

**Centre for Urban Research on Austerity (CURA) Interdisciplinary Research
Partnerships Fund Proposal**

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Project report (2018/19)
April 18 -July 31, 2019

Research activity (all funds were spent by 31 July 2019)

Timeline

Research Assistant recruitment April 18, 2019

First project meeting April 26, 2019

Framing analysis April-May 2019

Interviews May-June 2019

Project review June 26, 2019

Seminar and conference presentations

29.05.2019 Cinema and Television History Institute seminar

27.06.2019 Discourses of Immigration and Citizenship: from Windrush to Brexit (Meccsa Race, Ethnicity, and Post-Colonial Network, SLRC and Media Discourse Centre conference)

19.09.2019 Radical Pedagogies (SLRC and Freedom to Achieve Project)

(https://radicaldmu.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/a_indrani-lahiri_claire-sedgwick.pdf)

<https://youtu.be/ktIVAm8MxFo>

Symposium July 23, 2020 (Trinity House Chapel) Migration and Secondary Schools
Networking Event in collaboration with Celebrate our Similarities

Newspaper framing and interview analysis

The newspaper framing analysis has already been captured in the initial draft of the article (below). The interview analysis needs to be blended in the draft. I realised that there is a need

for partial discourse analysis just to negate any bias from framing as it heavily relies on cognitive paradigm.

External bid writing

I submitted a draft for the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. However the feedback was very intense and we were limited in time. The research office suggested that we rethink on the submission. I'm aiming to put in the bid this year after the article submission.

Networking and future events

As an outcome of this project we have developed a local ethnic network group and the aim is to take initiatives at local levels to generate an impact. I had a discussion with the research office impact team. They can assist in developing the impact case study.

Article (submission aim: March 2020)

Framing Immigration and Education in the UK press.

Introduction

Given that immigration is such a 'hot' topic in the UK, it is important to consider how the media impacts on the ways that the media help to frame attitudes towards the issue. Lecheler et al (2015: 813) argue that the 'the European immigration debate reeks of specifically negative emotions'. The press, and the right-wing populist press in particular, help 'keep the immigrant issue on the popular agenda and try to appeal to emotions that might be latently present among parts of the electorate' (Lecheler et al, 2015: 813). As this article will demonstrate, this was often related to the way that immigration and immigrants were framed as problematic and as a key issue.

Boomgaarden and Vligenthart (2009: 515) point to research that shows that 'exposure to information in the news matters for explaining anti-immigration attitudes.' It is, therefore, important to consider how immigration is presented in the press in order to be able to hypothesize how this impacts on attitudes towards immigrants. Furthermore, Boomgaarden and Vligenthart (2009: 517) also argue that the frequency of discussions of immigration can be understood as 'external shocks' that keep immigration as a prominent issue within the press. Furthermore, they argue that 'news media can influence people's readiness to categorise others' (518).

Dearing and Rogers (1996: 1-2) in their discussion of agenda setting argue that 'the agenda- setting process is an ongoing competition among issue proponents to gain the attention of media professionals, the public, and policy elites'. This suggests that the media has a role in shaping public opinion, and it is therefore important to consider how this plays out with immigration and schools. This is an especially important consideration given that as Pruitt (2019: 384) notes 'researchers cited increased migration as a key reason for the Brexit decision', whilst 'the type of newspapers individuals read correlated strongly with their Brexit vote'.

Methodology

A framing analysis was carried out to identify how the British national press represented migration and education. In addition to this, a local newspaper was also chosen: *The Leicester Mercury* since the interviewees for the project are from the Leicester area. The newspapers that were analysed were: *The Sun*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*. These newspapers were selected for analysis as they represent the newspapers that have the highest circulation, with the exception of the *The Guardian* (Statista, 2018). *The Guardian* was selected for analysis because it is a left leaning newspaper in a print landscape that is dominated by right leaning publications. Given that this is the case, analysing *The Guardian* provides a useful source of comparison. 10 articles were identified for each newspaper. These articles were identified by searching the Lexis Library using a number of keywords: immigrant school, migrant school crisis, migrant school, immigration school, education immigration, migration school and mother tongue. The sample includes articles from 2009- 2019. This time period covers the year leading up to the 2010 general election, the period of the coalition government from 2010- 2015, the 2015 general election, the run up and aftermath of the EU Referendum in 2016 and the 2017 election. Having a 10 year time period makes it easier to identify changes over time, especially given that the last ten years have been politically tumultuous.

