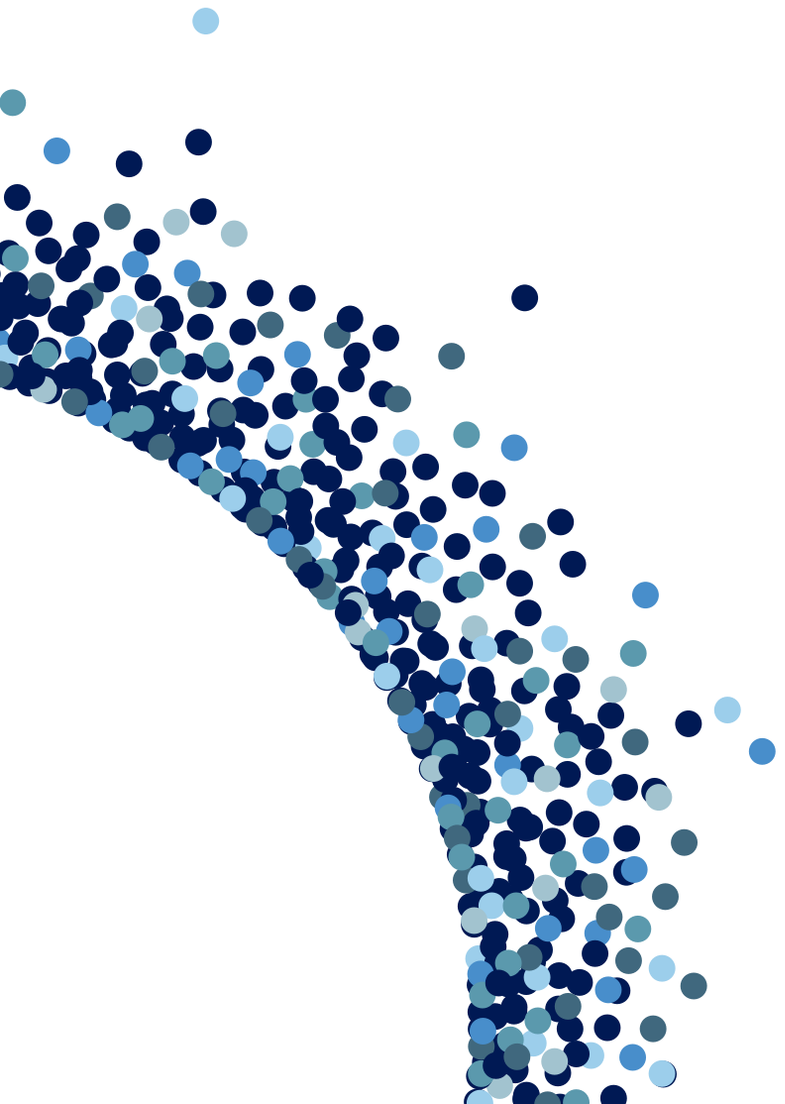
THE MIGRATION OBSERVATORY
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

REPORT

A Decade of Immigration in the British Press



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Executive Summary

Immigration has become one of the most salient topics in the UK public debate. Over the past decade, policymakers and politicians have directed a lot of energy and attention to migration policies, often citing public demand for stronger action to reduce immigration levels or tackle related issues.

Where do the public get their ideas about immigration? One frequently cited source—besides day-to-day contact with immigrants themselves, or what friends and work colleagues might say—is the media. UK media coverage of migration has evolved over the last decade to accommodate an array of profound changes: changing trends in the movement of people; changing governments; changing policies; changing geopolitics; and changing commentators in the debate.

This analysis looks at trends in the language used in newspaper reporting through that period, and considers how these developments relate to the current UK political context. In particular the report identifies six key trends:

- A tendency for journalists themselves to play the role of framing problems in the migration debate, rather than simply reporting on others' (such as politicians,' think-tanks,' or academics') analysis. This highlights the key role played by journalists and media organisations in shaping the UK migration debate.
- A tendency to blame politicians for the scale of EU migration, while in discourse about 'illegal' immigrants, migrants themselves are often blamed. Economic arguments dominated the discussion of problems related to both EU and illegality.
- A sharp increase in the volume of newspaper coverage relating to migration since the election of the Conservative-led coalition government in 2010, particularly after the introduction of measures to reduce net migration in 2011 and 2012.
- An apparent change in how immigration is discussed, with a significant decline in discussion of the legal status of migrants and an increase in the focus on the scale of migration from 2009 onwards. This was accompanied by a rise in the relative importance of discussion relating to 'limiting' or 'controlling' migration since 2010.
- A sharp increase in the frequency of discussion of migrants from the EU/Europe after 2013, with a particular spike in 2014 when migrants from Romania and Bulgaria achieved full access to the UK labour market.
- A notable change in depictions of refugees between 2006 and 2015, with a sharp increase in references to Syrians coinciding with the escalating Syrian refugee crisis.

The report suggests that press depictions of migrants have focused on concern about high levels of net migration, and particularly EU migration. This numerical focus has eclipsed a waning focus on 'illegal' migration and become the leading migration frame in UK national newspapers.

The role of media in shaping public opinion is not clear-cut. It has often been observed that the press is good at setting the agenda—telling readers what to think about—although there is an ongoing debate about the extent to which media coverage either causes or simply reflects the views of its audiences on the topics it discusses.

Immigration, and specifically EU immigration, has clearly emerged as a key factor in the decisions of many people to vote for the UK to leave the European Union. But the significant increase in the profile of EU migration within recent UK media coverage—which has been dominated by a focus on high levels of net migration, and challenges in controlling migration flows—predates the EU referendum debate (the analysis runs until May 2015) and shows that the media was already playing an important role in discussions of the EU and migration in the years leading up to 2016.

1. Introduction

In Britain, immigration has become one of the most salient topics in public debate. Over the past decade, policymakers and politicians have directed a lot of energy and attention to migration policies, often citing public demand for stronger action to reduce immigration levels or tackle related issues.

Where does the public get their ideas about immigration? One frequently cited source—besides day-to-day contact with immigrants themselves, or what friends and work colleagues might say—is the media (van Klingeren et al. 2015). Media outputs come from established outlets such as printed newspapers and broadcast as well as online sources including blogs, websites, social media, or apps. These different kinds of media have different ways of operating and producing stories and users can engage with and access online media in more instantaneous and interactive ways (Beckett and Mansell 2008).

This report explicitly focuses on one portion of the whole media landscape – national print editions of newspapers. While there has been much discussion about the demise of print newspapers as key influencers in an increasingly online world it is important to recognise that the traditional press still occupies an important role in public debate and policymaking. This role is necessarily changing due to the rise of other media through which people access and share journalistic content, not all of which is subject to similar standards of editorial scrutiny or transparency (Beckett 2010). But nevertheless, Britain's national newspapers still have an important position in the engine-room of national policy narratives.

In this context, the role of media in shaping public opinion is not clear-cut. Across many different media and national contexts, it's often been observed that the press is good at setting the agenda—telling readers what to think about by regularly highlighting certain kinds of information (Chong and Druckman 2007). This may include choices about what to emphasise, or which topics and themes to link together—as well as the choice of narratives used to make sense of a phenomenon. However, there is debate about the extent to which media coverage either causes or simply reflects the views of its audiences in an 'echo chamber' (for more discussion, see Boyd 2008).

1.1. Motivations for Studying Press Coverage of Migration

This report builds on prior Migration Observatory work examining how the British press covers migration (Allen and Blinder 2013). It covers the period January 2006 to May 2015, and aims to contribute to understanding how the British press has actually talked about this issue.

This report has several aims: (1) to show how the kinds of words used to describe immigration, as well as immigrants, have changed since 2006, based on quantitative analysis of a large database of newspaper articles mentioning migration; and (2) to examine the kinds of problems, justifications, and messengers that have been especially prominent in discussions surrounding two key aspects of the press debate: illegal and EU migration.[1]

Following this introduction, Section 2 focuses on the amounts of coverage mentioning key terms. Section 3 turns attention to patterns of words that the press uses to describe immigration and migrants. Finally, Section 4 focuses on close-reading of a smaller sample of articles on the topics of illegal and EU migration to show how the press uses elements of narratives in articles.

1.2. Data Sources and Methods

The data for this report come from Nexis UK and Factiva, two archiving services that include full-text versions of many newspapers and other periodicals. The database includes articles containing migration related words in all 19

1. The term 'illegal' as a way of describing immigrants is contentious. In 2013, the Associated Press officially changed its stylebook guidance: '"illegal" should describe only an action, such as living in or immigrating to a country illegally' (AP 2013). However, since the term is prevalent in the British press (see Blinder and Allen 2016), this report examines use of the word 'illegal' because it emerged from the dataset as one of the most common ways of describing migration and migrants.

national UK publications that continuously appeared between 1 January 2006 and 30 May 2015.[2] These are divided into tabloids, midmarkets, and broadsheets as seen in Table 1. In total, there are over 170,000 articles included in the study (for more details, see Table 4 in Appendix A).

Table 1: National UK Tabloid, Midmarket, and Broadsheet Titles Included in the Study

Tabloids	Midmarkets	Broadsheets
Daily Mirror (Sunday Mirror)	Daily Mail (Mail on Sunday)	The Daily Telegraph (Sunday Telegraph)
Daily Star (Daily Star Sunday)	The Express (Sunday Express)	Financial Times
The People		The Guardian (The Observer)
The Sun		The Independent (Independent on Sunday)
		The Times (Sunday Times)

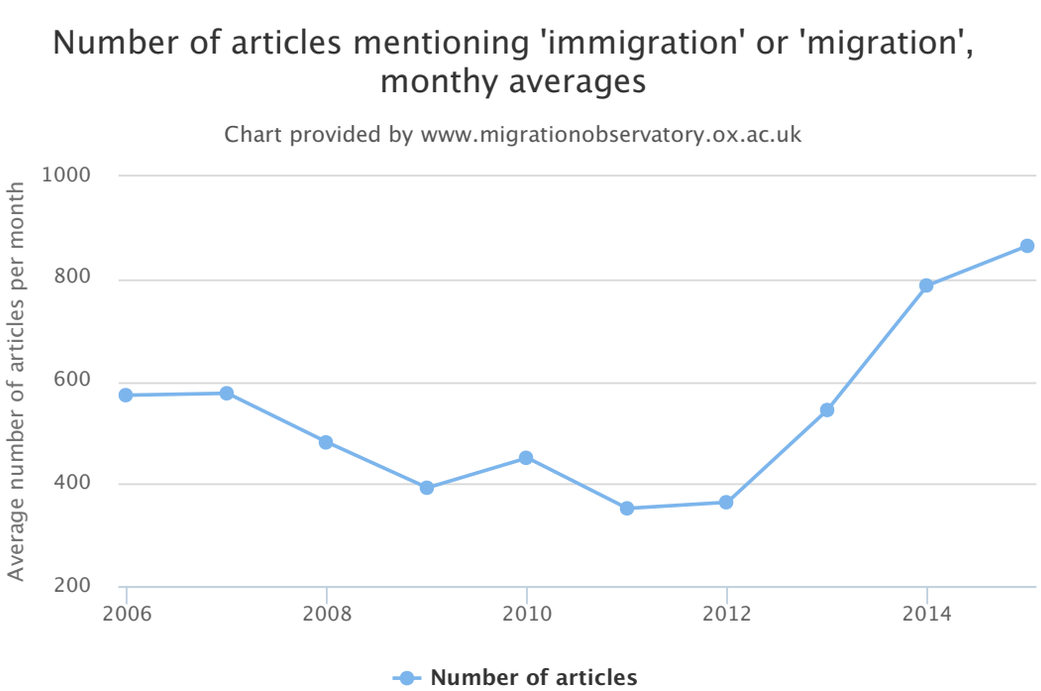
The report uses three main techniques. The first is frequency analysis, where migration-related words, as well as articles containing them, are totalled up to show how prominent they are. The second is collocational analysis, a method that uses grammatical rules as well as statistical tests to determine how strongly one word is linked with a target word—as opposed to them appearing together by random chance. This helps to identify groups of words that tend to be used together. And the third is manual content analysis, where specific aspects of narratives are identified and counted up for subsequent analysis. The content analysis in this report covers two specific topics—EU/European immigration, and illegal immigration. For full details on the data collection and methods, see Appendix B.

2. Reporting on Immigration and Migrant Groups: Visibility of the Issue

The volume of press coverage mentioning 'immigration' or 'migration' declined from 2006 to 2011 before rising each year from 2011 to mid-2015.

Figure 1 shows the average number of articles per month in each year that contained either the words 'immigration' or 'migration'.[3] From now on, when this report presents data about 'immigration', results for the term 'migration' are also included in the figures unless explicitly stated.

