

# Covering immigration: How U.S. and German media approach the story

By Perla Trevizo

When we think of immigration or refugees, we think of it as an issue of the U.S.-Mexico border or of people making their way to Western Europe from Africa or the Middle East. But the movement of people is global and the more you cover migration, you see that the issues that surround it — and the way we report on them — are more similar than different.

Opinion pieces about security and immigration published in a newspaper in Nairobi could be reproduced almost word for word in Washington; Sicilian advocates' concerns over Frontex are almost identical to what Texas activists say about the Border Patrol; and when businessmen in Greece talk about Islamization and Sharia law, they echo concerns of Southern Arizona ranchers.

Migration has once again jumped to the top of the news agenda on both sides of the Atlantic — fueled by the Trump administration in the United States and by the arrival of more than a million people seeking refuge in Europe — but is the media giving this issue the right coverage?

I have focused on the topic of diversity and migration for the last 10 years and every election cycle, as politicians trot out immigration to motivate voters, we hear about the importance of reporting on this issue. That enthusiasm is almost always short-lived, though, and we find ourselves back where we began. Ideally, immigration should be treated to constant coverage that captures the nuance in the issues, much like education or health care. Instead, the media in general seems to cover it like a natural disaster.

One could argue that coverage in the last decade or so has been hampered across the board, as newsrooms in North America and Europe face shrinking resources while expectations to be faster and do more with less continue to rise. But the use of stereotypes, and the focus on crime and terrorism in immigration coverage by some media outlets, is hardly novel.

While in Germany the media is largely credited with the overwhelmingly positive reaction seen in the beginning of the so-called refugee crisis, earlier (and subsequent) coverage has been problematic. In the United States, coverage on immigration, according to researchers, has contributed to polarization on the issue.

If anything is different in this new wave of coverage, it is the climate in which news is being received. Now, on top of immigration being a hot-button and highly-politicized issue, we are living in an era when everything some people don't like gets called "fake news" and where the term "lügenpresse," the lying press, has come back in use. The distrust of the mainstream media is high and growing — especially in the United States. Among President Donald Trump's supporters, nearly nine in 10 respondents to a new University of Virginia Center for Politics poll said that media criticism of the president reinforces that he is on the right track. The same percentage agreed with Trump's assertion that the press is "the enemy of the American people." In Germany, a poll conducted by the Allensbach Institute found 40 percent of respondents described the reporting on refugees as "one-sided."

Immigration touches on issues of identity, human rights, justice and fairness — all against a backdrop of real and perceived economic impact. And based on the current picture researchers paint of how we in the media are doing, there's plenty of room for improvement.

The stories we cover or don't cover, the language we use, the voices we choose to represent, play a major role in shaping the public policy debate on immigration.

### **The United States: a narrow focus**

In the United States, there's a longer tradition than in Germany of having reporters whose responsibility is to cover only immigration issues. I was a diversity reporter in the Tennessee daily newspaper the Chattanooga Times Free Press in 2007 and I was the second person to have that position. The Arizona Daily Star, my current employer in Tucson, has had a border reporter since 1991.

Overall, there are more than 90 U.S. immigration reporters in the country, according to BusinessWire, a news-release distribution service.

After the presidential elections, there's been a renewed effort in U.S. newsrooms to cover the issue of immigration. The New York Times expanded its team of reporters assigned to the topic; the Marshall Project hired a reporter to cover the intersection of immigration and criminal justice; the Washington Post now has a reporter specifically covering the issue.

But is more coverage necessarily good if it continues to spotlight only certain aspects of immigration?

I was having coffee with a German artist earlier this year to whom I mentioned I was born in Mexico but had been raised across the border in Texas. "Was it as hard as people say to cross the desert?" she asked. While my grandfather was born in New Mexico and I migrated legally with my parents more than 20 years ago, I can't blame her for assuming I had crossed without authorization. Our immigration and border stories tend to focus on unauthorized migration and because Mexicans have long been the largest origin group, these are the voices most often represented.

