

THE MEDIA CONSTRUCTION OF ANTI-IMMIGRATION POSITIONS: THE DISCOURSE ON THE ROMANIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE BRITISH PRESS

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ABSTRACT

This paper looks at how the British press frames the issue of Romanian immigrants in Great Britain, in the context of the freedom of movement for workers in the UK. The study insists on the frames employed by the British journalists in constructing anti-immigration discourses in the newspapers. In doing so, it focuses on the stereotypes about Romanian people employed in quality and tabloid newspapers (“beggars”, “murderers”, “criminals”, “fraudsters”, “corrupt”) and on how they affect Romania’s image overseas. By using a mixed research approach, i.e. by combining framing analysis (Entman, 1993) with the critical discourse analysis, this article investigates 271 news items out of three of the most read newspapers in UK (*The Guardian*, *Daily Mail* and *The Independent*), which were published online during January 2013–March 2014. As a conclusion, the results show that the British press uses frames such as economic, political, and also pertaining to employment and national security in the coverage of Romanian immigration. The media also infer the polarization between “Us” (the British citizens) and “Them” (the Romanian migrants).

Keywords: media frames, migration, critical discourse analysis, stereotypes, nation brand.

1. INTRODUCTION

On the 1st of January 2014 the restrictions for Romanians and Bulgarians to work in the EU and, therefore in the UK as well, were lifted. Victor Spirescu was one of the Romanians to arrive in UK on the first day of unrestricted access to the UK for Romanian workers. After introducing him as a Romanian who came in Britain to work, the British tabloid press moved on to frame the discussion in terms of health benefits, migration, employment, his personal life, and his plans to move his girlfriend over to London (“Romanian migrant No 1 exposed as brute. Vaz

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shake newcomer is crook”, *The Sun*, 1 January 2014, “Washing car in Biggleswade, the Romanian welcomed to UK on New Year’s Day by Keith Vaz... meanwhile, his fiancée is left chopping wood in Transylvania”, *Daily Mail*, 3 January 2014, “Romanian migrant treated to Costa Coffee by Keith Vaz is accused of being a drug user who beat up his girlfriend and threatened to drown her”, *Daily Mail*, 8 January 2014, “Now Romanian migrant treated to Costa Coffee by Keith Vaz lands a 60 pounds-a-day building job in London after quitting car wash following just one shift”, *Daily Mail*, 18 January 2014). Furthermore, the press pictured him with politicians such as the Labour MP Keith Vaz, who greeted him at the Luton airport on his day of arrival in the UK. Victor Spirescu was a 30-year-old man originating from a small village in Transylvania who flew to the UK to work, thus becoming a symbol of the Romanian migrant in the latest debates over immigration. Following months of stories about “the wave” of Romanians and Bulgarians that will invade Great Britain starting with the 1st of January 2014, when the working restrictions were lifted, Victor Spirescu was portrayed as a potential threat to the UK by the tabloid press (*Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*, and *The Sun*): he quit his job after the first day, he is a drug user, and beat up his former girlfriend.

The story of the Romanian migrant heading to Britain is linked with the immigration media debate. At the beginning of 2013, the British Government launched the “Don’t Come to Britain” campaign, in order to discourage potential migrants from Romania and Bulgaria to head to Britain. After a short time, the Romanian newspaper *Gândul* responds with the “Why don’t you come over?” campaign, hitting back at Britain’s negative portrayal of Romanians immigrants. During 2013 the debate about migration intensified in the British press, especially in the tabloids (*Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*).

The ways in which Victor Spirescu was portrayed in the British media are related to the frames employed by different newspapers and televisions when debating the theme of Romanian migrants in the UK. The tabloid press insisted on the human interest aspect, while the quality press revealed political and economic issues, such as why Keith Vaz waited for him at Luton airport, how much he earns per month, what his future prospects are. Considering this aspects, the article looks at how the media – particularly the British press and television – frame the issue of Romanian immigrants in Great Britain, in the context of freedom of movement for workers in the EU. Furthermore, the paper reveals the stereotypes about Romanian people employed in the British media and how they affect Romania’s country image overseas. The theme of Romanians migrating in other countries is a public issue discussed in the media, related to the way in which the actions of the migrants influence the country image – a key element of the “symbolic capital” of the nation (Beciu, 2012a, my translation). In this context, the framing of migration addresses also the national image building problem.