Figure 1



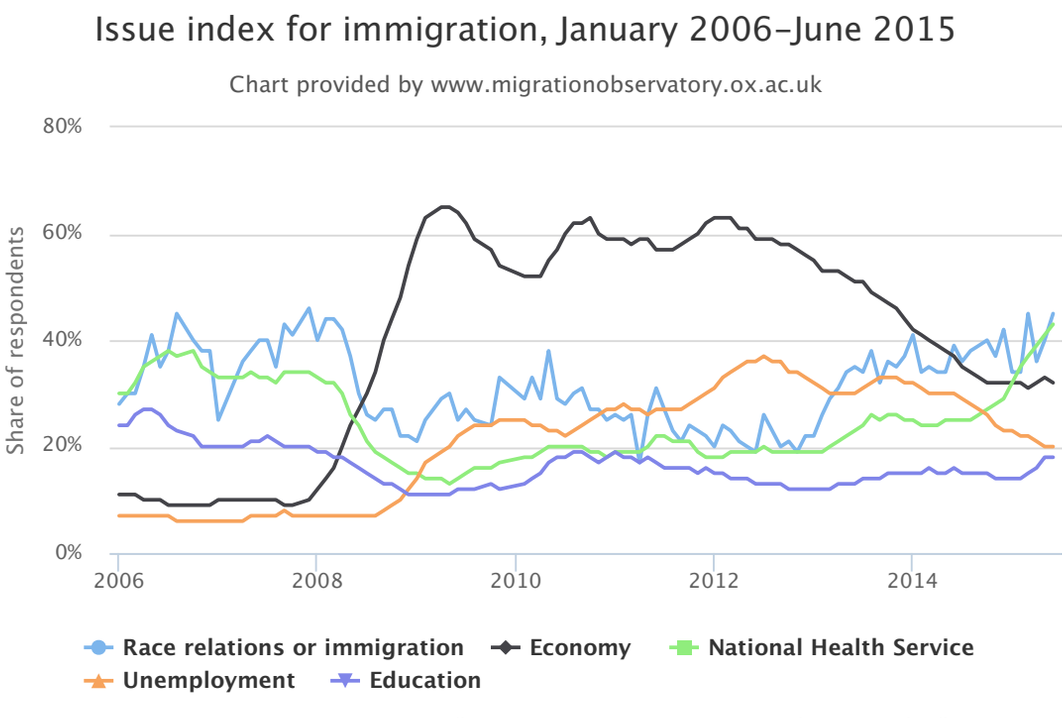
From 2006 to 2011, the British press mentioned immigration in fewer articles—with the exception of 2010. The small increase in 2010 coincides with a General Election which produced a Conservative-led coalition. A key policy focus of the Conservative party in this period was reducing net migration, or the difference between the numbers of people

2. This excludes the News of the World and the i because they were not available for the full period covered.
3. In all cases except 2015, this was calculated by dividing each annual figure by 12. Since the 2015 dataset only includes articles published up to 31 May, this annual figure is divided by five to make it comparable to the other years.

entering and leaving the country, to the 'tens of thousands'. The government introduced policies to achieve this goal from 2011 onwards. Then, from 2012, the press published increasingly more articles mentioning immigration. Notably, the average month in 2014—the last year in the dataset with a full year for comparison—contained over twice as many articles mentioning immigration than in 2011.[4]

Over the 2006-2015 period, the prominence of immigration also changed in British public opinion. The Ipsos MORI Issue Index asks people every month to name the most important issue facing the country, as well as any other issues that come to mind. Then, these answers are grouped together to create a percentage of all respondents. Figure 2 shows the percentage of people that named immigration (in 2015) or immigration and race relations (2006-2014) as one of these top issues (actual percentage), compared with four of the other top issues raised by respondents (expressed as six-month rolling averages for clarity).

Figure 2



From 2008 to mid-2014, in the wake of the economic crisis and subsequent recovery, the economy was the top issue raised by respondents. Unemployment also rose in public salience, but both issues declined during 2014-2015 as immigration increased in importance again. The data indicate relatively higher levels of both public concern and press coverage during 2006-2007, lower levels between 2008-2012 (with the exception of the time around the May 2010 General Election), and increasing attention to the issue from 2013 onwards. This trend is similar to that seen in the data on the volume of media coverage in Figure 1. While this does not necessarily show that public concern caused more press coverage, or vice versa, there does appear to be a relationship between the two.

4. While the database included articles containing the word 'immigration', it did not include the word 'migration' because there was a risk of collecting articles containing phrases relating to non-human migration (such as 'bird migration' or 'data migration'). So, while Figure 1 does reflect all available articles in the archives referring to 'immigration', it systematically undercounts the visibility of 'migration': only articles containing references to both 'migration' and another term in the search are included. Also, just because an article mentions either of these words does not mean it was entirely 'about' immigration or migration. There are several cases where an article could mention either word in a tangential way—say, in a list of issues, or in a way that sets the context for a story about something else. But seeing these patterns in a large amount of coverage over time does suggest that the British press on the whole has increasingly mentioned both of these terms in the past 3-4 years.

Immigrants get the most coverage in the British press compared to refugees and asylum seekers

Figure 3 shows the average number of articles each month from 2006 to May 2015 that contained at least one of the following terms: 'immigrant(s)/migrant(s)', 'asylum seeker(s)', or 'refugee(s)'.[5] Several points are worth mentioning. First is the decline and resurgence of articles mentioning immigrants—a U-shaped pattern also seen in Figure 1 involving mentions of 'immigration' over the years. This suggests that, at least in terms of frequency, 'immigration' as the phenomenon has similar dynamics to 'immigrants' as people. Second is the lack of articles the press as a whole published that mentioned 'asylum seeker(s)'. These results confirm previous work on the 2010-2012 period that shows how the British press mentioned asylum seekers the least (Blinder and Allen 2016: 21) but for the full 2006-mid 2015 period. But, thirdly, there has been a recent increase in the average number of articles mentioning refugees and asylum seekers: the average month between January and May 2015 contained the highest number of articles mentioning 'refugees' over the period, about twice as many as in 2012. Average monthly mentions of 'asylum seekers' increased more than three times from 2012 to 2015. Recent events such as coverage of the 2014-2015 migrant crisis likely contributed to these large increases.

Figure 3

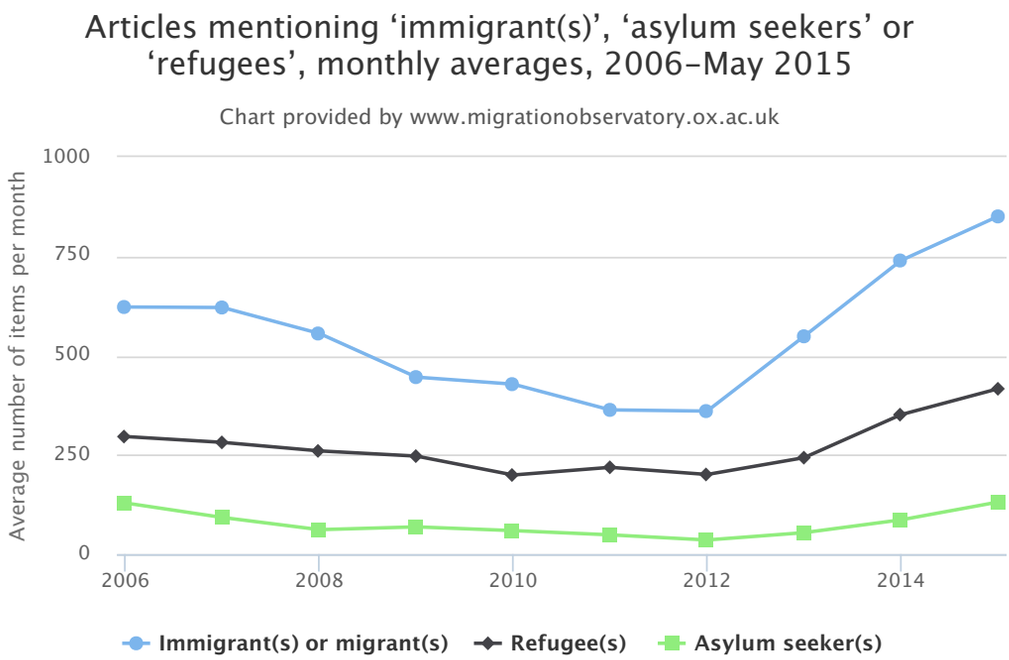
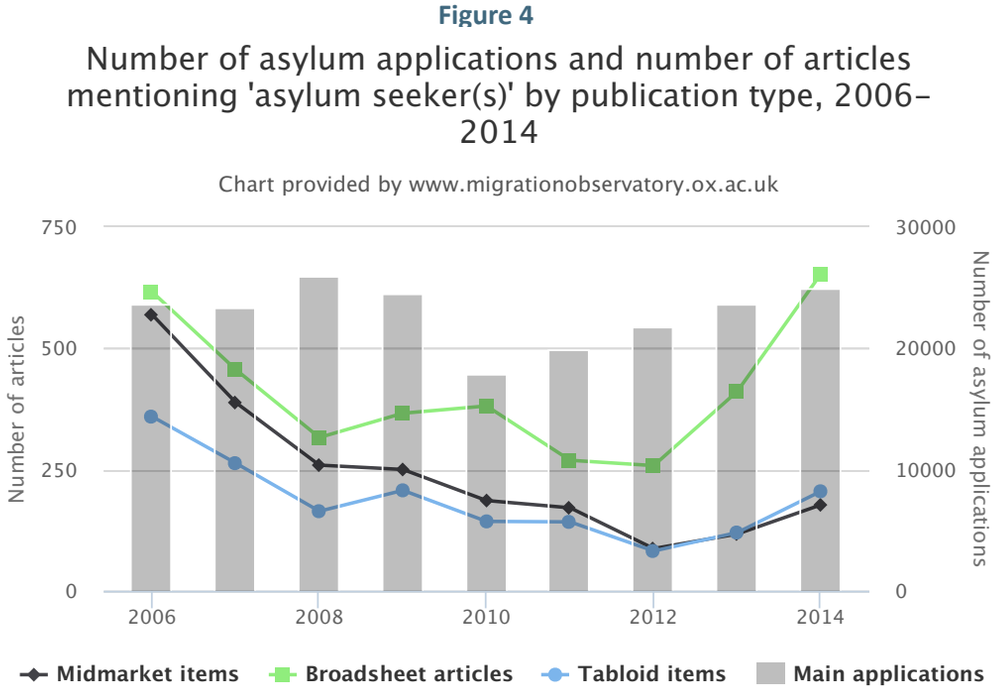


Figure 4 compares the amount of coverage mentioning 'asylum seekers' with the number of asylum main applications (not the total number of people seeking asylum, which would include children and dependents as part of the same application). Although it is debateable whether the volume of news coverage does or should exactly mirror developments in the real world, the analysis shows that press coverage from 2006 to 2014 roughly corresponded with changes in the number of asylum applications.

Figure 4



5. There are many other kinds of migrants, such as workers and family dependents. But, these are harder categories to reliably identify using a set of specific terms.

3. Describing the Debate: Characterising Immigration and Migrant Groups

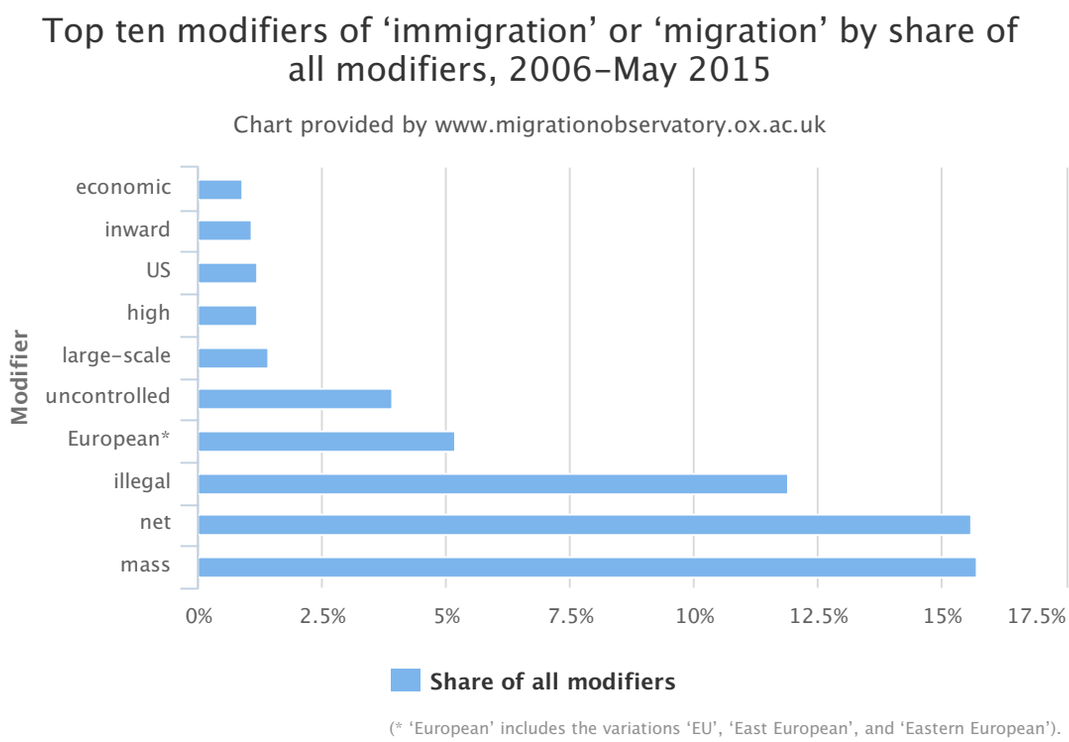
This section shows how the words associated with the phenomenon of 'immigration' as well as migrant groups themselves have changed over time. Instead of looking at key terms themselves, this section looks at the other kinds of words that are closely associated with these terms. In a similar way to 'immigration', when this report talks about 'immigrants', it includes mentions of 'migrants' unless explicitly mentioned.