Once the articles had been collated, the next step in the research was to identify key discourses within the articles. Unsurprisingly, given their support for Brexit, *The Daily Mail*, *Express* and *The Sun* tended to present immigration as negative and emphasised the impact it was having on white British students' education. This was done in a number of ways that will be discussed in this article. Firstly, there was frequent use within tabloids of words like 'influx', and a suggestion that immigrants were causing pressure on schools. Whilst this was often related to children who had come to the UK, alongside this there was a narrative of fear around the 'high birth rates' of immigrant women. As this article will argue, this often alludes to underlying racist fears around changing ideas of British nationality. The final way

that these newspapers presented immigration and education was through the idea that British children were being 'left behind' and that immigrant children outperformed them. This article will now discuss these three key themes in depth.

Newspaper	% articles optimistic tone	% of articles pessimistic tone	% of articles neutral tone
<i>The Sun</i>	10	90	0
<i>The Times</i>	60	30	10
<i>The Guardian</i>	40	40	20
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	10	70	10
<i>Daily Mail</i>	0	10	0
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	40	60	0
<i>Express</i>	0	10	0
<i>Leicester Mercury</i>	50	20	30
Average percentage	26	64	9

Newspaper	Influx/ increased resources needed	Birth- rates	High Achieving	Entitlements (e.g. benefits)	Should support immigrants	Politics
<i>The Sun</i>	5	1	3	1	0	0
<i>The Times</i>	5	0	5	0	0	0
<i>The Guardian</i>	2	0	2	1	5	0
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	5	0	0	0	1	4
<i>Daily Mail</i>	6	1	1	1	0	1

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The Influx of Immigrants

The tabloids were most likely to present the issue of immigration using the language of capacity. This can be seen in the June 22 2016 article ‘ Schools all full; 570,000 EU kids in UK classes by 2030 Brexit says influx will cost Brits £29bn’. In this headline, education is seen as a limited quantity, for example if schools are ‘full’ then this suggests a limited capacity that cannot be increased. This is reinforced by the use of ‘influx’. The headline juxtaposes the EU and the UK, omitting the fact that the UK at that point in time, was also part of the EU. Indeed, it is important to note the timing of this article, coming one day before the EU referendum. Given that *The Sun* had a pro-leave editorial position, this reinforces a general editorial line that sees EU membership as detrimental to the UK. However, a *Daily Mail* article from 2013 (‘Immigrant influx will “put strain on schools”’) suggests that this is an issue that had been prevalent in the tabloid press long before the EU referendum. The article refers to ‘huge numbers’ of immigrants and links this to the strain on schools. As with the article from *The Sun*, the option to increase resources as a result of greater demand is not presented, meaning that a reduction in immigration is presented as the only option. Similarly in an article from September 26 2015 (‘38,000 migrant children starting school this year’) there is again focus on the idea that migrant children are a drain on finite resources. The article states that ‘charity bosses warned that record immigration is creating a perfect storm for cash- strapped primaries that must absorb rising pupil numbers amid unprecedented pressure’. The attribution of these arguments to a charity boss, serves to suggest that this is a legitimate argument that goes beyond the editorial position of the paper. The use of language such as ‘unprecedented’, ‘record immigration’ present this as an issue that is significantly unique and therefore requires specific special measures to resolve.

The rhetoric around influx can also be seen in the *Daily Express* seen in an article from September 2015 titled ‘School migrant crisis: Britain needs 16,000 new primaries to cope’. The language used in this article is very similar to the language used in the *Mail*, with the *Express* referring to an ‘influx of migrants’ and ‘unprecedented pressure’. Furthermore, the article refers to the ‘true burden uncontrolled immigration is placing on the country’s immigration system’. In the narrative of the tabloids, immigration is seen as exerting pressure on the education system that cannot be relieved in any way other than restricting immigration. Another aspect of this narrative is that the potential benefits of immigration to education are

not presented. Pruitt (2019: 394) argues that ‘ a key sub-theme in the construction of a crisis of borders was the notion that borders were imagined to be becoming problematically porous’. This can be seen through the language used in *The Sun*. For example, there is discussion of a “migrant rush” (July 23 2015), whilst another headline argues that ‘schools all full’, further alluding to the idea that there is a capacity that is being breached. This metaphor imagines the border as a physical entity that can be broken. The border is therefore presented as something in need for protection and presents a territorial understanding of the UK’s relationship with the rest of the world. Arguably, this need to maintain borders can be linked to a sense of nationalism [ELABORATE]