Therefore, the research questions underlying this research are:

RQ1: How do the British journalists frame the issue of Romanian migrants in Great Britain?

RQ2: What stereotypes about Romanian people are employed in the British press?

RQ3: How do these stereotypes shape the discursive construction of Romania's nation brand?

The article starts with an overview of the *public sphere* concept, in the context of convergence between *old media* and *new media*. The Internet introduces new practices of communicating, in relation to the fragmentation and diversification of media channels and audiences. In this context, the role of the journalists is also challenged, because the online editions of newspapers involve new writing techniques, delivering information at great speed and a higher degree of contestation from the audience. In fact, the public sphere is a primordial dimension of this paper, because it will be used as a criterion for interpreting the results of the analysis. When discussing about Romanian migrants in the UK, the British journalists shape the media discourses through the frames they use. The framing process is a subject of constant debates in the academic literature, therefore theories and models of frames are explained and analyzed in a special section.

The framing analysis employed in this article is based on Entman's (1993) perspective, which is deeply discussed in relation to inductive approaches on frames. A special attention is given to the framing of migration specifically, dealing with the methodological challenges raised by a lot of studies in identifying media frames. The method section outlines the steps of the research process and the results present the frames employed by the British journalists in the coverage of Romanian migration.

2. CHANGES OF THE MEDIA DISCOURSE AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

The public sphere that was once anchored around the national institutions of societies has now shifted to a public sphere constituted around networks of communication. As the communications landscape gets denser, more complex and participatory, the networking population is acquiring greater access to information, which means more opportunities and facilities to engage in public speech. In this context, media have become one of the main institutions of the public sphere in the industrial society (Thompson, 2000). Due to the rise of mass media, the political function of the press has been replaced by a commercial function. The development of the capitalist economy led to the sacrifice of the political content space in favour of a more commercially viable content. Habermas (2006: 411–412) calls for the use of mass media in order to challenge the private interests of corporate media, arguing for a “self-regulating media system”. Therefore, the media should be independent from the political interests and mediate between

formally organized and informal face-to-face deliberations in arenas at both the top and the bottom of the political system.

New media change the practices of communicating in the emerging online public sphere. The role of Internet in this multi-platform environment is often linked with the logic of commercialization. Paul Levinson (2009) discusses the role of new technologies in democratizing closed societies. He introduces the distinction between the *information consumer* and the *information producer*, claiming that new technologies allow everyone to be free from the gatekeepers present in traditional media. Therefore, anyone can be a producer of content and part of the conversation.

A divide between those who believe in the Internet's power to revolutionise the public sphere (Benkler, 2006; Castells, 2008; Dahlgren 2005; Downey and Fenton, 2003) and those who believe the Internet will be normalised into existing practices (Bohman, 2004) has thus emerged. For example, Downey and Fenton (2003) claim that the Internet use is contributing simultaneously both to the rise of new forms of social solidarity and to fragmentation. They discuss about the notion of a *counter-public* in contrast with the notion of community, implying that it offers forms of solidarity and reciprocity. Notwithstanding, Dahlgren (2005) talks about a *cyber transformation* of the public sphere, where the Internet offers available spaces for many forms of civic initiatives. Moreover, "in the arena of new politics, the Internet becomes not only relevant but central: it is especially the capacity for the 'horizontal communication' of civic interaction that is paramount" (2005: 155). The communicative interaction among citizens is of prime importance and is linked to the idea of deliberation. Manuel Castells (2008) explores this further, talking about a *new global public sphere*. The process of globalization has shifted the debate from national to global and the Internet provides both an organizing tool and a means for debate, dialogue and collective decision-making. In Castells's opinion, the current global civil society has the technological means to exist independently from political institutions and from the mass media.