'Mass' was the single most common way of describing immigration from 2006 to 2015. The press mentioned aspects of immigration's scale and pace more often than legality.

Looking at modifiers of the terms 'immigration' and 'migration' shows those aspects the press tends to highlight over others. Modifiers are words that describe, characterise, or intensify something.[6] In the Migration Observatory dataset, the press mentioned either 'immigration' or 'migration' a total of 121,026 times. In about 20% of these cases (23,853 instances), there was a modifier present.

Figure 5 shows the top ten modifiers of the terms 'immigration' or 'migration' ranked by their share of all modifiers.[7]

Figure 5



When British newspapers have chosen to describe immigration in some additional way over the 2006–2015 period, about 15% of the time they explicitly use the word 'mass'. This is closely followed by 'net' and 'illegal'. However, Figure 5 is an aggregated snapshot of the whole period: as explained below, the apparent predominance of these latter two modifiers has changed over time. Some examples illustrate how these terms appear in the press:

> Yet, astonishingly, the government has never made a serious attempt to justify mass immigration. (Broadsheet 2008)

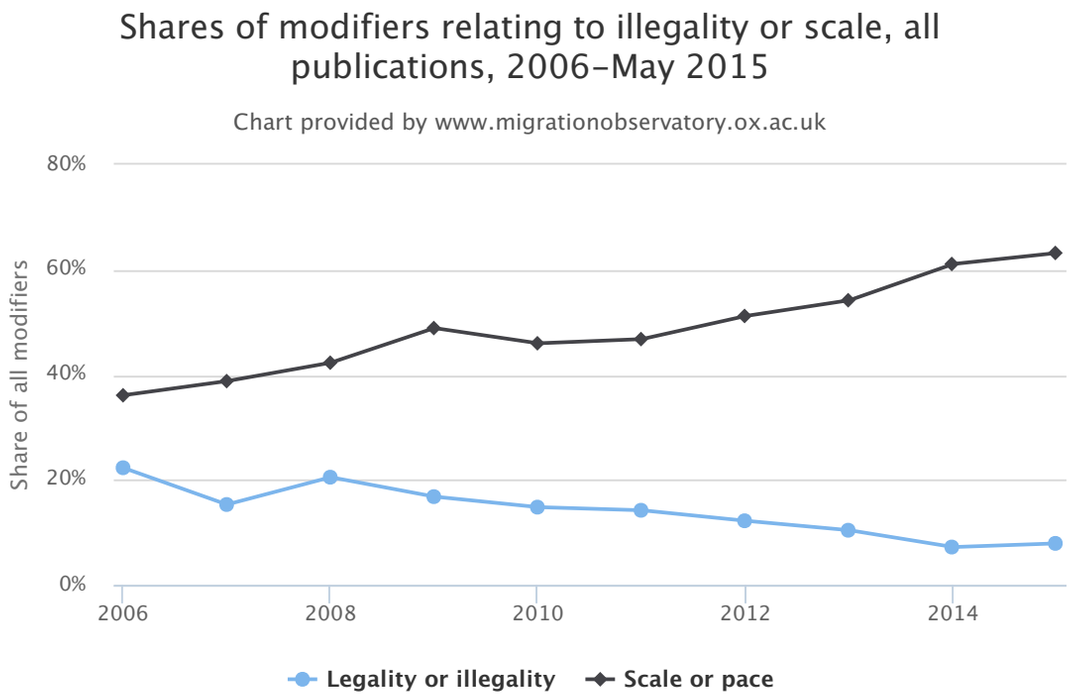
> With net migration reaching 298,000 it is apparent that immigration from the EU is out of control. (Midmarket 2015)

6. It is helpful to think of them as adjectives describing a noun (for example, answering the question 'what kind of immigration?'), though they don't always have to be. Examples of intensity might be comparative (higher, greater) or superlative (highest, greatest).
7. Note that a word like 'immigration' might have more than one modifier, and all of these instances will count towards the total.

> Violent crime is up, illegal immigration is out of control, the NHS is failing and hospital-acquired diseases are needlessly slaughtering patients. (Tabloid 2006)

Looking at the top modifiers as a whole, words related to the scale or pace of migration can be grouped together to show their prominence over time.[8] Figure 6 shows the relative shares of 'scale and pace' modifiers compared to 'legality' modifiers in each year of press coverage.[9]

Figure 6

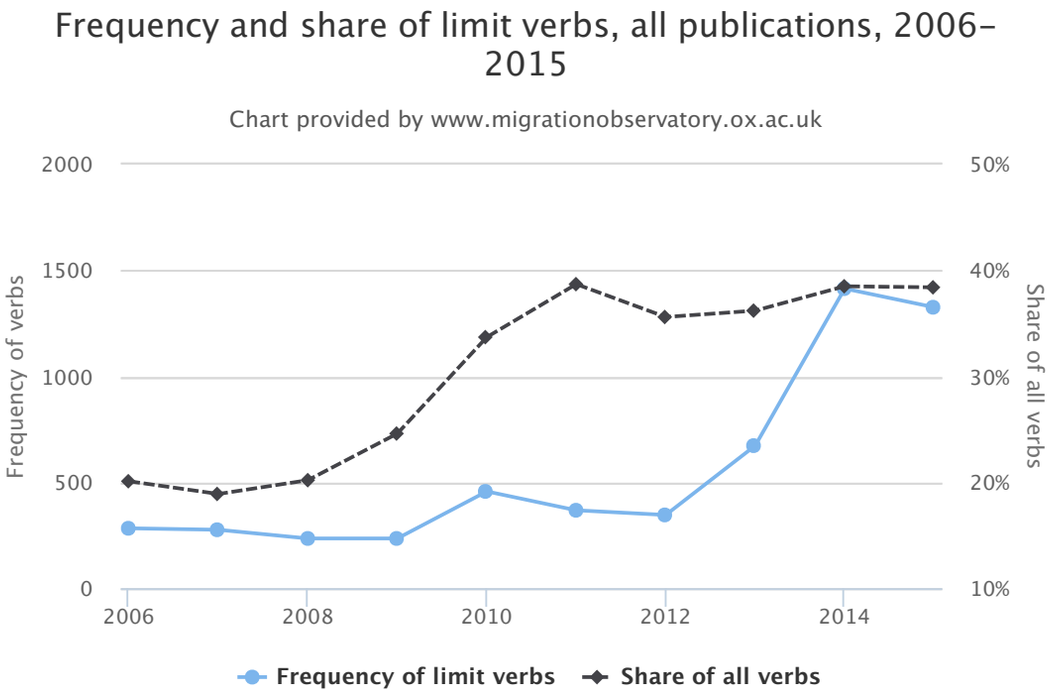


A key finding is the decline of illegality from comprising nearly a quarter (22%) of all modifiers in 2006 to less than 10% of instances in 2015. Meanwhile, the share of scale-related modifiers rose over the same period, peaking at 63% of instances in 2015. What this means is that when the news articles explicitly used a word to describe 'immigration' in the first five months of 2015, about 6 out of 10 times it was with a word related to its scale or pace (see footnote 8 for the complete list of these words).

Another way of looking at scale or pace is to examine the kinds of actions done to 'immigration' or 'migration'. This involves analysing the frequency of verbs associated with either term. For example, in the sentences 'the government is reducing immigration' and 'we should encourage migration', the verbs 'reduce' and 'encourage' signal some kind of action that is done to either immigration or migration. Looking at the most frequent actions associated with both terms over the whole period revealed a category of verbs expressing efforts to limit or control movement—what might be called 'limit verbs'.[10] Figure 7 shows how the visibility of these 'limit verbs', both in terms of raw frequency and as a share of all actions done to 'immigration' or 'migration', has changed from 2006 to 2015.

8. Any words appearing in the top 50 overall modifiers of either 'immigration' or 'migration' and relating to scale or pace are included in this finding: 'mass', 'net', 'uncontrolled', 'large-scale', 'high', 'more', 'unlimited', 'unrestricted', 'excessive', 'unfettered', 'much', 'further', 'open-door', 'unchecked', 'massive', 'low', 'less', 'balanced', 'large', 'vast', and 'big'.
9. Four modifiers relating to illegality appeared in the top 50 overall modifiers of 'immigration' or 'migration': 'illegal', 'legal', 'unlawful', and 'irregular'.
10. Any words appearing in the top 50 overall verbs of either 'immigration' or 'migration' and relating to limits, control, or restrictions—to varying degrees—are included in this finding: 'control', 'manage', 'tackle', 'regulate', 'reduce', 'cut', 'curb', 'limit', 'restrict', 'stop', 'cap', 'slash', 'prevent', 'discourage', 'stem', and 'halt'.

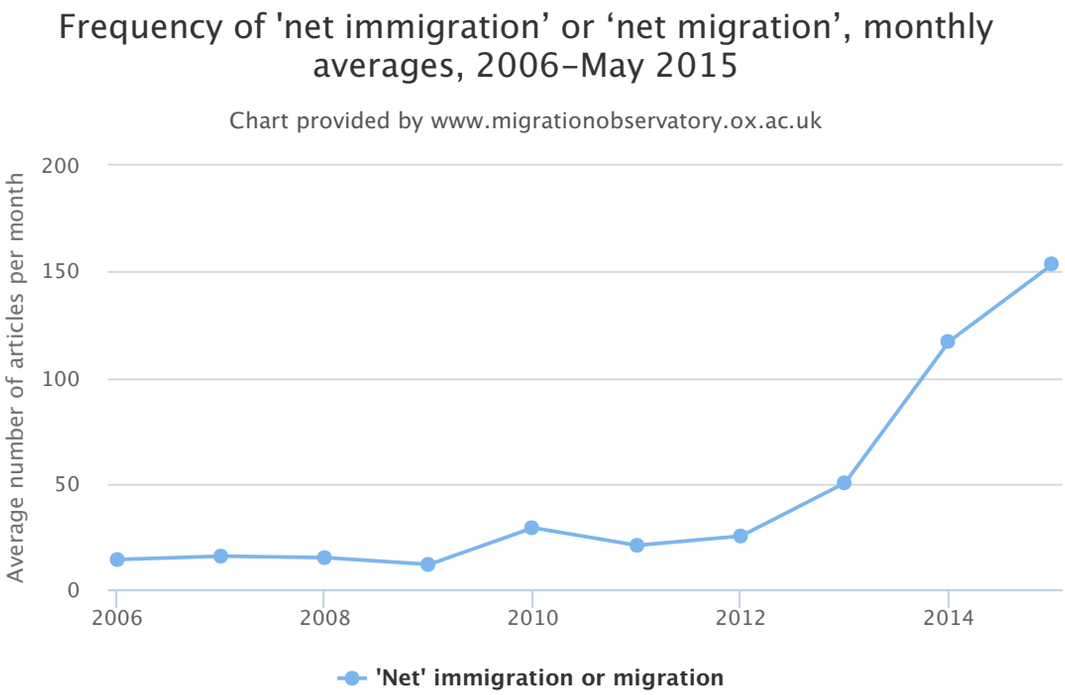
Figure 7



The chart shows that the overall frequency of these words, indicated by the solid line, increased by about four times between 2006 and the high point of 2014—from 283 instances to 1,414. Also, since 2010 these verbs have consistently made up about 30-40% of all verbs used in connection with 'immigration' or 'migration'. These findings suggest that, although the visibility of this category became prominent in absolute terms beginning 2013, press coverage was already moving towards using these kinds of actions from 2010.

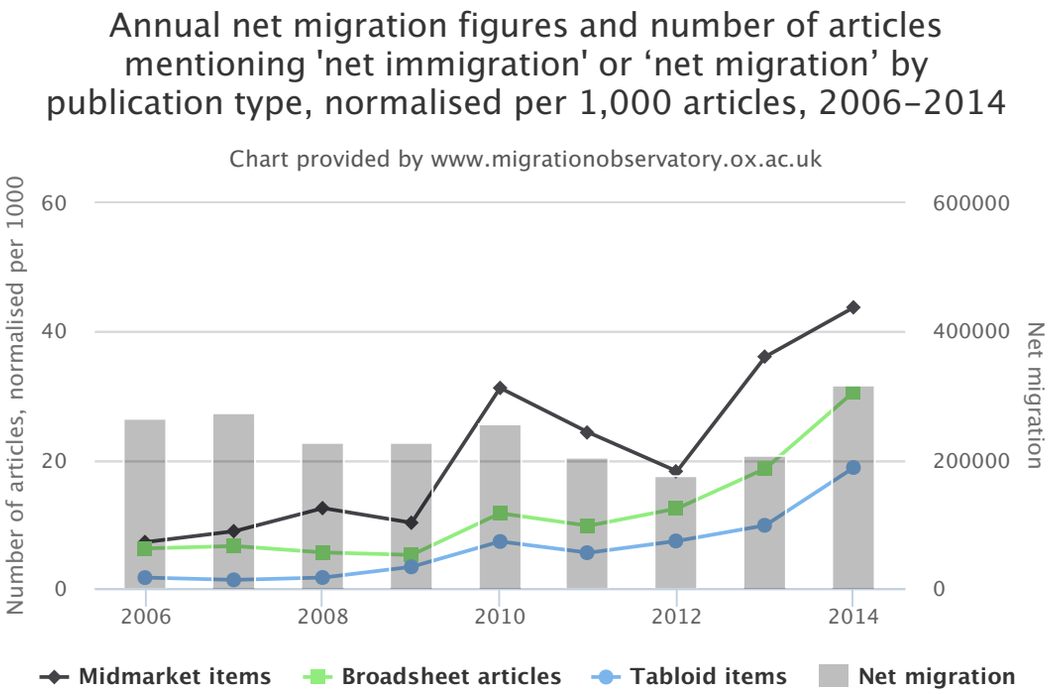
'Net migration', or the difference between the numbers of people entering and leaving the UK, became more prominent in public debate once the Conservative Party pledged to bring this figure down to the 'tens of thousands' as part of its 2010 General Election manifesto. Figure 8 shows how the press used this phrase more often as the Coalition government went on.

