country of his/her nationality and submits an application to be granted refugee status, or other forms of international protection, in a different country on the basis of the 1951 Geneva Convention on refugees. He/she is an asylum seeker and has the right to reside in the host country as a legal alien until a final decision has been reached by the competent authorities. Asylum seekers are thus not irregular migrants, though they may enter the host country without identity papers or in an irregular manner, e.g. through so-called 'mixed migration flows', which are made up of both irregular migrants and potential refugees.

A **refugee** is a person who has been granted refugee status on the basis of the 1951 Geneva Convention on refugees, which Italy is a member to along with 143 other countries. Article 1 of the Convention defines a refugee as a person having a 'well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, [who] is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country'. A person is granted refugee status if he/she can demonstrate that he/she is the victim of an individual persecution.

A **beneficiary of humanitarian protection** is a person who cannot be strictly defined as a 'refugee' under the 1951 Convention because he/she is not persecuted as an individual, but who is nevertheless in need of protection as, were he/she to be repatriated to his/her home country, he/she would be in grave danger due to armed conflict, generalised violence and/or widespread violations of human rights. European directives define this form of protection as 'subsidiary' protection. Most of the people who are recognised as being in need of protection in Italy are granted a residence permit for humanitarian reasons rather than refugee status.

A **victim of trafficking** is a person who – unlike irregular migrants, who decide to entrust their fate to people smugglers – has not given his/her consent to be transferred to another country or, if he/she has given his/her consent, the latter has been rendered void by the coercive and/or deceitful actions of the traffickers or by the abuse which he/she has been the victim of or has been threatened with. Traffickers aim to achieve control over another person for the purpose of exploitation. 'Exploitation' includes the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

A **migrant/immigrant** is a person who chooses of his/her own accord to leave his/her home country in search of work and of better economic conditions elsewhere. Unlike refugees, migrants may return home without prejudice to their safety.

An **irregular migrant**, often defined as a 'clandestine' migrant in Italy, is a person who: a) has entered a country avoiding detection at the border; b) has entered the country in a regular manner, e.g. on a tourist visa, and has not left after his/her entry visa has expired (thus becoming a so-called 'overstayer'); or c) has not left the territory of the destination country subsequent to receipt of an expulsion order.

This Charter is available online at: **http://www.cartadiroma.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/CODE-AND-GLOSSARY-ENGLISH.pdf**

that it had rescued over 30,000 refugees attempting the Mediterranean crossing on makeshift boats, ending with the following: "I will attract a good dose of criticism, but I want to say that I am proud of belonging to a nation which sends its soldiers to save families rather than to shoot at them."

This piece followed investigative work undertaken to track down the survivors of a shipwreck on 3 October, 2013, discovering that they were mainly refugees from Eritrea and that few had stayed in Italy. Further, the people rescued by the Italian navy were largely refugees escaping from civil wars and social conflicts in Syria, Libya and Mali.

A second example of positive journalism was a series of reports in *L'Espresso* magazine on the inhumane conditions in which female Romanian agricultural workers were made to work in Sicily. It uncovered a national shame, because while exploitation of migrants is notorious, the fact that young women were being raped in the fields was shocking. The reports, during the late summer and early autumn of 2014, led to attempts to intervene by the authorities, although the victims' reluctance to press charges meant the intervention was more important in symbolic terms than for any charges being brought.

These media and editors demonstrated that media in the frontline countries of the European migration and refugee crisis could produce stylish and professional journalism to be proud of in a country where media, slowly but demonstrably, are learning from their mistakes.

Sources: Ethical Journalism Network (EJN); Carta di Roma association's website; Articolo 21, which promotes press freedom, and Cronache di ordinario razzismo, which monitors racist and/or discriminatory content in the Italian media.

Additional Research: Rebecca Braccialarghe.

TURKEY

Media under the government's thumb and migrants in a legislative limbo

» ELIF INCE

The current state of mainstream media and the obstacles against a free press in Turkey have been subject to various critical studies and reports. The main problems can be summarised as: government pressure; downsizing and loss of journalistic expertise; competition for website hits killing serious reporting; and cross-ownership structures in which media owners try to keep good relations with the government and to land public tenders.

Ceren Sözeri argues in the Ethical Journalism Network report *Untold Stories: How Corruption and Conflicts of Interest Stalk the Newsroom* that this is leading to a media landscape dominated by self-censorship and four major corporations. She states that: "The media has become just another way to demonstrate faithfulness to the ruling party in order to survive and grow in all sectors of the economy."

Aside from business-related pressure from owners, direct government pressure on journalists has been intensifying. Hundreds have been fired in recent "downsizing/cost-cutting" operations.

Yavuz Baydar, in the Shorenstein Centre report *The Newsroom as an Open Air Prison: Corruption and Self-Censorship in Turkish Journalism*, paints a stark picture: "Investigative reporting, more crucial than ever, is on the verge of extinction. Journalists found themselves again in the courts and jails for professional conduct and the opinions they expressed."

Turkey is now home to the largest community of Syrians displaced by the ongoing conflict: in August 2015 the Ministry of Interior Affairs stated that 1,905,000 have arrived.

In October 2014 a new law on Foreigners and International Protection was issued that granted "temporary protection" status to Syrians and grants the right to be admitted to Turkey and not be sent back against their will. However, the government is facing criticism for leaving Syrians with a legally ambiguous status. Last year 14 NGOs protested the failure to produce a follow-up statute. They explained that refugees didn't know how long the "temporary protection" would last, what kind of status they would be given once it was over and whether they would be allowed to apply for asylum. The NGOs asked for new laws.

Before the war in Syria erupted, most refugees in Turkey were from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Somalia, with many from the Middle East and the Caucasus as well. They also face serious problems regarding their status, for Turkey has not lifted the geographic restriction of its 1951 Geneva Convention obligations which limits asylum rights to Europeans. These legal ambiguities mean refugees have difficulty accessing basic human rights such as housing, education, healthcare and employment.

Two critical analyses discuss how refugees have been covered in the Turkish media. The first, titled *Discrimination in Newspapers* and published by the Hrant Dink Foundation in June 2015, offers a thorough account of how Syrian refugees' issues have been dealt with in the press. Hakan Ataman reviewed 177 news articles and 33 opinion columns in five newspapers during two weeks of local protests, including lynching attempts, against Syrians in Gaziantep in the south of the country. The second, by Nevin Yıldız Tahincioğlu, an academic from Hacettepe University's communications department, is titled *Syrian Refugee Children in Mainstream Media and Racism.*

The first examined two mainstream papers (*Hürriyet* and *Sabah*) and three local papers in Gaziantep (*Olay, Gaziantep Güneş* and *Gaziantep*) in the two weeks when violence erupted (12-24 August, 2014) followed by a Syrian refugee killing the owner of the house he was renting.

The report found that rights-based reporting was limited to 11 of the 177 news articles, half of which were press releases from NGOs and included no original reporting. *Sabah*, a newspaper owned at the time by Çalık Group which has close ties to the government – the chairman of the board is the son-in-law of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (now President) and through winning major public tenders – published no articles on the events.

As for the 33 opinion columns analysed, all but three were biased against refugees. Hate-speech was widespread and some columnists went as far as asking refugees to leave the city (*Olay*, August 13, 2014, Tayfun Katırcı).

The report noted that of the 177 news articles only three cited Syrian refugees' opinions. On the other hand, 70 articles quoted officials and business people. No news articles cited experts from NGOs when there was not a press release.

Of the news articles 55 connected Syrian refugees with complex problems such as rent increases and unemployment. Many of these articles were based on quotes from "concerned citizens" which implied that Syrians were outsiders. *Hürriyet*, for example, published eight that linked refugees to social tension, rent increases and rising unemployment. The articles mostly addressed the refugee question as a security issue, talking about measures against public-order disruption. In most cases refugees were identified with crime, sex work and begging. The media, while seemingly asking citizens to "tolerate" these "visitors", failed to cover the issue from a rights-based perspective.

Syrian refugee children in mainstream media and racism

On August 18, 2014, Syrian refugees in İskenderun faced a lynching attempt, sparked by claims that a 15-year-old Syrian refugee had raped a 10-year-old boy from İskenderun. Medical reports showed the claims were false. Nevin Yıldız Tahincioğlu analysed articles on this incident published in three of Hatay and İskenderun's most-read newspapers (*Antakya*, *Söz*, *İskenderun*), two mainstream national papers (*Hürriyet*, *Radikal*) and one independent and left publication (*Evrensel*).

He found that except for *Evrensel*, none of the newspapers defined the events as lynching attempts. Some subheadings were "Syrian tension in İskenderun" and "We don't want to even see one (Syrian) here". Tahincioğlu explains that this normalises the attacks as the moral and just reaction of the public. The articles stated that some Syrian-owned stores were damaged, although the offenders were not named, just generalised as "angry citizens" or "the public". None of the articles quoted Syrians or their reactions to the events.

Also, the consequences weren't documented by any newspaper except for *Evrensel*, which reported that Syrians were beaten up after being forced to get off buses and that many were injured. Furthermore, no articles said where the Syrian child was taken into custody and under what conditions he was questioned even after he was acquitted of the false claims.

The case of Aylan Kurdi

The one moment that shaped so much of the global media coverage – and had an impact in many of the countries covered by this report – came on September 2, 2015, when the body of Aylan Kurdi, a three-year-old Kurdish Syrian, was washed ashore in Bodrum. Kurdi had been trying to reach Greece with his family but drowned alongside his brother and mother. The striking photograph made headlines in Turkey and became the centrepiece of a global media focus on the migration story.

Since then 73 results show up with the keyword search "Aylan Kurdi" on *Hürriyet*'s website. About 70 stories can be found on *Sabah*, the same newspaper that, according to the Hrant Dink Report, published no stories on the Gaziantep lynching attempts. Both papers were filled with emotional headlines such as "little Aylan's heartbreaking story" and "the child that shook the world".

It can be asked what percentage of the articles were just on the family's individual story, what percentage mentioned the everyday problems refugees face, their struggle for justice or their demands. And what percentage were rights-based, or quoted refugees as sources and so on. Whether or not the photograph should have been published was a matter of controversy. But the public's reaction to it illustrates to media the importance of having reporters in the field, and active in cities where refugees live, work and try to cross borders. It also reinforces a simple and well known journalistic truth – that an iconic image can capture the essence of a story.

Some recommendations: how media can do better

Education for the media: Journalists interviewed for this report said they would like to participate in education sessions on subjects such as international conventions and refugee rights, and what terms to use while covering refugee stories, etc. One said she would benefit from a concise guide to best practices for reporting on refugees.

Education for activists and NGOs: Activists and NGOs could be briefed on how best to communicate with the media (how to pitch a story, having good visuals etc.) as well as reporting on their own (how to blog and use social media effectively, as well as technical skills such as taking photographs, recording videos, preparing infographics, etc.). Alternative media organs such as *multeci.net* that publish refugees' own writing could be encouraged and supported.

Making connections: Connections with refugee groups, activists and NGOs are important, especially when reporters are out reporting a story, and having trusted local sources is very helpful. So reporters need to make connections with translators and fixers. Similarly, Afghan activist Hekmat Ali said it would be very helpful for them to meet reporters/editors from various media organisations. This way they could directly pitch their stories to people they've already met.

Fighting hate-speech in the news: Hate-speech is widespread in the media and can't be prevented because the propagators face no major outcomes. It must be closely documented and reported regularly. Media that use this kind of language must be criticised. When the offence is repeated despite warnings, legal action must be taken. A committee of lawyers, journalists and activists solely working on hate-speech in the media would be useful.

Pressuring the government for a free, independent press and transparency: When access to information is restricted, such as not being allowed to enter refugee camps, the government should be internationally pressured for transparency. Most important of all, the obstacles to a free press need to be removed in order to improve the quality of reporting in all fields, including immigration.

Reporters discuss the challenge of covering migration

I asked reporters in various media outlets who cover the issues about the challenges in dealing with migration stories, their access to reliable data and statistics and for their recommendations on how to increase the quality and quantity of reporting on refugees.

Osman Kaytazoğlu, producer at Al Jazeera Turkey

How has your experience been with government transparency and access to information on refugees?
We weren't allowed into certain refugee camps. It was difficult to get permission and in those camps we could enter we faced restrictions on recording. However I have run into no problems getting statistics when working on stories for *AJEnglish* and *AJTurk*, in fact they usually answered fast.

How do you get readers interested in refugee issues?
The reader is interested in images, like in the case of Aylan Kurdi. There is first an explosion of interest but when the level of sensationalism in the media starts to decrease, readers also lose interest. In Turkey, because there is always an abundance of breaking news, the non-sensational stories don't get much attention. At *AJTurk* I have never faced a restriction while covering refugee stories and in fact all kinds of sacrifices were made by the news desk for me to cover these stories. I think the biggest challenge is writing without sensationalism and avoiding cliches.

Do you have any recommendations for media professionals working on refugees' issues?
More interactive features linking to international stories, for example.

Göksel Göksu, reporter at CNN Turk

Is your news desk interested in refugee stories? How has viewer attention been?
My news desk encourages these stories. I work on them at moments of crisis, such as when the Yazidis mobilised to reach the border, and I also prepare longer features. such as my documentary *Journey to Death: Yazidis*. This received much more attention than I expected. I had to answer many questions from viewers. Some wanted to know more, although mostly they were wondering how they could help.

What are some difficulties you've faced while reporting in the field?
In areas populated by refugees I see that people in control want to decide who I will speak with. This is a problem for objective reporting. I've also experienced trouble finding trustworthy translators. Translations are usually done by groups protecting the refugees, so they sometimes tend to manipulate claims during translation and bring them in line with their own political ideology. So I usually get unbiased people to translate my video interviews. In the field what makes my job easier is having relationships with locals.

What are some recommendations to increase quality and quantity of rights-based journalism in Turkey?
Reaching out to sensitive reporters is important. Women and children, as in many other issues, are the most vulnerable and suffer special disadvantages. Thus I think that their stories can be highlighted. However I must point out that if I decide that a story might harm a refugee or their family, I will hold back on publishing.

Burcu Karakaş, reporter

(Recognised for her human rights reporting, Karakaş worked at *Milliyet* from 2010 until September 2015 when she was fired along with other acclaimed journalists. *Milliyet* is among the newspapers acquired by corporations that have close ties to the government and have investments in sectors like energy and mining.)

What are your sources of information? How has your experience been with government transparency and access to information on refugees?
It's always easier to report a story when you're out in the field and not working from your desk. I'm in communication with various NGOs as news sources. UN websites such as UNHCR's are a major resource. AFAD, the government office for Disaster and Emergency Management, has statistics on its website but the press office doesn't always respond to questions.

What are some recommendations to increase quality and quantity of rights-based journalism?
My newspaper neither discouraged nor encouraged stories on refugees. One challenge is the media's tendency for sensationalism – as a reporter you can't decide on the headlines. The readers also respond to sensationalism, for example whenever

there's sexual abuse involved, the news gets shared widely on social media. I think there needs to be less agitation and more articles offering solutions that need to quote expert views on rights and include their recommendations.

Ali Hekmat, spokesperson for Afgan Mülteciler Dayanışma ve Yardımlaşma Derneği (Afghan Refugees' Association)

What is your relationship with mainstream media?
Unfortunately mainstream media does not give Afghan refugees much attention. Especially after Syrian refugees arrived, Afghans in Turkey have been completely forgotten. The media does not follow our issues unless we reach out to them. Sometimes they don't even follow through when we ask for help publicising issues we've raised.

Two exceptions were the drowning of 37 Afghani refugees in Istanbul in 2014, and our hunger strike last year to get the attention of UNHCR. During the hunger strike in Ankara we got a lot of press and I believe we managed to get UNHCR's and the Turkish government's attention briefly. However, even after the second hunger strike, once our protests were over, media attention faded and nothing changed. The media didn't even show any interest during the first two weeks, they only starting writing once they thought it was "newsworthy". Even then, they were writing about the strike itself and not mentioning our demands for UNHCR to end discrimination against Afghanis. Media organs with ties to the government have also asked us not to mention problems related to the government.

What are some of your recommendations for the media to increase the quality and quantity of rights-based reporting on refugees?
I believe that the media is crucial in our struggle for rights and needs to break stereotypes and highlight our problems. Reporters need to be educated on refugee rights, on the legal definitions of who is a refugee and who is an asylum seeker. A major and recurring problem is calling them illegal when, according to the Geneva Convention, they are either refugees or asylum seekers, not illegal.

As I said the media in general doesn't care about our issues but if we personally knew a reporter or editor at each major news organisation that would be very helpful.

Volkan Görendağ, Amnesty International Refugee Rights Coordinator

How is your relationship with the media? How important is it for you to reach mainstream media?
We try to get in touch with all media organs, we do care for our issues to be publicised in mainstream media but it's not crucial to appear in newspapers with the biggest circulations. We can get good feedback on a story that wasn't published in mainstream media but was in alternative media. Readers who are interested in these issues and help circulate the articles on social media are those who also follow alternative media closely.

Senar Ataman, activist, founder and editor of multeci.net

When, why and by whom was multeci.net founded?
We were founded in 2007 with the support of a few volunteers. The purpose of the site is to make refugees' voices heard. Other than me three volunteers write regular columns: Taner Kılıç, Zakira Frotan Hekmat and Orçun Ulusoy. I also do reporting for the website. We're familiar with refugees, activists and NGOs working in the field and all of them are sources for stories. Refugees also reach us through the website and ask us to help publicise their problems. It's very exciting to publish refugees' own writing, as we believe that the best way for them to be represented is through their own words.

Our website is the best resource on immigration issues. It is used widely as a source of academic research. We get between 10,000-50,000 hits for news stories and columns.

Do you believe that NGOs are doing a good job of communicating refugees' issues to the general public and media?
One of the biggest problems in Turkey is that NGOs have weak relationships with the media. The NGOs help individuals but don't create mechanisms to make their voices heard. This traps the issue, which is already not so mainstream, in an even narrower circle.

What are your recommendations for refugees' issues to be better publicised in the media?
There is a real need for a wide network of journalists and refugees. This network could provide cameras for refugees to document their own issues and produce written-visual content to put the struggle for rights on the public agenda. It could also encourage journalists to follow refugees' stories more closely. This wider project would need resources and funding that we don't have.

UNITED KINGDOM

How journalism plays follow-my-leader with rhetoric of negativity

» ZAK SUFFEE

For decades the issue of immigration has been a toxic and divisive political issue in the United Kingdom and in 2015, in the wake of the European-wide migration crisis, the debate around asylum and refugees became highly charged, volatile and polemical.

In its reporting of the crisis the British tabloid press, already criticised in recent years for political bias over reporting of refugee and asylum issues, has found itself again under scrutiny during 2015 – this time from the international community.

In what was probably the lowest point for British media coverage, the country's highest circulation tabloid newspaper, the *Sun*, in April was carpeted by the United Nations human rights chief for describing migrants as "cockroaches" in a piece of journalism which he said was reminiscent of anti-Semitic Nazi propaganda.

In the midst of global media coverage of the tragic scenes of suffering by hundreds of migrants who drowned off the coast of Italy earlier in the month, *Sun* columnist Katie Hopkins wrote:

"I don't care. Show me pictures of coffins, show me bodies floating in water, play violins and show me skinny people looking sad. I still don't care… these migrants are like cockroaches. They might look a bit 'Bob Geldof's Ethiopia circa 1984', but they are built to survive a nuclear bomb. They are survivors."

This incendiary piece appeared only hours before another migrant ship sank off the coast of Libya killing some 800 people. It prompted protests on a massive scale: more than 300,000 online protests and more than 300 complaints to the newly-formed Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO).

But the intervention of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein shows that the frustration over media-inspired hatred, particularly coming from Britain's biggest-selling newspaper extends far beyond the shores of the United Kingdom.

"The Nazi media described people their masters wanted to eliminate as rats and cockroaches," said Zeid.

Katie Hopkins

TEXTING HOME TRUTHS

SUE QUIT OVER NET TWITS

Rescue boats? I'd use gunships to stop migrants

Black ops and Botox

ON AIR? HELL YEAH

His intervention raised two issues concerning Britain's troubled press industry. The first is whether the tabloid press, despite promises of reform, is really willing to regulate itself effectively.

And the second is to explain why Britain appears to be the only settled democracy in Europe where the problem of hate-speech is generated less from outside the newsroom – by extremist political or religious leaders – than from within, where it is flourishes amidst a mix of editorial stereotypes, political bias and commercial self-interest.

As Zeid noted in his protest when bias and prejudice make the headlines in Britain it is often as a result of editorial choice, while elsewhere in Europe where "demonisation" of migrants is also taking place it is "usually led by extremist political parties or demagogues rather than extremist media".

With a few dips, net immigration has steadily increased since the 1990s. Between 1994 and 2003, the share of annual net migration by asylum seekers ranged from 25 per cent to 54 per cent. This trend had changed decisively by 2004, as net migration increased but asylum seekers declined, so that between 2004 and 2012, their numbers ranged from 4 per cent to 11 per cent and was estimated at about 8 per cent for 2013.

Large peaks and troughs have occurred but each quarterly review of immigration creates in some media circles a new furore, often driven by outspoken and intolerant political speech and generally leading to negative coverage of asylum seekers or migrants from other countries of the European Union.

This approach to immigration in particular places enormous responsibility on media to provide critical and informed journalism. And it is no longer enough to ensure that coverage avoids hate-speech or intolerance. New forms of communication have opened the door to more opportunities for critical journalism but have also flooded the debate with opinion over fact, pushing freedom of expression into hate-speech and prejudice.

The challenge of reporting the migrant and refugee crisis comes as the British press emerges from a period of intense public scrutiny in which corruption, scandal and political bias in the media have been forensically exposed. In 2012 a major tabloid newspaper was investigated for phone hacking and bribery. The establishment of an inquiry headed by Lord Justice Leveson into the state of the press found deficiencies in press regulation.

In his scathing report on the press published in 2013, Lord Leveson ripped into the media culture. He concluded:

"There have been too many times when, chasing the story, parts of the press have acted as if its own code, which it wrote, simply did not exist. This has caused real hardship and, on occasion, wreaked havoc with the lives of innocent people whose rights and liberties have been disdained"

In his report Leveson highlighted political bias in coverage of migration issues and highglighted a number of cases where tabloid media had fabricated stories concerning migrants and minority communities.

He pointed to examples of the tabloid press attacking migrants and recalled how the *Daily Express* 12 years earlier "ran 22 negative front pages stories about asylum seekers and refugees in a single 31-day period".