The Internet brings new ways of collecting and reporting information into the newsrooms (Reddick and King, 1997; Miller, 1998; Singer, 1998; Deuze, 1999; Garrison, 2000, 2001, 2003; Rivas-Rodriguez, 2003; Gilmour, 2004). This new journalism is open to novices, involves new writing techniques, which are adapted to online communications, functions in a network with fragmented audiences and is delivered at great speed (Fenton, 2010: 5–6). Compared to traditional news, the online editions of newspapers are open to a higher degree of contestation. A fraction of the print stories are used in the online edition, but the stories are written in a less extensive manner. For Redden and Witschge (2010: 171), the Internet leads to the production of more news (because of its speed and space), more diverse news (through multiplicity and polycentrality), and allows a greater public participation in the production of news, due to interactivity.

The journalist's role is also challenged in this new public sphere, because "through each technological change, from the intervention of the printing press, through radio, television and now the Internet, news journalists have sought to play a mediating role between power and the people" (Fenton, 2010: 87). Nick Couldry (2008) distinguishes between *mediating* and *mediatization*. The first concept is related to the relations between the media institutions and to how media shape the social world, while mediatization "describes the transformation of many disparate social and cultural processes into forms or formats suitable for media representation" (p. 377), or encourages common patterns of communicating. In considering these concepts, the professional journalists should redefine their contribution to the public sphere, beyond simply telling stories, by facing the array of bloggers, citizen-journalists, and contributors of user-generated content.

The relationship between mass-media and the public sphere raises questions about how the media content is received (Dalhgreen, 2006; Livingstone, 2005) and how media are framing debates and issues (Schlachter, 2009). For Sonia Livingstone (2005), the media select, prioritise and shape information in accordance with the institutions, technologies and discursive conventions of the media industry. She proposes the concept of *active viewer*, relating it to the way in which media mobilizes citizens to be part of the public debate: "when interpreting a program, viewers use not only the information in the programme, but also their social experiences with the phenomena portrayed (e.g. institutions, relationships, myths, explanations" (1998: 21). Consequently, the *active viewer* interprets media based on his knowledge and experience.

When presenting an event, the media select a specific angle and highlight words and catch-phrases that are relevant to the story. In doing so, the journalists frame the issue and assume a role of informing or entertaining the audience. The next section will consider how media frame debates and issues, thus understanding the different approaches to the concept of *framing* and raising the question of how frames can be identified and analyzed.

3. THE FRAMING PROCESS

Framing is the process of selecting "some aspects of a perceived reality and making 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" (Entman, 1993: 52). From a sociological perspective, frames represent cognitive structures, and form an important element of public discourse. In Entman's opinion, (1993) framing is a research paradigm which could be applied to the study of public opinion and voting behaviour in political science.

Frames are defined as patterns of interpretation rooted in culture and articulated by the individual (Entman, 1993; Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes & Sasson,

1992, p. 384; Pan & Kosicki, 2003; Reese, 2007; Van Gorp, 2007). One power of framing is the way it operates by “selecting and highlighting some features of reality while omitting others” (Entman, 1993: 53). In fact, frames are part of culture, they guide the way in which the elite constructs information, they affect how journalists select information and they are manifest in the media texts. Continuing this idea, Reese (2001: 5) comes with a constructionist perspective, claiming that “frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world”.

For McCombs, Shaw and Weaver (1997) framing is, actually, an extension of agenda setting, while for Gamson & Modigliani (1987) media frames represent “a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events” (p. 143). Other research about framing focuses on two types of frames: *issue-specific* frames (persistent only to specific topics or events) and *general* frames (identified in relation with different topics, some even over time and in different cultural contexts) (De Vreese, 2002). Tweksbury and Scheufele (2009) identify processes of frame *building* and frame *setting*. The frame building involves looking at how frames get established in the public discourse and then are completed for adoption by elites and journalists. On the other side, frame setting determines and evaluates the framing effects on the audience.

A frame is an abstract variable that is hard to identify. There are many different approaches to derive a set of frames given a particular issue (Gamson, 1989; Gandy, 2001; Hertog and McLeod, 2001; Miller, 1997; Scheufele, 1999; Tankard, 2001; Van Gorp, 2005), and most of them are inductive. Content analysis of media frames range from completely qualitative interpretive or hermeneutic-qualitative approaches to automated device-orientated methods, such as semantic network analyses (Scheufele & Scheufele, 2010).