Figure 8



Since the idea of net migration has been closely linked with policy developments and rationales, it provides an opportunity to see how press coverage matches actual migration data. Figure 9 places the 2006-2014 annual net migration figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Long Term Immigration (LTIM) data against the number of articles that each subset of the press published mentioning 'net migration' or some variation.[11] These are expressed per 1,000 articles within each group, to allow comparison between subsets of the press.

Figure 9



Comparing net migration levels with media coverage of net migration, two patterns emerge. First is the clear increase in the proportion of migration-related articles mentioning net migration in 2010: this is likely due to coverage and subsequent discussion of the Conservative manifesto announcement. Second is the increase of tabloids and broadsheet articles mentioning net migration from 2011 to 2014, and of midmarket articles from 2012. These increases took place alongside increases in actual net migration. However, relatively high levels of net migration from 2006-2008—before the introduction of the net migration target—were not associated with the same level of coverage.

One possible interpretation is that as the concept of net migration gained greater traction during the Conservative-led coalition government from 2010, the press paid more attention to the actual quarterly ONS reports, with rising numbers providing opportunities for coverage:

> The net migration figures have, in fact, barely changed since 2010 in spite of the Coalition 's cap on migration for people outside the European Union. (Broadsheet, 2014)

> ONS figures show that net migration rose from 154,000 in 2012 to 212,000 in 2013, which suggests we are a long way off David Cameron 's target of 100,000 in 2015. (Midmarket, 2014)[12]

> No one asked the British population if we wanted an increase in net migration to this level, which is twice that of the previous decade. (Midmarket, 2013)

11. These include phrases like 'net annual migration', 'net inward migration', and 'net international migration'.

12. ONS LTIM figures are revised for several reasons. The numbers mentioned in this article were provisional at the time.

When the press explicitly described immigrants and migrants during 2006-2015, 3 out of 10 times (30.4%) it was with the word 'illegal'.

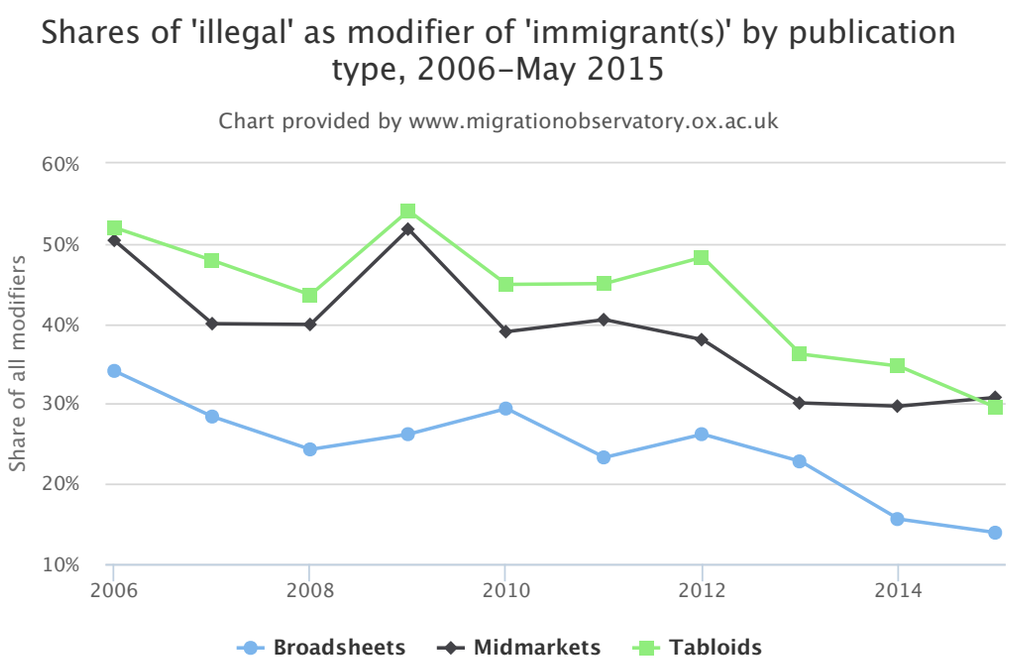
When it comes to describing immigrants as people, all subsets of the press used the term 'illegal' most often. As shown in Table 2, when newspapers characterised immigrants from 2006 to mid-2015, 3 out of 10 times (30.4%) it was with the word 'illegal'.[13] This is in contrast to the words 'EU' or 'European' which were the second-most frequent modifiers: they were only used 7% of the time. And, geographic terms like 'African', 'Polish', and 'Irish' were also used to describe immigrants' origins.

Table 2 - Top Ten Modifiers of 'Immigrants' or 'Migrants', All Publications, 2006-May 2015

Rank	Modifier	Frequency	Share of all modifiers
1	illegal	14,202	30.4%
2	EU/European	3,271	7.0%
3	many	1935	4.1%
4	new	1395	3.0%
5	more	1043	2.2%
6	African	921	2.0%
7	Jewish	782	1.7%
8	Polish	777	1.7%
9	Irish	750	1.6%
10	recent	551	1.2%

Figure 10 shows how the different press subsets used 'illegal' to describe immigrants and migrants since 2006. As a proportion of all the modifiers they use to describe immigrants, broadsheets consistently use 'illegal' the least compared to tabloids and midmarkets. This rate has dropped by nearly half to about 14% of all modifiers of immigrants in broadsheet coverage through May 2015. Meanwhile, tabloids and midmarkets tended to use 'illegal' between 30-50% of the times they describe immigrants. But all subsets show a downward trend: January 2013 to May 2015 has lower rates of using 'illegal' compared to 2006.

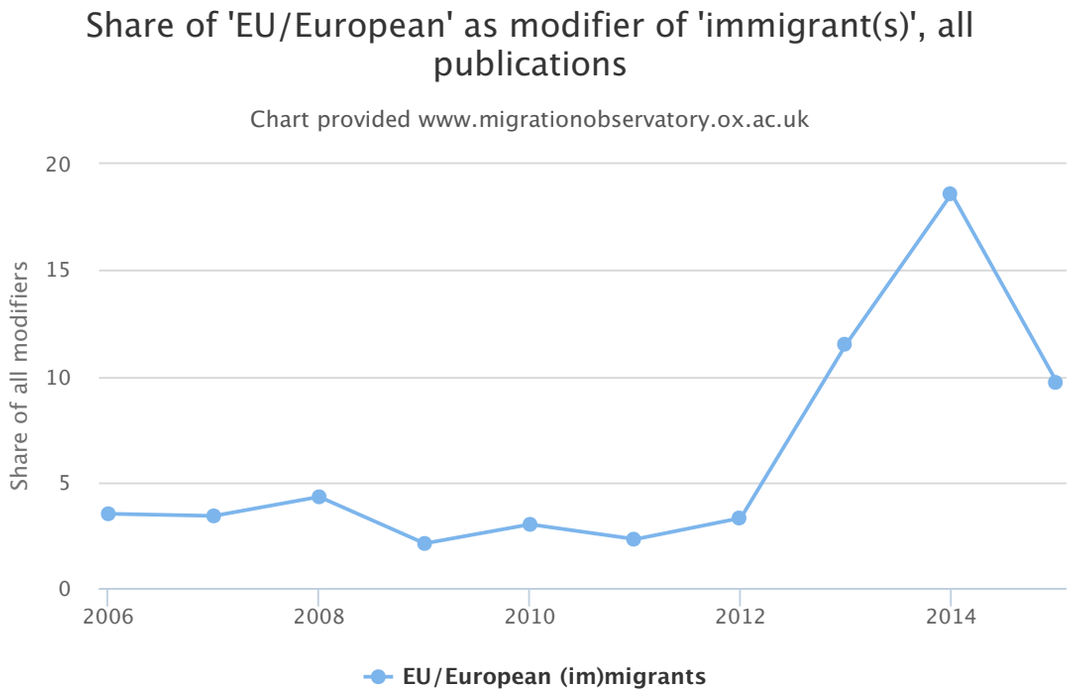
Figure 10



13. The terms 'immigrant(s)' and 'migrant(s)' appear a total of 107,959 times in the dataset. 43% of the time (in 46,704 instances) at least one modifier appears with either term. So, taking into account instances when 'immigrant(s)' or 'migrant(s) don't have a modifier, the word 'illegal' appears with these terms about 13% of the time.

Returning to Table 2, the second most frequent way that the press described immigrants is with the terms 'EU' or 'European'. This is actually a relatively new phenomenon: as seen in Figure 11, the use of these modifiers increased dramatically from 2012 onwards. At its peak in 2014, when newspapers described immigrants and migrants, nearly 1 out of 5 times (19%) it was with 'EU' or 'European'. There is little evidence of an increase in references to EU migrants in 2007, the year that Romania and Bulgaria actually joined the EU.

Figure 11



Refugees tend to be described in terms of their geographic origins more than immigrants: since 2012, the press mentioned Syrian refugees the most. Prior to that point, 'Palestinian' was the most frequent modifier of 'refugees'. As seen in Table 3, 1 in 10 (10.3%) instances of the press using a word to describe refugees from 2006-2015 involved 'Syrian'. Other terms related to either geographic origins or site of conflict also appear in the top ten most frequent modifiers: 'Iraqi' (in 2.6% of instances) and 'Afghan' (2.1%).

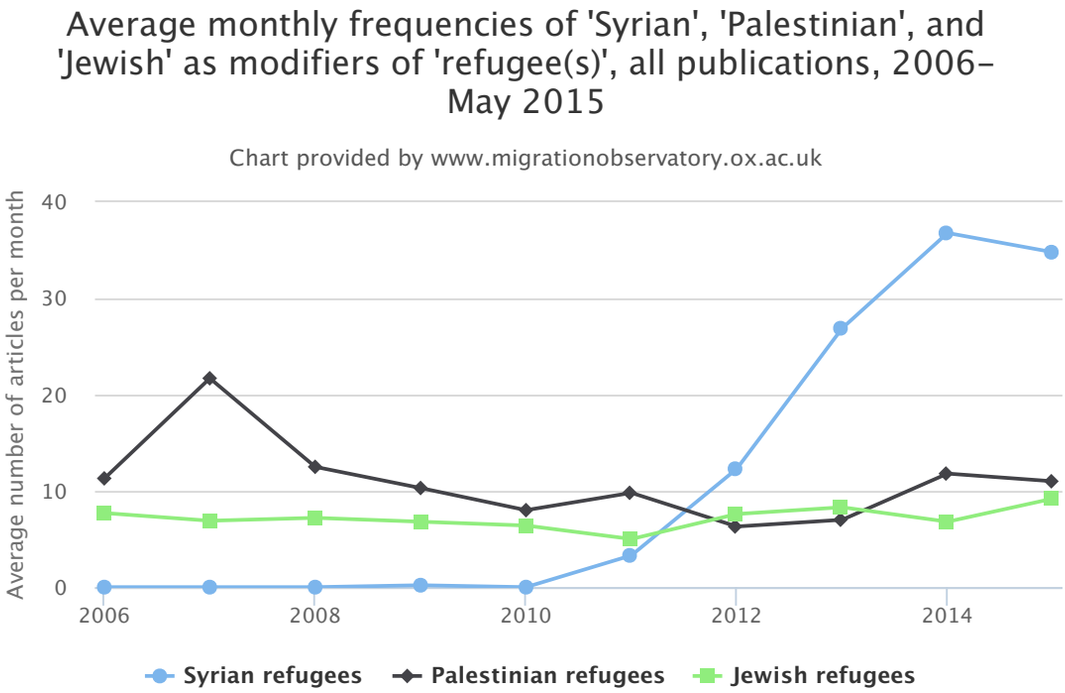
Table 3 - Top Ten Modifiers of 'Refugee(s)', All Publications, 2006-May 2015

Rank	Modifier	Frequency	Share of all modifiers
1	Syrian	1,336	10.3%
2	Palestinian	907	7.0%
3	Jewish	766	5.9%
4	many	338	2.6%
5	political	339	2.6%
6	Iraqi	340	2.6%
7	other	308	2.4%
8	more	277	2.1%
9	Afghan	278	2.1%
10	young	205	1.6%

Figure 12 shows that before 2011 the press as a whole rarely if ever mentioned 'Syrian refugees'. Rather, as the conflict grew in importance and scale, average monthly mentions also increased nearly three-fold between 2012 and the first part of 2015. Prior to 2012, the word most often modifying 'refugees' in the press as a whole was

'Palestinian'. Meanwhile, the presence of 'Jewish' in the top ten modifiers comes mainly from references to people or places related to the Second World War.