That case (the only time in recent history when journalists have reported their own newspaper to the national press council) was also highlighted by Leveson. In his final report Leveson condemned "careless or reckless reporting" and concluded that regular discriminatory, sensational or unbalanced coverage of ethnic minorities, immigrants and/or asylum seekers amounts to press hostility and xenophobia.

He accused newspapers of manufacturing stories to suit their anti-migrant political agenda. A story in *The Sun* headlined «Swan Bake,» for instance,

alleged that gangs of Eastern European asylum seekers were killing and eating swans in London. Unidentified people were cited as witnesses. But the story was totally unfounded.

Among his recommendations aimed at cleansing the press was a demand to dismantle the disgraced and ineffective Press Complaints Commission (PCC), an independent watchdog, but which was seen to be a creature of the press industry rather than an effective guardian of readers' interests by holding the press to account.

This led to the establishment of a Royal Charter on Press Regulation and the appointment of an independent Recognition Panel which aims to monitor press self-regulators to ensure that they meet basic standards of independent governance but without any power to regulate the press and with no role in relation to the contents of newspapers and news websites.

The majority of the country's national and local newspapers decided to ignore this process and created a new body to replace the PCC: the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). Significantly, three leading media – *The Guardian, The Independent* and the *Financial Times* – decided not to join.

The new body was established in September 2014 and is tasked with regulating the press in conjunction with the Editors' Code of Practice, ratified by the PCC in December 2011. This Code, written by journalists in the newspaper industry, including current editors of broadsheets and tabloids, provides guidelines and ethics by which journalists are bound – albeit without legal sanction for breaking them.

Particularly important for reporting on migration are the Code Guidance Notes on asylum and refugees, originally established in 2003, which state:

"Editors should ensure that their journalists covering these issues are mindful of the problems that can occur and take care to avoid misleading or distorted terminology. By way of example, as an 'asylum seeker' is someone currently seeking refugee status or humanitarian protection there can be no such thing in law as an 'illegal asylum seeker'…"

The guidance notes continue to underline the importance of Clause 12 (Discrimination) and Clause 1 (Accuracy) of the Editors' Code, to mitigate "the danger that inaccurate, misleading or distorted reporting may generate an atmosphere of fear and hostility that is not borne out by the facts".

Despite the guidelines, many newspapers still fail to adhere to accurate and non-discriminatory reporting. A 2015 publication by the Media Standards Trust, as well as reports from campaign group Hacked Off, found a number of breaches to the Code, specifically on migration-related stories in major tabloids, with no rulings from the new self-regulating body IPSO. Most tellingly, there were numerous complaints to IPSO about the article by *Sun* columnist Katie Hopkins referred to earlier, but the organisation said it could not consider the issue, because the complaints did not come from people directly affected, that is from among migrants themselves.

It was in this context that the British press, in the summer of 2015, faced the challenge of reporting on the record numbers of asylum-seekers crossing the Mediterranean to mainland Europe – as many as 522,134 arrived by sea, with 2,892 dead or missing.

The pivotal moment however came at the beginning of September 2015 when a majority of the front pages on one day were dedicated to the death of a three-year-old Syrian Kurd, Aylan Kurdi.

Almost overnight this reframed the rhetoric from scare-mongering, as described by the front page (28 August) of the *Daily Mail* – "Migrants: How many more can we take" – to a more humane call for aid and hospitality "A tiny victim of a human catastrophe" (3 September).

This almost schizophrenic reaction to the so-called "migrant crisis" highlights the tempestuous relationship the UK press has with migration, fearful on the one hand and fearless on the other.

Playing alongside the Mediterranean migration crisis was a story closer to home: a growing number of asylum seekers had been gathering in camps at Calais, with 12 people killed whilst trying to get to the UK up to the end of September 2015.

The situations in Calais and the Mediterranean provided a contrast of approaches to media reporting. A number of articles, from media linked to politics of the right and left, often displayed a knowledge and understanding, albeit limited, of the complexities of European migration, with mention of European directives, regulations, or UN definitions of refugees.

However, many would continue to frame the Calais story in particular with the same rhetoric. This approach may have taken its cue from the Prime Minister's use of the word "swarm" in July to describe the numbers of migrants, but in fact even before then newspapers had long been using war-related terms such as "invasion" to describe migration.

In some cases, numbers and figures were twisted or exaggerated to portray asylum seekers as "sneaking in", yet in other examples lengthy articles provided profiles of asylum seekers, or of those helping refugee organisations working in Calais. The scale of the coverage of the Calais story astonished many, including Alan Travis, Home Affairs Editor of *The Guardian,* who commented:

"What, however, is extraordinary is that the attempts of a few hundred migrants, many of whom may well be refugees fleeing war and persecution, have completely eclipsed the situation in the Mediterranean, where thousands do continue to attempt to cross"

The schizophrenic media coverage of migration and refugees issues perhaps reflects current public attitudes. According to an August 2015 poll, 50 per cent of the public are not concerned about immigration, while 50 per cent are. Arguably this concern has been influenced by the government's rigid and negative response. Britain has refused to be part of any European-wide quota solution to the refugee crisis and has insisted on taking only 20,000 from camps housing Syrian refugees in the region over five years, compared with the hundreds of thousands being admitted by Germany and Sweden. This stance is welcomed and supported by the majority of media.

The migration story is rarely told from the perspective of those arriving, or the resident communities. In telling the story of humane migration, journalists face a number of challenges. "It is no longer about myth-busting or being better informed, the debate has moved on, and is highly politicised", says Alan Travis.

There are a number of sources which provide reliable statistics, yet coverage of migration is still unbalanced. As the pressure group Hacked Off has found, newspapers continue to print inaccuracies and still allow space for extreme views, potentially inciting xenophobia. It may not be the decision of editorial staff to begin these discourses in order to sell papers; however there is little reason for them to diverge from what is becoming the mainstream.

"Accurately informing relevant stakeholders and the wider public about migration may be the single most important policy tool in all societies faced with increasing diversity"

– International Organisation for Migration, 2011

Without media challenging mainstream discourses in a critical way, coverage of migration risks remaining as polemic. Rare examples of media criticising migration coverage can be found both in *Al Jazeera* and *The Guardian*, which highlights a crisis of reporting rather than a migrant crisis *per se.*

Al Jazeera's "Listening Post" provided a 10-minute package solely on the coverage of Calais by the UK Press. They found that it was "difficult to separate truth from fiction", which tended to be a result of the "disproportionate way that stories are covered, which says more about the political agenda of news outlets than the story itself". As Arun Kundnani told *Al Jazeera:*

"Media are driven by sales, but you can't simply explain this through supply and demand, this is part of a deeper cultural shift going on in the UK"

Interestingly, it is online where media such as *Sky News*, *CNN* or *Al Jazeera* have had more balanced and in-depth reporting, analysing who is fleeing and why they do so. This also coincided with a debate the media had around terminology. Many civil society groups began pressing for those arriving to be described as asylum seekers or refugees rather than migrants.

This debate was picked up by many papers, including *The Financial Times*, *The Spectator*, *The Independent* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Many news outlets, such as *The Mirror*, *The Guardian* and *Channel 4 News*, continue to use the word "illegal" in describing undocumented migrants, despite calls to avoid the term from NGOs such as the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants.

As the mainstream media falls within the narratives discussed here, it is the alternative media, or smaller media outlets which have shown themselves able to provide quality and nuanced reporting on migration. Media Diversified, *openDemocracy* and *Ceasefire Magazine* all have in-depth and accurate stories viewing migration from different angles, not toeing the government line, or reducing the argument to slogans.

If journalists are to successfully navigate the tricky waters of hateful and divisive politics around the migration story they will have to focus on balanced and reporting without polemics. People need to understand the facts about migration and need commentary and analysis which use the right terminology and avoid language that is pejorative in telling this story. That means care with words like "illegal" and "migrant."

The media coverage often underlines the newsroom diversity deficit with limited numbers of women, people from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds, and even those with precarious immigration status not themselves writing for major news outlets. Encouraging more journalists from refugee backgrounds will be beneficial in getting closer to the story and its roots.

Reporting around migration often remains framed through an old-fashioned perspective which for some people has an imperial, if not colonial tone. When the Prime Minister portrays Britain as a land attractive to migrants for its health and justice system, without noting any historical link that may be evident in the nationalities of migrants he plays into familiar and well-worn descriptions of "them" and "us". That is why there is a need to acknowledge a wider historical perspective when writing about recent migratory trends in order to provide a more well-rounded picture of the situation.

In Britain, some of the best examples of good journalism in this area are those stories which do not quantify the "migrant" story, or qualify between "good" and "bad" migrants. These are the stories that do not play into the invasion or flood imagery but that focus on the human story without emotionally manipulating the reader.

Much media attention has tapped into public uncertainty and focused on the fear of migration, on problems of security, or the threat to UK culture from "migrants". Often too little attention is given to the failure of the political system to deal with a humanitarian situation, or on political failure over the last five years (and longer) to anticipate this latest crisis. That is why reporting on migration should not focus on scare-mongering about refugees but on holding to account those with political influence.

Given the UK media's history of impunity and weak levels of self-regulation major press news outlets can be unrestrained in their reporting of migration. For some that means the freedom to use intemperate language, and even hate-speech.

The press in the United Kingdom provides some excellent examples of fine reporting, with good background and sensitive coverage, but in debate where fear often frames the story deceptive handling of the facts, political bias and a rush to publish without sufficient thought as to the impact on the audience provide traps for all journalists.

The unconscionable terrorist killings in Paris on November 11 with a reported link to the Syrian refugee crisis after a migrant's passport was found at the scene at one of the incidents prompted new media speculation over migration policy. The story is becoming more complex.

Simple narratives – either of so-called migrant "invasion" or of a de-politicised ahistorical human story where hospitality in the form of "Refugees Welcome" is presented as a solution – are not enough. The challenges to journalism will be to show sensitivity, humanity and respect for the facts and, above all, to provide their audience with information they can understand.

REA
AUSTRALIA
SA
WELCO
NEXT DOOR
REAL
AUSTRALIANS
SAY
WELCOME

AUSTRALIA

In a nation of migrants the media faces its own identity crisis

» CHRISTOPHER WARREN

Australia is a country of migrants, a diverse, multi-cultural society with about 28 per cent born overseas in 200 countries and a further 20 per cent having at least one parent born overseas. Net migration drives up population by about 200,000 a year, with 800,000 arriving in the past four years.

Yet this story is largely absent from the Australian media which, in both news and entertainment, too often acts as though it is telling stories about and often to only one segment of society.

But as mainstream media fractures and social media spreads, political-elite consensus on race is breaking and journalism is being challenged. And as asylum seekers filter in, their use as a political tool demands new understanding and new ways to inform our communities. Yet the usual journalist focus on conflict means the real migration story of a society absorbing and adapting to change is missing

Codes and ethics: A missing link

This absence of the migration story is reflected in the codes of ethics and conduct that define the practice of journalism. At best, they adopt the language of non-discrimination. The Journalist Code of Ethics, developed and monitored by the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance, the journalists' union, says: "Do not place unnecessary emphasis on personal characteristics, including race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, family relationships, religious belief, or physical or intellectual disability."

There were similar words in the general principles of the Australian Press Council (which oversees print and on-line publications), although these were deleted in a 2014 rewrite, relying instead on advisory guidelines on reporting of race. Although the Press Council says it receives a significant number of complaints about reporting on race or ethnicity (often in the context of overseas events), most are resolved through mediation.

The codes of conduct for newspapers in the Fairfax group make no reference to these principles, except to the extent that they incorporate the MEAA code. The News Corporation code says: "Do not make pejorative reference to a person's race, nationality, colour, religion, marital status, sex, sexual preferences, age, or physical or mental capacity. No details of a person's race, nationality, colour, religion, marital status, sex, sexual preferences, age, or physical or mental incapacity should be included in a report unless they are relevant."

Commercial electronic media are governed by codes of practice overseen by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). These provide a higher test: "[…] likely to incite hatred against, or serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of people on the grounds of, among other things, race or religion."

The code of editorial practice for the national public broadcaster, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), says: "Avoid the unjustified use of stereotypes or discriminatory content that could reasonably be interpreted as condoning or encouraging prejudice." It also imposes a positive obligation to seek out and encourage reporting of diversity of views and experiences.

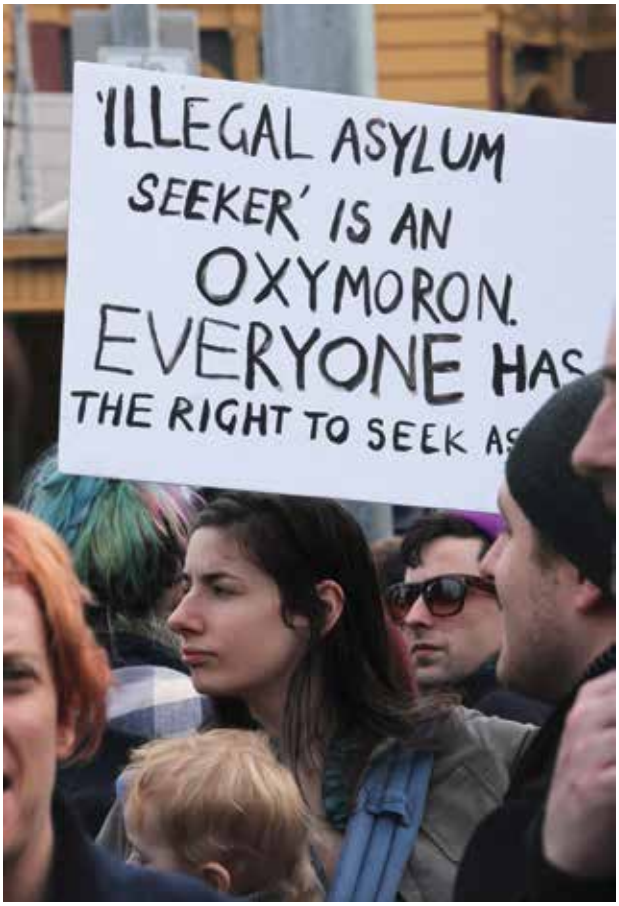
Other than this ABC reference to diversity, these ethical principles reflect the absence of reporting on migration. To the extent they have been discussed by ethics or conduct panels, it has been in the context of indigenous Australians or the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Similarly, the only major case against a journalist under Australia's racial vilification laws involved questioning the Aboriginality of indigenous activists.

Sometimes it seems journalism lacks an accepted word to describe third-generation Australians – half the population – or a word to capture all the diversity of first- or second-generation Australians, or even those of multiple generations from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

Even "Australian" can mean different things in different contexts: from third-generation people of British or Irish descent through to native-born Australians of all backgrounds and on to all residents. Because the different usages are so sensitive, most journalists use the term only in its broadest sense.

Journalistic style and practice has not adopted the use of the word "migrant" to mean first- or second-generation Australians. It is usually only used in referring to those involved in the act of migration itself. Once resident, there is no journalistically accepted word that captures the diversity of the once-were-migrants.



Despite attempts by some politicians to tag asylum seekers as "illegals" or "illegal migrants" this has not been adopted. The Australian Press Council has said use of these words could breach their principles and should be avoided.

There have been some attempts by Australians from non-English-speaking backgrounds to appropriate the abusive word "wog" as a collective noun for themselves, but it is too freighted for general or journalistic use.

As a general principle, journalists are more careful in using "asylum seeker" or "refugee" so that usage generally accords with legal status. Despite attempts by some politicians to tag asylum seekers as "illegals" or "illegal migrants" this has not been adopted. The Australian Press Council has said use

of these words could breach their principles and should be avoided.

The media workforce itself often seems a modernised pastiche of pre-1945 Australia, talking to and about itself. How does it change to more effectively represent the wider society? Failure to do so over decades means lack of coverage is a system flaw.

As Filipino-born Australian writer Fatima Measham wrote recently: "To put it bluntly, lack of diversity is not a symptom of exclusivity in Australian media; it is the disease. The status quo essentially reflects a form of denialism."

Australia lacks clear statistics about its media community. Industry mapping by MEAA in 2005 indicated that about 9,000 people earned a living as journalists, most in or for newspapers and other print media. MEAA estimates there are now about 6,500.

The search for diversity

The only comprehensive study of ethnicity and migrant background in the media was conducted over 20 years ago. John Henningham of the University of Queensland found that mainstream journalists were overwhelmingly Australian-born with the remainder usually native to New Zealand or Britain. About 85 per cent said they were of either British or Irish descent

Anecdotal and personal observations indicate that there has been some shift in this pattern as second- or third-generation descendants of post-war migration from continental Europe (Italy, Greece, the former Yugoslavia etc.), or Asia, that began with Vietnamese migration in the 1970s, washed into journalism. Journalists have become younger, more female and, perhaps to a limited extent, more diverse. New employment has virtually collapsed since 2008 and, as a result there has been little renewal within the traditional mainstream.

There is no evidence of deliberate discrimination by employers, although Henningham did find that about half of all journalists thought being from an ethnic or racial minority made it hard to get ahead.

In 2012, the ABC announced a commitment to greater cultural diversity in its news operations and seems to have succeeded. As a government authority, it is required to provide regular figures on employment. Its most recent report shows that among "content makers" (overwhelmingly journalists) 8.3 per cent were from non-English-speaking backgrounds, significantly lower than elsewhere in the corporation.

The report confirms that ABC International was one of the major employment areas for people from non-English-speaking backgrounds, including offshore local hires. The closure of its international television service, *Australia Network,* in 2014 means this percentage has probably dropped.

Other than within the ABC, the decline in media employment has meant an even greater decline in opportunities to enter the mainstream business. It is unlikely that we will see a more diverse media emerge from some sort of affirmative action plan. Nonetheless, publishers and broadcasters need to follow the model of the public broadcasters in developing diversity policies and publicly reporting their progress.

New media – particularly those unaligned with traditional Australian or global media – are showing the greatest diversity, with people building their own opportunities and distribution networks. Journalism institutions need to examine how to support emerging media that encourage creative opportunities for a diverse Australia.

There is already significant evidence that changing the diversity of the journalist community changes what journalists consider news and changes how societies are reported. The feminisation of journalism since the 1960s has changed the reporting of gender, although there remains a long way to go.

Anti-migration racism

Australia is not constant and both assimilates and is assimilated by the successive generations of migrants. Racism is not absent and is usually directed at the most recent arrivals. Although almost all migrant communities can trace roots back to the earliest days of European settlement,

the composition of the Australian community has been shaped by successive waves – European and Chinese migration in the gold rushes of the 1850s and 1860s; the largely British and Irish migration (coupled with active exclusion and expulsion of Asian migration) from the 1880s to World War One; southern and eastern European immigration in the 1950s and 1960s; Vietnamese migration in the 1970s; Chinese and other East Asian migration in the 1990s, now joined by people from the Middle East and South Asia.

The media has largely ignored the cultural and social impact of these events, unless they break into the political discussion of the day such as when a group is seen as (or is portrayed as) an existential threat to Australian society. Chinese migration and communities in the late 19th century were targeted by mobs and the law and largely excluded. Sectarianism directed at Irish Catholic communities was taken so much for granted that it was not reported.

Until the 1970s, Asian migration was largely blocked through the so-called White Australia policy which sought to restrict immigration to Europeans. This was abandoned by successive governments between 1965 and 1975 and then smashed by the large-scale Vietnamese migration. Since then, Asian migration has dominated. Other than Britain and New Zealand, four of the top five other birthplaces of Australians are Asian – China, India, Vietnam and the Philippines.

In the major cities where most media are based this change is even more obvious, with Asian-born Australians making a larger proportion of the population.

More recently there has been a shift in migration to Muslims from the Middle East and South Asia, coupled with the growth of asylum seekers. There has also been a degree of soft racism directed at most recent arrivals but the debate over Muslim migration has taken a new, decidedly harsher, edge.

In the Firing Line: Muslim and Middle East Migrants

As Australia opened up in the 1970s, Muslim and Middle East migration increased. As a result, the five-yearly census shows the number of Muslims has more than tripled over 20 years, from about 148,000 in 1991 to about 476,000 in 2011 – about 2.2 per cent of the total population. Although Muslims are a significant component, this percentage is not expected to rise above 3 per cent.

This community reflects the broad regional, national and religious diversity of Islam, although the largest groups are from Lebanon, Turkey and, more

recently, Iraq and Afghanistan. As in much of the developed world, the September 11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington affected approaches to the Muslim community. In Australia, this fed into a climate of antagonism against the latest arrivals.

This continues as part of the discourse on Islam, and shapes a key area of continuing debate: the right to religious freedom and the rights of women. The media continue to struggle with this as most journalists prioritise the rights of women. Some – largely but not exclusively on the right – continue to focus on women's rights both within Islamic communities and in writing about the impact of Islam on women's rights generally.

Many journalists avoid the issue of Islam to prevent being seen as encouraging attacks on Muslims.

Social media have played some role in filling this gap. Muslims – particularly women wearing the hijab – reported increased harassment on public transport after a siege in a Sydney cafe by an Iranian-born gunman claiming affiliation with ISIS in December 2014. This spawned the #illridewithyou hashtag on Twitter and other social media. Using this hashtag, about 150,000 people offered to travel with Muslims fearful of harassment.

But social media have also played a less constructive role. As tensions between the local community and mainly Lebanese groups escalated into riots at Cronulla beach in southern Sydney in 2005, text messaging promised "Leb and wog bashing" and also that "Aussies will feel the full force of the Arabs".

Traditional media also contributed. In the week before the riots, talkback radio host Alan Jones fed the hysteria, saying to one caller: "We don't have Anglo-Saxon kids out there raping women in Western Sydney". While cautioning against people taking the law into their own hands, he read one of the text messages encouraging people to go to Cronulla for "Leb and wog bashing" on air and claimed credit for the building pressure in Cronulla.

Jones was subsequently censured by the ACMA for breaching the Code of Conduct with comments that were "likely to encourage violence or brutality and to vilify people of Lebanese and Middle-Eastern backgrounds on the basis of ethnicity".

The riots suited all morality tales in the migration debate. For those hostile to migration, or Islamic migration in particular, it fed a narrative of the collapse of social cohesion. To others, it fed entrenched racism.

In fact, since the riots – perhaps as a result – public anti-migrant displays have eased and become more marginalised. There remains ongoing low-level commentary in some right- wing political circles and media and, of course, on social media, about Islam.

Here, concerns rumble on about halal and the wearing of the headscarf, without often breaking into the mainstream media which, generally, have ignored these debates.

The riots suited all morality tales ... For those hostile to migration, or Islamic migration in particular, it fed a narrative of the collapse of social cohesion. To others, it fed entrenched racism.

There has been some serious reporting of the political groups behind these views. *The Australian*, News Corp's national newspaper, has reported on and analysed fringe political groups such as Reclaim Australia, and the ABC's *4 Corners* devoted a programme to the anti-halal movement.