Linguistic approaches involve the identification of a frame derived from dimensions such as syntax, script, theme, and rhetoric (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Conversely, there are some deductive approaches that theoretically derive frames from literature and code them in standard content analysis (De Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). For example, Semetko and Valkenburg use a deductive method, predefining certain frames as content analytic variables to verify the extent to which these frames occur in the news. They have investigated the presence of five news frames in press and television: conflict, human interest, economic consequences, morality, and attribution of responsibility. Semetko & Valkenburg's (2000) model is used in a lot of research on press and television, because they managed to compare the use of frames in the two types of media. Thus, a crucial limitation of using a deductive approach is the fact that frames are known beforehand. In this way, the researcher could miss newly emerging frames by concentrating on already established ones.

Matthes and Kohring (2008) tested an inductive method for frame analysis, starting with a specific operationalization of the four elements identified in

Entman's definition (1993): problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. Each of these elements is coded through basic quantitative content analytic techniques. In this way, frames emerge from the pattern of co-occurrences of frame elements in the media content. The use of their method was demonstrated by applying it to data on the coverage of biotechnology in *The New York Times*. In their opinion, "a frame consists of several frame elements, and each frame element consists of several content analytical variables" (Matthes & Kohring, 2008: 264). The main assumption is that different variables systematically group together in a specific way, thus forming a certain pattern (a frame). A crucial advantage of this method is that "frames are neither identified beforehand nor directly coded with a single variable" (Matthes & Kohring, 2008: 264). Furthermore, coders do not know which frames they are currently coding, which means that new emerging frames can be easily detected.

Following Matthes and Kohring's (2008) approach, this paper uses inductive reasoning to content analysis frames and function frames considering Entman's (1993) definition. Thus, cluster analysis is not used in order to determine occurrences. Therefore, after identifying the frames from a close reading of sample of texts, each frame is coded by using Entman's framing functions. In his perspective, a frame in the news can be examined and identified by the "presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments" (Entman, 1993: 52). Furthermore, frames have at least four locations in the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver and the culture. In Entman's opinion, frames diagnose, evaluate, and prescribe issues discussed in the media. He identifies four functions of frames:

"define problems which determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values; *diagnose causes* which identify the forces creating the problem; *make moral judgments* which evaluate causal agents and their effect; and *suggest remedies* which offer and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects" (1993: 52).

According to Entman's model, a single sentence may perform more than one of the four framing functions and a frame in any particular text may not necessarily include all four functions.

3.1. FRAMING MIGRATION

There are a lot of studies focusing on media frames on the issue of migration. Some of them employ quantitative research (Fryberg *et al.*, 2012, Van Gorp, 2005, Vliegthart & Roggeband, 2007) in order to determine frames, while others use qualitative research (Durham & Carpenter, 2014, Polson & Kahle, 2010) or a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis (Balabanova & Balch, 2010).

Other works on media framing of immigration insist on political aspects, considering the dominance of ‘conservative’ and ‘progressive’ frames (Lakoff & Ferguson, 2006).

The method of content analysis is usually applied in the area of quantitative approaches of frames. For example, Fryberg *et al.* (2012) examine how the media frame the issue of the anti-immigration bill in Arizona by content analyzing 337 articles from local and national newspapers. The main claim is that media frames play an important role in how social and political issues, such as immigration, are presented in the national debate, as well as how people respond to this issue. The results reveal that both the location and political ideology of the news media (Liberal vs Conservative) promote different framings of the anti-immigration debate: (1) national newspapers were more likely than Arizona newspapers to frame support for the bill in terms of threats, (2) conservative newspapers were more likely to frame support for the bill in terms of *economic threats* and *the need to protect jobs* (Fryberg *et al.*, 2012: 103–104).