When people think of Latinos, they think of undocumented, said Celeste González de Bustamante, associate professor at the University of Arizona School of Journalism. "While the issue of immigration is extremely complicated and diverse, the coverage is somewhat narrow and has been historically somewhat narrow," she said.

"There's still a lack of context in reporting, including those factors that are causing people to leave in the first place," she said. "Immigration is an issue that by and large is covered through a national lens, and how it affects U.S. economics, culture, and not in a global sense, which is what it is."

There's significantly less research about how we cover immigration in the United States than how the European press has covered the refugee influx since 2015. Although there are several professors and former journalists who have tracked our work over the years.

One consistent conclusion has been how we don't cover the topic of immigration continuously.

"Media's tendency to flood the zone with instant coverage and then quickly drop the subject," as was stated in the Pew Research Center [State of the News 2008 report](#), was also seen in immigration coverage.

This is less true for conservative media, including talk radio and cable news. Some argue that the steady drumbeat of anti-immigrant rhetoric pushed through these outlets played an important role in the demise of the bipartisan Senate immigration bill in 2007.

But while conservative media is more constant, it's hardly alone in its effects on readers and viewers.

"Deeply ingrained practices in American journalism have produced a narrative that conditions the public to associate immigration with illegality, crisis, controversy and government failure," Roberto Suro, professor of journalism and public policy at the University of Southern California [wrote in 2008](#). Suro has more than 40 years of experience in the immigration field as a journalist, author and researcher.

"While the immigrant population has grown vastly larger over the years, the terms of the policy debate over immigration have hardly changed in 30 years. Improving border controls; halting the employment of unauthorized migrants; dealing with temporary workers; determining legalization plans for people in the country illegally; refiguring visa categories for legal immigrants — all these topics have been debated repeatedly since at least 1980, and some have actually been legislated," he said.

While individual stories about immigration may have been accurate, he wrote, "the cumulative effect of U.S. media coverage has distorted the underlying realities of immigration... When immigration is associated with crime, crisis or controversy, it makes news. Immigrants and political actors are the primary protagonists of these dramas, while the public is a passive bystander."

Almost a decade later, this still very much applies to our coverage, he said. One of the biggest changes he has seen since the election is the sheer volume of stories, "just because you got a classic news driver here with a president who has made it a major issue."

"What remains true is that you have a great deal of coverage that is absolutely driven by breaking news," he said. "An air of crisis coverage. A story that gets covered when you have policy makers making noise about it or very dramatic movements of people like Central American surge in 2014 or in the Aegean and Mediterranean."

All the while the phenomena of unauthorized migration decreasing and the decline in Mexican migration has gotten lost in the discourse, he said.

The reason you get people chanting "build the wall," said Suro, is not only due to Trump, but to continuous coverage telling the American people something dark and nefarious was going on at the border for years. "Regardless of which side is panicking, it doesn't

make it any easier for society to come to calm consideration on how to deal with what's already a difficult subject.”

Over the course of the summer, the three U.S. cable news networks devoted nearly twice as much air time to Trump as to any other Republican candidate — and most of this coverage focused on his anti-immigration rhetoric, [wrote Bill Orme](#) in a profile about migration coverage in the United States. He is the UN Representative of the Brussels-based Global Forum for Media Development and a former journalist who covered immigration issues as a correspondent for publications including The Washington Post and The New York Times.

“Trump boasted that he had singlehandedly put immigration at the center of U.S. political debate and media coverage for the first time in years,” he wrote. “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.”

Increasingly, local and national media outlets have been producing reports fact-checking a lot of what Trump claims and his policies. But while it’s good that immigration is getting more attention in the general press, Ammina Kothari, assistant professor in the Rochester Institute of Technology, also worries about how it is tied to the president.

Before Trump, “there were some stories about deportation or detention centers if you were paying attention, but there wasn’t such a focus,” she said.

“I’m happy that there is more attention being paid, not just in the U.S., but global migration issues as well, but worry that political bias driving the coverage is not going to be sustainable.”

“If we use it as a way to look at Donald Trump policies, what happens after his presidency or his policies change? Do we lose this momentum or is it a commitment for newsrooms?”