It is difficult to gauge how deep social antagonism is, but it does appear, with some caveats, that in the decade since the Cronulla riots, Muslim migrants have become incorporated into the Australian diversity. The most recent social cohesion survey by Monash University found that 58 per cent of Australians found the immigration intake – already at its highest levels – as about right or too low and 85 per cent said they believed multiculturalism was good for the country.

At the same time, about one in four said they had negative attitudes about Islam, though this may be more hostility to religion than to Muslim migrants.

Rise of ISIS and national security

The emergence of Islamic state and its recruitment of foreign fighters has provided a further opportunity for demonising the Muslim community. Government briefings suggest that about 150 Australians have sought to fight, although there is no clear evidence of this, and there have been reports that a number have been killed.

Information is largely based on briefings by security agencies and government, although the use of

social media by ISIS and some individual fighters has also fed into media reporting.

Notoriously, Khaled Sharrouff, who had been convicted of domestic terrorist offences, fled with his family to Raqqa in Syria. From there, he tweeted a photo of his seven-year-old son holding the head of a murdered Syrian soldier.

Coming shortly after the videoed murders of US journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff, this shocking image raised the issue of whether the media should repeat or link to these images. Most carried pictures of the child with the face obscured. Most videos have not been carried or linked.

This incident was used by the government to justify increasing national security laws, including criminalising visits to designated areas (including northern Iraq and Syria) without good cause, and the administrative power to strip citizenship from dual nationals considered to be supporting terrorism.

However, integration of national security and Muslim migration has not always been a winning issue for governments. In 2007, *The Australian* newspaper's Hedley Thomas won the country's most prestigious journalism award for his reports on the security forces' handling of the detention of Dr Mohamed Haneef for suspected terrorism. His reporting resulted in Haneef being released and cleared of all suspicion. It also undermined much of the government's stance on the threat of terrorism.

Over the past two years the government has ramped up the rhetoric, raising the risk of terrorism to high and continually referring to ISIS as the "Daesh death cult". In August, it was reported that the cabinet had directed that weekly announcements on national security would be rolled out between then and elections due in September 2016.

The first of these again sought to link migration and national security when the new militarised Border Force announced it would be cooperating in Operation Fortitude with the Victorian police in checking papers to identify "visa fraud" in Melbourne.

A social media campaign under the hashtag #Borderfarce threatened civil disobedience (Australians are not required to carry papers or to produce them on request) and resulted in a demonstration outside the press conference to promote the operation. The police withdrew cooperation and the operation was cancelled. This fed into a general media questioning of government competence.

The challenge of covering asylum seekers

The enduring challenge is of asylum seekers arriving by boat, which has become a high-level media and political issue. Over the past 10 years, about 50,000 have arrived by boat; according to the Australian Parliamentary Library, most were legitimate refugees. Within the largest group, from Afghanistan, between 96 and 100 per cent were found to be legitimate refugees and were granted citizenship.

Yet it is on such asylum seekers (known as Irregular Maritime Arrivals) that politics and media are fixed. This dates back to the October 2001 national election, when the then conservative government launched a major campaign against what it saw as the escalation of boat arrivals (then about 2,500 a year).

When a Norwegian cargo ship, MS Tampa, rescued 438 mainly Afghan asylum seekers from a sinking boat and attempted to offload them on an Australian island, the Federal Government refused to allow them to enter territorial waters and subsequently seized the ship. The asylum seekers were then transferred to offshore detention centres on Papua New Guinea and Nauru as part of what became known as "the Pacific solution".

Under the slogan "We will decide who enters this country and the circumstances in which they come", the government, which was thought to be facing defeat in light of unpopular domestic policies, was comfortably re-elected.

The media generally took a sceptical approach to the rhetoric and the policy. In the run-up to the election, *The Australian* reported that government claims of asylum seekers deliberately throwing their children overboard to force the Australian Navy to rescue them were false and were known to government ministers to be false.

More disturbingly for journalists, community opposition to asylum seekers seemed to fracture their confidence that media opposition to racism and support for an open Australia reflected the views of society.

After the election of the Labour Government in 2007, the Pacific solution was abandoned. However, two years later there was an increase in asylum seekers, peaking at 18,000 in 2012-2013. It also raised concerns about deaths in the crossing from Indonesia, with about 600 drowning. Reporting on the deaths may have raised empathy for migrants while also acting as a deterrent to others wanting to travel.

The conservative opposition campaigned strongly under the slogan "Stop the Boats". The re-introduction of offshore processing in the last days of the Labour Government and an increase in boats being turned back under the Liberal Government elected in 2013 seemed to close the ocean route.

However, the policies of the new government raised new challenges for journalists.

First, the process of maritime interception was militarised under the title Operation Sovereign Borders. As such, the government refused to reveal any details of "water matters", saying any information would only assist people smugglers.

So media have had to seek information from asylum seekers themselves, including those still in or returned to Indonesia, to get any details on the actions of the Australian forces. As a result, such reporting is attacked by the government and its supporters as undermining the military.

Second, there remain about 150 asylum seekers (many now officially recognised as refugees) who arrived by boat and who continue to be detained on Papua New Guinea and Nauru. While journalists have sought to expose the deplorable conditions they are held in, they have generally been unable to get to them. Visas have become difficult to obtain and access to detainees is largely blocked.

Although it does not have an unblemished record, the Australian media has played a key role in building and sustaining social cohesion faced with this latest wave of migration. Social media have increasingly played a role in mobilising support for migrant communities. Despite government attempts to create a sense of fear and panic over the threat of domestic terrorism, the media has not played along.

However, the fracturing of the mainstream media has provided space for anti-migrant and, specifically, anti-Muslim voices. And again, social media has enabled these voices to be amplified.

It may be too early to tell if Australia has now absorbed the Muslim migration as it has earlier migrations. However, increasing diversity within the media, coupled with opportunities for new voices in new and social media, mean journalists will be better placed to manage the inevitable tensions of a diverse, multi-cultural society.

BRAZIL

Where politics takes precedence over the people who make it

» JAN ROCHA

In Brazil, a country of migrants, President Dilma Rousseff is the daughter of a Bulgarian migrant. President Juscelino Kubitschek, who built Brasilia, the country's capital since 1960, was the son of a Czech migrant. The father of Milton Hatoum, one of Brazil´s best-known writers, came from the Lebanon. The very first migrants were the Portuguese, who arrived in 1500, decimating the indigenous population with war and disease.

Over the next 300 years the slave trade brought an estimated eight million Africans to work in the goldmines, sugar plantations and coffee farms. The next big wave of migration came from Europe in the 19th century, when shiploads of impoverished peasant families, mostly Italian and German, arrived to farm and work in the new industries.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Japanese immigrants escaping from poverty arrived to work on the coffee farms. Today Brazil has the world's largest concentration of ethnic Japanese living outside Japan.

After World War One and the collapse of the Ottoman empire Turks, Lebanese and Syrians arrived and in between the wars came Jewish refugees. After the establishment of Israel, it was the turn of the Palestinians. In the 1970s, thousands of new exiles arrived, fleeing right-wing dictatorships in neighbouring Argentina, Uruguay and Chile.

As Brazil entered a period of economic prosperity in the early 2000s migrants came from the USA and Europe, escaping the economic downturn in their own countries.

Over recent years the tightening of restrictions on Africans trying to reach Europe led many to look to Brazil instead. The 2010 earthquake in Haiti, which caused thousands of deaths and widespread devastation in one of the world's poorest countries, caused an upsurge in migration to Brazil.

Between 2000 and 2010 the number entering Brazil rose by almost 90 per cent, to reach more than a quarter of a million. The Haitians chose the country for various reasons: Brazil had built up a considerable presence in Haiti since 2004, when the Brazilian military took over the UN Stabilisation Mission. After the earthquake, many Brazilian NGOs provided aid.

For thousands of Haitians, Brazil became the new promised land, even though reaching it involved an arduous 6,000-kilometre-long journey. They came illegally, catching a plane from Port-au-Prince, the Haitian capital, to Quito, the Ecuadorean capital, and then paying *coyotes*, or people smugglers, between US$3000 and $8000 to take them across the Peruvian Amazon and in by the back door, a journey that can last up to three weeks.

Federal authorities calculate that almost 40,000 Haitians have arrived by this route in the past four years. In 2012 the government created a new type of document – the "Humanitarian Visa', valid for five years, which enables migrants to work and reside legally. The government also intends to allow the consulate in Port-au-Prince to grant more visas, increasing from 600 to 2,000 a month, as part of a policy aimed at cracking down on the operations of the *coyotes*. Joint actions with Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia to fight the people smugglers have also been proposed.

While in recent years Haitians have made up the majority who arrive via the illegal Amazon route, more and more Africans, especially Senegalese, have also been taking the same difficult route in search of better economic opportunities. Part of the reason for this new flow is Brazil's growing presence in a number of African countries through its oil and construction companies. It also funds a number of agricultural and educational projects in Africa.

Migration has not all been inward. In the 1970s, after the giant hydroelectric dam of Itaipu flooded their lands, thousands of small farmers trekked across the border into Paraguay, where land was cheap. In the 1990s, when hyperinflation took hold and the economy stagnated, many thousands of young Brazilians made their way to the USA and Europe in search of work.

Internal migration is also a major factor and has long been a common feature of life. Hundreds of thousands have left the impoverished northeast – especially during periodic severe droughts – to find work in São Paulo, the country´s biggest city and economic powerhouse. In the 1950s, the opening of car factories stimulated the exodus. Among the migrants was a small boy, Luis Inacio da Silva, travelling with his family in search of a better life: many years later he would become president – widely known as Lula.

Migration: A media story in political form

For all of this movement of peoples that has shaped the country in all aspects of its cultural and social development the Brazilian media coverage of migration and migrants is sporadic – sometimes positive, sometimes negative.

In the mainstream media, the growing influx often only becomes a story when it can be directly related to party politics. The national media, overwhelmingly conservative and critical of the Workers Party (PT), which has been in power for 12 years, tends to publish stories about migrants which show the PT government and administrators in a bad light.

In May 2015, busloads of Haitians suddenly arrived in São Paulo, coming from Rio Branco, capital of the Amazon state of Acre, where they had entered Brazil. Both Acre and São Paulo are governed by the PT, and the conservative newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* reported the story in a political context, discussing it primarily in terms of arguments and policy differences between local officials.

"The mayor Fernando Haddad accused the federal government and the PT administration of Acre of disrespecting the rules drawn up in 2014 for the transport and shelter of Haitians in the city," reported *O Estado de São Paulo*. "Haddad's criticism was a reaction to the sending of 500 immigrants at one go from Rio Branco to the capital."

The Acre state Secretary for Justice and Human Rights, Nilson Mourão, said he did not know of any agreement and denied that Acre wanted to get rid

of the migrants. He said: "We are not disembarking Haitians in São Paulo as though they were rubbish (but) we are exhausted. For five years we have been involved in this struggle." It was reported that 30 Haitians a day were crossing the frontier.

The newspaper used the situation not to criticise the precarious conditions of the migrants, arriving in São Paulo with nowhere to stay, but to attack the PT for not coping properly. In an editorial the same newspaper also attacked the special "humanitarian" visa given to Haitian migrants.

"If these human beings were to be treated like animals, it would have been better to stop them entering Brazil – as does every country whose government … measures the consequences of a migratory flux," said the editorial.

"Without this visa, they (Haitians) would have to be repatriated. But the PT federal government, with the aim of showing its 'humanitarian' side, has created an instrument to regularise the situation, stimulating the entry en masse of new illegal immigrants."

The same humanitarian visa was criticised in a different manner by the blogger João Paulo Charleaux, writing in the online *Brazil Post*, an affiliate of the *Huffington Post*, on April 25, 2014. "What happened to the country of solidarity which we said we were?" said Charleaux.

"Suddenly the nobility of the gesture has gone and all that remains is a game of pass the buck between the federative entities which show themselves every day more lost in dealing with what has become a hot potato.

"While they are in Haiti the Haitians deserve enthusiastic speeches of support, campaign hospitals, engineering works and games by the Brazil soccer team but when they get to Brazil, they are received first in a dusty overcrowded camp, then soon sent down by bus to an uncertain destination, arriving in a megalopolis like São Paulo without even knowing where to go."

In 2014 the Ebola outbreak in West Africa led to widespread and sensationalist coverage after a refugee named Suleymane Bah, who had recently arrived from one of the countries most affected, Guinea, sought help at a hospital, complaining of a high fever.

Bah was immediately treated as an Ebola suspect and flown to Rio in a specially equipped Brazilian Air Force plane to an isolation hospital, and subjected to examinations. For days the press speculated on the possibility of an Ebola epidemic brought by African migrants. He was eventually diagnosed with flu symptoms.

What was described as the Brazilian media´s "incompetence and lack of ethics" in their coverage was severely criticised by researchers at the National Public Health School in Rio (ENSP). Research coordinator Sergio Rego said the incident showed the media´s lack of preparation for dealing with the situation. "National newspapers with large circulations published the name of the patient, and details of his documents. He is a refugee and should not have his data exposed. Instead of protecting the victims we run the risk, once more, of blaming them.

"The cynical posture of the media may encourage more racism, xenophobia and discrimination in the population, traditionally lacking in quality information. Also lacking in information are the journalists who refer to Guinea as the patient´s country, forgetting that there are three Guineas in Africa (Bissau, Equatorial and Conakry); or worse, when they opt for the adjective African, homogenising the population of a continent of over a billion inhabitants."

The non-mainstream press has tended to take a more sympathetic line, publishing informative and positive stories, sometimes sending reporters to investigate local conditions.

On June 7, 2015, the regional paper *Zero Hora*, of Porto Alegre, capital of Rio Grande do Sul – one of the southern states which has received large numbers of migrants – published an 11-page report on the Haitian migrants, called "Hell in the Promised Land", written by journalist Carlos Rollsing, with photographs by Mateus Bruxel.

After describing the inadequate conditions in the overcrowded shelters where the migrants spend their first days or weeks, the two accompanied a group of 18 men and women on the 79-hour-long, 4,000-kilometre bus journey from the hot and humid Amazon to São Paulo. Among other travel hazards – pot-holed roads, precarious wooden bridges over swollen rivers, mosquitoes and a five-hour breakdown – they endured the rants of a xenophobic passenger who foretold the massacre of black immigrants.

Arriving at the city's enormous bus terminal and unable to speak Portuguese, the migrants, all Haitians, were cold and hungry, confused and lost. *Zero Hora* reported that they were suffering from "a lack of information, the terrible difficulty of communication and a certain fear of behaving in the wrong way". But Brazil´s metropolis, "so much

Organisations investigating human-rights issues found it necessary to publish a manifesto warning about the media treatment of migrants from Africa, Haiti and South America.

desired and idealised", was where they hoped to find work.

"Thousands have managed to find work in the southeast and the south, overcome the difficulties and now support their families back home," said the report. "For them, the sacrifice was worthwhile. But there are many who came with the hope of not becoming (mere) labourers, who see the experience with frustration."

When not using migration for political ends – mainly to criticise the PT party – the national press has occasionally published stories that convey some idea of the wide range of experiences, positive and negative, experienced by migrants. A 22-year-old Haitian, DJ Cayes, who had been in Brazil for three years, told the *O Estado de São Paulo:* "Here I am earning money. I can earn R$300 (approximately US$100) a night at clubs, playing techno music. The trip was worth it."

A more recent arrival, 31-year-old beautician Muta Zhephiran, told the same newspaper of her ambitions. "In Haiti they talk a lot about Brazil. They say there are good opportunities here. It was my dream to come." She arrived in São Paulo hungry and tired after the four-day journey from Acre, and was sleeping at the church-run Peace Mission, where two large rooms have been set aside for the new arrivals.

Alexandre Martins, a specialist in media analysis, says: "A superficial analysis of the online coverage of immigration presents positive aspects when it shows some of the difficulties migrants face when they arrive." "What is noticeable is that these news items obtain low audience ratings, indicating that they are not a theme of interest to the Brazilian reader."

Even in cities which have seen a substantial influx, interest is low. Martins says there is "no obvious prejudice in the coverage" but feels that the lack of interest could be due to the weakness of the stories presented, which "fail to arouse the interest of the reader enough to make him reflect on such a sensitive social question".

However, a group of organisations investigating human-rights issues found it necessary to publish a manifesto warning about the media treatment of migrants from Africa, Haiti and South America arriving in Brazil. They said that in many cases,

the media had "assumed a tone of criminalisation and alarmism".

To help combat such coverage, in May 2015 the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) organised a meeting with migrants and refugees to which the press was invited. Several spoke about their experience in Brazil.

Syrian refugee Miguel Majd said he had been surprised, when questioned by immigration police on entering Brazil, not to be asked about his religion. "Nobody asked me, are you a Christian or a Muslim?" Another immigrant said that while there was discrimination, many people were welcoming, though he was surprised at the level of ignorance or interest about where migrants had come from. And another said, "They (Brazilians) thought we were running away from our country because we were murderers."

Inequality, racism and partisan media

Brazil´s migrant background and traditional support for the United Nations means its official policy towards migrants and refugees is positive. Although overwhelmingly a Christian country, all religions are tolerated, and religious persecution is minimal. But it is also considered to be one of the world's most unequal countries with yawning gaps between the rich elite and the poor, which affects both Brazilians and migrants.

In a country where almost everybody can claim a migrant ancestor, Brazilians have a tradition of accepting foreigners. Yet racism – the legacy of 300 years of slavery – persists, even in what is, formally, a racial democracy. Afro-Brazilians have less education, earn lower salaries and die earlier than white Brazilians. They are over-represented in the prison system and under-represented in government.

This means black migrants are subject to discrimination, not because they are migrants, but because they are black. When the press uses the emotive words "avalanche" and "invasion" to describe the growing numbers arriving, in almost all cases they are referring to black migrants, not white ones. Ignorance about the rest of the world, including geography and politics, means that few Brazilians know where migrants come from, or why refugees have left their countries. Migrants often express a wish for Portuguese lessons, not generally on offer except at some charities such as Caritas.

But many problems encountered by migrants are the same faced by Brazilians: inefficient bureaucracies slow down the recognition of overseas documents, like university diplomas; public services are often understaffed and inadequately equipped.

Brazil has become an increasingly popular destination for both migrants and refugees from all over the world, as traditional destinations become more difficult to access. Until recently, unemployment was low, but since 2014 the economy has gone into recession: this could lead to greater resentment as competition for jobs becomes ever more intense.

Some migrants, however, have found niches where their particular skills give them an advantage, like the Senegalese employed by firms exporting meat to Middle Eastern countries, because, as Muslims, they know the necessary halal techniques. Or the Haitians employed in a club in São Paulo frequented by Jewish immigrants from Europe, because they speak French.

Media coverage is volatile but could become more openly hostile if unemployment increases and the government cuts more jobs in public services. The recent growth of intolerance in Brazilian politics – as evidenced by strident calls for President Rousseff to be impeached or forced to resign – could spread to migrants, if one of the political parties saw attacking them as a vote-catcher.

Such a situation could be exacerbated by a partisan media, often subservient to powerful political interests. The alternative and regional press generally strive to be positive and informative on migrant issues, running stories similar to that reported in *Zero Hora*. But it is the mainstream media, especially radio and TV, that most influence public opinion.

This highly influential sector could be doing a lot more to inform their viewers, listeners and readers about the context of the recent migration. They could provide background information about the countries they come from, why they come, their motives in migrating or fleeing their home countries.

The media could also remind Brazilians that most of their ancestors were migrants and how they helped to make Brazil what it is today. The role of black migrants, historically brought as slaves, is especially important: their labour not only built the economy but created the art and culture that is the essence of modern Brazil.

追求卓越

CHINA

An inside story – the invisible and ignored migrant workforce

» VIOLET LAW

Migration has been a familiar part of China's history through the centuries, with Chinese explorers roaming the globe and traders following in their wake.

Millions left, from the south of the country in particular, to escape famine and poverty, eventually settling and setting up vibrant communities throughout Southeast Asia. Today, in virtually every country across the world, there are communities – some big, some small – whose forebears emigrated from China.

As large as this emigration has been, it is dwarfed by migration within the country. In the 1950s, following the Soviet Union's lead, the Communist Party government, which took power in 1949, followed a policy of developing heavy industries. Farmers flocked to urban centres to work on production lines, encouraged by a relatively relaxed attitude to internal migration by the central authorities, which aided this mass movement. By the end of the 1950s, 20 per cent of the population had settled in cities, predominantly in the eastern half of the country.

During the 1960s the policy radically changed: a "rustication movement" was inaugurated, with millions of party cadres, intellectuals and students forcibly sent to the countryside. Continuing urbanisation was condemned as being bourgeois: instead people had to learn from those working in the commune movement out in the country.

This policy was only reversed after the death of Mao Tse Tung in 1976 and the gradual unveiling of economic policies more open to the outside world in the late 1970s. With a move towards a more market-orientated form of economic development foreign investment was welcomed. Special economic zones were set up to entice domestic and foreign industries.

China began to grow at breakneck speed, with large numbers of workers providing relatively cheap labour the key. People migrated from rural to urban areas – mainly from west to east – in their millions.

Since 1979 China's urban population has grown by 440 million to 622 million today – the largest mass movement of people within such a time period anywhere in the world. Nearly 55 per cent of the 1.36 billion population now live in urban areas. There are six cities of more than 10 million. In the past five years alone Shanghai, the most populous city in the country, has grown by 4 million to 23 million and Beijing by 3 million to 18 million.

Media focus on economic migration

Interest in migrant workers, at once the ubiquitous and the invisible in Chinese society, seems mostly to take place in the context of economic development. Generally the media seems to view them only as a collective source of cheap labour in factories and at building sites, fuelling urban economic growth.

The media, including internet news portals, are tightly controlled by central government thus reflecting official attitudes and policies to migrants, who are valued only for their contribution to economic growth and not as equals to long-term residents of the cities.

The most striking manifestation of such attitudes is the "hukou" system, under which all citizens have to register with the authorities in their place of birth. It operates in a way similar to an internal passport, with a citizen only entitled to public benefits and services – such as medical or educational – in his or her place of birth.

So while rural migrants are free to move to the cities, they and their urban-born-and-bred children are deprived of their entitlements once there. It's estimated that more than 270 million people from the countryside – over a third of the country's entire workforce – live and work on rural status in China's cities and are effectively treated as second-class citizens.

Only infrequently does the media draw attention to the suffering caused by the "hukou" system. Shortly before the 2010 meeting of the National People's Congress, one of the main policy-forming bodies, a group of 11 national newspapers called for reforms, saying: "We hope that a bad policy we have suffered for decades will end with our generation, and allow the next generation to truly enjoy the sacred rights of freedom, democracy and equality bestowed by the constitution."