Van Gorp (2005) too applies the method of content analysis to the news coverage of asylum-seekers, refugees and illegal immigration in eight Belgian newspapers, on a sample totalizing 1 489 articles. He also raises the question of how frames can be identified in the media. Van Gorp claims that frames are part of a culture and they can be localized quite independently of individuals. In fact, “journalists can construct a news report *deliberately* starting from a certain frame, but not incorporating the frame *itself* in the text” (2005: 487). This way, journalists are “applying the frames that are part of a *repertoire* of frames that we dispose in our culture to represent reality” (*ibidem*). Frames are not mere heuristic tools, and the connection between the frame and its cultural motive is made by the reader in his perception of the news text. Van Gorp’s study proves that content analysis can be used as a method to identify and test frames, but the intercoder reliability could never reach the level that is usually expected in a usual case of content analysis, because framing is complex and also involves qualitative elements.

Another way of doing a quantitative research on framing migration is by employing computer assisted content analyses, mostly used to establish the occurrence of different frames (Vliegthart & Roggeband, 2007). In this case, the frames are identified through a qualitative pre-study.

On the other hand, research based on qualitative methods in determining media frames are based on models developed by Gamson and Modigliani (1989), Gitlin (1980), Entman (2004), Pan & Kosicki (1993), Shaw *et al.* (2002) or, more recently, on Victor Turner’s (1981) social drama theory.

Polson and Kahle (2010) used a framework adapted from Van Dijk’s model of CDA and Pan and Kosicki’s framing model to see how immigrants were portrayed in a Special Report on the BBC Online. They noticed the presence of a ‘conflict’ frame, ‘resulting from journalists’ professional attempts to get multiple sides of the story. This can leave to misleading coverage of an issue, when there is

a majority consensus (2010: 266). In fact, the results show that the BBC online provides a “hierarchy of preferred immigrants” through the Born Abroad Database, using this “as a tool for constructing the future British race within the limits imposed by an unstoppable and unaccountable invasion of migrating ‘others’” (2010: 265). Therefore, the BBC Special Project’s aim of promoting multiculturalism are subverted by a racialized framing of immigration. Another frame is that of foundational ‘commonsense’, which encourages viewing the phenomenon of immigration through data such as national origin, spatial demography and economic performance. Polson and Kahle imply that the data suggest a link between economic performance and national origin, focusing on a particular group’s ‘performance’, rather than on socioeconomic structures (2010: 263). The study reveals racial constructions of immigration under the arguments about multiculturalism and transnationalism.

A more recent study (Durnham & Carpenter, 2014) uses Victor Turner’s social drama theory for a critical framing analysis of the media events around Jasmine Lee, the first non-Korean appointed to national office in the Republic of Korea. The analysis shows the hegemonic role played by Korean journalism in the reproduction of the process of multiculturalism (Dunham & Carpenter, 2014: 3). The phases of Turner’s social drama – “breach”, “crisis”, “redress”, and “reintegration or separation” were used to see how the Korean reporters, editors, columnists and on-line commentators from three newspapers framed the Lee case. In conclusion, the coverage of Jamine Lee’s subject-position as a foreign-born, immigrant wife of a Korean challenged the dominant Korean race ideology in a multiculturalism context.

Balabanova and Balch (2010) perform a mixed research in order to see the media coverage of intra-EU migration in two European countries: Bulgaria and the UK. The research employs content analysis on 12 newspapers from the two countries, during 2006. In terms of qualitative analysis, Balabanova and Balch use the concept of framing drawing on Gamson and Modigliani (1987) and Shaw *et al.* (2002) perspectives. The study insisted on the ethical frames, considering the issue of migration and the free movement of people to work in the EU. The results reflected “the dominant policy frame of ‘managed migration’”, because the majority of the articles justified “migration control on the basis of costs/benefits to the nation-state (the economy or the welfare state)” (Balabanova & Balch, 2010: 394). Moreover, the media generally frame intra-EU migration by using nationalist, communitarian arguments. An interesting fact is that the Bulgarian print media imported frames from the British press, that argued intra-EU migration should be restricted because of education/housing costs. In doing so, the roles of sending and receiving country were reversed in the debate about immigration.