### **Germany: adapting coverage**

In a country of about 81 million people, every fifth person in Germany has a migration background. Yet immigration has not been as much of a focus in newsrooms there as it is in the United States. In many cases reporters covering migration or integration issues do so as part of their ministry beat or as part of a broader range of tasks.

Until the early 1980s, the number of asylum seekers in Germany was minimal in comparison to labor migration, although numbers rose in the early 1990s with the disintegration of the Soviet bloc and war in the former Yugoslavia. In the early 2000s, nationality and immigration politics became an “issue” in Germany, according to a [2015 report about the press coverage](#) of the refugee and migrant crisis prepared for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

The Nationality Law of 2000 placed an emphasis on integration. At the same time, highly-skilled migrants were encouraged through a “green card” program, and post the 9/11 attacks, security became part of the political discussion, leading to the Immigration Law of 2005, the authors wrote.

“Generally speaking, it is not common for German media, especially not for the newspapers, to have special reporters on this subject,” said [Karl-Heinz Meier-Braun](#), professor and former integration commissioner at the SWR, the public broadcasting service in South-West Germany.

But there have been past efforts, including in the 1960s, when public radio offered special broadcasts for so-called “guest workers” in their native language, he said. During that time Braun himself established a department in public radio with journalists from migration backgrounds, which during the latest influx of asylum seekers developed a special online [program for refugees](#).

In earlier decades, migration coverage tended to be more negative, said Kai Hafez, professor for international and comparative communication studies in the University of Erfurt. “There are many European studies proving again and again that migrants are more or less only covered when it’s about problems, negative affairs, lack of integration, of language and social competence and political extremism,” he said, with some exceptions, “migrants are treated as a problem.”

Hafez is also part of a German Council of Migration, a network of scholars that looks at this issue, and they argue that the state of integration of migrants in Germany is a lot better than the coverage of the mass media seems to imply.

German media turned its attention to migration in a big way in 2015, after Germany opened its doors to hundreds of thousands fleeing wars and extreme poverty, as deaths in the Mediterranean climbed and as countries such as Hungary started to erect fences.

“The crisis didn’t happen in one day,” said Juliane Schäuble, politics editor for Der Tagesspiegel. “The issue was getting more serious every week. You look at the numbers and get a strong feeling it becomes a mega issue when the administration is overwhelmed and not prepared.”

That year they published stories in every section of the newspaper, she said. “Even the sports section because gyms were being used as shelters,” there was not one day without a refugee story.

In 2015, a study by the Hamburg Media School counted 19,000 articles on refugees that year, 4,000 more than in the past six years combined. Four out of five articles took a positive view of refugees, which researchers said helped reduce negative perceptions in the public. Major media outlets had reporters dedicated exclusively to migration issues, doing in-depth reporting and research.

The coverage stood in contrast to the xenophobic stereotyping of the early 1990s, [wrote J. Olaf Kleist](#), a senior researcher at the Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies at the University of Osnabrück and founder of the German Network of Refugee Researchers.

“Following German reunification, the country saw heightened nationalism, a rise in the number of refugees, a series of racist riots and murders, and constitutional reforms that severely restricted political freedoms. Newspapers published articles about the criminality of foreigners, often using derogatory terms,” he wrote. “Until the number of asylum-seekers sharply declined during the mid-1990s and the topic of refugees largely vanished, a media-constructed anti-migrant discourse penetrated society.”

Following Chancellor Angela Merkel’s call of “Wir schaffen das” — We can do it — even the major conservative tabloid, Bild, had a campaign called “Refugees Welcome,” which provided information to those who wanted to volunteer.

Bild, published in Berlin by the media conglomerate Axel Springer AG, is the country’s most widely read newspaper, with a daily circulation of approximately 2.8 million copies. Tanit Koch, its editor-in-chief, [told BuzzFeed News](#): “The headline “Wir helfen!” (We help!), which was the start of our campaign, felt like a natural thing for us to do. There was a huge surge of Gastfreundschaft [hospitality] in Germany. And BILD has a great tradition of campaigning for people in need. As Germany’s best-selling paper we have a unique power and responsibility. It wasn’t a one-sided coverage, however: We made sure to also report the problems caused by immigration, lack of integration, and the challenges for society.”