Figure 12



Summary

On the issue of immigration, a complicated and wide-ranging topic, newspapers are important sources of information for the UK public (Blinder and Allen 2016). The analysis Section 3 shows that immigration has risen in media visibility since 2012, to levels higher than in 2006 (Figure 1). Immigrants and migrants received more explicit mentions than refugees and asylum seekers over the whole period (Figure 3). Over the entire 2006-2015 period, 'mass' was the single most frequent modifier of 'immigration', followed by 'net' and 'illegal' (Figure 5). Meanwhile, the press increasingly described the phenomenon of immigration in terms of its scale, pace, and direction rather than legality (Figure 6). Although immigrants are most often described as 'illegal', (Table 2), this trend has been declining across all subsections of the press since 2010 (Figure 10).

4. Examining Narrative Elements: EU and Illegal Immigration Compared

This section looks in more detail at two aspects of press coverage on immigration and immigrants: legal status and the role of the European Union.

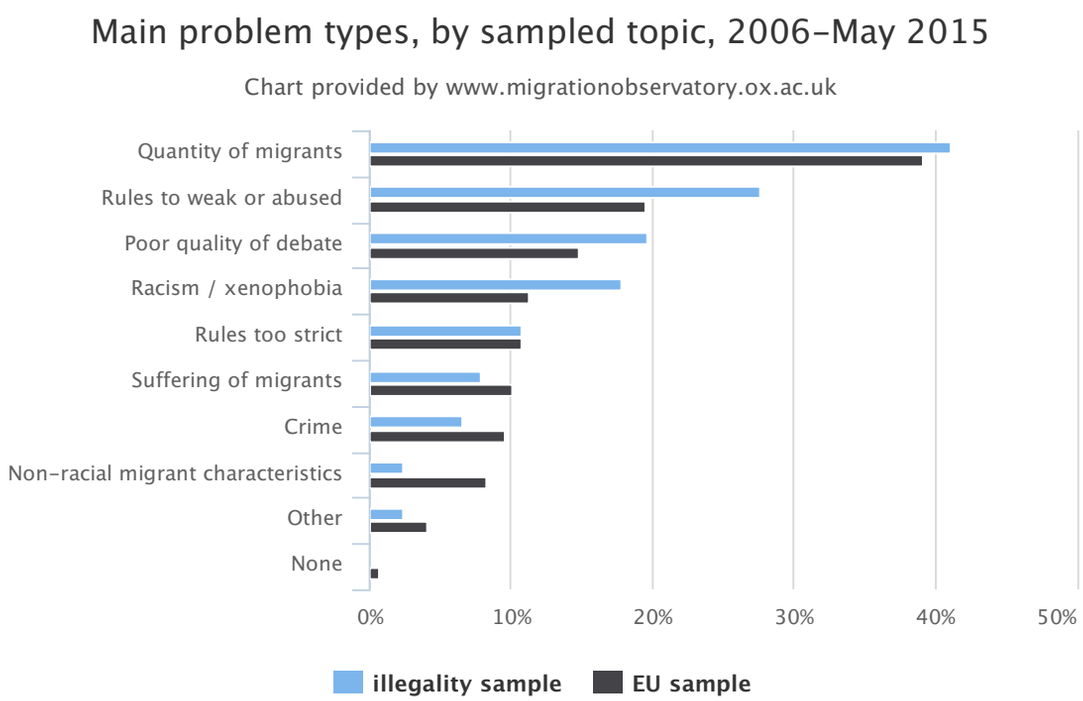
Manual content analysis methods were used to identify specific aspects of news articles, opinion pieces, and letters from the public that corpus linguistic methods used in the previous section are less immediately suited for: do articles highlight mainly problems or achievements, which kinds of problems or successes are mentioned more often, what kinds of justifications are particularly frequent, who is claimed to be responsible for these occurrences? Drawing upon a subsample of the larger corpus, the research analysed 412 articles that dealt with either EU immigration or illegal immigration in the UK context. In the following section, where a difference between the two topics is mentioned, it is statistically significant. More details about the specific procedures used, as well as full statistical tables reporting all findings, appear in Appendix B.

When papers mention either EU or illegal immigration, they tend to focus on perceived problems rather than achievements. Coverage of EU immigration tends to mention the numbers of migrants, while articles mentioning illegal immigration highlight how existing laws are ineffective as well as increased criminality.
About 7 in 10 articles (69%) mentioning EU immigration, and about three-quarters (76%) of articles in the illegal immigration sample, contained only mentions of problems. But, the types of problems mentioned in either topic differed. The analysis identified eight main types of problems in each sample (more details about each problem type can be found in Appendix B). Figure 13 shows the percentage of articles that mentioned one or more of these problems, divided by topic.

In the EU immigration topic, 39% of articles mentioned the number of migrants (either actual or potential) as a problem, compared to 20% in the illegality topic. Meanwhile, 41% of articles in the illegality sample argued that existing laws and rules were weak, abused, or ineffective, whereas only 20% of articles in the EU sample did so. In addition, 41% of the articles in the illegality sample (compared to 10% in the EU sample) mentioned crime and insecurity in the UK as a problem.

> Under this Government £30 million less is being spent on protecting our borders than five years ago and for seven years the Home Office has not checked how many illegal immigrants are in Britain. These figures suggest that the Government is simply not serious about cracking down on what it is a flagrant and widespread act of criminality. When illegal immigrants come here, many of them take on cash-in-hand work which robs the Treasury of tax income but these immigrants also frequently become involved in organised crime. (Midmarket, 2014)

Figure 13



Note: percentages within topics do not total 100% because articles could be assigned up to two problem types.

Meanwhile, much of the debate about EU migration has centred on its scale and anticipated impacts.

> Tougher controls on migration could include curbs on freedom of movement to delay an exodus from new EU countries, David Cameron said yesterday...He acknowledged fears about an influx of non-skilled workers from Romania and Bulgaria when restrictions are lifted on January 1 and condemned Labour for giving Poles and other eastern Europeans instant access to British jobs in 2004. (Midmarket, 2013)

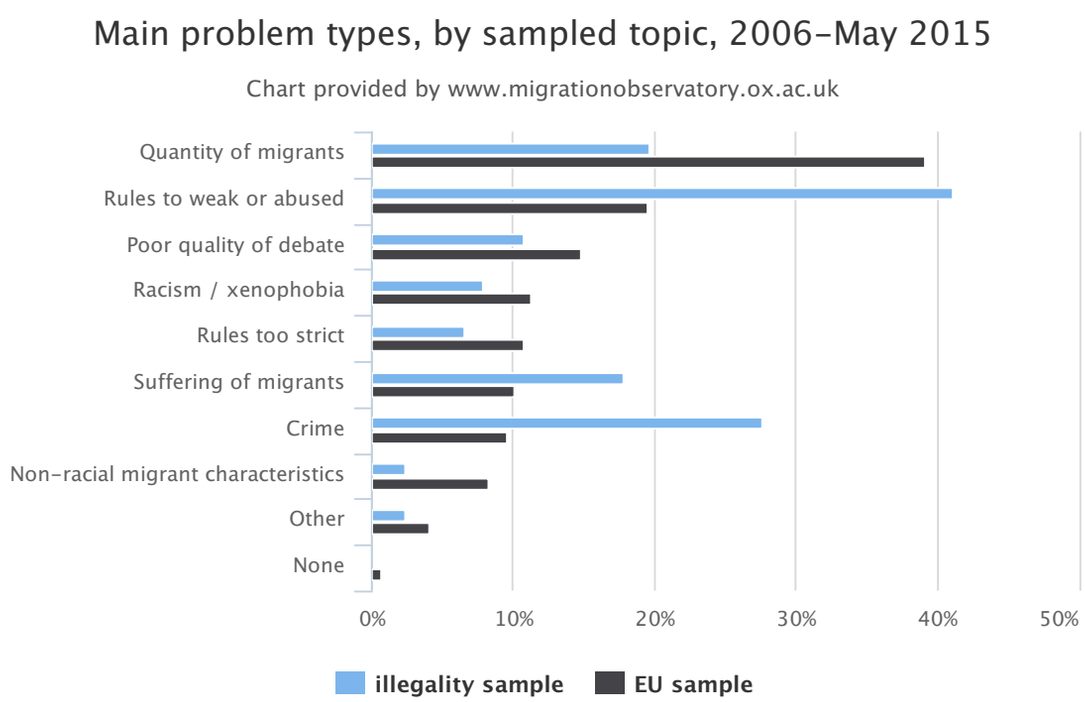
Whether regarding EU or illegal immigration, articles place the blame for problems—as well as the credit for successes—with the government in power. But, migrants themselves are also portrayed as the causes of problems with illegal immigration rather than EU immigration.

Articles often attribute responsibility to specific groups or people when they report a problem or success. In both topics, articles usually put the spotlight on the government in power or one of its agencies. This happens in nearly half (49%) of articles mentioning a problem related to EU migration, and a similar proportion (46%) in the illegality sample. Meanwhile, when an article mentioned a success or achievement, about a third of the time (34%) in the EU sample it was the government that got credit. This happened a quarter (25%) of the time in the illegality sample. But a distinction emerges in who or what gets blamed for problems specifically associated with each topic, as seen in Figure 14. Migrants tend to be cast as the cause of problems related to illegal immigration (28% of articles), much more than EU migration (9% of articles). Although there also is some evidence suggesting that the press blames smugglers and traffickers in the illegality sample, blame is attached less often to this group than to migrants themselves. Conversely, EU bodies and other European states are blamed for problems relating to EU migration (10% of articles) rather than illegal immigration (fewer than 1% of articles).

> Four illegal immigrants sneaked into Britain in the back of a lorry carrying Tony Blair's new armoured car. The asylum seekers slipped into the truck shortly before it was shipped across the Channel in a ferry... A police spokesman confirmed four men were arrested for alleged immigration offences on Tuesday. The asylum seekers have now been handed over to the immigration service. Sources said they will soon be released into the community while their asylum applications are processed. (Midmarket, 2007)

> Non-EU migrants have swamped France. Instead of deporting them, France aims to offload them on us. Most are delighted to come, since our economy and benefits are better. And France is using our EU contributions to ease their passage. It is truly insane. (Tabloid, 2015)

Figure 14



Note: percentages within topics do not total 100% because articles could have multiple actors blamed for problems or credited for successes.

Meanwhile, when articles report on a perceived success or achievement, the only significant difference between the two topics appears in regard to the police or security services. In 23% of successes mentioned in the illegality

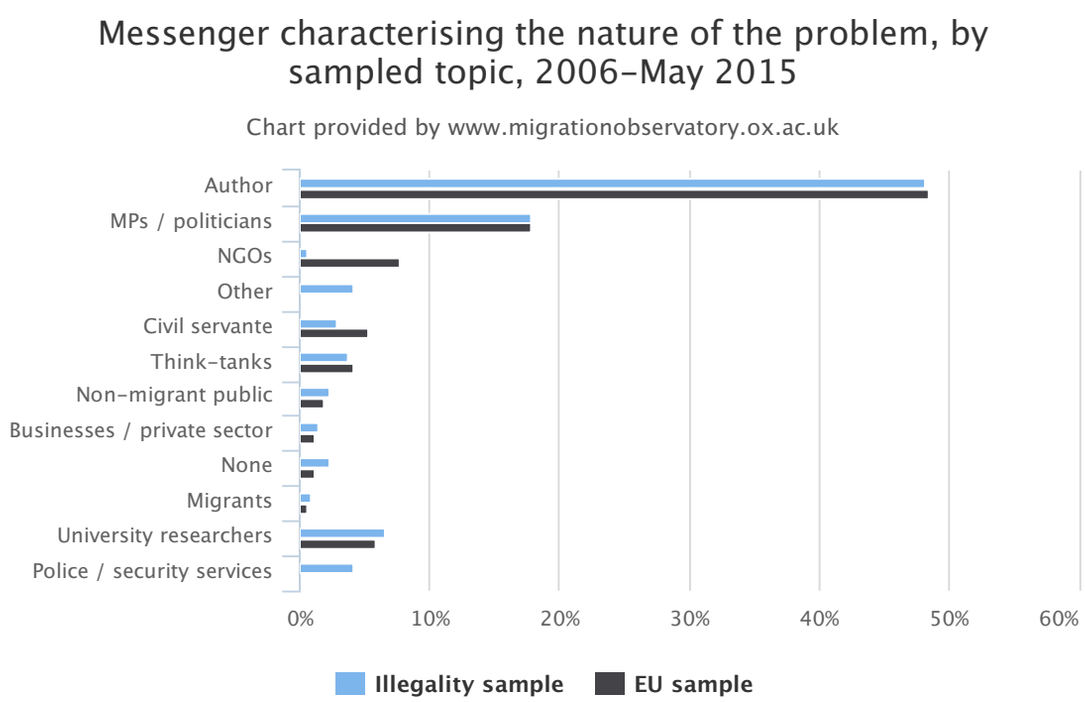
sample, compared to none in the EU sample, the police receive credit for achieving something. Closer inspection revealed that articles attributing success to this group are generally mentioning the successful arrest of illegal immigrants.