However, despite calls for reform, little has been done, with few signs that "hukou" is going to be dismantled soon. In some cities, such as those in the special economic areas of Shenzhen and Guangzhou in the south and in Chengdu in western China, officials have relaxed requirements of the system by allowing long-term migrants to receive certain benefits, including locally available healthcare and education for their children.

In large part such changes have been brought about by economic realities rather than changes in official attitudes; a one-child policy which came into force in 1980 in much of China is now giving rise to labour shortages; there is also the fact that the country has one of the world's fastest-ageing populations.

The numbers willing to work for low wages – and a long way from home – who once fed the industrial power base are just not there anymore: industries are being forced to relax the "hukou" system to entice more workers.

Generally, when these internal migrants are written about as individuals rather than as a factor important for economic growth, their second-class citizen status is reflected in news coverage. Reporters tend to be biased against their status and rural origins, and portray them in an unfavourable light, when such portrayals are neither substantiated or warranted.

For example, a local resident of Tiantongyuan, a Beijing suburb that has more migrant workers than locals, was quoted using deeply critical terms in an article entitled "Migrants out" in *The Global Times* newspaper, the English-language version of the state-owned *People's Daily*: "The whole place is ruined by the messy and dirty crowds," said Liu.

In the rare cases where reporters attempt to highlight the discrimination migrant workers face, there is regrettably very little critical coverage of policies which continue to add to their plight.

Perhaps self-censorship is at work: reporters do not want to fall foul of the authorities. They also might feel their work – if at all critical – will be censored if they describe such policies as "hukou" in a negative way. Consequently most media coverage is either based on or occasioned by official pronouncements and reporters often appear to have made no effort in challenging officials.

A member of the Chinese Peoples Political Conference (CPPCC), talking to journalists about recent migrants to Shanghai, suggested that they no longer sought to work for their living. "Shanghai has been attracting residents from other regions because of its migrant-friendly education and health policies", Chai Junyong, a CPPCC member told *The Global Times*.

"When the first generation of migrants came they came for jobs," Chai said. "Then they started to bring their children. Now, they are coming because they want their children to be educated here." No one challenged the CPPCC's statement: the views of migrants themselves were not given.

Coverage of migrant issues is generally limited to once a year during the Spring Festival travel season, spanning the Lunar New Year. This sees as many as 175 million travelling for family reunions.

Although the event is repeated year after year, with such mass travel first witnessed from the mid-1980s onwards, the media still gives full coverage to detailing how millions of workers return to their towns and villages. But again, little is said of their suffering and hardship, nor is there questioning of broader issues such as whether these vast movements are good or bad.

Amongst the generally negative and lop-sided coverage, there is only one exception which really stands out. *YazhouZhoukan* – literally *Asia Weekly* – is a Chinese-language news magazine published in Hong Kong but barred from the mainland.

In reporting the annual Spring Festival migration, *YazhouZhoukan* makes efforts to provide informed news. An early 2015 edition devoted 10 pages to five stories detailing different aspects of journeys home – to the perils of the trip, the migrants' hopes and the realities they face.

Reporters presented the varied life experiences of migrants. Most, they report, are stuck on the bottom rung of society, though some manage to save money and build a business or otherwise advance in life.

YazhouZhoukan reported: "Working in a factory is the surest way to wear down one's will," said Lei Jianxin, 29, who at 13 left his home in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, to work. Now a low-level supervisor at a shoe factory in Dongguan, Guangdong province, Lei works the production line.

"Every day you clock in, clock out. You collect your paycheck, and you won't think about much else. A decade ago I might still have dreams; now, I don't have any whatsoever."

Yazhou Zhoukan's reporters went to various parts of the country and travelled alongside migrant workers, some of whom were loaded with gifts to bring home, travelling by motorbike with wives and children. Others travelled in overloaded vans.

In addition to capturing individual stories, reporters also sought to examine the mass travel phenomenon: they pointed out that despite modernisation of the rail system, migrants still face considerable financial and technical difficulties in securing a ticket home, with many forced to spend frustrating hours waiting at stations.

Interestingly, the media gives little coverage to outward migration. Over the years there have been many reports in western media concerning Chinese trafficking gangs, and people paying substantial sums to be smuggled from China to western

countries, mainly to the US and Canada, with large numbers also going to Europe. Such stories have received little or no coverage in China.

In 2000, 58 migrants from China being smuggled into the UK died when they suffocated in a container truck. In 2004, 23 Chinese illegal immigrants – both male and female – were killed by rising tides while working to gather cockles in Morecambe Bay, in the north of England. The incident received widespread coverage in the UK national and international media though little within China.

One reason for this lack of coverage is perhaps reporters' fear that giving space to such stories might be construed as criticism of the status quo in China – reporting that people are seeking to leave the country and work abroad in often harsh conditions could imply that all is not well at home. The media has chosen instead to focus more on those migrants who successfully build businesses overseas.

Migration and media in Hong Kong

As a British colony, Hong Kong had a long history of opening its doors to diverse peoples from around the world – from the Indians and Nepalese who came to serve in the British Army and the local police force to refugees fleeing wars and political purges in mainland China and Vietnam.

There has been a large influx of Chinese to Hong Kong since 1997, after Beijing resumed sovereignty over the former British colony. There are stringent border controls and a strict quota system to regulate migration from the mainland.

Usually only mainland Chinese citizens with family ties, special talents or substantial financial resources are granted an immigrant visa to live permanently in Hong Kong. More than 800,000 have settled since 1997, accounting for 11 per cent of the current population. In addition, there are tens of thousands who are on temporary student and work visas.

However, this latest wave of migration has roused much conflict and controversy. Even though nearly all recent Chinese immigrants and local people share ethnic origins, a substantial segment of Hong Kong society sees a gulf between the newcomers' value system and cultural habits and its own.

Reporting often tends to mirror such attitudes. For example, TV or tabloid news reports invariably mention whether the new Chinese immigrant involved in an incident is on a one-way permit – that is a permanent visa, as opposed to a two-way, temporary permit.

The city's leading English daily paper, *The South China Morning Post* (SCMP) gives generally wide coverage to migrants though articles seem to focus

on the extremes – the people mentioned are either desperate and needy or very rich.

Coverage often focuses on money and not on human interest stories, as in the cases where some new immigrants asserted their rights as permanent residents to welfare and other entitlements. A 2012 feature headed "Call to cut number of mainland immigrants" in the SCMP gave the results of a poll on public attitudes:

"The view that new migrants lowered wage levels was held by almost half of those polled – 46.7 per cent – and almost four in 10 said they stole locals' jobs. Meanwhile more than a third thought a rise in new migrants would result in more crime."

There are those in Hong Kong who say the government and the media should do more to counter what they feel are excessively negative attitudes.

"This (the poll result) is worrisome," Professor Chou Kee-lee of Hong Kong's Institute of Education was quoted as saying. "The sentiment needs to change. The government needs to face this problem before it gets worse … to change negative public sentiment through education, and increase policies targeting immigrants to help them integrate."

A rapidly ageing society with one of the world's lowest birth rates, Hong Kong should regard immigration as a boon rather than a nuisance, and a population flow within what is the same country should be seen as normal.

Bringing the migration story out of the shadows

While China has for centuries seen its people migrate overseas, few foreigners, particularly in more recent times, have been allowed to settle in the country.

The experience of having been subject to successive colonisations by foreign powers has sowed deep suspicion, at least within officialdom, towards foreigners. But with China's economy growing rapidly in recent years many foreigners have sought to establish themselves and participate in its rapid growth.

Yet, this new land of opportunity is also the land of a draconian immigration regime. Very few foreigners are allowed to become naturalised. Permanent residency, introduced only in late 2004, may be available for those with strong family ties or with large amounts of money to invest. Even so, the naturalisation quota is minuscule.

The 2010 census was the first time China officially counted foreigners, who now number around 850,000, less than 0.1 per cent of the total population. Amongst them, Africans, Americans, Japanese, Indians, Pakistanis and South Koreans represent the largest groups, mostly living in the most populous cities, Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Although Beijing and Shanghai have a higher percentage of foreigners, Guangzhou's foreign population is by far China's most visible concentration of migrants. An estimated 200,000 Africans, who arrived to trade from a number of countries – including Nigeria, Mali, Cameroon, Ghana and Tanzania – live in Guangzhou: more than half are believed not to have proper immigration papers.

"In the early days, media coverage of these people was mostly negative," says Li Zhigang, an academic who has researched Guangzhou's foreign population.

In 2009, a police chase resulted in two Nigerians jumping to their deaths. Coverage focused not on the circumstances of the incident but rather on the commotion caused when angry Africans surrounded the local police station.

However, as the presence of these new arrivals became less a curiosity and more accepted, coverage has become more enlightened.

The foreign traders were recognised as important patrons of local factories; reporters noted that some Africans come out of hiding only at night in order to avoid police attention. News reports also sought to explain the difficulties these foreigners had with the local bureaucracy.

But there are still issues which go unreported: there is no mention of the extrajudicial detention of migrants and traders who might have overstayed their visas or been accused of minor offences. Nor is there mention of cases where permanent visas are denied to those married to local Chinese.

Migration is an issue of great importance in China although many aspects have gone unreported or are under-reported.

The economy, though still growing at rates many countries can only dream of, is slowing down. Migrant workers, many from the countryside, are being laid off. It will be interesting to see how these developments are reported, whether an open discussion is allowed or whether the media, nervous of official disapproval, will seek to avoid them.

WEST AFRICA: THE GAMBIA

Desperate young take the backway to an uncertain future

» LAMIN JAITEH

West Africa has experienced migration as a result of many factors, including population pressure and violence – communal, ethnic and criminal. Much of this movement can be classed as forced: in recent times it has been driven mainly by poverty, with people seeking better economic prospects elsewhere. Ongoing political strife and corruption have also played a big role in people choosing to leave.

It's a story rooted in history that remains untold by the country's journalists, particularly in its modern context, and not least because of the tough social, political and professional conditions in which media across the region are forced to work.

The countries of West Africa share historical migration characteristics. The slave trade, starting in the 16th century, had long-term impacts on Africa as a whole but was particularly devastating in West Africa – the main transit area.

The trade not only caused widespread death and human suffering, with Africans treated as a commodity, bought and sold and forcibly sent across the Atlantic to the Americas and the Caribbean, it drained West Africa of millions of its young. The development of economies was severely set back as the most productive segment of the population disappeared overseas.

In modern times, colonialism imposed arbitrarily drawn boundaries but these have done little to curtail patterns of migration which, to most inhabitants, have been a normal way of life for centuries. Communities have family and kinship ties across the region, borders are porous and often unsupervised

The formation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975 was a bold attempt to stimulate and give form to the kind of borderless society that existed in pre-colonial times.

The free movement of people was one of ECOWAS' main principles. This was not universally welcomed: smaller countries such as the Gambia and Senegal expressed fears of economic domination by Nigeria, the Community's demographic and economic giant. At the same time, Nigerians were concerned about the possible influx of ECOWAS citizens into their country.

Despite these reservations, traditional intra-regional migration in West Africa – viewed by demographers and others as one of the world's major migration patterns – continues. The overall picture is complex and flows frequently change, due mainly to positive or negative economic factors. Over recent decades, changes in climate have become an important driver, with people escaping drought or forced to move in order to plant crops or graze cattle in more fertile areas.

Farmers from Mali move south to take advantage of better grazing at certain times of the year. They might, for example, sell their stock in Liberia and take salted fish and other produce from there back north. Young men from Burkina Faso move south to work in mines in Liberia or on the cocoa plantations in Ghana or the coffee groves of Ivory Coast.

Others, including Gambians, would traditionally move north to work in Libya and elsewhere in North Africa. Meanwhile, thousands migrate to Nigeria to work in its oil industry or other concerns.

"Migration networks go in every direction" says one American expert on the region. "I think of them as like a spider's web – long or short distances, they transcend modern boundaries."

It is impossible to gauge the extent of intra-regional migration but it is likely to run into the hundreds of thousands, if not millions, each year. It is also impossible to calculate its economic benefits: most cross-border financial transactions use informal finance networks, often based on extended kinship groups.

Such remittances are vital and are often the difference between death and survival for poverty-stricken families. Some research has been done on the level of remittances flowing in from areas outside the region.

A recent study by the World Bank says: "Remittances to Sub-Saharan Africa rose 3.2 per cent to around US$33 billion in 2014 from US$32 billion in 2013 – a significant acceleration from the modest growth of the preceding two years."

The figures show that Nigeria is the largest recipient of remittances, amounting to US$22.3 billion in 2014. This reflects the large number of Nigerians who now live and work outside their country, mainly in the UK and in the US, and who regularly send money back to their families or invest in projects in Nigeria.

More than 20 per cent of the Gambia's gross domestic product now comes from remittances, according to the World Bank, one of the highest percentages in Africa. However, this figure is likely to be a considerable underestimate, reflecting only money transfers through formal networks.

The media and migration

Covering the migration story in Gambia is a challenge for journalists because of the restrictions that have been imposed on media for more than 20 years. But even if the media were free, the Gambian context is full of challenges.

The Gambia is one of the world's poorest countries with most people living on less than $1 a day. The United Nations Development Programme index of human development in 2014 ranked the Gambia 172nd out of 187 countries in terms of health, education and other development factors.

The population of under two million, though small, is one of the world's fastest growing, doubling in size virtually every decade since the early 1960s. The country also has one of the world's youngest population profiles, with nearly 40 per cent under the age of 14. Finding jobs for this growing stream of youth is a constant challenge.

Tourism and the export of peanuts are the major sources of income, together with foreign aid and remittances from Gambians working in West Africa or in Europe and elsewhere. While there has been an upsurge in investment in the business sector in recent years – mainly by Gambians living abroad – the economy is stagnating. The recent Ebola crisis hit the tourism industry hard, even though no Ebola cases were reported in the country.

Although the constitution in the Gambia guarantees all citizens freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and many other internationally recognised human rights, the governing Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction headed by the president, Yahya Jammeh, who seized power in a military coup in 1994, has systematically undermined these rights. The government has brought in legislation aimed at silencing the media, including obligatory bonds of about US$16,000.

Media outlets have to lodge this amount with the government before starting operations and it is held as a guarantee should a court ruling go against them. Such laws have severely restricted the development of an independent media. Many journalists

exercise self-censorship, afraid of provoking the office of the president.

While the media is kept firmly in line at home, the Gambian diaspora has set up a lively overseas media network, establishing online newspapers and radio stations, mainly in the US and in the UK. Most of these are fiercely critical of the government and President Jammeh and most of these outlets are rigorously monitored and blocked by the government.

Amnesty International accuses the Gambian authorities of subjecting journalists to enforced disappearance and of torturing activists: "Muzzling of dissent has had a devastating and chilling effect on human-rights defenders, journalists and political activists who have been persistently brutally targeted solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression," says Amnesty.

With little sign of change and competition for jobs growing as increasing numbers of young people leave school, desperation leads many to embark on a dangerous journey, first across the Sahara to the coast of North Africa and then to Europe.

In the Gambia, there's a special term for this dangerous and illegal journey to Europe: it's called the Backway. No one knows how many have left to take it but the number is likely to be in the tens of thousands – a significant proportion of the population. Everyone knows the Backway and its various routes. Trafficking agents based in Banjul, the capital, are the first point of contact for the would-be migrant: the usual trek involves a long bus journey from Banjul to Agadez in Niger and then on to Libya.

At one time Gambians would have stopped to work in Libya, earning their additional trafficking fare for the journey across the Mediterranean. Nowadays, with order breaking down in Libya and few jobs available, migrants can be stuck for months or even years waiting for funds to arrive from relatives already in Europe or elsewhere in order to continue their journey.

Until recently there was little reporting in the tightly controlled media about migration or of the hazards faced by those making the journey. Though migration influences virtually every family, perhaps the government did not want too many questions asked as to why numbers of people, mainly the young, were leaving. The president has made known his displeasure at this exodus.

The online *Jollofnews* says Jammeh has generally dismissed the economic worries of Gambian migrants. In a national TV address he said they should concentrate on working at home rather than heading off to Europe and elsewhere. "If these people (the migrants) are true Muslims … they should equally believe that their sons and daughters could have made it at home if they were ready to invest and work," he said.

Jammeh has said young people should apply their energies to working in agriculture and producing more food.

The *Daily Observer* state-owned newspaper published a story about a young Gambian who had tried

to reach Europe through the Backway but failed: he had returned to the Gambia to take up farming.

"Alhagie Darboe is no doubt a shining example among the youths in the Kombo East District Village of Kafuta, West Coast Region. Over the years he made several unsuccessful attempts to travel through Backway, but since he returned the Backway syndrome he once had has been driven away with the coming of President Jammeh's vision 2016 and 'grow what you eat and eat what you grow'.

"Darboe said that since he returned home, he wasted no time in venturing into farming; something he said that has improved his living conditions."

The president has in the past strongly attacked European policies towards migrants, in particular a plan to bomb the boats of Libyan people smugglers. "We will retaliate against the massacre of Gambians in the Mediterranean," said Jammeh on national TV. "If the European Union is acting out and kills a Gambian I swear, I will fight back."

Early in 2015 Jammeh offered all Muslim Rohingya refugees escaping discrimination in Myanmar asylum in the Gambia. *The Standard* newspaper published in full a press release from the office of the president.

"As human beings, more so fellow Muslims, it is a sacred duty to help alleviate the untold hardship and suffering these fellow human beings are confronted with. Therefore, the Gambia being a country with predominantly Muslim population and with a natural culture of inter-faith tolerance hereby expresses willingness to accept and resettle all those people who wish to reside in the Gambia."

It is not clear if any of the Rohingyas have accepted the offer. The *Kairo* online publication – blocked in the Gambia – was sharply critical of the move. "The Gambian dictator who is evil and ruthless to his own people wants to be the world's kindest Muslim leader by offering to take in the embattled fugitives."

There are some signs that attitudes to the country's migrants might be changing in government and in the mostly government-controlled media. A civil society organisation called Operation No Way Back, led by Bubacar Jabbi, a local youth, has been raising the issue.

Jabbi, who says he became disturbed by what he calls the senseless waste of life among youthful migrants, is frequently heard on the airwaves and appears in newspapers telling of the perils of the journey to Europe. His organisation has also staged concerts and held youth camps aimed at persuading young people to stay at home.

In the Gambia, radio is the fastest and most effective way to disseminate information. Though many stations report on only "safe" topics such as sport, Operation No Way Back has been gaining more coverage.

"Backway Bad Way" is a popular song on the radio. Even government-controlled radio stations run periodic vox pops, gauging public attitudes about migration. The responses tend to fall into two categories: for every person who speaks out against illegal

migration there is usually another who says that only by journeying to Europe will dreams be realised.

The government has also set up youth projects, targeting villages in the countryside and aimed at persuading young people to stay.

The state-controlled *Standard* newspaper has started to run regular stories on the plight of Gambians in Libya and at camps in Italy. Each edition that covers these stories of human suffering generates a flood of enquiries from family members worried about the fate of their children.

"I used to be overwhelmed by people asking if I had information on their sons or brothers each day we published news about accidents at sea," said one of the editors.

Though the media have become more active on migration, in a small country like the Gambia, word of mouth is often the main means of communication, with people influenced by stories they hear from friends and relatives, rather than by columns in a newspaper or reports on the radio. This is particularly the case among the young: Facebook and text messaging act as key drivers of migration.

A brother who has made it to Germany or the UK will text or send a Facebook message to a younger sibling back in his village. Pictures of the brother's new life will be sent. To justify the payment of precious family funds to a people trafficker the newly arrived migrant might seek to paint a rosy picture of his or her circumstances.

The young might dismiss the stories they hear of the deaths and suffering of migrants in the government-controlled press, on radio or on TV. But they will often be taken in by the more personal messages on Facebook or in a text message.

The Gambia opened its one university only in 1995. Before that, people interested in higher education had to go abroad, mainly to Europe or to the United States. These students, when returning, were nicknamed Semesters.

Today the word refers to those who travel abroad legally or illegally and then come on return visits, spending their money and talking of their lives abroad. Some use their money to help their families improve their lives and buy houses or tractors. Others use it to stage extravagant parties and show off their supposed wealth.

Many have raised loans in London or elsewhere specifically so they can return and give the impression of an easy life abroad. Gullible youths, tired of struggling in the Gambia and dreaming of life overseas, are taken in by the Semesters. A phenomenon called "Nerve Syndrome" has even been invented to describe youths becoming anxious and breaking down when they can't raise funds to pay traffickers for travel.

It seems no amount of articles or broadcasts about the suffering and death of migrants will deter these young and impressionable people. It's estimated that there are now about 30 absentee funerals every month in the Gambia of migrants who failed to realise their dreams.

"Just imagine how many deaths will happen in one year alone," says Bubacar Jabbie of the Operation No Way Back campaign. "I wonder how long we can allow the country's youth to perish at this rate?"

The media has reported on the deaths of youths risking their lives at sea on their way to Italy and Spain but it doesn't investigate many of the root causes driving migration.

And it is clear to see why this editorial vacuum remains in place – media is tightly controlled by the government and reporters resort to self-censorship because they are afraid of drawing attention to factors such as the dire economic conditions for fear of falling into disfavour with the authorities

But even if they were able to exercise their professional duties without restraint they are restricted by a paucity of resources and have no capacity to properly investigate migration: newspapers or radio stations don't have the funds to send reporters to Libya or to Italy to follow the fortunes of migrants. In many cases journalists who might undertake such projects could find that they themselves are not allowed into Europe or elsewhere

Given this difficult environment both politically and economically it is no surprise that the quality of journalism is often low and has created a crisis of trust between media and the public. Many people are generally suspicious of the media and are unlikely to heed its messages.

Instead people rely on word-of-mouth reports or social media outlets. And many of them – especially the young – dream of a better life. Often it seems they suspend any rational assessment of the dangers they face in attempting the journey to Europe, so great is their desire to get there. The migration from the Gambia shows no sign of ending and nor does the crisis that continues to cast a shadow over journalism.

INDIA

How missing facts and context are toxic for media coverage

» PRAMILA KRISHNAN

India is a country made up of many countries – a statement often made in discussions about India and migration. Studies show that three out of 10 Indians are internal migrants. A search for work, for a better life or for marriage are the most common reasons behind such migration. Parents seeking better educational opportunities for their children is also a factor. Generally it is people from the most vulnerable and marginalised communities who have been forced to migrate.

Millions move each year – many from the countryside to the city where they think they will find jobs and a better life. Many have to cope with different cultural traditions: for such people it feels like a move to a foreign land.

