

## CALL FOR PAPERS

Journal of Applied Journalism and Media Studies

### SPECIAL ISSUE

#### **Should I post that picture or issue that story? Journalistic practices in the representation of the migrant crisis**

Guest editors: Vittoria Sacco and Valérie Gorin

Human migration is not a new phenomenon. However, recently it has gained substantial space in media coverage. In particular, the images of the little Aylan, a child escaping Syria with his family, lying dead on Bodrum's beach, have raised old ethical questions of journalistic practices. Aylan's pictures were extremely powerful and not without symbolism, becoming icons of Syria's tragedy. They went viral on social media, but they were also criticized. Several media opted not to show the images. The criticism centered on whether it was justifiable or ethical to direct readers' attention to the conflict in Syria with stark images of an innocent victim. There were parallels to the images of Kim Phuc, the little girl running naked and screaming in Vietnam in 1972.

This very issue of audience engagement with crisis is a topic of heated debate in academia. In her book "Compassion fatigue: how the media sell disease, famine, war and death" (1999), Susan Moeller discusses audience engagement with the news coverage of war, conflict or other types of violence. The media has thus the potential to stress particular forms of engagement to mobilize the public and create a collective memory amongst audiences. Exposed daily to distant suffering, the audience can develop apathy and disengage with events, resulting in compassion fatigue.

Kerry Moore, Bernhard Gross and Terry Threadgold drive same message home in their book on "Migration and the Media" (2012). They try to trace the reporting practices that produce migration coverage. A large part of academic studies has otherwise explored visual representations of migrants and refugees in humanitarian appeals (Mannik 2012), emphasizing the role of aid agencies in framing visual stereotypes of helpless people (Rajaram 2002) or racializing, victimizing and feminizing the refugees (Johnson 2011). However, the questions around how the problem of compassion fatigue challenges journalistic practices, and what the news boundaries and standards when reporting crises should be in a digital online age, has had less attention in academic research.

This special issue of the "Journal of Applied Journalism and Media Studies" (AJMS) aims to shed some light on the complex ecosystem journalists covering the crisis face. It invites contributions on the relationship between journalistic practices and audience compassion fatigue, as well as the role of social media and new technologies on how to have it alleviated.

The guest editor welcomes contributions from both scholars and practitioners in the field of media and journalism studies and practice. Scholarly submissions can have a theoretical, analytic, critical, empirical or comparative angle. Other topics may include:

- Practices, cultures and ethics of covering migration crisis
- Economics, political, and social situations impacting journalistic practices
- Audience understanding of the crisis, its coverage and relevance for audiences

- The challenges the migration crisis has posed to citizen and user-generated content
- What transformations the crisis has brought about as far as the relationship between journalists, their organizations and their audience is concerned
- Has the crisis had a bearing on freedom of expression and social media
- Economic imperatives and the migration crisis
- Visual communication and photojournalism vis-à-vis the migration crisis

High-quality and original submissions are expected to be conceptually relevant to the topical relation between journalistic practices, migration crisis and the notion of compassion fatigue. They can develop communication and media theories, report empirical and analytical research, present critical discourses, apply theories to case studies and set out innovative research methodologies.

Contributions from both academics and practitioners are welcome.

Questions regarding the special issue can be directed to the guest editors.

### **Important deadlines and milestones**

Prospective authors should submit an *abstract* not exceeding 250 words directly by email to the guest editors Vittoria Sacco ([vittoria.sacco@unine.ch](mailto:vittoria.sacco@unine.ch)) and Valérie Gorin ([valerie.gorin@unige.ch](mailto:valerie.gorin@unige.ch)) by end of March 2016. Please mark your submission as “Special Issue on the migration crisis”.

Following peer-review, a selection of authors will be invited to submit a *full paper* (from 5000 to 8000 words) by end of September 2016. Full details about the journal and the prescribed format for manuscript submissions can be found at:

<http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/page/index,name=journalstyleguide/>

Please note that acceptance of the abstract does not guarantee publication, given that all papers will be put through the journal’s peer-review process.

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