But the coverage took a turn after the Paris terrorist attacks in November 2015 and the incidents over New Year’s Eve in the German city of Cologne, where hundreds of police reports of sexual harassment and more than a dozen cases of rape were filed against men said to be of Arab and North African origin.

The media came under heavy criticism for being too slow to report the incident and not being explicit about the perpetrators’ identities. Germany’s public broadcaster, ZDF, had to apologize for its decision not to report on the attacks until four days after. “The news situation was clear enough,” the show’s deputy chief editor, Elmar Thevessen, according to media reports. “It was a mistake of the 7pm Heute show not to at least report the incidents.”

Some commentators initially said it was unlikely asylum seekers were involved.

“In all likelihood, the people behind this have been here for a long time,” the daily Süddeutsche Zeitung said in its lead editorial a week after the attacks. The real problem, he said, was likely “failed integration,” [Politico reported](#).

After Cologne, the use of the term “border control,” surpassed that of “welcome culture” in news reports. With the headline, “Are we tolerant or blind?” The Süddeutsche Zeitung ran a front-page illustration showing a black hand reaching into a white female figure’s crotch. The newspaper’s editor later apologized. Focus, a news weekly, put on its cover a naked white woman with black handprints over her body.

While some of the journalists I reached out to said the incident in Cologne didn’t change their coverage, it did make them question their work more.

“We work even harder to confirm that our stories show the whole truth of a story,” said Michael Naumann, advising editor to the editor-in-chief for Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk,

an affiliate of the ARD-Network. “Cologne made us even more sensitive to our approach.”

For Eva Thöne, editor for Spiegel Online, “it did not change the way we cover these issues. But the public discussion about the incident — for example by populists who made a way too simplistic connection between Islam, violence and sexism — shows how difficult the issue is. And how important it is to watch closely and without prejudices on matters like that.”

“We didn’t have an agenda, but we had to question ourselves, do you only write what you want to see, not what the truth is?” said Schäuble. “For stories such as the incident in Cologne, it’s important to be there, but the newspaper didn’t have any correspondents there that night, so we had to rely on what others said.”

This has also led to greater efforts “to say what we know and what we don’t know,” she said. “Our job is to either don’t do (the story) or wait until more information becomes available. It’s an ongoing discussion.”

How to respond to this type of stories remains a challenge and there’s a feeling that no matter what you do, reporters will be criticized.

After a 17-year-old unaccompanied minor from Afghanistan was charged with raping and killing a medical student in the southwestern city of Freiburg, a station came under fire for not running the story on its national newscast.

This push to cover the “other side” of immigration has also led to fake news. The Bild had to apologize for an article that said a “mob” of Arab men had sexually assaulted women on New Year’s Eve in a Frankfurt restaurant, [The New York Times reported](#) in February, after a police investigation found no evidence.

While research shows that in general, coverage has returned to a focus on crime, security and national identity, it is also important to remember the media is diverse and therefore so are the stories. For instance, the Süddeutsche Zeitung was less likely to see refugees as an economic, cultural or security threat and more likely to feature positive stories about refugee success stories, [according to a report prepared for UNHCR](#). “The paper was also far more likely to feature humanitarian themes which focused on the suffering and hardship that refugees were either fleeing from, or had experienced on their journey to Europe.”

While the issue of cultural threat was a theme more likely to be highlighted in the right-wing press. “These combined concerns about Islam, social cohesion and how the influx of refugees from Africa and the Middle East would either struggle to assimilate into German culture or would change it,” the authors wrote.

There is more discussion now on when to mention someone’s nationality, just as in the United States there’s a debate on when to mention a crime suspect’s legal status.

The German Press Code said a suspect’s “religious, ethnic, or other minority membership” may not be identified “unless this information can be justified as being relevant to the readers’ understanding of the incident.” But if journalists chose not to

include this detail, right-wing politicians and opinion makers would accuse them of suppressing the truth, Michaela Maria Müller writes in her [Germany coverage report](#).