> Two Brazilian illegal immigrants who set up Britain's biggest fake passport factory were jailed for five years yesterday...When police raided it last November after a tip-off from a Central London stationers, officers found 'wall-to-wall machinery' along with 12,000 passport covers, hundreds of passport photographs, driving licences and utility bills. Detective Sergeant Tony Lynes said the passports could easily have been used in benefit, credit card, loan and mortgage fraud. (Midmarket, 2006)

Whether dealing with a problem or success, the people identified as the source of the main message are most often the article authors themselves

The analysis identified who says that something matters, or the messenger of an issue. In nearly half of both samples (about half of articles mentioning either EU or illegal immigration), the author of the article is the person who is communicating the main issue—asserting whether it is problem or success. This includes instances of opinion pieces, commentaries, and letters. (In articles where the author was clearly writing as a representative of a particular group, such as a business, it was coded as part of that group). The second-most frequent group that articles use to transmit a message consists of MPs or other politicians: for example, 18% of EU and illegality articles containing a problem cite politicians as the messenger (Figure 15).

Figure 15



By way of example, the first of the following two quotes shows a case in which the author of the article is the 'messenger' of the problem, while the second shows a case in which the messenger is a politician.

> Violent extremism, illegal immigration, climate change and rising food prices are not problems we can address by acting only within our borders. Aid focused on tackling poverty and nurturing civil society can play an important part in tackling the root causes behind such challenges. (Broadsheet, 2014)

> Tony Abbott, the Australian prime minister, has been quick to recommend his approach to Europe after hundreds of migrants drowned in the Mediterranean. "The only way you can stop the deaths is to stop

> the people smuggling trade. The only way you can stop the deaths is in fact to stop the boats, "he said. "That's why it is so urgent that the countries of Europe adopt very strong policies that will end the people smuggling trade across the Mediterranean. (Broadsheet, 2015)

Other actors outside of government agencies or Parliament do not appear to be prominent as messengers in discussions of problems or achievements related to EU or illegal migration.

Assertions in media coverage also tend not to be accompanied by other sources—either in support or contrast to the main points

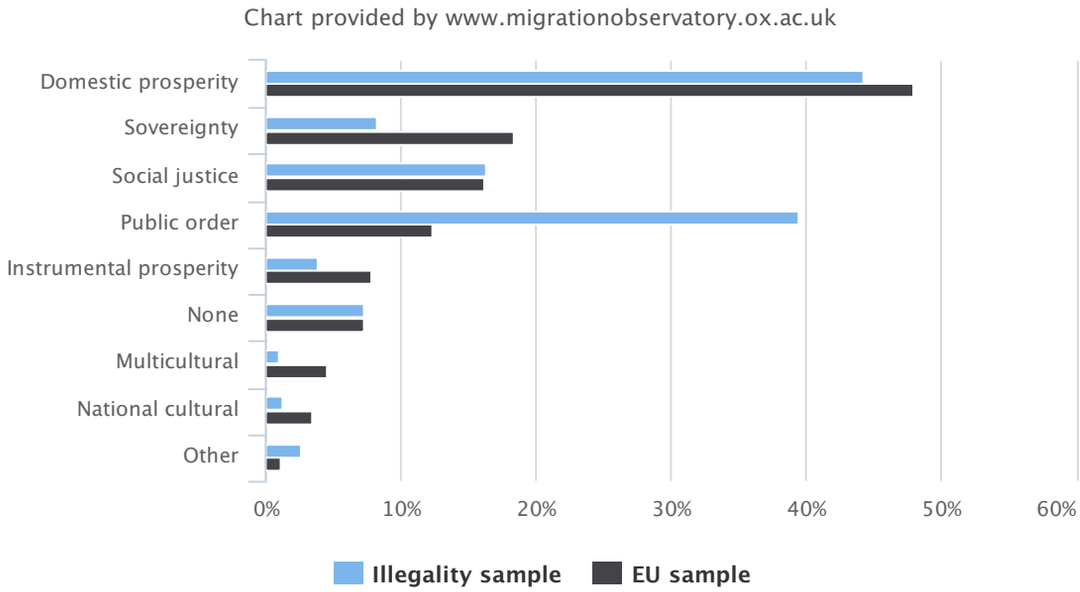
Authors have the option to bring in other actors, whether through passing attribution or explicit quotation. But in the cases of both topics, articles tend to lack references to additional sources. This happens more often in the context of illegal immigration (56%) rather than EU immigration (41%). When sources do appear, they tend to be politicians (mentioned in 23% of articles in the EU sample; 15% of articles in the illegality sample), or civil servants (19% of articles in the EU sample, and 12% of articles in the illegality sample). Although the samples include some genres of newspaper content that might be reasonably assumed to naturally feature the author's own voice—one-off opinion pieces or regular columns, for example—the fact that other sources tend not to be brought in to complement or strengthen the author's arguments highlights the significance of journalists' roles in framing migration narratives.

In both topics, problems and successes were most often justified on the basis that the UK's own prosperity and well-being should come before others. But, justifications related to public order and security were very strongly associated with illegal immigration rather than EU migration. Meanwhile, arguments based on sovereignty were common in the EU sample

Another key part of press coverage involves how issues are ethically framed, or how authors draw upon different kinds of values to make their arguments. Some of these values might place more emphasis on the host country's own welfare ('domestic prosperity'), while others might highlight the importance of states being able to govern themselves ('sovereignty'). In nearly half (48%) of articles mentioning EU immigration, the authors justified their argument on the basis of domestic prosperity, or the idea that 'immigration should be controlled to deliver the best possible economic, social and welfare conditions for citizens' (Balabanova and Balch 2010: 384). A similar proportion of articles in the illegality sample (44%) also contained justifications based on domestic prosperity.

Figure 16

Proportions of justifications used, by sampled topic, 2006–May 2015



Note: percentages within topics do not total 100% because articles could be assigned up to two justification types.

The following two examples illustrate how 'domestic prosperity' is communicated by emphasising differences between interests in the UK's own economy and society and the interests of those outside Britain.

> There is no doubt that Britain needs to address its skills deficiencies. Improved education and training programmes are crucial. There is, of course, another way of tackling the problem, and that is by importing skilled labour. This has happened to a considerable degree over the past two years as a large number of people from Eastern Europe have migrated here. There is no doubt their presence has been a fillip for employers and helped to hold down inflation by restraining wage increases, if not undercutting wages. On some estimates, they contributed about 1/2%, possibly more, to GDP growth in 2005 and a similar contribution can be expected for 2006, thus bolstering the Chancellor's GDP data. But large-scale immigration cannot be the long-term solution to our skills problems. There are too many downsides in a crowded island. (Broadsheet, 2006)

> The Commons home affairs select committee's damning report on immigration controls...says that the Home Office is clearly 'not in a position' to think through the wider implications of immigration on labour markets or society and that a cross-government committee should take charge of this. (Broadsheet, 2006)

Previous research by Balabanova and Balch (2010) measured the quantities and types of ethical framings that appeared in British and Bulgarian coverage about EU migration in 2006. They found that in nearly half (48%) of all framings identified in their UK sample (52 out of 108), the main justification was 'domestic social justice', which corresponds with this report's code of 'domestic prosperity' (see Appendix B for full details of each code). Subsequent research that compared coverage in 2006 and 2013 (Balch and Balabanova 2016) found that the emphasis towards domestic concerns had intensified over the period.

As seen in Figure 15, the kinds of justifications made between the two topics differed, too. Arguments citing the value of public order—that is, the claim that any action on immigration should preserve safety and the rule of law as well as combat anti-social behaviours—appeared most in the context of illegal immigration (40% of articles containing a problem) rather than EU migration (12% of articles containing a problem).

> More than 50,000 illegal immigrants who were told to leave the country have been granted a 'de facto amnesty' after officials admitted they had no idea where they were. [The director-general of immigration enforcement at the Home Office] added that because the department had a 'limited amount of enforcement resource', it was used to pursue those immigrants whose location was known and who were considered to be likely to cause harm. 'If there is any evidence that they are causing harms, i.e., criminal offending, then of course we would pursue them', she said. (Broadsheet, 2014)

Meanwhile, arguments based on the justification of sovereignty, or the belief that actions should be based on Britain's right to act according to its own rules and laws, frequently appeared in connection with discussion about the problem of EU migration: 18% of articles in the EU sample contained this justification, compared to 8% in the illegality sample.

> Non-EU relatives of EU citizens currently need visas before they can come to the UK even if they are living within the community. But the European Court of Justice has ruled that Britain has had no right to enforce travel controls on non-Europeans who have been granted a residency permit by another member state. The EU court's ruling, expected to be upheld in the New Year by Britain's own High Court, is a fresh blow to the Government's border powers. (Midmarket, 2014)

These results about the kinds of values and justifications used in news coverage about EU and illegal immigration suggest reasons why these topics matter as either problems or successes. Illegality is strongly linked with ideas of

criminality and the need for keeping the public safe, while EU immigration is coupled with concerns about how the UK's ability to govern itself.

Summary

The analysis in Section 4 shows that discussion of EU immigration tends to focus on the scale of migration, while coverage mentioning illegal immigration highlights how existing laws are ineffective (Figure 13). Across both topics, the journalist themself is most often the "messenger", rather than simply reporting a third party's concerns. The government receives most of the blame for problems—although migrants themselves also receive blame in reference to illegal immigration, while EU states and organisations are also implicated in problems relating to European immigration (Figure 14). And, in line with previous research (Balch and Balabanova 2010; 2016), many claims about achievements or problems relating to these topics were based on arguments that emphasised the UK's own domestic prosperity, whether in economic, social, or security terms (Figure 15).

5. Conclusion

Media coverage of migration issues divides opinion. To some, British newspapers are barely-regulated juggernauts of opinion, pushing political agendas and shaping the UK's policy landscape. Others see the UK press as champions of common sense, reflecting the voices of the people and dealing with complex subjects in a forthright manner. Regardless of one's position on these issues, it is clear that there is an important relationship between the nature of media coverage, policymaking and the public debate.

The data in this report suggest that media coverage should be seen in the context of both the changing dynamics of migration and unfolding policy debates. Looking at trends in media coverage from 2006 to 2015, there are several clear examples of media coverage responding to events on the ground, such as the growing number of displaced people following the conflict in Syria. In other cases, media coverage appears to have been driven by policy positions, such as the government's net migration target from 2010 onwards.

Over the last decade, words related to the scale and pace of migration to the UK have increasingly dominated discourse, pushing those relating to the legal status of migrants into a distant second-place. In fact, the prevalence of 'illegal' as a way of describing immigration has declined. This has occurred alongside a sharp increase in the number of stories appearing in British national newspapers mentioning European and EU migrants. A striking feature of media coverage around EU migration over the period of this study is that it was less evident in the earlier period of this study, from 2006-2008. This was despite the fact this was a period when migration to the UK from new EU member states became very high in a very short period of time. But, newspaper stories about EU migration increased in frequency rapidly from 2012 onwards—continuing at elevated levels into 2015—which coincided with the end of transitional labour market controls on Romanian and Bulgarian workers.

The growing emphasis on scale and numbers rather than illegality also has implications for the nature of coverage, since—as the qualitative analysis shows—the two are covered in different ways. For example, coverage of EU migration, which tended to focus on the scale of migration, is less likely to emphasise links with criminality or attribute responsibility for the problem to migrants themselves.

Recent changes in the focus of the debate are pertinent for understanding the context of the recent debate about Brexit, in which the scale of EU migration and the UK's ability to restrict access of low-skilled EU migrants to the UK labour market was a key issue. Although further research is needed to understand what role the media played in shaping or reflecting public attitudes to EU migration and EU membership, the evidence in this report leaves the possibility open that it has played some part.[14]

14. For further reading on this subject that spans different countries and issues, see: Soroka (2003), John et al. (2013), Helfer (2016), and van Klingeren et al. (2015).

Understanding the Evidence

The quantitative design and analysis (seen in Appendices A and B) has some important limitations. First, it relies upon the quality of archiving provided by Nexis UK and Factiva. Although checks were conducted throughout the data collection process to ensure no systematic errors or gaps existed, it is possible that both services may miss some data due to human error. Given the large-scale nature of the analysis, any random errors should not affect the findings meaningfully. Second, counting up the frequencies of key terms—as well as the words associated with them—reveals only some aspects of language. It is not as well-suited as closer reading or content analysis for identifying either how arguments are formed or the overall tone of an article.

Meanwhile, the manual content analysis design (explained further in Appendices B and D) also has limitations. First, determining whether a claim is a 'success' or 'problem' is subjective: it may look different depending on one's perspective. So, decisions about which categories the articles fit into were taken by at least two people who separately read each article. This helped minimise potential bias introduced by any single person. Second, the design specifically considered whether people or organisations were the ones to blame or credit for developments about EU and illegal immigration. Although much research seems to reflect this approach (see for example Statham and Geddes 2006), it is possible that wider factors that aren't related to any single actor also contribute to events covered in the news. The tendency to attribute problems and successes to more immediately visible actors is consistent with the possibility that structural drivers of the scale and nature of migration—such as economic growth, demographic shifts, and the globalisation of labour and product markets—are underappreciated in the public debate. However, the content analysis for this report did not seek to separately identify cases where responsibility was attributed to structural factors.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix A: Data Sources and Collection Procedures

This project relied upon two archiving services as sources for newspaper data: Nexis UK and Factiva. Within these archives, the following search string was used: "(refugee! OR asylum! OR deport! OR immigr! OR emigr! OR migrant! OR illegal alien! OR illegal entry OR leave to remain) NOT (deportivo OR deportment)". This is based on the work of Gabrielatos and Baker (2008), and used in prior Migration Observatory research (Blinder and Allen 2016; Allen and Blinder 2013). Two publications, the Express and the Sunday Express, were not fully available in Nexus UK for the 2006-2008 period. So, we used Factiva to fill in this gap. Comparing results of other publications between the two services did not reveal any obvious systematic biases for the 2006-2015 period.