India is also a magnet for immigrants from other smaller neighbouring countries who are escaping poverty and political unrest. It has become a homeland for hundreds of thousands of Sri Lankans, Bangladeshis, Nepalese, Pakistanis and other nationalities.

Particularly for Sri Lankan Tamils, India is viewed as a second motherland but the relationship with Bangladesh is more difficult. A fence along the 2,500-mile border between the two countries has been built by the Indian government to keep out migrants, though this has not stopped the most determined getting through. Estimates of Bangladeshis who have crossed into India illegally over the years range from four to 20 million but no one is sure of the exact number.

Yet despite the tension caused by such movements – and periodic outbreaks of violence between peoples of different cultural or religious backgrounds – India is in many ways a migration success story. Since independence in 1947 the many different states in India and the multiple languages and customs have been woven into the fabric of the world's largest democracy, with at least 2,000 ethnic groups united in their diversity.

One of the major problems for government agencies and journalists charting migration is a lack of up-to-date information. The numbers run into millions. The government has no accurate figures of where people come from – or where they travel to. It is also often hard to differentiate between internal migrants and those from neighbouring countries: to local people all strangers might appear foreign.

According to a 2011 census, India had a population of 1.210 billion, more than double the figure in the early 1970s. It is a country of youth: more than half of the population are below 25. It's estimated that within 10 years it will surpass China as the world's most populous country.

As in China, India has seen a big shift in population from rural to urban areas over recent years. The 2011 census recorded that the urban population increased from 286 million to 377 million between 2001 to 2011. The prediction is that almost half of India's people – about 600 million – will be living in cities by 2030. Already two cities – Mumbai and Delhi – have more than 10 million each while six others have more than four million.

Migration: An untold story across the media landscape

Media coverage of migration issues in India is – with a few notable exceptions – relatively rare and not very thorough, especially in the non-English-language media. In newspapers there are few attempts at serious analysis, partly because there is so little clear information available, though some journalists are now beginning to probe the issue in more detail.

Overall there is very little discussion of trends and no serious coverage of migration-linked human-interest stories. Journalists instead tend to report in the context of a debate in Parliament or in a state assembly, giving the views of government but little else.

Where individual stories about migrants appear they tend to reflect a general public prejudice against them: if a crime, however minor, is committed by an immigrant it features far more prominently in newspapers than similar crimes committed by locals.

Recently there has been more media discussion, prompted mainly by two books by journalists. Another more recent development has been migrant use of social media to tell their stories and voice their concerns. Veerapandian, a journalist working in Tamil Nadu in south India, won a special literary award for his book *Parukai*, highlighting the plight of poor students who migrate from the countryside to the cities to pursue their studies.

Samir Kumar Das, a journalist and academic who has written extensively on migration issues, refugees and the plight of internally displaced persons recently edited a book entitled *Media Coverage on Forced Displacement in Contemporary India.* Looking at migrants in the Bengal region he says: "Local media, particularly the newspapers, have been successful to a certain extent in portraying forced displacement in the state. Problems such as ethnic conflicts, floods etc. and their impact on people are highlighted.

Where individual stories about migrants appear they tend to reflect a general public prejudice against them: if a crime, however minor, is committed by an immigrant it features far more prominently in newspapers than similar crimes committed by locals.

"However, the media have failed to address the issues in their totality, as well as objectively. Largely depending on official sources, local newspapers have tried to inform readers about the intensity of the problem, but failed to establish a lively communication between victims and civil society-at large."

Assam and the north eastern region have seen some of the biggest migratory movements in recent years – with hundreds of thousands settling in the area from Bangladesh and Bengal and from countries to the east, including Myanmar. Tensions have risen between indigenous groups and the newcomers as people compete for farmland and living space: there have been periodic outbreaks of violence.

Journalist Nilajaana Dutta has come up with a reference book named *Forced Migration in North East India: A Media Reader* to inform fellow journalists on the issue, its history and ways to cover the story in detail.

Migration has been the core subject of reporting by journalist P. Sainath. He has written many articles featuring the urban-rural divide, migration of farmers to urban areas, how thousands of farm workers have vacated villages over the years and settled in urban and suburban areas in search of jobs.

Sainath's news reports, mainly in *The Hindu,* one of India's main English-language newspapers with a readership of more than two million, caused consternation in the bureaucracy and forced the government to look into the agrarian crisis. The 2011 census showed that, for the first time since population records began, India's urban population had grown faster than that in the countryside.

"Clearly, something huge has happened in the last 10 years that drives those numbers," said Sainath. "And that is: huge, uncharted migrations of people seeking work as farming collapses. We may be looking at – and missing – this cruel drama in the countryside. A drama of millions leaving their homes in search of jobs that are not there. Of villages swiftly losing able-bodied adults, leaving behind the old, hungry and vulnerable. Of families that break up as their members head in diverse directions."

His articles have stressed how liberalisation and the mushrooming growth of multinational firms have eroded the lives of villagers in various occupations. He questioned poor labour management policies of the government and absence of facilities for migrant workers.

Sainath quotes Dr. K. Nagaraj, professor at the Asian College of Journalism, in Chennai, south India. "The migrations of these past 15-20 years are overwhelmingly distress driven and often disruptive of the lifestyle, roots and family bonds of the migrant. Very few gain in terms of acquiring skill and capital, unlike those from the middle and upper classes. When the latter migrate, they usually make big gains in skill, capital and mobility in the jobs ladder."

Sainath also talks of the exploitation migrants are subject to: "A massive chain has sprung up of middlemen and labour contractors who gain heavily from this exodus and thus seek to organise it to their benefit. They supply labour at cheap rates to a variety of patrons – from town and city contractors and builders to corporations, including multinationals.

"This not only helps depress the local wage, but also offers patrons a pool of cheap labour that is desperate, unorganised and thus relatively docile. The employers don't have to bother about the migrants' security, workplace conditions or any standard benefits a city labourer might know of and claim. To the workers, this system offers quick if low payments, crushing debt and unending despair."

Jayati Gosh, social activist and a well-known economist, also writes for *The Hindu* and various other media outlets on migration. Gosh has highlighted how the Indian statistical system is not really designed to capture short-term migration. She says this results in policymakers being unaware of the sheer extent and the likely increase in migration in the years ahead. She says the census captures only permanent migration by asking respondents if they had previously lived somewhere else and how long ago that was.

Gosh, writing jointly with C.P. Chandrasekar in *The Hindu Businessline,* says India's economic growth has been fueled by the movement of labour. "Such migration is not only a sign of dynamism – it reflects increasing inequalities, agrarian crisis and inadequate livelihood generation in many parts of rural and urban India.

"Apparently, a growing part of it is short-term and often repeated, although destinations may change. And while it has already created huge changes in the lives and work patterns of ordinary Indians, these consequences are yet to be adequately recognised and addressed by public policy."

Regional migrants and the media

Immigration from Bangladesh to India has long been a thorny issue for politicians and led to the building of razor wire fences along the border. People are often shot by Indian border guards as they try to cross.

According to the Indian government, the fence is also designed to keep out so called "Muslim terrorists" and to prevent illegal smuggling of cattle. India's majority Hindu population regard cattle as sacred while Muslims eat them and this often causes ethnic tensions.

Estimates of the number of Bangladesh nationals in India vary enormously, and there are no accurate figures, though some politicians have claimed there are as many as 20 million. This figure proved emotive in local elections: some journalists sought to dispute it, quoting an official at the Indian Statistical Institute who called such estimates "exaggerated" and said that internal migrants from other Indian states can easily be confused with Bangladeshis.

While the fence is controversial, it tends to gain more media coverage outside rather than inside India. Writing in the online journal *The Diplomat* – a Tokyo-based online magazine looking at issues in the Asia-Pacific region – Joyeeta Bhattacharjee, a New Delhi-based journalist, says there is a need to understand what causes the Bangladeshi exodus.

"The major causes are socio-political strife, natural calamities, communal riots, and poor economic prospects. Amongst these the economic issue has been the most dominant factor. In spite of deportation, arresting the flow of immigrants from Bangladesh will be very difficult, since economic conditions and opportunities for employment back home are bleak."

Bhattacharjee says dialogue between the two countries is the only solution and finding some way of providing work permits and regulating the ebb and flow of people is required.

There have been some signs that they are working to tackle some of the more difficult issues. One major problem, left over from the colonial era, has been the existence of enclaves of people from Bangladesh and India on either side of the border. There are an estimated 100 Indian enclaves in Bangladesh and 51 Bangladeshi enclaves in India.

Earlier this year the two countries agreed to an exchange of land and, for the first time, there are hopes that this highly contentious issue, involving the livelihoods of thousands of stateless people, is on the way to being settled. The settlement was given fulsome coverage in *The Times of India, The Business Standard, India Today* and other media outlets.

Immigration from Sri Lanka is treated differently from that of Bangladesh by both government and the media. Starting in early 1983, thousands of Tamils fled northern parts of Sri Lanka, caught up in a civil war between the Tamil Tigers, fighting for a separate state, and government forces. They sought refuge in Tamil Nadu, in southern India.

R. Bhagwan Singh, an Indian journalist who has written extensively on Sri Lanka, says: "The Tamil Nadu government, with funds from the federal government, created refugee camps to house Sri Lankan Tamils and took care of them by giving them monthly monetary doles and highly subsidised rations.

"Their children also had access to education. The Indian government provided necessary facilities and ensured that they are treated well. And compared to citizens, refugees received better treatment from the government."

With the end of the civil war in Sri Lanka, some refugees have returned home, though others have attempted long, hazardous journeys, trying to gain entry to Australia and other countries. Singh has tried to document the suffering of these Tamils in search of a better life. "But now with the end of the war these countries have closed their doors to them because they are no longer fleeing from war but are now mere fortune seekers," says Singh.

The Indian media has reported that many of these Tamils now feel more at home in India and are reluctant to return to Sri Lanka. One, Prasanth Sekar, was reported as saying he was not willing to return. "I am still scared and worried about security for the Tamils there. I am not willing to get back to my country. Moreover, I got used to Indian soil and I'm comfortable here. To me Sri Lanka is just a distant country. I feel that I am an Indian."

Migrant issues surface in various parts of India, often in areas which are becoming more prosperous and where locals are concerned about an upsurge in migrants taking jobs. Madhumita Dutta is a Chennai-based activist and researcher who

has highlighted migrants' problems in Tamil Nadu in *The Hindu*.

He says migrants – many from poorer areas in northern India, have no working rights and live in bad conditions. "Tamil Nadu has a fairly large interstate migrant population, estimated to be over ten lakhs (one million), with large concentrations around Chennai, Coimbatore, Trichy, Madurai, Hosur, Tirupur, Kanyakumari and Tirunelvelli.

"Hailing from Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and even Nepal, these men come to work on private and government construction sites, in small engineering ancillary units, steel-rolling mills, hosieries, foundries, in roadside eateries as well as fancy city restaurants, as security guards and even as farmhands. While walking past a slum or even a fishing kuppam (village) these days, one can catch a soft snatch of conversation or song in Bhojpuri, Hindi, Bangla or Oriya.

Dutta wanted to find out who were these men, sometimes labelled North-Indian "thieves", and what their loot looked like. "So I met a few young men from Bihar who had just come back from 'duty'. They were huddled together in a small room in one such slum. A 120-sq.ft. room with peeling green walls, a few shirts and pants hanging from the hooks nailed to the walls, a mirror, a plastic comb, small suitcases and bags, a kerosene stove, a few cooking pots and pans, plates, tumbler and two buckets, floor mats and mobile phones! No toilet and an open bathing area."

While such focused, human-interest reporting is rare in the India press, other media platforms are covering migrant problems.

Social media is playing an ever-greater role. There are several online Facebook groups aimed at raising support for the rights of Tamil refugees and residents of communities trapped in the enclaves on the Bangladesh-Indian border. Young migrants in particular use Facebook, Twitter and other social media to highlight their problems: they say they are united in the virtual world and share views about their identity.

The information deficit that harms media

Several research studies have illuminated the prevailing unsafe environment for both internal migrants and immigrants. There is, however, a lack of basic information about how many immigrants there are and the movements of people internally and across borders.

This means that journalists lack accurate statistical information, which can often lead to ill-informed assertions about migration by the public and politicians, which under-resourced journalists find hard to refute or verify. Many researchers fail adequately to disseminate their material – important findings and data do not reach local news organisations and civil society.

Though the government has set up institutions such as helpline centres, and redress mechanisms to provide justice to migrants in difficulties, in many cases the institutions do not work on the ground.

For its part, the government needs urgently to update its records on numbers and movements of people – both in and out of India and within the country. Only then will the true scale of the issue be known – and proper policy measures put in place. Schools need to be established in urban areas to cater for migrant children – their education is vital for the future of the country.

The media also needs to be far more proactive. Too often, reportage tends to reflect ill-informed opinions from locals who accuse migrants of stealing their jobs or ruining their neighbourhoods. There are exceptions: several journalists are now taking a broader, more nuanced approach and presenting the migrants' point of view. But a great deal more could be done to ensure fair and balanced reporting.

LEBANON

Media put humanity in the picture as refugee crisis takes hold

» MAGDA ABU-FADIL

If there is one country where migration is a meaningful crisis story it is Lebanon which, according to Forbes-Statista/UNHCR, has the most refugees per 1,000 inhabitants – 257 in mid-2014. Lebanon's population is estimated at 4.5 million. Syrian refugees are estimated at anywhere from 1.3 to 1.5 million, with unregistered numbers approaching 2 million, according to some studies.

But the very definition of a refugee, an asylum seeker or a migrant, takes on more than the usual connotations in a country burdened by a history of sectarianism, political and economic uncertainty, feudal patronage and more.

The Bloomberg View offers a perspective on who is a refugee, according to the 1951 UN convention and a 1967 protocol, as well as the principle that countries can't send refugees away once they arrive, also known as nonrefoulement. However, Lebanon is not a signatory to the convention, so its situation is both murky and untenable – more so when media are covering a crisis well beyond the country's capacity.

Dr. Guita Hourani, Director of the Lebanese Emigration Research Center and Assistant Professor at Notre Dame University's Faculty of Law and Political Science wrote in an email interview on August 5, 2015: "As told by the media in Lebanon, various pressures shape the 'migration' story, including highlighting the calamity of displacement and its humanitarian consequences, especially at the onset of the crisis.

"However, as settlement occurred and years passed without any prospect of return, resettlement in a third country and inflow of assistance to the host community and country, the story began to recount the impact of the crisis in economic, social, and demographic terms.

"The latter was also emphasised as the 'takfiris' (Islamic fundamentalists who denounce the 'others' as apostates) began to infiltrate vulnerable refugee communities. The story changed too to reflect the economic recession and increased inflation – due in part to the protracted Syrian crisis, the involvement of Hezbollah in the fighting in Syria, and the lack of consensus on electing a president for Lebanon, among other issues."

Media usually deal with refugees as a block and not as individual stories. There is some good coverage, but that does not represent the mainstream media.

– Diana Moukalled

She added that Lebanese and foreign media coverage had contributed to the stereotyping of both communities – refugee and host. A point highlighted in October 2014, when the daily *Assafir* said the wrong questions in headlines and online content were being asked, citing examples such as: "Do you support not selling to Syrians from our shops to tighten the noose on them? Lebanese, who protects your rights to jobs? What do you say about illegal competition? After security, how does Syrian migration affect the Lebanese economy? What's the Labour Ministry doing?"

In June 2015, the same paper ran a telling headline: "The Patriation/Naturalisation Choice: Syrians or Palestinians?" in reference to the hundreds of thousands of refugees and asylum seekers who have flooded in since the Syrian conflict erupted in 2011 and the earlier creation of the state of Israel in 1948, leading to successive waves of people from neighbouring countries and what their presence has meant to the already-sensitive issue of "sectarian balance".

An alarmist article entitled "Before Lebanon Becomes a Depot for War Refugees" in the daily *Al Joumhouriya* on July 12, 2015 shed light on the crisis, noting that no country has had to face refugee numbers that almost match its population.

It quoted Rock-Antoine Mehanna, Dean of the Business School at Beirut's La Sagesse University, pointing to an internal economic cycle within the main Lebanese cycle, when Syrian merchants buy products in Syria then sell them to other Syrian merchants in Lebanon who, in turn, sell them to Syrian labourers in Lebanon, thereby creating an economic crisis.

In January 2015, the daily *Annahar* published a diatribe by Hussein Hazoury who said Hamra Street, Beirut's one-time Champs Elysées, had changed colour from "Hamra" (red) to "sawda" (black) with the unregulated influx of (dark-skinned) Syrians. He complained that the street had lost its charm, that the Syrian presence had changed Hamra's demography, and that restaurant owners were decrying the proliferation of cheap Syrian labour and competition from Syrian eateries. The comments caused such a backlash on social media, charging *Annahar* with racism, that its administration had to publish a clarification hours later saying the commentary didn't reflect the paper's editorial line or values and that the writer had just expressed his personal observations.

However, there are stories in print, broadcast and online media that show sympathy for refugees and displaced people and that focus on the humanitarian aspects of the crisis.

A case in point is the story of Fares Khodor, a friendly 11-year-old Syrian boy who in 2015 sold flowers on the streets of the Hamra district and who one day on his way back home was killed by the anti-regime coalition's air campaign, according to news reports. His death triggered a social media frenzy of sympathy, but it also led to unsubstantiated reports and questionable pictures of a boy resembling Fares who reportedly was said to have carried out a suicide attack in Syria.

For Diana Moukalled, a television journalist, documentary producer, columnist and women's advocate,

Lebanese media contribute to hate-speech against refugees, displaced persons and asylum seekers in news stories, comments and columns. "Media usually deal with refugees as a block and not as individual stories," she said. "There is some good coverage, but that does not represent the mainstream media."

She added that during an assault by militants on the Lebanese army in the Ersal region near Syrian refugee encampments in the summer of 2014, media tended to label all refugees as terrorists.

Asked in an email interview August 5, 2015 whether the pressure of time, competition among Lebanese media and sources of information affected coverage, Moukalled replied: "The time factor is minimal. But there is a lack of professional and ethical will to cover these issues fairly. Again, there are really good reports sometimes but the main approach is negative and full of stereotyping and labeling."

The Maharat Foundation released an invaluable study in August 2015 on Lebanese media's coverage of mostly Syrian and Palestinian refugees, migrants, and displaced persons.

The 58-page project, *Monitoring Racism in Lebanese Media: Representations of "The Syrian" and "The Palestinian" in News Coverage*, takes a critical look at how these two communities are portrayed. It analysed coverage in newspapers, television, radio and news websites.

The study said the presence of Syrian and Palestinian refugees had long been a factor of division and conflict among Lebanese. That has translated into the political and media discourse, which becomes fodder for scaremongering against strangers and hate-speech that plays on identity, demography, everyday life and national-security issues.

Monitoring organisations representing different political and sectarian leanings it aimed to demonstrate the existence – or lack of – racism and whether it is overt or covert in media that signed a code of ethics in 2013.

Conducted between February 5 and 25, 2015 the study focused on determining the subject/topic of the media discourse towards Syrians and Palestinians in Lebanon and quantifying media content, its position and the tone used. It analysed the types of racial discourse, determined the targeted parties or categories and examined the journalistic framework and various stereotypes of the media discourse.

Using a very methodical approach to define racism, the study examined outward and obvious manifestations as well as indirect, veiled and reserved types. It noted that for the past century the media had played a key role in promoting and reproducing racism by looking at the stranger, the foreigner, the immigrant, the refugee, the displaced person and minorities as problems rather than inseparable parts of the host community.

Hard news stories tended to focus on crime, violence, drugs, disruption of security and terrorism, or on analyses that characterised the stranger as not only different but as an element of instability and a threat. In Lebanese print media Syria had most coverage, compared to the Palestinian issue. Only one newspaper had very little coverage of the topic.

The Syrian-related topics were:

- The right of entrance and exit in Lebanon
- Peaceful sit-ins and demonstrations
- Integration
- Civil, social, economic rights for refugees
- Civil society and activities
- Taking advantage (abuse) of women and children
- Medical care, hospitalisation, health and public safety
- Crimes against Syrians and Palestinians
- Learning and education
- Disasters and accidents
- Competing with (Lebanese) manual labour, irregular work, travelling salesmen
- Crimes committed by Syrians and Palestinians
- Housing, social care, infrastructure, water and electricity
- Government and administrative rulings
- The burden of refuge and responsibility of different parties
- Financial aid, food, clothing and supplies
- Arrests and security measures

The Palestinian-related topics were similar but in a different order, with more focus on security, social and health matters and civil rights.

Palestinians in refugee camps and others outside the camps (not tent cities but more deprived urban areas) have had outbreaks of violence over the years – often involving their respective warring factions and in earlier times, against the Lebanese themselves. Stories on Syrians and Palestinians were mostly on the inside pages, never on the front.

A key element of the negative security and terrorism-related issues, based on raw reports from security sources, is the fear within host communities that Syrians seeking refuge from the war could be members of terrorist groups, or be easy prey for terrorist recruiters.

TV coverage was mostly hard news, with little time allocated to features and interviews. The Syrian issue had most coverage, given the fast-changing nature of events. The tone varied between negative and positive, depending on the topic in question. Radio reports were mostly hard news, with hardly any features and very few interviews. Security issues, which took on a negative tone, predominated whereas social matters were positive. News websites offered a mixed bag, but human interest and feature stories were mostly positive.

In its content analysis, the *Maharat* survey found that Lebanese media were somewhere in the middle on racism. The definition of Syrians as "displaced" or "refugees" was a bone of contention. The same questions could apply to Palestinians, except Palestinians are recognised more as refugees worldwide and have been for decades.

Figures and statistics also varied considerably from source to source and agency to agency, which affected coverage and how stories were skewed, it said. It used specific questions to determine whether news and media reports were racist, how to determine racism (in words and pictures), and subliminal messages.

Scaremongering was a key element, relying on superlatives, exaggeration and manipulation of facts on the adverse effects of ballooning numbers of refugees, as well as the economic/social/security burden and existential threats to the indigenous population.

According to *Maharat*, the mixture of facts and value judgments exacerbates matters, as do expressions of hate and the demonisation of "the other" in Lebanon where 18 religious sects are officially recognised and vie for economic and political power, pitting locals against refugees and migrants in an "us-versus-them" scenario. The vocabulary used was quite telling, with some expressions dating back to the 1975-90 Lebanese civil war.

It concluded that the media landscape was a reflection of Lebanon's complex makeup that creates a media discourse built on fear. Political differences are sharp, refugees may easily pose security threats since, unlike in other countries, they are often armed, so the locals are in full mobilisation mode.