While journalists often try to avoid repeating hate-speech, there's also the concern of whether boycotting hostile and bigoted voices inadvertently plays down legitimate concerns over the negative impact of migration, [The Ethical Journalism Network found](#).

The refugee influx has also impacted the general discussion on migration, said Mariam Lau, political correspondent with Die Zeit. "Up until the refugee crisis, there was almost a consensus (long in the making) that Germany is *Einwanderungsland*, a migration country," she said. "After, it became a loaded subject, a real threat to Merkel's power, and a problem, a crisis. Practically no one speaks of the benefits of migration anymore."

The number of new migrant arrivals has decreased significantly since 2015, along with the coverage, but the challenge for journalists and how to cover the story remains. While some outlets initially created special task forces to cover the topic of refugees, most of those have disintegrated and reporters have gone back to their general assignments. There's a certain fatigue from viewers/readers and within newsrooms, a reporter told me.

While the media attention that refugees got has fueled the anger of populist movements, Lau said, "at the same time, many people were truly enriched by the experience of helping, getting to know Syrians.

She used to write several human-interest stories on individual refugees, she said, but. "I don't do that anymore. I also lived for a week in a refugee home. Don't do that now, either. We've had enough of those stories, I feel."

Hafez said the "so-called 'refugee crisis' has been largely overrepresented in German talk shows, with about 50 or more shows covering the issues in less than two years," building it up to one of the dominant characteristics of our time. "One of the decisive aspects is political entertainment because the way those cases are presented today are very entertaining."

How much the media is simply following the political discourse and how much it is shaping it, is unclear. "We are at a time where the media influences politics as much as politics influences the media," he said.

It's not only the amount of coverage, he added, "but also the quality of coverage that really influences public opinion and, at the end of the day, policies."

## **Moving forward**

With Germany's upcoming election and the Trump administration's unwavering focus on migration, what impact will the press continue to have on the debate on immigration and refugees?

Researchers tells us that we in the media, in general, we rely too heavily on official sources; we bow to the pressure coming from social media and online sources to publish first; and we show little interest in the push factors driving migrant flows.



We also face a constant balancing act to represent the voice of the refugee, migrant community, while reflecting legitimate concerns.

Tanit Koch, Bild editor-in-chief, [told BuzzFeed News](#): “Years before the refugee crisis a certain unease about issues such as the lack of integration was tangible already. These issues were hardly addressed by most media and party politics; they were considered too sensitive — whenever *BILD* put the focus on them we were accused of stirring populism. Too many people in Germany didn't realize that not touching on these topics caused the real problems, lack of trust in media, etc. You may argue that all of this left a niche for AfD.”

We heard this same argument in the United States after the presidential election.

Migration needs to be covered more in the long-term, and as part of other beats, not only when there's a large movement of people or when a politician makes it the top of his or her political agenda. We also need more fact-based reporting that provides context, background and thoughtful commentary, as well as challenging sources on both sides of the immigration debate.

The story of immigration is a story of two borders, said Giovanna Dell'Orto, associate professor at the University of Minnesota's School of Journalism and Mass Communication. “Once you made it then what? What happens in the workplace? To children, especially in Europe, what happens with civic and social integration and religion?”

But it's a lot easier to talk about a border wall or a boat sinking in the Mediterranean. “The question of integration is an incredibly difficult one,” she said.

“As one journalist put it to me, it's boring. It's slow, it takes time, it's not immediately and visually compelling. Not only is it hard to write that story in a way that is compelling for the public to follow but also how do you write it in a way that doesn't whitewash concerns, handing a microphone or megaphone to most xenophobic, far-right parties?” she asked.

On both sides of the Atlantic, we continue to talk about the need to further diversify our newsrooms to better represent the communities we serve, and while there have been some improvements, there's still work to do.