The dataset covers all 19 national UK publications that were continuously published during 2006-2015. This excludes News of the World and the i. The publications are divided into tabloids, midmarkets, and broadsheets (see Table 1 in the main report). In total, the dataset contains 171,401 articles: 16.7% were from tabloids, 17.6% from midmarkets, and 65.7% from broadsheets. Table 4 breaks these figures into years. Exact and near-duplicates were removed if they appeared within the same publication on the same day. This addressed the problem of multiple—yet very similar—editions of the same paper appearing in the dataset. But, it is possible that different newspapers might publish similar articles, especially if they rely on commonly available press releases, or follow a similar structure of reporting. So, duplicates were only removed if they were judged to be similar and appeared on the same day within the same publication.[15]

Table 1. Articles in the Dataset by Year and Publication Type

Year	Publication type			
	Tabloids	Midmarket	Broadsheet	Total
2006	3,029	4,354	13,391	20,774
2007	3,067	4,386	12,947	20,400
2008	3,013	4,085	11,128	18,226
2009	2,699	2,842	9,842	15,383
2010	2,473	2,627	10,527	15,627
2011	2,352	2,307	9,556	14,215
2012	2,583	2,086	9,983	14,652
2013	3,470	2,937	11,904	18,311
2014	4,254	3,427	15,704	23,385
2015 (through May)	1,685	1,053	7,690	10,428
Total	28,625	30,104	112,672	**171,401**

15. Technical details about how this test works are available in Pomikálek (2011).

Appendix B: Data Analysis Procedures

The report uses two broad sets of methods, which are distinct but inform one another in the design of the project: computer-assisted corpus linguistics and manual content analysis.

Corpus Linguistic Analysis

Corpus linguistics is an approach to studying language that analyses collections of texts called 'corpora' (singular: corpus) to look for usage patterns, among other aspects, that aren't necessarily apparent when researchers read a small set of articles (Baker 2006). Often, as in the case of this report, specialist computer software aids this process by organising, processing, and quantifying the text data. But, despite this computerised assistance, researchers still can—and arguably must—view how the quantitative patterns exist in context and interpret the significance of them. The analysis relied on the web-based software Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff 2014 et al.) to organise, store, and analyse the dataset. This is a comprehensive tool that enables researchers to generate snapshots of how a chosen term functions in a corpus. These snapshots are called 'word sketches' because they potentially give the researcher an initial picture of how a given term actually operates in real-world language, with the option to go into more detail. Word sketches rely upon part-of-speech (POS) tagging. This is a technique that attaches information about how each word is used that allows Sketch Engine to look for patterns in usage. For example, if a word modifies a noun (such as 'immigrant'), its part of speech would typically be an adjective. So, if a corpus is POS tagged, researchers could search for all adjectives associated with the word 'immigrant'. The specific set of tags used by Sketch Engine come from Marcus et al. (1993).

The research uses two core techniques from corpus linguistics. The first is frequency analysis, where specified terms and the articles in which they appear are totalled up to show how salient they are in a given corpus or sub-corpus (a research-defined subset of the larger body of text). The second is collocational analysis, a method that can use grammatical rules as well as statistical tests to determine how strongly one word is linked with a target word, as opposed to them appearing together by random chance. Conventionally, collocation is defined as 'a co-occurrence relationship between two words' (McEnery and Hardie 2011). Although statistical, computer-assisted ways of identifying this relationship are commonly used, they are not the only way to do so: other ways can come from frequency analysis.

This report often uses normalised figures. Normalisation is important because it enables comparison among differently sized corpora and subcorpora, rather than simply reporting raw frequencies of a particular collocation. Typically, corpus linguists report their findings in terms of occurrences per million units (usually words). Findings can also be reported in terms of occurrences per 1,000 articles if the units are whole documents. In some places, we are interested in the overall number of articles that contain certain collocations: these are normalised per 1,000 articles. But in other cases, the results appear as normalised per million tokens (any instance of words or punctuation) because the units of interest are specific words. Finally, the report takes advantage of a key feature of Sketch Engine—and of corpus methods generally—which is the concordance view. A concordance is 'a display of every instance of a specified word or other search term in a corpus, together with a given amount of preceding and following context for each result' (McEnery and Hardie 2011: 241). Concordances are helpful in sorting data and disambiguating usages (Baker 2008), as well as qualitatively seeing how and when chosen phrases or collocations actually operate.

Manual Content Analysis

In addition to identifying general changes in press coverage over time, this report also sought to identify patterns in more specific features of narratives. These include the kinds of problems or successes mentioned, the kinds of characters or actors mentioned, and the types of justifications used to support a claim. The report uses manual content analytical methods (Krippendorf 2012) to identify these features within two different topic areas: EU/European migration, and illegal immigration. These two topics emerged from the quantitative analysis as particularly important and visible in overall press coverage (see Figure 5 in the main report).

This analysis was based on articles selected from the overall corpus: one subset containing articles mentioning terms relating to EU migration and relevant for the UK context, but not illegal immigration; and another containing articles relating to illegal immigration and relevant to the UK context, but not EU migration. Table 5 shows the sets of terms used to generate these samples.

Table 5 -Terms Used to Create EU and Illegal Immigration Samples

EU / European migration	Illegal immigration
[EU, Europe, European, and variations] within two tokens of [immigration, migration, immigrant(s), migrant(s), migrate, asylum, and variations]	[illegal, irregular, undocumented, unauthorized, unauthorised, clandestine(s), and variations] within two tokens of [immigration, migration, immigrant(s), migrant(s), and variations] [without document(s)] [without authorization, without authorisation] [without status]

Since the number of articles in each topical sample was very large (6,524 for the EU/European Migration topic, and 11,412 for the Illegal Immigration topic), 402 articles were randomly sampled from each topic. These 804 articles formed the basis of the initial manual coding. It was expected that, although these articles definitely contained relevant terms, they might not actually deal with either the intended topic or the UK context in any substantive way. For example, an article might contain the phrase 'illegal immigrants' but in reference to the United States. Or, it might list 'EU migrants' in a passing, inconsequential manner—say, as part of a list. It's likely both of these examples would not have enough content to identify arguments, characters, or types of problems and successes. So, these kinds of articles were discarded as part of the manual coding process (see 'Coding Scheme Used' in Appendix D). In total, about half (51.2%) of the two samples had enough content to be fully coded: 179 articles (44.5%) about EU/European migration, and 233 (58.0%) about illegal immigration.

The coding scheme, seen in Appendix D, was designed to identify narrative elements. It used prior research (Balabanova and Balch 2010) to generate categories within these elements. The initial scheme was refined and modified through two pilot exercises and a period of peer review from an expert in the methodology. Then, two research assistants used the scheme to code all 804 articles. Basic reliability checks taken about a third of the way into the project indicated that the coders agreed in about 82% of cases. A third coder then compared the results. Where an aspect was coded differently between the two assistants, this person re-read the article in question to reconcile the differences. So, in summary, every article was read at least twice—and where there was a difference of opinion, the article was read a third time.

Measures of Statistical Significance

To determine whether the two topics differed significantly in narrative features, the Chi-Square Test for Association (equivalent to a Z-Score Test of Two Population Proportions) is used. Where the frequencies are low (fewer than 30 observations), Fisher's Exact Test is used to determine statistical significance. Full statistical results appear in Appendix C.

Appendix C: Statistical Results from Manually Coded Samples

Feature		Topic: EU	Topic: Illegality
		N (%)	N (%)
Policy mention	Yes	142 (79.3)	139 (59.7)***
	No	37 (20.7)	94 (40.3)***
	Total articles	179 (100.0)	233 (100.0)
Problem or success	Problem only	124 (69.3)	176 (75.5)
	Success only	10 (5.6)	18 (7.7)
	Both	45 (25.1)	38 (16.3)*
	Neither	0 (0.0)	1 (0.4)
	Total articles	179 (100.0)	233 (100.0)

* p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Feature		Topic: EU	Topic: Illegality
		N responses (% articles)	N responses (% articles)
Problem type	Quantity of migrants	66 (39.1)	42 (19.6)***
	Migrant characteristics	14 (8.3)	5 (2.3)
	Rules too strict	18 (10.7)	14 (6.5)
	Ineffective rules	33 (19.5)	88 (41.1)***
	Crime, insecurity	16 (9.5)	59 (27.6)***
	Racism, xenophobia	19 (11.2)	17 (7.9)
	Migrant suffering	17 (10.1)	38 (17.8)
	Poor debate quality	25 (14.8)	23 (10.7)
	None	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)
	Other	7 (4.1)	5 (2.3)
	Total responses	**216**	**291**
		N = 169 articles	N = 214 articles
Success type	Quantity of migrants	5 (9.1)	1 (1.8)
	Policies working	22 (40.0)	24 (42.9)
	Security	1 (1.8)	6 (10.7)
	Multiculturalism	5 (9.1)	0 (0.0)
	Integration	14 (25.5)	4 (7.1)*
	Good debate quality	14 (25.5)	15 (26.8)
	None	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
	Other	6 (10.9)	12 (21.4)
	Total articles	**(67)**	**(62)**
		N = 55 articles	N = 56 articles

* p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Feature		Topic: EU	Topic: Illegality
		N responses (% articles)	N responses (% articles)
Justifications	Domestic prosperity	86 (48.0)	103 (44.2)
	Instrumental prosperity	14 (7.8)	9 (3.9)
	National cultural	6 (3.4)	3 (1.3)
	Multiculturalism	8 (4.5)	2 (0.9)*
	Public order	22 (12.3)	92 (39.5)***
	Sovereignty	33 (18.4)	19 (8.2)**
	Social justice	29 (16.2)	38 (16.3)
	None	13 (7.3)	17 (7.3)
	Other	2 (1.1)	6 (2.6)
	Total responses	**213**	**289**
		N = 179 articles	N = 233 articles

* p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Feature		Topic: EU	Topic: Illegality
		N responses (% articles)	N responses (% articles)
Actor responsible for problem	Government in power	83 (49.1)	99 (46.3)
	Opposition	15 (8.9)	0 (0.0)***
	MPs, politicians	39 (23.1)	33 (15.4)
	NGOs	0 (0.0)	4 (1.9)
	Think-tanks	0 (0.0)	2 (0.9)
	Businesses, private Ssector	7 (4.1)	13 (6.1)
	Court, judge, legal body	2 (1.2)	6 (2.8)
	EU body, state	17 (10.1)	1 (0.5)***
	Non-migrant public	7 (4.1)	9 (4.2)
	Migrants	15 (8.9)	59 (27.6)***
	Police, security services	1 (0.6)	5 (2.3)
	Smugglers, traffickers	2 (1.2)	10 (4.7)*
	None	8 (4.7)	6 (2.8)
	Other	23 (13.6)	11 (5.1)
	Total responses	**219**	**258**
		N=169 articles containing a problem	N=214 articles containing a problem
Actor responsible for problem	Government in power	19 (34.5)	14 (25.0)
	Opposition	2 (3.6)	0 (0.0)
	MPs, politicians	12 (21.8)	9 (16.1)
	NGOs	2 (3.6)	0 (0.0)
	Think-tanks	1 (1.8)	0 (0.0)
	Businesses, private Ssector	2 (3.6)	3 (5.4)
	Court, judge, legal body	1 (1.8)	5 (8.9)
	EU body, state	5 (9.1)	1 (1.8)
	Non-migrant public	6 (10.9)	1 (1.8)
	Migrants	10 (18.2)	8 (14.3)
	Police, security services	0 (0)	13 (23.2)***
	None	3 (5.5)	1 (1.8)
	Other	10 (18.2)	5 (8.9)
	Total responses	**73**	**60**
		N = 55 articles containing a success	N = 56 articles containing a success

* p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Feature		Topic: EU	Topic: Illegality
		N (%)	N (%)
Problem messenger	Author	82 (48.5)	104 (48.6)
	MPs, politicians	30 (17.8)	38 (17.8)
	Civil servants	10 (5.9)	14 (6.5)
	University researchers	1 (0.6)	2 (0.9)
	NGOs	13 (7.7)	1 (0.5)***
	Think-tanks	9 (5.3)	6 (2.8)
	Businesses, private sector	3 (1.8)	5 (2.3)
	Non-migrant public	7 (4.1)	8 (3.7)
	Migrants	2 (1.2)	5 (2.3)
	Police, security services	0 (0.0)	9 (4.2)**
	None	2 (1.2)	3 (1.4)
	Other	10 (5.9)	14 (6.5)
	Total articles	**169 (100.0)**	**215 (100.0)**
Success messenger	Author	24 (43.6)	26 (46.4)
	MPs, politicians	10 (18.2)	7 (12.5)
	Civil servants	0 (0.0)	4 (7.1)
	University researchers	2 (3.6)	0 (0.0)
	NGOs	4 (7.3)	0 (0.0)
	Think-tanks	2 (3.6)	2 (3.6)
	Businesses, private sector	2 (3.6)	1 (1.8)
	Non-migrant public	1 (1.8)	0 (0.0)
	Migrants	1 (1.8)	0 (0.0)
	Police, security services	0 (0.0)	6 (10.7)*
	None	2 (3.6)	2 (3.6)
	Other	7 (12.7)	4 (7.1)
	Total articles	**55 (100.0)**	**56.0 (100.0)**