To compound the problem, Lebanon has taken in Palestinian refugees from camps in Syria, who like their counterparts in Lebanon, rely on subsistence handouts from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency that caters specifically to their needs. The agency is woefully under-funded and has cut back on assistance and personnel across the Middle East. It has been providing Palestinian refugees in Syria with $100 per family per month housing subsidies and it cut food subsidies from $30 to $27 per head in April 2015.

Lebanese authorities fear the ramifications could lead to a social explosion, mostly in their own Palestinian refugee camps, where hundreds of thousands have resided since 1948. They also fear such a conflagration could spread to other areas.

Media, understandably, jump on headline-grabbing statements by officials calling for radical solutions. "Some political discourses call for repatriation of refugees," said *LBCI* TV correspondent Yazbek Wehbe in an email interview August 5, 2015. "Media cover these statements and activities about refugees and sometimes disseminate pejorative terms used by those they report, but it's unseemly."

Wehbe explained that no intentional anti-refugee stance by the media existed, nor did any systematic editorial policy about such coverage. "Of course one can't force a station to cover the topic one way or the other, but it's important to avoid racism and patronising them and to focus on the humanitarian aspect, bearing in mind that no small number of Lebanese look down on Syrians because most menial labourers ... are Syrians and because Lebanon was subjected to 30 years of Syrian political and military tutelage that half the population rejected."

To help mitigate the problem, the Samir Kassir Foundation (SKEYES) conducted a workshop on coverage of the refugee crisis in February 2014. The aim was to highlight the role of NGOs in helping refugees and the definition of human-rights journalism that can move public opinion to action. Journalists were also briefed with facts and figures from international organisations on what assistance they're providing – shelter, water, food, education and protection.

A bone of contention between the Lebanese government and international organisations is how many refugees are actually registered. Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil has repeatedly maintained international organisations are registering refugees and displaced people without referring back to the government – a claim denied by the organisations and other ministers in Lebanon's fractious cabinet – and that such procedures were illegal, thereby contravening international conventions, since any registration must occur with the host country's consent.

Participants at the SKEYES event discussed the media's need to check numbers accurately and scientifically, notably the increase in thefts with rising numbers of refugees and charges leveled by refugees and others against NGOs that are allegedly scalping donor funds.

A panelist recommended upgrading coverage by following basic human-rights guidelines:

- Participation and collection of **eyewitness reports** from the field as well as inclusion of all different views
- Accountability and **holding officials responsible** for their duties
- Use of **unbiased and non-discriminatory and impartial language** to reinforce media credibility
- **Empowerment** by informing people of their rights and presentation of the issue to public opinion as well as **presentation of solutions** and efforts that can be implemented
- **Linking articles to international human rights standards** and presentation of legal views on the issue as well as local laws

Participants also examined how media were ill- or under-informed about the work of NGOs and aid organisations, their funding, disbursement of assistance, tensions between refugees and host communities over resources, refugees' lack of knowledge about their rights, as well as the media's obligation to shed light on projects that help large numbers of displaced people.

In mid-June, 2015, Amnesty International launched its world report from Lebanon entitled *The Global Refugee Crisis: A Conspiracy of Neglect*. Amnesty also released a sister publication *Lebanon: Pushed to the Edge: Syrian Refugees Face Increased Restrictions in Lebanon* since the country is considered the epicentre of the Syrian refugee crisis.

A June 16, 2015 story in *Assafir* described how participants at the Press Syndicate launch of the Amnesty report had to walk through the building's garage, where a Syrian refugee family had sought shelter, in order to feel the neglect and need and hear through the window of a room lacking light the shouts of children deprived of school.

Lebanese media have repeatedly decried the lack of burden-sharing by other countries in the face of an endless and growing crisis. Meanwhile, aid organisations and NGOs continue to pitch in with the humanitarian effort and with helping media tell the story.

Asked whether he saw pressures shaping the way the migration story is told from the perspective of resident communities in Lebanon, the Lebanese Red Cross director of public relations and communications Ayad El Mounzer said: "The Lebanese Red Cross is not interfering in any 'migration' issues; its only concern is to support the people's needs."

In their contribution to the book *In Line with the Divine: The Struggle for Gender Equality in Lebanon* published in 2015 by Abelian Academic in the US, authors Rouba El Helou and Maria Bou Zeid examine the absence of women in the refugee picture. In the chapter "Dissonance and Decorousness: Missing Images of Syrian Women Refugees in the Lebanese Media", an introductory summary explains the missing media components:

"Thus far Lebanese media coverage has centred on the impact of the displacement of Syrian women refugees, especially their need for humanitarian aid, their experiences of rape and torture, or sexual harassment during settlement. This partial coverage has given a one-sided perception of Syrian women suffering from forced migration.

"Findings based on content analysis of media releases between 2011 and 2013 show that the media have neglected the resilience of Syrian female refugees, their coping tactics and mechanisms within their new environment and the challenges they face. Media reports have failed to highlight how these women have become active in handling the organisation and distribution of aid and how they are facilitating their families' lives.

"They also have ignored the fact that Syrian women use their creativity to provide their families with basic needs through establishing and running small businesses or working for Lebanese employers."

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MEXICO

Shallow journalism in a land where political bias rules the newsroom

» ELVA NARCIA

If significance, proximity, prominence and human interest are the factors that decide if a story is newsworthy, migration should be top of the list in Mexican newsrooms.

To put things in context, Mexico sees 400,000 undocumented people, mainly Central Americans, cross it every year on their way to the United States; about 12 million Mexicans live overseas, most of them in the US; and every year billions of dollars are sent back home as remittances.

Mexico's northern border with the United States is about 3,000 km long and goes across six Mexican States: Baja California, Sonora, Coahuila, Nuevo León, Chihuahua and Tamaulipas. The region is inhabited by about four million people. The southern border on the other hand, often described as porous, divides Mexico from Guatemala and Belize, the latter a former British colony, is 1,179 km long and has a population of over a million and a half.

Even though immigration in Mexico has great relevance that doesn't show in mainstream media; in fact, activists, academics and even journalists believe that the migration story is of no interest to newsrooms unless some kind of human tragedy is involved.

There are some cases of outstanding investigative journalism, mainly from big newspapers and digital news sites, but the news of the day is usually covered by press releases, press conferences, news agencies and perhaps something more in-depth with reports from correspondents on the southern or northern borders.

Journalist Elio Henriquez, based in the southern state of Chiapas for Mexican newspaper *La Jornada*, regularly covers migration stories focusing on transit, detentions, human rights abuses, protests and human trafficking. To cover the stories he, as other correspondents do, often talks to activists, civil society organisations or visits shelters for migrants but, as he admits, accessing official information is not easy.

He is not alone when he says that – several other journalists consulted for this report, also mentioned that official information comes only as press releases or statements. Ery Acuña, director of news site *Monitor Sur, says:* "There are legal

impediments, bans to video recording at migrant detention centers – it has become almost impossible to have access to immigration authorities."

Verifying facts with official sources sometimes takes weeks or months, and journalists often have to appeal to the federal law on transparency and access to information to be able to do that. The government institutions that appear least open are the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Immigration.

To get information from the Consulates an official request has to be made to the Foreign Office in Mexico City and it often takes weeks or months for them to respond. As journalists work on tight deadlines they often have to publish or broadcast a story without the official side of it, or they have to dig for quotes and information that have already been published in newspapers or websites.

In addition, reporters covering migration face a number of risks: Mexico is still one of the most dangerous countries for journalists – 80 have been killed and 17 have disappeared in the past decade. During the past five years organised crime has been closely linked to human trafficking. Tamaulipas and Veracruz states have become particularly dangerous.

Journalists seem to be aware that the migration story is not covered with the depth, frequency and professionalism that it should be. "We should be talking more to the experts and going into the field more," says Francisco Mendoza, a reporter from the state of Guadalajara who did outstanding investigative work, accompanying a group of human smugglers for two weeks crossing the border between Mexico and the United States.

But investigative reporting can be expensive; some media outlets are doing it with the help of international organisations such as the Ford Foundation and the Open Society Institute. The big players, mainly newspapers and television channels, fund investigative journalism but not particularly on immigration.

Funds for field work have become scarcer says Elio Henriquez, and it seems that the financial situation of most media organisations is a major challenge. Government advertising plays an important role in keeping them afloat but the consequence seems to be to surrender editorial control.

"To survive, 99 per cent of Mexican media depend on the government," says Gardenia Mendoza, Mexico correspondent of *La Opinión*, a Los Angeles-based daily and editor of a specialised news agency on migration, *D'Exodo*. She believes that the apparent lack of interest in migration from Mexican

media lies in a strong dependence on government advertising and "the government is not interested in migration, it is a topic unknown to them, the government is too self-absorbed and it always wants to see stories about itself in the media".

In fact, when we open a newspaper or tune in to news programmes on radio and television, we find dozens of stories on politics or about politicians: "If the vote of Mexicans living overseas had an influence on the balance of power in the country, the situation would be different," and migration would perhaps be at the top of the agenda, says Gardenia Mendoza.

Gerardo Albarrán, the Ombudsman of *Radio Educación*, a public radio station, is extremely critical of Mexican media because "it was born to serve the political power" rather than the people. "Media are more interested in surviving as a mercenary industry – what they haven't realised is that journalism, good journalism, is our business and it could be a really good business if what we write, if the stories we tell, touch the souls and hearts of our readers, of our audience."

And it seems that is not only about listening to the audience and addressing the issues that are important to them, but also about developing a more proactive, media savvy society that would be ready to demand quality news and information. That is the opinion of journalist Marco Lara Klahr, author of several books on media and justice and an expert in investigative coverage of crime, violence and conflict.

"What we have here is a lethal combination: a lack of political communication platforms within the official institutions capable of providing information with a human rights perspective; a government that polarises, criminalises and discriminates; a news industry that produces information that in the end is disinformation; disempowered journalists and an apathetic society."

Stereotypes and how media get a helping hand

One of the main criticisms from activists, civil society organisations and academics is that media coverage on migration rarely goes further than the news of today.

Professor Ana María Aragonés, from the Institute of Economic Research at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), who is also a columnist at *La Jornada,* laments that coverage of migration focuses mainly on tragedies, with a lot of drama involved, victimising migrants and often using sexist and discriminatory language. "It is important to discuss not only migration as a phenomenon but also the reasons behind it, the impact of it on national development, the impact on democracy," she says.

And as Professor Aragonés points out, stories of dismembered bodies, assassinations, rapes, robberies, kidnappings, mass graves are what get covered in the news, more so when the perpetrators are from organised crime or the security forces. National TV news reports are rarely more in-depth.

Gardenia Mendoza calls it a "vertical coverage", centred mainly on what happens in Mexico, particularly with a focus on security. and what happens with Central American or Mexican migrants here until they reach the Rio Bravo and the US. The stories hardly ever cross borders.

Gerardo Albarrán says that when covering migration some media outlets tend to create stereotypes so that, for example, Salvadorans and Hondurans are portrayed as gang members, Colombians as drug dealers, Central American women as prostitutes. When a Colombian woman was assassinated with five Mexicans on July 31, 2015 in a Mexico City neighbourhood, some media hinted that because she was a Colombian she could have been involved with organised crime. She was young and also a model and so some reports suggested that she could have been a prostitute.

"There have been many media stories that suggest that migrants in transit through Mexico bring criminality and that migrants themselves are criminals," adds Maureen Meyer, Senior Associate for Mexico and Migrant Rights at WOLA (Advocacy for Human Rights in the Americas). "There is a tendency to view the migrants as creating problems, not as a vulnerable population in need of support."

Undoubtedly, the media influence perceptions towards the migrants, and the challenge is to offer journalistic coverage with a human rights, gender, child protection perspective, not forgetting that migrants had to leave their countries either in search of a better life, escaping poverty or in some cases, for security reasons.

Gerardo Albarrán points out that society and the Mexican press treat migrants in the southern border area worse than Mexican migrants are treated in the southern border of the United States and "that is something we omit, we fail to acknowledge, we decide to ignore or to hide. Why don't we give migrants a face and a name?" he wonders, "because in Mexico people don't have a face, people become numbers, press releases, and government statements".

Even though the panorama looks so bleak there are exceptional pieces of high standard investigative journalism. Salvadoran news site *El Faro* is a good example of a regional effort to cover migration from Central America through Mexico and all the way to the United States. With financial support from the Open Society Institute it covers all the complexity and its implications for security, human rights and democracy.

There is also a book, *"Me decían mexicano frijolero"* by Ana Luisa Calvillo, a 108-page testimony of Roberto Rangel, a migrant from the Mexican

State of Michoacán sentenced for homicide to a 57-year stretch at a maximum security prison in La Soledad, California, for a crime he did not commit.

There are also other examples of media funding investigative journalism on migration, such as the newspapers *El Universal* and *Reforma* or news sites *Emeequis*, *Sin Embargo*, *Animal Político*, or political magazines such as *Gatopardo,* but for coverage of the extent of the phenomenon and its complexity the main challenge is still the day-to-day coverage in which sexist, racist and chauvinist language still persists, according to Marco Lara Klahr.

Part of the problem is unreliable sources, untrained journalists, a media industry addicted to press releases and statements of government officials, unverified news stories and news stories published with only one source.

Towards good practice and quality reporting

There has been some excellent coverage from some Mexican media outlets on the plight of migrants as they travel through the country. For example *72migrants.com,* a multimedia project that pays tribute to the 58 men and 14 women from Central and South America murdered by the Los Zetas drug cartel in 2010 in the village of El Huizachal in the municipality of San Fernando, Tamaulipas.

In the words of Alma Guillermoprieto, who coordinated the project, the idea was to express outrage and to return names, faces and identities to each victim "because for some media outlets and local authorities, the migrants were just corpses and numbers, not lives cut short, broken families or truncated dreams".

The project, in which prominent writers, artists, activists and political scientists took part, started as a "virtual altar", a website with texts, photos, music, flowers and donations, then added a series of radio programmes that were broadcast at a university radio station, *Radio Universidad*. One year later it became something more permanent – a book edited by Almadía and Fronteras Press.

There is also the series on Mexico's Southern Border Plan produced by digital news site *Animal Político* in collaboration with CIDE (Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas), a Mexican centre for research and higher education, with the financial support of the Ford Foundation.

The project "Southern Border Plan: Hunting migrants" explores the impact of the Mexican government plan supposedly designed to facilitate the legal flow of commerce, tourism and guest workers in the region, but as some media report, the plan pushed migrants to more dangerous routes and it made Mexico a barrier for undocumented persons heading to the United States.

Animal Politico's investigative journalism took reporters across the border and through the migrant routes, collecting testimonies, talking to official and unofficial sources.The production took about five months and involved a large team of journalists, graphic designers, editors, videographers, researchers and writers. It provides context, infographics, videos, photos, testimonies of migrants, information from government officials, expert opinions and comments from readers.

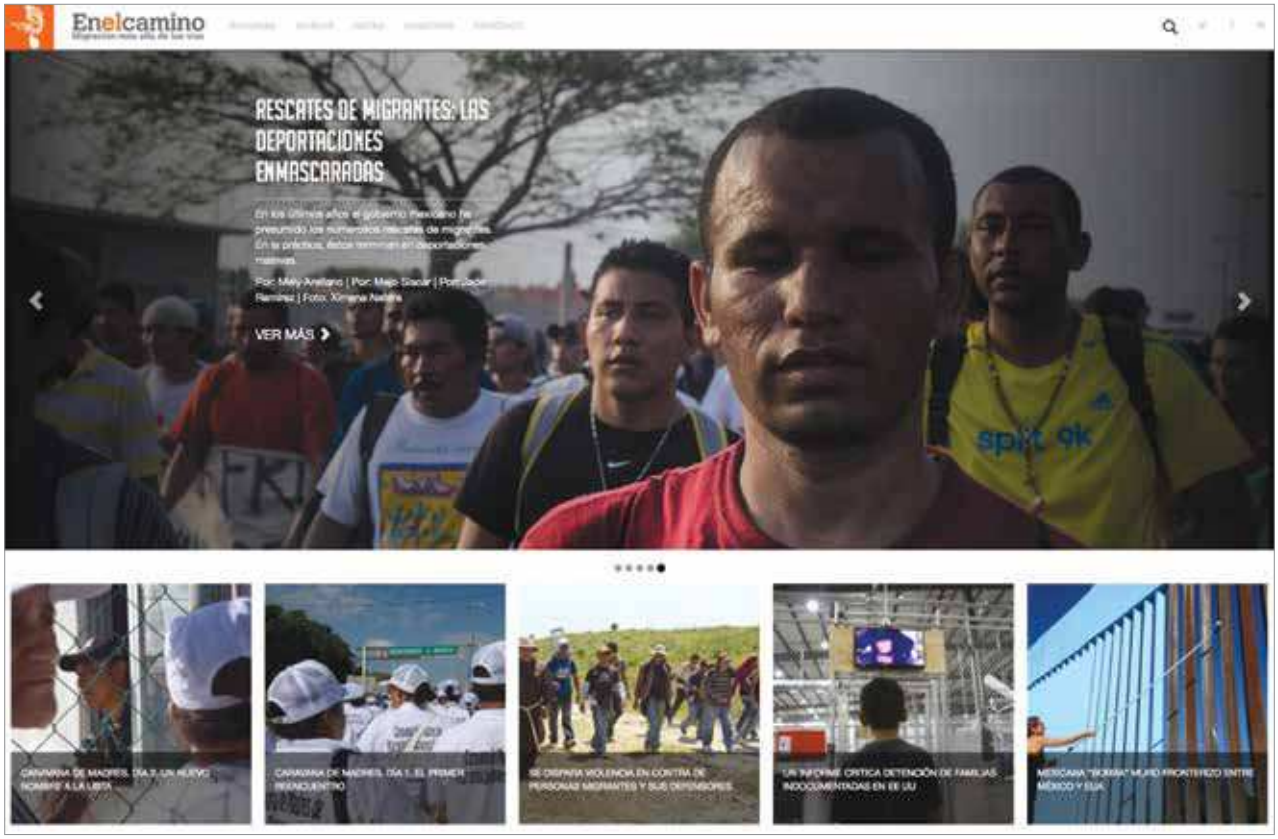
An important element was the security protocol. According to one of the producers, Manuel Ureste, journalists in the field reported on a regular basis to the news editor or to other colleagues, and always followed local advice, especially on no-go places where drug cartels actively operate.

En el Camino (http://enelcamino.periodistasdeapie.org.mx/) is another successful online project produced with the support of the Open Society Foundation by Periodistas de a Pie, a network of professional local journalists. As the website states, the purpose was "to make an adequate coverage of migration with an inclusive language, with an emphasis on human rights and respect for human dignity". The intention was "to contribute to the construction of a culture of journalism that is closer to the reality of immigration, to explain the reasons behind the exodus, the inferno of the route to reach the American dream, the loneliness of the deported".

The website contains written reportage, short pieces of video and photo galleries. The story of San Fernando, for example, described as a ghost town in the border state of Tamaulipas, shows silent streets, run-down buildings, memories of women raped, murdered, buried in mass graves, people burned alive … an atmosphere of mistrust among the sparse population.

Another story describes an eight-day search of migrants through Tamaulipas, the most used route and probably the most dangerous, for undocumented people on the way to the United States. What the journalists found, they say, were signs of an "invisible and silent exodus that moves inside trailers or hotels and only emerges in the form of mutilated or assassinated bodies".

With the examples mentioned above, it would seem that any strong journalistic coverage on migration



would require time, money and a large number people, but Gardenia Mendoza believes that stories are out there waiting to be told, the only thing journalists need is to keep ears and eyes open, to talk to sources, to talk to migrants and to civil society organisations actively involved in the reality of the migrants.

Gardenia was particularly surprised by the way local and international media covered the story of Mexican government officials allegedly exploiting Cubans passing through *en route* to the United States. "It was like the whole package was there, available to journalists – testimonies, government officials' statements, audios, videos … everything."

Recommendations for action

It seems necessary to increase coverage of migrants in transit in larger media outlets and Mexican TV. Although online and alternative media have done a wonderful job putting a human face to the migrants travelling to Mexico and the ways they are abused their reach is limited.

Changing the population's perception of migrants and increasing pressure on the government to address crimes committed against them (kidnappings, murder, extortion, sexual assault) requires more mass media coverage and particularly more with a human rights perspective.

Introducing a code of ethics and editorial filters that ban from newsrooms racist, sexist and discriminatory language is crucial. Training journalists on migration and human rights and regular feedback sessions on content produced and distributed, could, perhaps, contribute to professionalisation of media. Playbacks and post-mortems have proven useful.

Coverage of migration has until now focused mainly on security and tragedy, Exploring new angles requires regular insights from sources, civil society organisations, migrants themselves and the audience.

Interacting more actively with the audience could be an inexhaustible source of information and story ideas. Working on media literacy in Mexican society could also build a more proactive audience that demands quality news and information.

Access to information from official sources seems to be a challenge. But organised pressure from media outlets and civil society organisations could perhaps influence the way government officials talk to the media.

Establishing a safety protocol for journalists, particularly in current times, is essential; and exploring alliances with different media outlets to increase the reach of coverage, especially in light of the financial difficulties, could be a way to ensure editorial independence.

NEPAL

Information gaps fail to keep track of a country on the move

» OM ASTHA RAI

Migration is not a new phenomenon in Nepal – Nepalis have been migrating for centuries in search of a better life. In the 18th century, when Prithvi Narayan Shah annexed weaker states with his own Gorkha kingdom and gave birth to modern Nepal, many migrated to India to evade exploitative land tax by the new ruler. In 1815, Nepal signed a treaty with the East India Company, allowing the British to recruit Nepali youths into their army.

In more recent times there has been an upsurge in migration, driven by poverty, civil strife and war at home and the lure of jobs in the Gulf and in fast-growing economies such as Malaysia. This is a major story, affecting millions of people, but is gets little special attention in Nepali media.

In 1985, the Nepal government introduced a Foreign Employment Act to facilitate migration of workers. In 1990, after the end of the absolute monarchy and the restoration of multi-party democracy, the government adopted liberal economic policies, encouraging young, jobless people to migrate abroad and send home remittances.

In 1993, the first year official statistics on migration were compiled, 3,605 left for the Gulf. By 2006, the year a decade-long civil war ended in Nepal, that figure had jumped to more than 200,000.

The migration rate has continued to rise: according to official figures more than half a million migrated in 2014 – or nearly 1,500 per day. The government says that in total more than 3.4 million migrated through legal channels between 1993 and 2014:

Malaysia has received the highest number (1,144,859), followed by Qatar (910,204), Saudi Arabia (66,604), UAE (42,072), Kuwait (97,973), Bahrain (40,651), Oman (23,632), South Korea (22,131), Lebanon (11,432), Israel (7,937), Afghanistan (6,175), Japan (13,842).