The American Society of News Editors survey shows that last year, minorities comprised about 17 percent of employees at daily newspapers and 23 percent at online-only sites. National Public Radio was behind The Washington Post (31 percent diverse) and The Los Angeles Times (34 percent). But at 25 percent diverse, NPR was just above The New York Times newsroom, which was about 22 percent diverse.

In Germany, there is little data on the topic, but it is estimated that journalists with a migration background represent about five percent of the workforce, with print and online media apparently employing fewer people from immigrant families than broadcasters.

While it doesn't mean that only reporters with a diverse cultural background can cover these issues, they bring a different perspective and can contribute stories that might be missed by others, said Rebecca Roth, co-founder of the Neue deutsche Medienmacher, an association that formed in 2008 that aims to further diversity in the German media and to help provide a more balanced and accurate coverage of migration. The group is trying to raise awareness about the importance of having people who understand covering different topics in migrant communities.

Media has the responsibility to represent society and it cannot completely fulfill that mission without increased diversity, Roth said. Her association also created a database with experts from different fields with diverse cultural background to see if journalists can start changing stereotypes of what migrants are supposed to be or look like, by incorporating different voices into everyday reporting.

The words we use also matter and remain a challenge. In the United States, there is still the discussion in some newsrooms whether to use the term "illegal immigrant," "unauthorized immigrant" or, as The Associated Press has recommended, describe the person's legal status or how they arrived in the United States. When should we use the term "refugee" or "migrant" is also up for debate.

To help journalists, the Neue Deutsche Medienmacher organization created a glossary with alternative words and explanations. Although in general it was received positively, it also was subject to large criticism on social media saying they were too politically correct and would restrict freedom of expression.

But while journalists are under increasing pressure, there are also many good examples of responsible journalism being practiced on both sides of the Atlantic.

As the number of violent attacks against refugees and refugee housing increased in Germany, the mainstream media condemn them. TV host Anja Reschke, on Germany's public broadcaster ARD, said people should stand up against hateful posts on social media that say refugees should be "set on fire" or "left to drown in the sea," [Deutsche Welle reported](#).

The Bild online issue published an extensive list of facts and figures.

Der Tagesspiegel not only ran a series fact-checking what was happening with the refugees who arrived in 2015, but they published special sections reported and written by journalists in exile.

The first #jetztschreibenwir special edition was written by 25 journalists from Syria, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan who spent time at the newspaper in workshops and preparing the section. Reader reaction was overwhelming and almost all positive, with many saying they were grateful for getting direct insight into the thoughts and problems of refugees. Since the first edition in October, the newspaper has published individual articles and smaller sections.

"If we are going to be a diverse society, we have to facilitate communication and provide a space to help people live peacefully with each other because it's necessary," said Dorothee Nolte, an editor who spearheaded the project.

“They remain foreign if you only see them on the street but don’t get an opportunity to actually talk with them,” she said, and having readers seeing some of the refugees writing in their daily Tagesspiegel took away some of that otherness. The newspaper also holds events where readers, refugees and journalists in exile are invited to listen to talks or participate in panel discussions, with simultaneous translation into Arabic, but those have a more limited reach.

The press can help “create an atmosphere where people like to talk to each other, where you are not afraid and where you talk to people,” Nolte said.

As I was poring over reports on how we can do our jobs better, I came across this line [in the report](#) by the Ethical Journalism Network: “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.”

We are already seeing more of this and I believe this is the way to move forward, not only as it pertains to immigration, but to reporting in general.

In March, The Guardian, Le Monde, Der Spiegel and El País, announced [“The New Arrivals,”](#) a collaboration stretching over four countries following what happens after the arrival of more than a million asylum seekers through the stories of different groups and families.

Deutsche Welle also partnered with France Médias Monde, and the Italian news agency ANSA also announced a new partnership in March, [“InfoMigrants,”](#) an online project offering information for refugees and migrants.

In the United States, we are slowly seeing more collaborations between different media outlets and groups like ProPublica and the Center for Investigative Reporting. Personally, I found great success partnering with a reporter from a public radio station to produce a project that not only resulted in a much richer story package, but also was able to reach a broader audience.