* p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Feature		Topic: EU	Topic: Illegality
		N responses (% articles)	N responses (% articles)
Sources mentioned	MPs, politicians	41 (22.9)	34 (14.6)
	Civil servants	34 (19.0)	29 (12.4)
	University researchers	6 (3.4)	4 (1.7)
	NGOs	6 (3.4)	4 (1.7)
	Think-tanks	14 (7.8)	8 (3.4)
	Businesses, private sector	12 (6.7)	12 (5.2)
	Migrants	8 (4.5)	5 (2.1)
	Non-migrant public	12 (6.7)	10 (4.3)
	None	73 (40.8)	130 (55.8)***
	Other	22 (12.3)	19 (8.2)
	Total responses	**228**	**255**
		N = 179 articles	N = 233 articles

* p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Section identifier	Description of prompt	Description of codes
1. Topic Match	This section asks you to confirm two things: (1) whether the item contains discussion or examples related to the topic for which it was pre-selected; and (2) that it deals with the UK or British context in some way, rather than another country. The pre-selected topic is given in the title of each dataset.	There are two codes: (1) meaning 'yes, it contains discussion about the topic for which it was pre-selected, and deals with the UK context', and (0) meaning 'no, it does not contain discussion about the topic although it may mention some individual words related to the pre-selected topic, AND/OR it does not deal with the UK context'. If coded as '0', STOP coding and continue with next item. The topics are as follows: 'EU' relates to anything dealing with movement in, around, through, or from Europe or its constituent parts. This includes regions as well as specific countries within the EU, as well as groups or individuals who either have or are perceived to be of European origins. It also includes references to the European Union as an institution—its government, leaders, or constituent parts. 'Illegal immigration' relates to anything dealing with movement of people that is somehow breaking established rules, orders, or policies about who has permission to enter a country. This can relate to individuals or groups, and can be statements about their perceived or actual legal status.
2. Type of Item	This section asks you to identify what kind of an item the piece is.	There are four codes for this section. Use '1' if it is a news item that is generally reporting on some event or happening. Use '2' if it is an editorial or opinion piece—often this can be deduced by the presence of 'I' or 'we', or a tone that seems to give a position rather than report on something. Use '3' if it is a letter—often identified by the presence of 'dear so-and-so' or a short main body that responds to another item ('in yesterday's item, I was surprised about...') Use '4' if it is some other kind of document, such as a film review, recipe, or travel guidance. Use '0' if you cannot tell what kind of item it is.
3. Policy Focus	This section asks you to identify whether the item contains discussion about government policies or approaches to the 'Pre-Selected Topic' in 1.	There are two codes for this section. Use '1' if the item contains some discussion about the actions, decisions, or objectives of the government as they relate to the pre-selected topic that you confirmed in Section 1. You can also use '1' if the item discusses the implications or consequences of these actions by the government, politicians' views on what should be done on a particular issue, etc. Use '0' if it does not consider any of the above points.
4. Problem or Achievement	This section asks you to identify whether the item primarily identifies a problem or achievement in relation to the pre-selected topic. This can be a problem/achievement identified by the article's author, or by another person quoted or discussed in the article.	There are four codes for this section, each of which will help determine which of the following sections you should use. Be careful to ensure that the article actually identifies a problem or achievement rather than simply reporting events that might be considered a problem or achievement by different people. For example, articles identifying a problem/achievement are likely to include references to blame/responsibility, criticism/praise, or language implying value judgments (e.g. "shameful" or "beneficial"). You should ignore discussion of problems/achievements in relation to topics that are not the pre-selected topic. Use '1' if the item primarily identifies a problem in relation to the pre-selected topic, but not a success. Then, continue coding in Section 5a. Use '2' if the item primarily identifies a success or achievement in relation to the pre-selected topic, but not a problem. Then, continue coding in 6a. Use '3' if the item identifies both a problem and success in relation to the pre-selected topic. Then, continue coding in both 5a and 6a. Use '0' if the item does not identify either a problem or success in relation to the pre-selected topic. Then, STOP coding and continue with the next item.

Section identifier	Description of prompt	Description of codes
5a. Problem	Now that you've decided that the item mainly focuses on a problem related to the pre-selected topic, this section asks you to characterise the main rationale for concern about this topic. You can code up to two.	There are 8 substantive codes (1-8), one 'Other' code (9), and one 'None' code (0). 0: None provided. Use this code if there is no main cause for concern. 1: Quantity of people entering putting pressure on space and/or public services. This relates to the perception or reality that the number of people entering puts strain on available space, land, and services like trains or hospitals. 2: Characteristics of people entering. This relates to the specific non-racial qualities, perceived or actual, of people coming into the country. This may include skills, intentions, or objectives. Qualities related to criminality or intention to commit crimes should be coded under '6'. Qualities related to race or ethnicity should be considered under code '7'. 3: Rules or laws that are too strict. This relates to the perceived or actual stringency of rules related to the pre-selected topic. 4: Rules or laws that are too weak, or are being abused/poorly enforced . This relates to the perceived or actual leniency of rules related to the pre-selected topic, or the perception or reality of people taking advantage of existing rules for their own benefit, or that the government is not enforcing existing rules effectively.. 5: Crime, insecurity. This relates to the perceived or actual impacts of migration on levels of security or criminality. This may include violence, aggression, homelessness, anti-social behaviour, or community disorder. 6: Racism, xenophobic reactions, or desire for restrictive policies. This relates to the perceived or real threats to a host country from migrants based on race, ethnicity, or a fear of non-citizens. 7: Suffering, exploitation of migrants. This relates to the perceived or real mistreatment of migrants to a country, whether brought about by other individuals, governments, or institutions. This may include suffering or exploitation in physical, emotional, social, economic, or political terms, and may occur in host or sending countries. 8: Poor quality of debate, or too little meaningful or 'effective' discussion about the issue. This relates to the perception or reality that public debate about migration issues does not fully consider a range of perspectives OR that it tends to focus on particular opinions or groups. Note that terms like 'meaningful' and 'effective' are interpreted from the perspective of whoever is writing the item. Be careful to distinguish this from racism/ xenophobia which is coded separately as (6). 9: Other. Use this code if the main cause for concern is not described by one of the above.

Section identifier	Description of prompt	Description of codes
5b. Success	Now that you've decided that the item mainly focuses on a success or achievement related to pre-selected topic, this section asks you to characterise the main rationale for success or opportunity presented by the topic. You can code up to two.	There are six substantive codes (1-6), one 'Other' code (7), and one 'None' code (0). 0: None provided. Use this code if there is no main cause for success or opportunity. 1: Right number or type of people entering. This relates to the numbers, perceived or actual, of people coming into the country, or to the perceived or real economic labour market needs of the receiving country, possibly caused by changes in aging, fertility, or skills shortages.. 2: Government policies, rules, or procedures are working well. This relates to perceptions or reality that government actions on a migration issue are achieving their stated objectives. 3: More security for host country. This relates to the perception or reality that movement to a country lowers the likelihood of violence, aggression, homelessness, anti-social behaviour, or community disorder. 4: Multiculturalism, diversity. This relates to the perceptions or reality that migration raises the likelihood of co-existence among different ethnic, racial, or cultural groups in a host society, either of majority or minority status. 5: Successful experience of, or integration into host society. This relates to perceptions or realities of migrants who are seen to have joined and contributed to a host society. This may take the forms of social, political, or cultural contributions at the local, regional, or national levels. 6: Existence of meaningful or 'effective' discussion about the issue. This relates to the perception or reality that public debate about migration issues does fully consider a range of perspectives OR that it acknowledges a spectrum of opinions or groups. Note that terms like 'meaningful' and 'effective' are interpreted from the perspective of whoever is writing the item. 7: Other. Use this code if the main cause for success or opportunity is not described by one of the above.

Section identifier	Description of prompt	Description of codes
6. Underpinning Justification	This section asks you to identify how the item justifies its position or interpretation of the pre-selected issue—whether as a problem or an achievement. What values and/or priorities appear to be most prominently featured in this item? Choose at least one, but up to the two strongest rationales made in the item. The order you place them in does not matter: you are coding for the presence of any justifications in relation to the pre-selected topic.	There are seven substantive codes (1-7), one 'Other' code (8), and one 'None' code (0). If you think there is only one justification, code this section as '0'. If in doubt about which problem the article is mainly about and one of them is discussed in the first paragraph, select the one discussed in the first paragraph. 0: None provided. Use this code if there does not appear to be an explicit or implicit value, priority, or rationale in the item. 1: Domestic Prosperity. Actions should deliver the best possible economic, social, and/or welfare outcomes for citizens of the host country 2: Instrumental Prosperity. Actions should deliver the best overall possible economic, social, and/or welfare outcomes 3: National Cultural. Actions should maintain or promote a 'national culture' or identity, whether already existing or imagined 4: Multicultural. Actions should maintain or promote multiple cultures including majority and minority groups 5: Public Order. Actions should preserve safety and combat anti-social behaviours 6: Sovereignty. Actions should be based on the right of the host country to act according to its own rules and laws 7: Social justice. Actions should be based on concepts of human rights and social justice 8: Other. Use this code if the rationale or values do not appear to be captured by one of the above.
7a. Characters Responsible for Problem	This section now asks you to identify who is claimed to be responsible for this problem. List the characters in any order. Individuals should be coded for their institution or organisation if they are speaking on behalf of that organisation: e.g., 'Theresa May, Home Secretary' should be coded as (2: Home Office). Note: if you have coded Section 4 as containing BOTH a problem and success, complete BOTH sections 8a and 8b.	There are 10 substantive codes (1-10), one 'Other' code (11), and one 'None' code (0). 0: None provided. Use this code if no individual, group, or organisation is identified as responsible. 1: the Government in power or agencies of government 2: the Opposition/Shadow government 3: Members of Parliament or other politicians including candidates 4: Non-governmental organisations, charities, unions (not think tanks) 5: Think-tanks, including pressure groups or lobbying groups 6: Businesses, private sector 7: A court, judge, or legal organisation 8: A European institution 9: Members of the general public 10: Migrants, asylum seekers, refugees 11: Other. Use this code if the responsible party does not appear among the above codes. Then supply the name of the responsible party.

Section identifier	Description of prompt	Description of codes
7b. Characters responsible for success	If you have decided that the item mainly identifies a success or achievement, this section now asks you to identify who is claimed to be responsible for this success. List the characters in any order. Individuals should be coded for their institution or organisation if they are speaking on behalf of that organisation. Note: if you have coded Section 4 as containing BOTH a problem and success, complete BOTH sections 8a and 8b.	Use the same codes as in Section 9. If using (12: Other), then supply the name of the responsible party.
8a. Main problem messenger	This section asks you to identify who or what is communicating the main problem you've identified. Who is primarily saying that the problem matters?	There are nine substantive codes (1-9), one 'Other' code (10), and one 'None' code (0). 0: No sources. Use this code if no sources are explicitly identified. 1: The author of the item (usually journalists themselves in an editorial or opinion piece) 2: Members of Parliament or other politicians 3: Civil servants or government departments 4: University or research institute members (not think tanks) 5: Non-governmental organisations, charities, unions (not think tanks) 6: Think-tanks, including pressure groups 7: Private sector organisations or businesses 8: Migrants themselves 9: Non-migrant members of the public 10: Other sources. Use this code if the mentioned source does not appear among the above codes. Then supply the name of the source.

Section identifier	Description of prompt	Description of codes
8b. Main success messenger	This section asks you to identify who or what is communicating the main success. Who is primarily saying that the achievement matters?	There are nine substantive codes (1-9), one 'Other' code (10), and one 'None' code (0). 0: No sources. Use this code if no sources are explicitly identified. 1: The author of the item (usually journalists themselves in an editorial or opinion piece) 2: Members of Parliament or other politicians 3: Civil servants or government departments 4: University or research institute members (not think tanks) 5: Non-governmental organisations, charities, unions (not think tanks) 6: Think-tanks, including pressure groups 7: Private sector organisations or businesses 8: Migrants themselves 9: Non-migrant members of the public 10: Other sources. Use this code if the mentioned source does not appear among the above codes. Then supply the name of the source.
9. Other Sources	This section asks you to identify any sources that are mentioned or quoted on the pre-selected topic in the item. In this context, 'mentioned' means that the item references this source to illustrate, substantiate, refute, or somehow reinforce a point.	Use the same codes as in 11a. If using (10: Other), then supply the name of the source.

The Migration Observatory

Based at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford, the Migration Observatory provides independent, authoritative, evidence-based analysis of data on migration and migrants in the UK, to inform media, public and policy debates, and to generate high quality research on international migration and public policy issues. The Observatory's analysis involves experts from a wide range of disciplines and departments at the University of Oxford.

COMPAS

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