

# Impact of immigration on uk nationals

[Sociology](#), [Immigration](#)



Immigration in Uk- although not a recent occurrence, has become one of the most pressing social and economic issue for the country in the present times. With migrant population escalating by 22% during the open door policy period of 2000 to 2005 (Mail Online, 19 April 2012) and the number of immigrants and foreign born residents at its greatest than anytime in the history, immigration has also become a controversial political issue in Uk.

In this essay, using Entman's model of framing, I will examine how the media and different political actors exercise framing of arguments supporting and opposing immigration and its impact on British nationals trying to gain employment. Entman defines framing as "to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. (1993: 52) The key points in Entman's model of framing are selection and salience. After a more or less conscious selection process of a matter, salience is given to certain elements to establish argument about the problem, its cause, evaluation and the solution to the problem - the four main purposes of framing. The news media frames the high unexpected numbers of immigration from European Union and non European Union countries, defining it not as an issue but as a potential problem and a socio-cultural threat to the country.

The existing schemata in the belief system of present British population also view immigration as a potential problem due to the rise of foreign population. Schemata are the cognitive mental frameworks that help us perceive reality. Watson suggests that these existing schemata hugely affect

our responses, despite our efforts to maintain impartiality. Therefore for successful communication, the communicator selects the issue of their interest highlighting the elements that fit with the receiver's existing schemata. (2003: 187)

I have chosen two contradicting news media articles on impact of immigration on employment of people in UK, by MigrationWatch UK and The Guardian, written with different political ideological perspective to analyse how framing a text in different ways serves different purposes. After the careful problem definition, framing diagnoses the problem addressing the associations and the sources of the problem. MigrationWatch UK (6 Jan, 2012) diagnoses the high number of immigrants specially European Immigrants, to be a hindrance on possibilities of British nationals' employment.

The article stresses on all the negative impact immigration has had on the local youth pointing out that the high number of skilled immigrant working for lower wages has thinned the chances of British born of getting the jobs they would have got were it not for the immigrants. On the other hand, the article published by The Guardian is in stark contrast with the former article which states that " Immigration to Britain has had little or no impact on the overall levels of unemployment, even during the recent recession. (10 Jan, 2012) The article claims of having no evidence of negative impacts of immigration on employment in Britain. Therefore, a different diagnosis on the same issue shows how communication texts can be framed by giving salience to different elements. The moral judgment then prompted by the framing of immigration suggests that the European Union(EU) immigrants

have taken maximum advantage of the open border policy therefore abusing Britain's generosity.

By highlighting the numeric data of high number of British youth unemployment and EU employment, since 2004 till 2011, and showing the enormity of the problem, MigrationWatch UK suggests stopping anymore immigration and lowering the current number of immigrants as the only possible solution to minimize the negative effects of EU immigration on employment. Migration Watch UK is an organization which opposes high level of immigration in Britain and is open about its anti-immigration policies.

The report published by the organization as part of the 'zero net migration' campaign can be argued to be biased in its framing of immigration as it portrays youth unemployment problem as an immigration problem itself. The report has omitted the issues like the recession and lack of qualifications during the selection process and giving salience only to comparison of number of employed EU workers with the number unemployed British youths. The Guardian (10 Jan, 2012) on the other hand frames immigration as a trivial issue in relation to impact on employment, disregarding the seriousness of the issue and omitting the factual numeric data- admitting to only a slight impact on employment of less skilled people. It points out that the rise of youth unemployment was prevalent before the large flow of immigrants from the European Union since 2004. Any conscious or unconscious framing of any text carried out by the communicator are the product of the communicator's frames or schemata that organize their perception of reality. However, Entman also argues that the frames, in a communication process, also exist in the receivers of the text and

the culture apart from the communicator and the communicating text. 1993: 52) Influenced by various physical, and social factors, the receivers have their own set of frames that navigate their perceptions and their judgments which may or may not coincide with the communicator's framing judgements or the frames in the text. Similarly, common frames or schemata exists in culture among different people in a social group sharing similar belief systems. For example, People from an area with dense immigrant population might criticize The Guardian's article for undermining the potential threat of immigration as they have witnessed the losing jobs to immigrants and agreeing with MigrationWatch Uk's report.

While people from more affluent places might criticize the latter as they believe immigrants are taking up domestic and labour works for them that British nationals would not do hence leaving the high skilled jobs for British people. “ News frames make the world beyond direct experience look natural; they are principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exist, what happens and what matters. ( Glitin 1980: 6 in Allan 2010; 74) News hugely influence the choices of audiences by the way they present a communicating text by arranging issues and framing them in the order they are to be comprehended and made meaning out of them. The readers of MigrationWatch Uk are influenced to perceive both EU and non-EU immigration as a grave employment problem Britain is faced to tackled with. It influences people either aware or unaware of other issues the country is facing in regards to employment , to perceive immigrants as solely responsible for lack of youth employment opportunities.

The report can also trigger people already in disapproval of immigrants to develop anti-immigration attitude leading to rejection of foreign nationals and xenophobia. While The Guardian, on the other hand fails to illuminate the exact factual details of the high amounts of working immigrants that points out the seriousness of the matter. As a left winged news provider, The Guardian comes across as biased on immigration issues. Readers can perceive the article as covering up the bad news or important information of the high amount of unemployment of youth by giving more priority or salience to inaccuracy of the MigrationWatch report.

This shows how the coverage of the same matter by a different organization with a different ideology, has framed the matter in a different light. News media frame the events in a way that highlights the components that advance the story and interest the viewers and are much less concerned with the underlying conditions of the events and components that explain the event rather than advance. (Giltin 1980: 28 in Allan 2010: 7) Although framed in different perspectives, both the articles show an understanding that the issue of immigration overall appeals to all audience irrespective of their right winged- left winged political ideology.

The readers may or may not be able to relate the disorderly events of the world to their cultural belief systems or schemata. Therefore, by framing the events or issues and highlighting the components the communicators want the viewers to acknowledge, they present the events in an orderly and understandable way to the readers. Framing gives meaning and order to the numerous arbitrary happening in the social world by composing them into

ordered meaningful events therefore becoming an efficient and important attribute in prevalent news presentation systems.

Although, the issue of impacts of immigration on employment as well as on various other factors in Uk is being treated differently by different media organisations, and presented in different ways highlighting different aspect of the issues- some news media arguing on fears of unemployment, declining public services and social security and decreasing wages while some news media stressing on arguments related to cheap labour force and economic growth- as immigration turns into a physical and economical threat from being just a cultural threat, the problem becomes more politically prominent and less polarized pproach and responses of the problem by all news media is imminent. Bibliography: Entman, R. (1993) Framing: Towards Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm, Journal of Communication, 43(4): 51: 58 [online] Available at: [Accessed: 22 April 2012] Gavaghan, J. (2012) Immigration boom under Labour changed face of Britain faster than any major country except Italy, Oxford experts reveal. Mail Online. [Online] 19 April Available at: < <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2132012/Immigration-boom-Labour-changed-face-Britain-faster-major-country-Italy-Oxford-experts-reveal.html> > [Accessed 26 April, 2012] Green, A. (2012) Youth Unemployment and Immigration From the A8 Countries. Migration Watch Uk. [Online] 6 Jan Available at: [Accessed 25 April 2012] Stuart, A. (2010) News Culture, 3rd ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press Travis, A. (2012) Migrants do not affect jobless levels, say researchers. The Guardian, [Online] 10 Jan. Available at: [Accessed 23 April, 2012]

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