And since the presidential elections, the renewed effort to better cover immigration has already yielded to excellent stories offering more nuance and context about the employers who benefit; the communities facing change and the migrants themselves.

While we might at times feel that the role of the media is decreasing, it is important to remember our responsibilities and the impact we continue to have.

## HOW CAN WE DO OUR JOBS BETTER? Tips from the field

*“If we are covering migrants, we have to clarify the reasons for their presence, or our own co-responsibility in terms of international conflicts and economic relations. We should not present them as masses, but as individuals; individualize your coverage.”* — **Kai Hafez, professor for international and comparative communication studies, University of Erfurt, Germany.**

*“The most important thing is not reducing the topic to stereotypes, positive or negative, to try to have a little more depth. Try to pay more attention to second border and stories about integration because that’s the future of the society but it’s hard to do that. Policies are extremely complex, so try to know as much as possible about the law.”* — **Giovanna Dell’Orto, associate professor at the University of Minnesota’s School of Journalism and Mass Communication.**

*“We absolutely face the real possibility of well-meaning coverage creating a further sense of panic and a further sense that this is something out of control. There’s a very substantial need now for very precise, very energetic, very diligent coverage of bureaucracies that manage immigration policies. It requires really patient, constant expenditure of resources by news organizations. It requires reporters who are willing to cover stories that aren’t sexy and take time to develop — a very real, difficult classic watchdog reporting job to be done and people have to stick to it, you can’t just do it for the first few months.”* — **Roberto Suro, professor of journalism and public policy at the University of Southern California.**

*“The more emotions are involved the more calm and unbiased, careful, fact-orientated stories are important. Journalists should stick to all the basics they learned and go through the storm with open eyes and a confident attitude.”* — **Michael Naumann, advising editor to the editor-in-chief for Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk, an affiliate of the ARD-Network.**

*“We need a lot more coverage on unauthorized people who aren’t from countries we tend to hear about most. Maybe another thing is to look at the employment side, there are real contributions to the economy from people who don’t have proper documents, also there are so many people are benefiting from the status quo, and that’s a story that’s not being told.”* — **Celeste González de Bustamante, associate professor at the University of Arizona School of Journalism.**

*“Convey the emotions, especially the conflicting ones.”* — **Mariam Lau, political correspondent for Die Zeit.**

*“Do not replicate clichés. Refugees are not victims or offenders, but people. Don’t let ideological and political views — right or left — interfere too much with your coverage.”* — **Eva Thöne, editor for Spiegel Online.**

*“We need to make sure we correct mistakes when they happen. Perhaps we should concentrate on the stories we can really research on. For example, with crime statistics, our job is to be able to determine what the stats really tell us, comb through it, put it in context and find nuances.”* — **Juliane Schäuble, politics editor for Der Tagesspiegel.**

*“It’s no longer enough to say he said she said, in some cases there are not two sides. This is an issue that is going to impact us whether you like it or not. You have to say whether you like it or not that refugees are not going to go away because it’s a global issue and unless we change our consumption habits and policies, especially in relation to climate and trade. We need to provide the larger context and explain clearly what is at stake so it’s not just a feel-good story; family settled and assimilated. For every one family that’s assimilated, another 10 are struggling and have issues.*

*The bigger issue is who is responsible for the displacement, the ‘why’; these things will not solve themselves if we continue with our policies and lack of responsibility for what is happening around the world.*

*There’s a need to incorporate more of those details to the policy-related stories people are more likely to read instead of just being a separate story presented as a feature piece.” — **Ammina Kothari, assistant professor of communication at Rochester Institute of Technology.***

*“One thing I wish I saw more is business stories, because business stories can actually tell you a lot about a community. We tend to focus on tensions and immigration policy, but what about when people are already here? Not only to look for happy stories, but to also show different aspects of the issue.” — **Veronica Zaragovia, freelance journalist and former Robert Bosch fellow.***

*“Find a personal, human angle to tell the story through, in a way that allows readers to first connect on an emotional level and then read on to get a better understanding of the situation.” — **Yermi Brenner, Berlin-based freelance journalist.***