Research in the area of migration studies raises the issue of *politics of belonging* (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Therefore, the question that emerges here is why should people feel more loyal to a nation than to other political and religious

collectivities. The concept of *politics of belonging* describes “not only construction of boundaries but also the inclusion or exclusion of particular people, social categories and groupings within these boundaries by those who have the power to do this” (Yuval-Davis, 2011: 17). Belonging is constructed in relation to particular collectivities, which are sometimes conditioned by spatial boundaries. Thus, the diasporic and transnational belongings can transcend the limits of physical geography, especially by using the Internet. Besides this, constructions of self and identity can be forced on people and the boundaries of the politics of belonging become the boundaries which “sometimes physically, but always symbolically, separate the world population into ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ (2011: 20).

An example of politics of belonging in the British context is linked to Conservative Enoch Powell, who tried to establish boundaries to British or English belonging in the post-Second World War era. For him, the principal criterion for belonging was descent. In the contemporary “age of migration” (Castles and Miller: 2003), people develop transnational identities by travelling between different locations. This is also the case with the Romanian people who migrated in the United Kingdom for different purposes, thus creating a debate in the British media.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a mixed research, combining frames analysis (Entman, 1993) with critical discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1993). Foremost, in order to establish the main themes and patterns present in the British press, I will perform a frame analysis of three of the most read British newspapers (*The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *Daily Mail*). A sample of 20% of the news items was taken to identify frames inductively, by using Entman’s (1993) four function frames: define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies. The method of content analysis was used to measure the variables (frames and function frames) and to determine their frequencies. The unit of analysis was the article. By performing a framing analysis, this article answers to the first research question, revealing how the British media frame the issue of Romanian migrants in Great Britain.

Second of all, the analysis uses CDA as theorized by Teun van Dijk (1993), who considers that the core of CDA is “a detailed description, explanation and critique of the ways dominant discourses (indirectly) influence socially shared knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, namely through their role in the manufacture of concrete models” (p. 258). Considering this approach, this article shows how media discourses generate a polarization between ‘Us’ (Britons) and ‘Them’ (Romanian migrants). The CDA analysis performed is based on a mixed design, combining elements from Wodak *et al.* (1999) and Van Dijk (1993), in order to determine what stereotypes about Romanian people are employed in the British press. Therefore, the elements of the analysis are: the presence of *constructive*

strategies (the linguistic procedures which constitute a national ‘we-group’ – in this case, Britons – and marginalizes the ‘other-group’ – Romanian migrants); the presence of *perpetuation and justification strategies* (Romanian immigrants are viewed as a threat to the national security); *the dominance of the power elites* (British press); and forms of *positive self-presentations* (British press) and *negative other-presentation* (Romanian migrants). By employing CDA, the second and third research questions are answered, regarding the stereotypes of Romanian people presented in the British press and also how these stereotypes impact the discursive construction of Romania’s nation brand.

The corpus contains a total of 271 news items from the British quality press (*The Guardian*, *The Independent*) and from the tabloids (*Daily Mail*), discussing the topic of Romanian migrants in UK, published in the period 1st of January 2013–31st March 2014. I selected this period because it is linked with the intensification of the migration theme in British press. Furthermore, at the beginning of 2013, the British Government has launched a negative campaign in order to discourage potential migrants from Romania and Bulgaria to come to Britain. I consulted the online editions of the British newspapers and I searched for key terms such as ‘Romanian migrants’, ‘anti-immigration discourses’, ‘Romanian people in Great Britain’ or ‘1st of January 2014’. After searching in the online editions, I found 1238 news items, that mentioned the topic of Romanian migrants in Great Britain, but only 271 articles were relevant for the analysis.

The news items were content analyzed (*The Guardian*; N=76), *The Independent*, N=65; and *Daily Mail*, N=130, and the unit of analysis was the article. Based on inductive reasoning, following Matthes and Kohring’s (2008) approach on identifying news frames, I identified the frames and function frames in a sample of 20% of the corpus. The frames coding was applied to the news items, evaluating with 1 the presence of a certain frame, and with 0 the absence of a frame.

5. RESULTS

The frames were identified from a close reading of a 20% sample of texts. Each frame was coded using Entman’s framing functions. The dependent variables employed in the content analysis were: define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies. There were differences between the frames found in the British quality press and the British tabloid press, therefore a separate analysis was needed to understand the journalists’ practices and roles in two different media formats.