However, these records do not give the full picture: the government does not record returnees. Many who left Nepal might have returned or died overseas. Also many, particularly women, migrate through illegal channels, often via India, and there are no figures for them. A large number are seasonal migrants,

going to India and returning for the planting and harvesting seasons. In 2010, the World Bank estimated that 867,000 Nepalis were in India but the figure could be much higher.

There are no exact numbers of migrant workers. But it is estimated that around four million are abroad, mainly in the Gulf countries and Malaysia. This estimate is based on the number who took out labour permits with the Department of Foreign Employment between 1993 and 2014, plus estimates of the number of undocumented workers who went abroad through informal channels.

While migration is widespread in all areas of Nepal eastern districts have seen the largest exodus over the past 20 years.

Most migrants are male: following reports of sexual abuse, exploitation and harassment of Nepali housemaids by employers, the government placed a ban on women going to several Arab countries, though many avoid the restrictions.

According to government statistics, at least 3,270 Nepalis died in Malaysia and the Gulf countries between 2009 and 2014, most of them men. The death rate is increasing year on year: in 2010, 418 were reported; in 2014 it was 842, or more than two a day.

Lack of job opportunities is the single biggest reason behind migration. "Jobs with decent incomes are rare in Nepal," says Hari Krishna Neupane, who worked first in Israel and is now in Kuwait. "If you work in Nepal, you can survive but it is difficult to save any money to build your own house and send your children to English-medium schools.

"It is not that salaries are very attractive in foreign countries. Many unskilled Nepali workers earn about NRs 15,000 (about 150 US$) a month. But they manage to save because they always keep in mind that they are there to earn.

"Youths are lured by manpower agents with lies about salaries and other factors. If they know they will have to work like slaves they will not go but once they land in the Gulf it is very difficult to return. They have no means to pay off a huge loan which they take to go abroad. In addition, most Arab countries practice the 'Kafala' system in which employers have charge of the workers' passports."

The number of migrants is likely to increase dramatically over the next few years as a result of the recent earthquakes. On 25 April, 2015, a 7.8 magnitude quake killed nearly 9,000 people and destroyed hundreds of thousands of houses. The government has offered loans for rebuilding: many of the earthquake victims who borrow will have to migrate to pay them back.

Ram Hari Katwal, a 26-year-old from Melamchi village in Sidhuplachok, the district worst-affected by earthquake, had gone to Malaysia one year before to pay off a loan that he took to build a house. The earthquake not only destroyed it but also killed his wife and one-year-old son.

"I have not paid off my previous loan," says Katwal. "I will now have to take out another to rebuild my house, and it is not possible to pay off these loans working in Nepal. I must go abroad again."

Besides migration abroad, there has been a big surge in internal migration with large numbers moving from rural to urban areas, particularly during the civil war. Over the past 20 years, the population of the valley around Kathmandu, the capital, has nearly doubled.

Migration and media: A poverty of reliable information

Migration in Nepal touches millions of families, but media coverage fails to give it any special focus or attention. Most reporters see the issue only as an extension of other newsbeats like business, the economy and foreign affairs. Television channels, radio and online news portals do not have specialist migration reporters.

"Any reporter who is free can do a migration story but someone else is likely to do it on another day," says Govinda Pariyar, editor of *www.digitaldainik.com*, an online news portal. "Our reporters do not explore issues, they cover just incidents. For example, if some migrant workers are deported or swindled, it makes news. We do not have resources to do in-depth stories digging out reasons behind their misery."

Kantipur Daily, the newspaper with the largest circulation in the country, was the first to have a reporter covering labour migration. *Kantipur* began publication in 1993 – the year the government started maintaining data about migrant workers: most stories were written in the context of job opportunities, or about labour agreements between Nepal and various Arab countries and the value of remittances and their contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Later, other newspapers started covering the subject. Most, like *Kantipur*, wrote from a mainly business perspective. This continues to be the case. At

Nagarik Daily, the foreign affairs reporter includes migration as part of his brief. In *Republica*, a sister publication of *Nagarik*, the reporter assigned to migration also covers gender issues, women's rights, children and culture.

"Migration-related stories are few and far between, as compared to other newsbeats like politics, crime and sports," says Shreejana Shrestha, who covers migration for *Republica*. It might look as though reporters have a plethora of migration issues to write about. But these issues are often the same – workers being swindled by manpower agents, difficulties in getting passports, or about labour permits and deportation from destination countries.

"When you write a couple of stories about migrant workers being swindled or deported, you do not feel like writing more because while the names of those involved might be different, the issues remain the same," he says.

One major handicap is access to reliable sources and good statistical data. Most comes from government officials, NGO activists, Kathmandu-based experts, manpower agents and some migrant workers on their way to or from foreign countries.

Due to a lack of financial resources, reporters rarely have the opportunity and means to look closely into the conditions migrants work under. Surendra Poudel, who covers migration for *Nagarik*, is essentially a foreign affairs reporter. He started covering migration after hearing, via Foreign Ministry officials, about Nepalis being exploited abroad. But he has never been able to visit countries where this occurred.

"I write just what I know from the Foreign Ministry officials," says Poudel. "Sometimes, I get lucky and talk to migrant workers abroad on the phone but that's it. I have never seen what their conditions are like. I do not know whether what they describe to me is real. Or maybe they are working in more deplorable situations than they are able to describe."

Kantipur is an exception. It has a bureau in Qatar which not only covers the Gulf region but also publishes a weekly newspaper in Qatar targeting Nepali migrant workers there. But it has not been able to cover many of the issues they experience.

According to the paper's Qatar bureau chief, Hom Karki, only two kinds of data about migrant workers can easily be found: the number who obtain labour permits to go abroad through legal channels and the number who die abroad. Other not-so-significant data, such as the number of registered

manpower agencies and institutions qualified to run pre-departure orientation programmes, is also available on the Nepal government website.

But it is not always reliable and only tells the official story. For example, due to illegal migration, the number obtaining work permits does not reflect the actual number working abroad. Financial data is also limited: while the Central Bank of Nepal is able to track remittances sent back through formal channels like banks and registered money-transfer companies, many workers use "Hundi", a traditional form of money transfer that does not pass through official bodies.

Karki says that even though he is based in the Gulf it is still difficult to get hold of reliable data. "We are forced to rely on our own government's agencies. We cannot go to Qatari government offices and ask. Two years ago, I wanted to get hold of more useful data such as the exact number of Nepalis working in Qatar and how many were in which sectors. I asked at the Nepali embassy: it wrote to Qatar's labour ministry but up till now there has been no response.

"The issue of migrant workers is so vast that with limited resources it is difficult to explore even from here. So how can we expect Kathmandu-based reporters to present the real picture?" he asks. "When I came here, I realised that the conditions are much worse than what I thought while reporting from Kathmandu."

Karki also finds that editors back home in Nepal do not understand these conditions. "I sent a story about migrant workers forced to sleep in congested rooms that have no air-conditioning but I was ridiculed by my editors for trying to make a mountain out of a molehill.

"They did not understand the difference between Nepal and Qatar. In Nepal, only well-off people

sleep in AC rooms. But in Qatar, AC is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Like you cannot live without oxygen, you cannot survive without AC in Qatar.

"Another time I wrote about how migrant workers have to walk to the embassy office here to lodge complaints about working conditions. Again, my editors in Kathmandu laughed it off because walking to the office is normal in Nepal. In the desert heat of Qatar, if you walk out on the streets, you might lose your life."

Karki says the Nepali media have not been able to explore many migrant issues. "When workers go on strike and get arrested and deported back to Nepal, it makes big news," he says. "But the media often fail to find out what circumstances led them to go on strike in a foreign country. Were they getting the wages they were promised? Were they getting their promised leave, their off-duty hours, their liveable rooms or potable water? The media does not bother to explore these nuances."

The social impact of mass migration is also rarely reported. Many youths fall into drug addiction because their fathers live far away and come home only once in two or three years. In a patriarchal society such as Nepal, mothers alone cannot provide proper guidance. When a migrant worker dies abroad, his wife and children are left to fend for themselves.

After the recent earthquakes, it was reported that women in many areas faced difficulties in building shelters or rebuilding damaged houses in the absence of their husbands. Before the earthquake, that kind of reporting was rare. Every year disasters like floods and landslides hit villages and women are left to cope as best they can.

In the absence of proper in-depth, comprehensive and compelling reporting, there is little pressure on the government to act on some of the serious questions surrounding the export of labour. Manpower agencies within Nepal and in the Gulf states have been accused by workers of charging excessive fees and extracting bribes yet little has been done to curb their activities.

As many as 3,272 Nepali migrant workers died in the Gulf countries and Malaysia between 2009 and 2014, with 847 recorded as dying from heart failure. The question is, why do so many, most below the age of 40, suffer heart failure? Is it because of the extremely hot and unpleasant conditions? Or are there other factors at play?

Some deaths may be due to a sudden drop in body temperature: returning migrants report that workers, during breaks from the intense heat in the Gulf, often fall asleep in air-conditioned rooms, dying as their bodies fail to adapt to the sudden cold.

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The government has not adequately investigated, and without its help – particularly in the Gulf countries where directly questioning the authorities is very difficult for reporters – the true picture is unlikely to emerge.

Comprehensive and compelling coverage of the lives of migrant workers is rare, with few journalists or media outlets having the resources, the imagination and enthusiasm to carry out the task.

Two years ago, a team from *Sajha Sawal* – translated as "Common Questions" – a popular television show produced by the BBC Nepali Trust, went to Qatar and interviewed migrant workers. It showed the often very difficult conditions and unmasked manpower agents who had misled workers about their contracts and salaries. This episode of *Sajha Sawal* is still considered one of the best examples of coverage of migrant issues.

In 2009, *Nepal Weekly*, a news magazine, ran a cover story about deaths abroad in another good piece of reporting which drew the government's attention to the unusually high rate of deaths of migrant workers, particularly in Arab countries like Qatar and Saudi Arabia. But the magazine failed to follow up and there was no effort by government to put diplomatic pressure on either Qatar or Saudi Arabia to protect Nepali workers, and the death rate among those in the Gulf continues to be high.

Bridging the information gap at home and abroad

This lack of protection for migrant workers fails to recognise how migration plays a central role in Nepal's economy. Remittances sent home have not only sustained local economic activity but also helped reduce poverty. In rural villages, many women are able to feed their children nutritious food and send them to school because their husbands earn money abroad.

Over the last two decades, Nepal has succeeded in bringing down the percentage of its people living below the poverty line. Without remittances the fight against poverty would be all the more difficult: in a 2013 report, the National Planning Commission said the incidence would jump to more than 33 per cent from the current 19 per cent if remittances stopped. It is difficult to imagine the impact this would have on the economy.

Like much other data related to migration, reliable figures on remittance are not available. In 2013, Nepal Rashtra Bank, the country's central regulatory bank, estimated that it represented 25.7 per cent of GDP.

The government has no plans to put an end to migration but seems to have adopted policies encouraging it. Setting up the Foreign Employment Promotion Board (FEPB) in 2007 showed that the government wanted to encourage Nepali youths to migrate.

Ganesh Gurung is Nepal's foremost expert on labour migration and the remittance economy. "Migration should not be promoted but managed by the government," he says. "Youths must be encouraged to stay by creating job opportunities within the country. But our government is not focused on creating job opportunities. In this situation, an end to migration does not look in sight. I think it will go on for the next couple of decades."

Comprehensive coverage of migration is vital for the country and the media needs more resources and to be better trained.

One way to improve the situation is more migration-focused fellowships for journalists. Panos South Asia, a regional media organisation based in Kathmandu, is carrying out the first phase of a fellowship programme aimed at selecting journalists to go to the Gulf countries and cover migration.

Managing and releasing reliable data is also important. The government should track workers not only when they leave but also while they are abroad or when they return. It should also be more proactive in investigating allegations of abuse.

According to *Kantipur*'s Qatar bureau chief Karki, workers who complain about injustices are often ignored by their own authorities. "When they cannot take it (abuse) any more, they go to their embassy. But the embassy sends them back to Qatar's labour department, which will never do them justice."

Some groups in Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait have been running blog-like online news portals. These are not professionally produced but many are popular. Workers could be trained and encouraged to provide more information which could be used by Kathmandu-based journalists. However migrant blogging groups are wary of gaining too much publicity: they do not want to get into trouble with the authorities in the Gulf and elsewhere and endanger their work status and income.

SOUTH AFRICA

Compelling tales of afrophobia and media selective blindness

» ANTON HARBER

A South African woman living in a building called Fatties Mansions in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, with her Burundian boyfriend and three-month-old daughter was woken one night in May by the police and soldiers of Operation Fiela kicking down their front door.

Fiela means "to sweep away, to clean up, to remove dirt" in the Sotho language. This was a joint operation launched by the police, municipal police and the military in response to a wave of xenophobic violence which had taken seven lives. It should be seen, said Gwede Mantashe, secretary-general of the ruling African National Congress, as "an attempt to rid the country of illegal and undocumented immigrants". In other words, it was aimed at the victims rather than the perpetrators of the violence that had gripped the city a week earlier.

Documents filed in court over the next few weeks said, "They asked for the boyfriend's papers and he was slapped when he showed his passport. She tried to show them her South African identification but they refused to look at it, she says. They were sent downstairs with the baby, but with no blankets, nappies or food, and taken to the police station where she says people had to sit on the floor without food or access to toilets. Eventually, she managed to show an officer her ID book and was released around 12.30am."

Little of this was reported in the mainstream media, and only cursorily covered was the fact that lawyers had to return to court twice to get access to those detained in Operation Fiela. In its first few days, the security forces took journalists with them to make a public show of their clenched-fist response to the violence. Pictures that emerged showed the humiliation and degradation of scores of people – the documented and the undocumented, local and foreign. Front-page images of many being made to lie down half-naked in the corridors of their buildings as police searched their belongings were reminiscent of security force action at the height of apartheid. Media response, though, was muted, in line with public sentiment, which is strongly anti-crime and anti-immigrant.

Operation Fiela began as a short-term response to the violence, but quickly morphed into a prolonged crime clean-up which targeted both locals and migrants. Policemen on the ground were less circumspect in their description of what they were doing than the politicians. Before a raid in Bellville, Cape Town, a police spokesperson said: "The focus for today will be on illicit goods, whether it is firearms, illicit cigarettes, counterfeit products, drugs …" There was little mention of immigrants. The reporter said they then "tore" through the area. An officer was

quoted saying: "We are here to protect the businesses, to ensure that business is conducted in a way that is free, so that … the economy can grow."

Stephen Faulkner of the SA Municipal Workers Union said at a media conference called to decry the operation: "With the chronically misnamed Operation Fiela, we have witnessed a terrible assault on what had become a symbol of refuge and asylum and a symbol of safety for those who most needed it … migrant communities are being compared to rubbish at the same time as our government at all levels is declaring itself in favour of tackling xenophobia."

There was little media questioning about how a short-term operation became open-ended, how it came to widen its scope to take in a range of crime, how it failed to discriminate between the undocumented and the documented and how it packaged this so that it gave the impression that crime and migrants were part of the same problems.

Hard-pressed media as idle myth-makers

"The media is lazy," said Prof Loren Landau of the African Centre for Migration and Society at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, "and it perpetuates many myths about migrants. If the government says there are 30,000 cases a year of child trafficking then it is reported without questioning, and the figure is out there – even though the government's own figures don't support this. If a minister says that migrants are stealing jobs, then that is how the problem is framed: people are naturally upset because they are unemployed and blame foreigners for taking the jobs. The myth is perpetuated, even if the evidence is that migrants create more jobs than they take."

Laziness is not the only explanation. Newsrooms are depleted, having seen large-scale retrenchments in recent years, and newspapers are unable to do the kind of day-to-day reporting they did a few years ago. There are few specialist reporters and certainly none who have expertise in the migration question, even though it has been a major political and economic issue.

Another factor that counts when the media are under financial pressure: immigrants, particularly the undocumented, seldom feature in the audience surveys which increasingly hold sway over editorial strategy as traditional media grapples with diminishing audiences. This means that migrants are largely invisible both as consumers and subjects of the media.

One would have thought that bringing soldiers onto the streets, which had not happened since apartheid, would be questioned in the media, but strong anti-crime sentiment meant the operation had public support, and media attention quickly faded. Reports of whole townships being surrounded and of house-to-house searches, with hundreds of people caught up in them, were only rumours recounted by activists, because the media was not there.

This stood in strong contrast to the coverage just a week earlier of the xenophobic violence. Professor Landau and Rashon Dadoo, who runs the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (Cormsa), agree that coverage of the violence that drove many people out of townships and into temporary refugee camps was generally quite good and mostly sympathetic. It also gave more context and explanation than during the previous such outbreak in 2008, when the media were caught completely off guard and struggled to understand what was happening.

A company called ROi Africa, which monitors media, said the level of reporting and social media conversation during the week of violence was "incredible". Tracking it against other major trending stories, xenophobia monopolised 66 per cent of the news media. On social media, this was on the hashtags #NoToXenophobia and #NoToAfrophobia. The most popular theme – in about 40 per cent of the discussion – was calls for the government to act.

This is the pattern of media treatment of migrants: when there is a wave of xenophobic violence it is on the front page and coverage is full and detailed. It is often accompanied by campaigns for assistance for victims and coverage of those who volunteer to assist or who protest the violence. For the rest of the time, migrants largely appear only in reports of crime.

The overwhelming majority of mentions of non-South African origins are when criminals are identified. While South African media has developed a sensitivity towards identifying the race of criminals and has largely broken with the apartheid tradition of describing "black" criminals and "white" victims, there is less hesitation in labelling criminals as foreigners, particularly "Nigerians". Because there is strong anti-crime sentiment, this has major implications for the way foreigners are seen.

In addition, there is seldom any differentiation between refugees and other migrants, or between those who are documented and those who are not. They are simply "foreigners" or "aliens", even if they have citizenship or permanent residence. Interest-

ingly, this applies mainly to black Africans. White middle-class immigrants are quickly integrated into the society and seldom labelled as foreigners.

Justice denied for an invisible community

Johannesburg is a city transformed in the last two decades by immigration from the rest of Africa since the end of apartheid, turning a city of segregation into a richly cosmopolitan and multicultural one. It is not clear exactly how many migrants there are, but significant sectors of the city and the informal settlements which surround it have strong populations of recently-arrived immigrants.

There are some quarters where more French is spoken than English and there are areas known as Little Addis and Little Kinshasa, alongside the older Chinatown. The official census figure is 2.2 million immigrants across the country, but *The New York Times* recently stated as fact that it was 5 million, a figure now often quoted. *Africa Check*, a fact-checking website based in Johannesburg, showed that there was no research basis for it and, while the census figure may reflect some undercounting, it is unlikely to have been so great.

This population is visible around Johannesburg – in fact, it is impossible to miss. It is evident in boardrooms and lecture theatres, on the streets and online, where there is a significant presence of bloggers writing about being what is routinely – and derogatorily – called "makwerakwera", a black immigrant from elsewhere in Africa.

But this significant segment of city life is largely absent from mainstream media, other than in crime reports or where there are outbreaks of violence. Read the newspapers or watch television and these areas are near-invisible. Part of this, according to Dadoo, is because – like migrants of uncertain status in many countries – they often choose to keep a low profile and avoid media attention. But they are vulnerable to abuse and maltreatment and there is little interest until it blows up into a major conflagration, threatening the peace of middle-class suburbia.

What coverage there is often feeds the view that migrants bear responsibility for joblessness and crime, two of the country's most severe problems. Alfani Yoyo from Cormsa said of Operation Fiela and its media coverage: "It feeds the perception that migrants are to be blamed for the social ills of this country … It cements the attitude of 'us' and 'them'."

Operation Fiela was presented as a clampdown on illegal immigration and the crime associated with it, but the majority of those arrested were locals. Police reported that by the end of June, 1,650 foreign nationals and 2,264 South African citizens were arrested for crime including drug possession, murder, rape and robbery.

"They would say that they had arrested hundreds of illegal immigrants and found large amounts of drugs, as if the two were conflated. Many of those arrested were just caught without their papers and many of those involved in drugs were South Africans as well as foreigners, but an impression was

created of a successful clampdown on illegal activities by illegal immigrants," according to Dadoo.

It was photographs of those two outbreaks that defined them, raised public horror and galvanised official reaction. And the debate around those photographs, overlaid with the concerns and issues of a young democracy with a troubled racial past, tell us a great deal about how the country grapples with the issues around migrants.

During the anti-immigrant violence of 2008, it was a photo of a man being burnt alive that brought attention to the horrors of what was happening. Ernesto Nhamuave, 35, was one of the many Mozambicans living quietly in South Africa and largely invisible in the media until his neighbours set upon him and the image of him being burnt alive was sent around the world. The use of that picture on many local front pages brought accusations that the media, still largely white-owned, treated black bodies, particularly dead ones, with less circumspection than white bodies.

Such pictures are seldom used as prominently if the person in them is white, it was argued. This sparked furious debate, overlaid with the accusation that the media is insufficiently transformed from its apartheid days. But it was the media investigation into the burning man and his identity that changed the coverage from that of "others" being attacked, to someone with a face, family and history. It brought horrified citizens out on the street to demonstrate their repugnance.

Attention faded, though, until the fresh outburst of anti-immigrant violence in 2015. And again it was a photograph – of three thugs knifing a foreigner to death in Alexandra township – that brought it home and galvanised the government into action. The picture was splashed over the front page of *The Sunday Times*, the country's biggest newspaper. "Kill thy neighbour. Alex attack brings home SA's shame," was the headline.

Journalists had been sent to Alexandra to cover attacks against migrants when they came on this scene. Emmanuel Sithole, a street trader from neighbouring Mozambique, had asked these three for some money he was owed for cigarettes he had sold them earlier in the day. They turned on him and stabbed him repeatedly in front of a crowd, including photographer James Oatway.

The journalists took Mr Sithole to a local clinic, where the doctor was absent because he was from the Congo, and had stayed away presumably because he feared for his own safety. By the time they got Sithole to a hospital, he had bled to death.

An immigrant and three township thugs, characters normally absent from our media, were suddenly thrust onto the front page of a leading family newspaper. Within days, all their names, ages and backgrounds were known and for a brief moment this segment of South African life was in the public eye. Some of the best coverage came from *The Sunday Times* delving into the dead man's background, friends and family, as well as those of his killers.

The political response: pressure on media

President Jacob Zuma leapt quickly into the furore, saying that the picture "made us look bad", fuelling a common government accusation that an overwhelmingly anti-government media focused on the negative. Speaking at a Freedom Day rally, marking the anniversary of SA's first democratic election in 1994, Zuma said: "When we listen to media who sometimes exaggerate, we might think we have a problem, but it's not true."