Birth-rate

A second and related theme in the discussion of immigration and education was related to the concept of the birth rate. Despite immigration being linked to increased birth rates in the articles included in this sample, this is not corroborated in the research carried out Abubakar et al (2018) which shows that there is a lower birth rates for migrant women. Therefore, the continued reference to increased birth- rates can be understood as a populist myth that aims to further stoke anti-immigrant sentiment. The October 2010 article from *The Sun* describes how ‘soaring births pile on pressure’, whilst describing how school funding issues have ‘been fuelled by the high birth rates among many migrant mothers’. Very similar language can be seen in a *Daily Mail* article from December 2013 which describes how, “England’s schools are already facing a potential classroom crisis as they deal with a rising birth rate which is being partly fuelled by immigration.’ This is also echoed in an article from the *Express* from September 2009 which claimed that ‘Immigration baby boom costs GBP 1BN.’ Much of the language around the so-called immigrant baby boom positions children of migrants not as British themselves, but as burdens to the British state. The continual concern about children born of immigrant parents can be linked to the ways that the way that borders are often presented in the newspaper articles as something that needs protection. As with the metaphor of ‘influx’ described earlier in this article, this can be understood in relation to nationalist rhetoric that aims to protect “Britishness”.

The high achieving immigrant school child and the underperforming working class British child

Another key way that the issue of immigration and education was framed was through the use of a binary opposition between immigrant school children and working class British born children. For example the headline for a June 2016 article from *The Sun*: ‘EU kids beat UK: Schools with Migrant Pupils Trounce White British’ explicitly sets up educational achievement as a competition. It is also telling that the

headline explicitly refers to 'White British' children, thereby racializing national identity. The binary opposition that can be seen between white working class children and immigrant children can also be seen in an article from the *Daily Telegraph* by Fraser Nelson. Nelson describes 'one head teacher in east London who puts his school's results surge down to the sudden arrival of studious East Africans.' In contrast, he argues that it is 'not so good to be poor and white' (July 14 2017). This can be seen in an article from *The Times* which describes the "supercharged" immigrant mindset' [Stuff on divide and rule]

Whiteness

A central concern throughout many of the articles included in the framing analysis seems to be concerned with the maintenance of white supremacy and privilege, which can be seen both through the continued reference to 'White British' that is evident in many of the articles, alongside the rhetoric around 'birth-rates'. Richard Dyer's (1997) work on whiteness is useful, particular his arguments about the ways that there are hierarchies within whiteness to consider. Many of the articles included in this research juxtapose immigrant children and white British children. In this respect, the race of the migrant is not necessarily explicitly stated. However, it is important to consider the extent to which immigrants from the A8 countries : Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, are positioned as problematic within the press, alongside those from Romania and Bulgaria, are presented within the articles in the sample. For example, on article from *The Sun* has the headline: 'British Pupils are Pole-Axed' (February 28, 2016), whilst an article from the *Daily Mail* warns that 'Huge numbers' of migrants from Romania and Bulgaria could place a major strain on Britain's education system'. No other specific countries are mentioned within the sample. The scapegoating of Eastern Europeans as problematic can be linked to the way that 'North European Whiteness has been hegemonic' (Dyer, 1998, p.11-12').

Another clear way that whiteness is reinforced is through the concerns about immigrant birth rates. Dyer (1998, p.27) argues that 'white discourse has often emphasised the importance of white reproduction'. Arguably, the consistent references to birth-rates can be linked to a white supremacist attitude that assumes that whiteness should be dominant.

Local versus National.

The articles in the *Leicester Mercury* present either a positive or neutral perspective on immigration. For example, an article from June 22, 2016 describes 'first school of sanctuary joy' as a school in the city was officially declared a school of sanctuary. Other positive words such as 'kindness', 'welcome' and 'safety' are also used. It is interesting to note that the article was written on the eve of the EU referendum, but

there is not the ambivalence or hostility to immigration that can be seen in some of the national press. A report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on Immigration and Social cohesion (2008) uses Leicester as one of its sites for analysis. In a discussion of the media, one respondents states that : 'I think most of the media in Leicester was very positive, in my experience. I think they are very respectful of cultural sensitivities' (Hickman et al, 2008: p.55). Similarly, the editor from the *Leicester Mercury* describes being on the 'Multicultural Advisory Board' as 'extremely useful because it allows different people from different aspects of life in the city to talk frankly and confidentially about what they see as the issues and what they see as the challenges' (p.56). Arguably, this represents a key reason for the differences in representation in the regional and national press. The regional press serves a local community, and therefore is more likely to be involved within that community. In contrast, the national press is less likely to be "on the ground" and as a result relies on other kinds of information gathering, usually from think tanks, politicians or from high profile figures from within education.