The British press is divided into three sectors: ‘quality press’, ‘middle market’ press and ‘red top’ tabloids (McNair, 2009: 87). *The Guardian* and *The Independent* are classified into ‘quality press’, and the first one has a Berliner format, while the second one has a tabloid format. On the other hand, *Daily Mail* is

a ‘red top’ tabloid, with a large circulation in UK (1,780, 565 per month). In the category of ‘quality press’, *The Guardian* has an average circulation of 207,958 per month, while *The Independent* has a circulation of 66,567 per month (Audit Bureau of Circulations, UK, 2014)¹.

In what concerns the political affiliations of British newspapers, Patterson and Donsbach (1996) claim that “*The Guardian* and the *Daily Mirror* are among the few national newspapers on the political left, while the *Daily Telegraph*, *Times*, *Daily Mail*, *Sun*, *Daily Express*, *Star*, and *Today* are among the many of the right” (1996: 459). Therefore, *The Guardian* and *The Independent* are likely to be favorable to economic migration, whereas *Daily Mail* tends to be negative.

5.1. FRAMES EMPLOYED BY THE BRITISH TABLOID AND QUALITY PRESS

The results show that there are 7 media frames present in the press. In fact, the 18 coded variables were systematically grouped together, leading to 7 dominant frames. A frame is, in fact, the sum of frame elements (define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies). First of all, the economic frame insists on the migration costs and economic consequences of migration. The educational frame is based on the impact of Romanian students that study in the UK, considering the maintenance they receive from the state. Furthermore, the political frame is linked with the political voices present in the debate of Romanian migrants. The social benefits frame refers to the Romanian migrants abusing the social benefits system in Great Britain (NHS, housing, benefits for families, children etc.). The employment frame entails presenting stories of Romanians that work in the UK. The national security frame emphasizes the fact that Romanians are a threat to the security of the UK citizens, because of crimes, begging, and pickpocketing. Finally, the EU policy frame is based on the mentioning of freedom of movement in relation with migration.

Figure 1 shows the frames frequencies in the quality and tabloid press, comparatively. The quality press (*The Guardian*, *The Independent*) focuses more on the economic consequences of migration, discussing about threats and benefits of Romanian migrants coming to work in the UK. Conversely, the tabloid press (*Daily Mail*) uses the economic frame to discuss about Romanian migrants as a threat to the economy. As for the education frame, only 5 percent of the articles mentioned Romanian students that study in Britain. Thus, the educational frame is more present in the quality press.

The political frame is used by both quality and tabloid newspapers, mentioning political actors in order to shape the arguments about Romanian migration. The voices of the politicians are used by the journalists as chiefly expert or elite, recognized sources. In doing so, it construct groups – such as migrants –

¹ Audit Bureau of Circulations UK, <http://abcstandards.org.uk/>, accessed on 12 May 2014.

from a distance, without exploring their beliefs, identities and lives in host societies (Beciu, 2011: 166). In fact, the press may employ expert or elite knowledge to gain a false legitimacy through the use of fallacies. The most quoted official sources in the quality press were the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, the UK Immigration Minister, Mark Harper, The Labour Government, the Home Secretary, Theresa May, The Bulgarian President, Rosen Plevneliev, the Romanian Prime Minister, Victor Ponta, the Romanian Ambassador to the UK, Ion Jinga, UKIP, Nigel Farage, and the pressure group arguing for tighter immigration controls, Migration Watch. In what concerns the tabloid press, the most quoted official sources were the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, the UK Immigration Minister, Mark Harper, the Home Secretary, Theresa May, Tony Blair, the Labour Government, Torry MPs, the Romanian Prime Minister, Victor Ponta, the Romanian Ambassador to the UK, Ion Jinga, UKIP, Nigel Farage, the pressure group arguing for tighter immigration controls, Migration Watch, and Sir Andrew Green, of the Migration Watch. An interesting thing here is that *Daily Mail* employs the political frame more often (*Figure 1*). Quoting political actors may also function as an argument to sustain a certain position about migration.