He described the murder as "callous" but pointed out that Sithole was an illegal immigrant who had adopted a local name to disguise his origins. The implication was that Sithole deserved different treatment because he was one of many undocumented migrants forced to hide their identities.

Deputy Police Minister Maggie Sotyu said the problem was misinterpreted and exaggerated by the media, calling on them to show a patriotic bias: "There are worse things happening in other countries but you will never see them in the media. The media is part of the community, so please, it must be biased when it comes to South Africa," she reportedly said, adding that she now understood why there was a call for greater media regulation.

This is part of a broader and consistent government-driven narrative: a news media insufficiently transformed since apartheid needs to adopt a developmental agenda. This would mean playing the critical watchdog less and being more positive about the country and its transition, including being less obsessed with issues such as crime and giving more coverage to the country's achievements since the advent of democracy. This is accompanied by calls for – and often threats of – greater regulation, including a statutory tribunal.

A parliamentary committee that launched an investigation into this year's violence against foreigners took issue with the media's depiction of it as xenophobic violence. It was an ordinary act of thuggery, the kind of crime that happened all too often in areas like Alex, they argued. It was abhorrent, but it was wrong to suggest Sithole was targeted because he was foreign.

"South Africans are not xenophobic," said the committee chair, Ruth Bhengu, citing the number of legal foreigners who lived in the country without problems. Bhengu argued that "xenophobia means having extreme hatred, which we don't have as South Africans.

"We must move away from this xenophobic word because it brings us to the wars, and makes it seem like South Africans hate foreigners," she said. She was reflecting a general discomfort in government at accusations that other Africans were not welcome, especially since many now in government had been given refuge elsewhere on the continent during the fight against apartheid.

Underlying it, though, was another uncomfortable reality. It was not that South Africans targeted foreigners, but that they targeted certain of them, notably those from Africa who were setting themselves up as township traders and allegedly taking business from locals. Some commentators argued that we should talk about Afrophobia, rather than xenophobia, though even this was not quite accurate, as some of the targets were not from Africa – such as Pakistani and Bangladeshi shopkeepers – and not all Africans were targets.

What was clear was that the primary target were those seen to be taking trade and jobs in a troubled economy. Locals most hit by high levels of unemployment were targeting the most visible and vulnerable of those that were easy to blame for taking those jobs – the foreigners, both documented and undocumented. One only has to spend some time on the streets of Johannesburg to pick up that xenophobia is rife and any attempt to disguise or rename it feels like denial.

During these outbreaks of violence media coverage is extensive and detailed, along with coverage of anti-xenophobic activities and calls for assistance for the affected. It is very different, though, the rest of the time.

When the Somali community drew attention to a wave of killings of their compatriots, particularly in the Eastern Cape in 2011, one local newspaper known for its investigative bite, *The Daily Dispatch*, took up the story. It reported over 100 Somalis murdered in their region alone, and told of 400 graves of murdered Somalis in the cities of East London and Port Elizabeth. Some were put down to intra-Somali rivalries, including fighting over business territory. The national newspapers barely reported it and the story slipped away.

As one activist, who asked not to be named, told me: "When there is an outbreak of violence, it seems to come from nowhere. But that is because the incidents that are happening all the time are not reported or noticed until they burst into something big and can't be ignored. But when we try and get coverage of some quite serious incidents then we can't interest the media because they are not directly affecting them or their target readers.

"There is no sustained coverage. It is hard to get space in the newspaper, and they send junior reporters to cover these things. There are series issues of diversity here, but we cover the issue in Europe more than here." To cover it in Europe is both easier and cheaper, as the material is bought from agencies or international media. To cover it locally is politically challenging because of the issues in our media and expensive, at a time of newsroom cutbacks.

UNITED STATES

The Trump Card: How US news media dealt with a migrant hate manifesto

» BILL ORME

In the United States, as in Europe, migration was a dominant topic of mainstream news coverage throughout the summer of 2015.

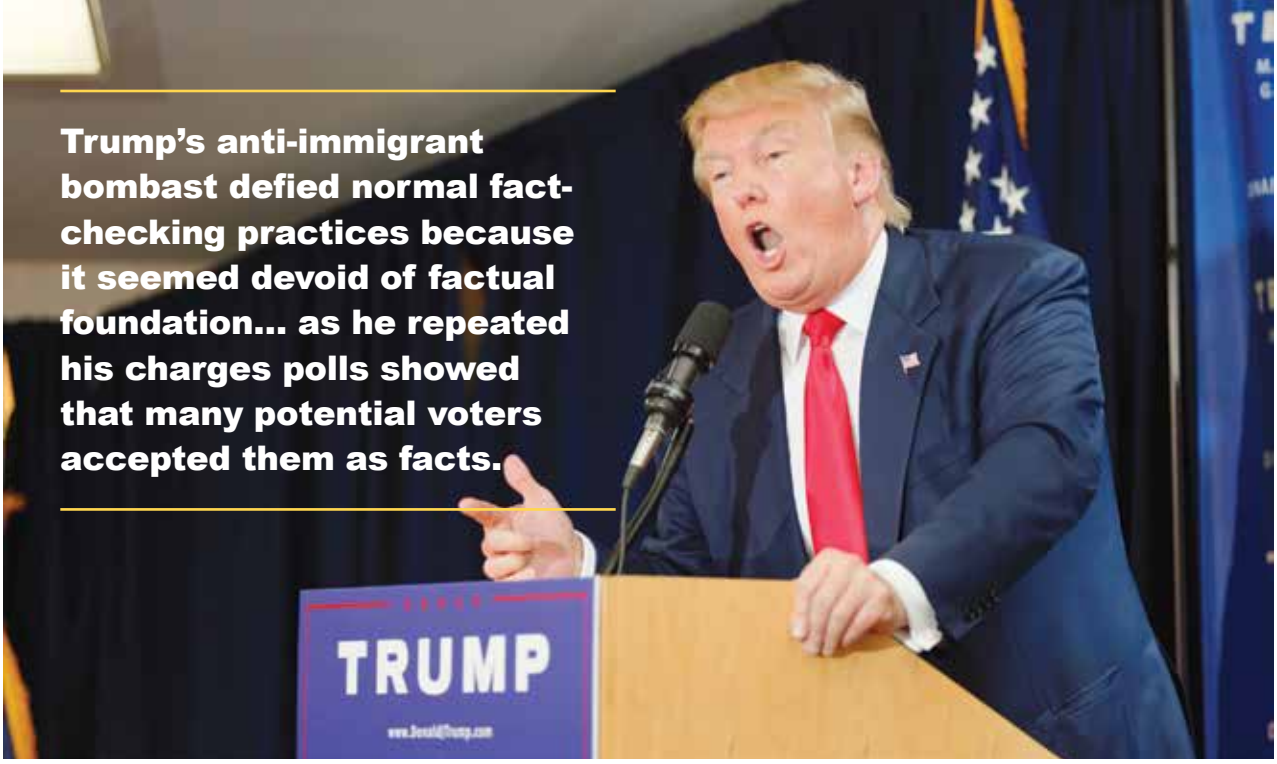
In Europe, the story was a humanitarian crisis of historic proportions, with millions fleeing violence and repression. The migration focus in US media, by contrast, was an utterly domestic debate about the legal status of millions of immigrants who have been peaceably settled in the country for years.

And it was prompted largely by one candidate in the early stages of a US presidential campaign, rather than reflecting an actual change in migration patterns or any other precipitating event. The refugee crisis across the Atlantic and in more distant parts were distant sideshows.

In serious news organisations in the US and Europe alike, migration has been covered as a multifaceted story of human tragedy and perseverance, of domestic resistance and acceptance, of multicultural diversity and geopolitical complexity, and, above all, as one of potentially permanent and profound demographic change.

Yet this coverage has long been strikingly different in the United States, where political refugees have not been a factor in debates over immigration in decades, while "economic" immigration has been a constant throughout its history – and a recurring topic of divisive partisan debate. The continuing desperate exodus of Syrian and other refugees was seen as a "foreign" story, with little initial reporting on the US role or responsibility in the origins of the crisis, or as a potential safe haven for those fleeing turmoil and often savage cruelty. By extension, ethical issues in migration coverage are also perceived quite distinctly in American media.

Ethical questions confronting news media in recent months included difficult decisions about the of shocking images of human suffering, and ground rules for the direct interaction of journalists with people in desperate need of food, shelter and medical aid. In the United States journalism during 2015, to judge by debate within the profession, the most pressing ethical question was how much newsprint and air time to devote to a single presidential candidate whose campaign strategy was the use of virulent attacks on immigrants as a device to secure more



Trump's anti-immigrant bombast defied normal fact-checking practices because it seemed devoid of factual foundation... as he repeated his charges polls showed that many potential voters accepted them as facts.

of this media coverage. The answer to the question was clear – as much as the market would bear.

The unexpected early dominance of the Republican presidential nomination contest by real-estate billionaire and reality-TV star Donald Trump was directly propelled by his caustic criticism of "illegal" immigration generally, and of Mexican immigrants in particular. His coarse language, once considered outside the bounds of US political discourse, and his incendiary pronouncements produced front-page headlines, hours of television news coverage, sharp denunciations by Latino leaders and Democratic candidates – and a swift upward spike in his standing in the Republican primary polls.

In August, the first televised Republican campaign debate broke ratings records for these primary-election forums, due mainly to Trump's reputation for inflammatory, unscripted candour.

Trump was a very good news story. Over the course of the summer, the three US cable news networks devoted nearly twice as much air time to Trump as to any other of the 16 Republican candidates – and most of this coverage focused on his unapologetically xenophobic anti-immigration rhetoric. He boasted that he had singlehandedly put immigration at the center of US political debate and media coverage for the first time in years – one of his few objectively accurate claims.

Trump's anti-immigrant bombast defied normal journalistic fact-checking practices because it seemed to many to be deliberately, almost tauntingly devoid of any factual foundation. But as he repeated his charges on the campaign trail – and as they were then replayed hourly on television news – polls showed that many potential voters accepted them as established facts. Among Trump's most-repeated claims:

- The Mexican government has a policy of systematically "exporting criminals" to the United States – "rapists" and drug traffickers most prominently among them
- American cities on and near the southern border are suffering from a record crime wave directly attributable to the influx of these lawless Mexican immigrants
- Though the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution has long been held by US courts to confer automatic US citizenship on all children born in the United States, "the best legal scholars" disagree with that interpretation and say US-born children of "undocumented aliens" should not be considered US citizens
- As President, he would quickly end any further unauthorized Mexican immigration by building an impregnable wall along the entire 3000-kilometer border – and he "would make the Mexican government pay for it"
- Most radically, he would also as President order the immediate deportation of all people in the country without official residency permits – some 11 million of them, from children to the elderly – "so fast that it will make your head spin"

Did news organisations challenge these assertions?

At first, not much, in part because Trump's claims seemed to many to be patently absurd, intended not as serious policy statements but as showboat-

ing rhetoric, with little need for factual refutation. But as Trump climbed in the polls, establishing himself as the leading choice of likely Republican primary voters, journalists began stating for the record that net Mexican immigration to the United States had slowed to a halt more than five years earlier, due to demographic and economic factors on both sides of the border.

Reporters covering Trump campaign visits to the border also dutifully pointed out that US border cities like El Paso had some of the lowest crime rates in the country, as well as the highest proportions of Mexican immigrant residents in the country. Many noted that much of the border is already fortified with heavily patrolled wall-like barriers. And some stories stressed further that the 14th Amendment guarantee of full citizenship rights to "all persons born or naturalized in the United States" has been accepted and enforced without serious dispute since its adoption in 1868.

Other Trump claims were a bit harder to subject to empirical tests, such as assertions about the legal, political and logistical feasibility of the mass expulsion of millions of tax-paying residents of communities that depend on them as a work force – and nearly half of whom have children or other immediate relatives who are US citizens.

The most prominent US journalist to publicly and directly challenge Trump on these immigration claims was Jorge Ramos of *Univision*, the best-known reporter on the country's leading Spanish-language television network, who has on behalf of his large national audience questioned US politicians about immigration policy for years.

At a Trump press conference in Iowa, Ramos stood and tried to ask the candidate a question about his immigration charges. Trump ordered Ramos to "sit down," as he had not been called upon. When Ramos persisted in his questioning, he was forcibly escorted out of the press conference by Trump's security guards. "Go back to Univision!" Trump called out to the Mexican-born Ramos – a remark that became quickly infamous among Latinos, who heard it as a thinly veiled anti-Mexican insult and deportation threat. After other reporters protested over Ramos's expulsion, Trump invited him back for a long testy exchange on border wall construction, the 14th Amendment, and mass deportation plans.

The Trump-Ramos encounter quickly became the single most widely viewed and reported immigration discussion in US media history, with many news media prompted by the incident to examine Trump's assertions in detail for the first time.

The immigration beat

There are now an estimated 41 million foreign-born residents of the United States, or about 13 per cent of the total population of 316 million. That is the highest share since the previous peak US immigration period a century ago – and far higher than the average eight per cent of the population in the European Union's largest countries who were born outside the EU (Spain, 8.5 per cent; France, 8.3 per cent; UK, 8.1 per cent; Germany, 7.4 per cent).

The biggest group of foreign-born US residents, in terms of national origin, emigrated from neighbouring Mexico – more than 13 million – followed by China (2.3 million), India (2.1 million) and the Philippines (2 million). Almost five million were born in Europe, with the largest numbers coming from the UK and Germany. Yet British and German immigrants rarely figure into US news coverage. Nor do the nearly one million Canadian immigrants in the United States.

The political and media focus has been largely been Spanish-speaking immigrants, even after immigration from Latin America has dramatically slowed. Net new US immigration peaked in 2007, when the number of undocumented immigrants reached an estimated 12 million, including about 7 million from Mexico. Since then, net immigration from Mexico has dropped almost to zero, and the overall population of undocumented US immigrants has stabilized at about 11 million – most of whom have lived in the country for a decade or longer.

The political, cultural and economic complexities of this large and diverse immigrant population are covered closely by many US news organisations, both locally and nationally. *BusinessWire*, a press-release distribution service, lists more than 90 US immigration reporters in its database for corporate clients. Most work for daily newspapers in cities with large and growing immigration populations – which is to say, most US cities.

Many of these beat reporters have distinguished themselves with insightful, empathetic coverage of issues ranging from assimilation challenges to the legal netherworld of US immigration courts to the systematic deportation of long-term residents for minor criminal offenses. Yet when immigration becomes a headline issue in a presidential campaign, the topic is often assigned to political reporters, rather than beat specialists, reflecting in some ways the accurate news judgment that this political story has little to do with demographic realities. The focus of that coverage is on the potential electoral consequences of the immigration debate, and on the political personalities who are most promi-

The 17 per cent of the US population that the Census Bureau identifies as "Hispanic" or Latino includes millions of recent arrivals as well as many communities that have been an integral part of the United States since it became an independent republic.

nently focused on the issue, rather than on the substance of the issue itself.

A still-simmering melting pot

For all mainstream US media, whether in English or in Spanish, immigration stories are implicitly rooted in a proud self-image of the United States as one "nation of immigrants" – albeit a still-simmering "melting pot" where many people self-identify as ethnically "hyphenated" Americans generations after their ancestors arrived in the country. Yet that inclusive national narrative has been cyclically interrupted by periods of fierce nativist backlash, whether against Irish, Italian and Jewish newcomers in the 19th century, or against the 21st-century migrants from Latin America and the Middle East.

Is the US public – and, by extension, the US media – on balance in favour of immigration, as the country's ethnic diversity and people's own family histories would suggest? It's not clear, and reporting and opinion surveys in US media are often contradictory.

In May 2008, with the immigration debate again rekindled by presidential primary debates, a CBS/*New York Times* poll reported that 69 per cent of Americans favoured the prosecution and expulsion of undocumented immigrants. A month later, in June 2008, an NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll showed 85 per cent of Americans opposing proposals for the deportation of more than 10 million immigrants.

Seven years later, in a Pew Research Center survey conducted in May 2015, a solid majority (72 per cent) of Americans – including 80 per cent of Democrats, 76 per cent of independents and 56 per cent of Republicans – said undocumented immigrants in the US should be allowed to stay if they met certain legal requirements. Yet surveys of Republican voters a few months afterwards showed most agreeing with Trump's hardline position on the issue.

Why the difference? In good part, as is often the case in opinion polls, it had to do with how the questions are posed. If you asked if immigrants who break the law should be punished and deported, a large majority said yes; if you asked if it were either feasible or desirable to forcibly expel millions of foreign-born workers and their families, most said no.

Selective citation of these polling numbers by media commentators has helped create parallel and mutually incompatible political beliefs about immigration, with most self-described Democrats not only favouring immigration but believing that most Americans agree with that view, and most self-described Republicans believing precisely the opposite. This ideological divide over the supposedly factual has been exacerbated by the increasing ideological polarisation of US media, especially in broadcasting. Republican voters – especially older, white, male Republicans, as polls show – watch the Fox News cable network more than any other US television news service, and listen while driving to the conservative talk-radio hosts who now dominate the AM airwaves. Democratic voters, by contrast, are more likely to watch the avowedly liberal cable news shows on MSNBC and current-affairs comedy programmes such as "The Daily Show" that routinely satirise right-wing political commentators.

Spanish-language media, and Spanish-language voters

As Trump's rise highlighted, the fundamental difference between the migration stories in the United States and the European Union is that US debate centres on the continuing growth of what is already the largest and fastest-growing U.S minority group, who mostly come from just a few countries immediately south of the US border.

All those countries – Mexico, most importantly, but also the smaller nearby nations of Central America

and the Caribbean – have always been intimately interconnected with the United States, economically, politically and culturally. The 17 per cent of the US population that the Census Bureau identifies as "Hispanic" or Latino includes millions of recent arrivals as well as many communities that have been an integral part of the United States since it became an independent republic. Though still under-represented politically, its leaders today include state governors, big-city mayors, presidential cabinet secretaries, and 32 of the 535 members of the US Congress. Even more distinctive, arguably, when compared to Europe, is the scale and influence of the Spanish-language media serving that community, especially in broadcasting.

Even in the age of on-line, on-demand Internet resources, and even among households with daily newspaper subscriptions, television news remains the most important source of current-affairs information for most Americans, surveys consistently confirm. Television news is proportionately even more important in Latino households, polls show.

The nightly national news programmes of Univision, the leading US Spanish-language television network, are often the highest-rated news shows in the country's biggest television markets, including New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago. *Telemundo*, *Univision's* Spanish-language rival, isn't far behind. In addition, the more than 160 local television stations owned or controlled by *Univision* and *Telemundo* air their own popular nightly Spanish-language local news programmes.

Though news programming on Univision and Telemundo features regular coverage of events in Latin America, most of its reporting is domestic in content, reflecting the interests of its US resident audience. International reporting is almost as often focused on news in Europe or the Middle East, as with the English-language networks. Yet immigration – or more precisely, the US political debate about immigration – is covered completely differently in Spanish-language media than it is by the other major US network news broadcasts. As Ramos has said: "For us, this is personal."

Following his celebrated confrontation with Trump, Ramos was chastised in some US media outlets for a purported lack of journalistic ethics, for both the perceived if minor offence of asking a question before he was called upon, and for the allegedly more grave error of expressing opinions rather than simply posing questions.

The sternest criticism of these alleged breaches of journalism protocols was heard on Fox News, famed for its own unabashedly opinionated commentary. One Fox News panelist, the former CNN host Tucker Carlson, charged that Ramos was not really a journalist – "He's not a reporter, he's an editorialist, he's an activist" – and hence unworthy of legal protection under the press freedom guarantees of the US Constitution. Bill O'Reilly argued in his nightly programme that as a network "anchorman" Ramos should not express opinions, but confine himself to dispassionately narrating the day's news. "If Jorge Ramos wants to be a commentator like me, that's fine," but that's different from being a "journalist," asserted O'Reilly, who has long identified himself as a journalist.

Ramos responded the next day, noting that for his Spanish-speaking audience – and for his network's own employees and their families – immigration was not an abstract policy matter but an issue directly affecting their daily lives. For *Univision*, a feigned neutrality on the subject would be dishonest and a disservice to its viewers, Ramos argued.

Sympathetic media observers also likened his stance to an older and still-revered US broadcast tradition of crusading journalism, perhaps best exemplified by the famously critical coverage by CBS anchormen of US Congressional investigations of allegedly pro-Soviet Americans in the 1950s and of the Vietnam War in the 1960s.

"I think the best journalism happens when you take a stand when it comes to racism, discrimination, corruption, public life, dictatorship or human rights," Ramos told *ABC News*. "As journalists, we are not only required but we are forced to take a stand, and clearly, when Mr. Trump is talking about immigration in an extreme way. We have to confront him, and I think that's what I did yesterday."

As television ratings rose for both Trump and Ramos in the aftermath of their Iowa encounter, both sides could claim victory, with US media coverage driving the story. Trump increased his lead as the Republican front-runner, while Democratic Party activists reported a Trump-fueled surge in Latino voter registration, aimed squarely against whoever is the eventual 2016 Republican presidential nominee.

Yet somewhat lost in the coverage of this US political saga was the daily reality of the millions of immigrants who still lack clear legal status, and whose future prospects are unlikely to be clarified further in the continuing presidential campaign. Nor is their eventual eligibility for residency likely to be advanced by US media coverage of their precarious legal circumstances, unless the English-language television journalists from whom most Americans get their news also cross the line with Ramos and take a stand.

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Migration: It's the same old story

'The enormous change in human conditions to which nearly all our present stresses are due, the abolition of distance and the stupendous increase in power, have flung together the population of the world so that a new way of living has become imperative …

'The elaboration of methods and material has necessitated a vast development and refinement of espionage, and in addition the increasing difficulty of understanding what the warfare is really about has produced new submersive and demoralising activities of rumour-spreading, propaganda and the like, that complicate and lose contact at last with any rational objective …

'The uprooting of millions of people who are driven into exile among strangers, who are forced to seek new homes, produces a peculiar exacerbation of the mental strain. Never have there been such crowds of migrating depressing people.

'They talk languages we do not understand … they stimulate xenophobia without intention … Their necessary discordance with the new populations they invade releases and intensifies the natural distrust and hostility of man for man – which it is the aim of all moral and social training to eliminate …

'For the restoration and modernisation of human civilisation, this exaggerated outlawing of the fellow citizen who we see fit to suspect as a traitor or revolutionary and also of the stranger within our gates, has to be restrained and brought back within the scheme of human rights.

– H. G. Wells, *The Rights of Man* (1940)

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