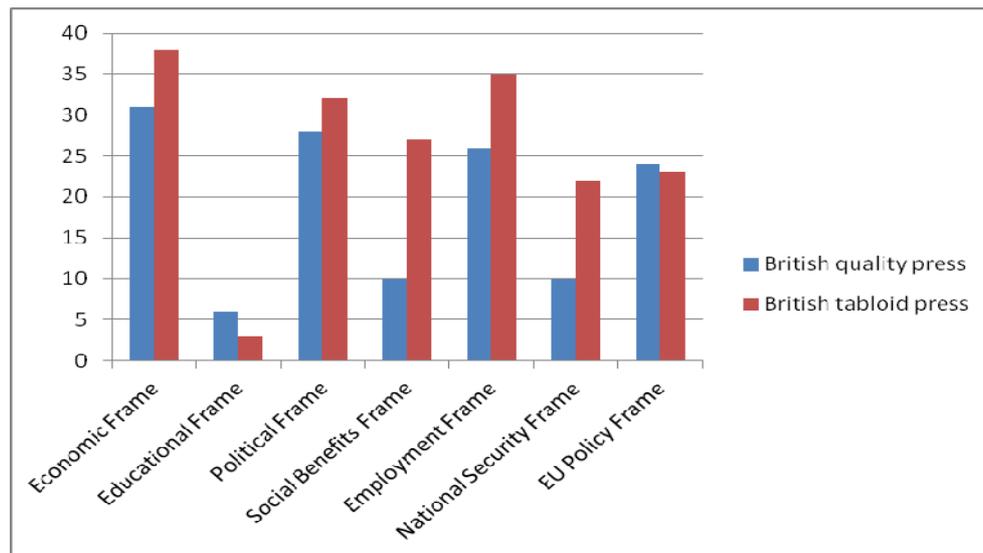


Figure 1 – Frames in the British press.

A great difference of coverage is to be seen when framing the social benefits of Romanian migrants in the UK. In fact, the social benefits frame is much more present in the tabloid press, in stories about Romanian people that abuse the benefit system when coming to Britain. As for the employment frame, it is used especially in the tabloids, presenting Romanians that work in the UK and threaten the jobs of British people. A significant difference in frame frequencies is found in the news

talking about national security issues. Therefore, the tabloid press reveals more frequently the crimes made by Romanian people, presenting them as a threat to the security of the citizens (The Romanian Roma around Marble Arch, a camp of Romanians living near Hendon Football Club, the rate of criminality in London, begging, and pickpocketing). Consequently, the tabloids are more interested in the human interest issues, while the quality press presents news from an expert position.

The EU policy frame is covered by both quality and tabloid press, mentioning the effects of the freedom of movement on the migration issue. Regarding this, the quality press employs this frame more frequently, discussing about the implications of the EU policies in terms of advantages and disadvantages for the UK.

5.2. STEREOTYPES OF ROMANIAN PEOPLE IN THE BRITISH PRESS

Stereotypes are often linked with the representations of certain groups in some specific contexts. In what concerns the national stereotypes, they can shape the way a nation is seen on the global stage. Walter Lippman (1922) has utilized the notion of “stereotype” in relation to the fact that people act based on mental representations, which are built on “abusive generalizations”. Furthermore, national stereotypes are the first step in developing the nation brand (Widler, 2007; Jansen, 2008). Considering these facts, every culture is to be defined through the opposition ‘Us’ – ‘Them’, so the collective identity of a nation is based on comparison with other states or on assimilation and differentiation processes. For example, the nation branding campaigns appeal to stereotypes in order to differentiate themselves on the competitive market. Continuing this idea, Billig (1996a: 189) argues that “the iconographic stereotype of ‘our’ national character was created in contrastive differentiation from the stereotype of ‘them’. In this sense, there is an implied argumentative dimension within the stereotype”. Furthermore, stereotype content is defined as to maximize perceived intragroup similarity and intergroup difference.

In this article, the stereotypes of Romanian people as portrayed in the British media are not always explicitly addressed. The journalist from the press constructs stereotypes about Romanian immigrants in their stories, as it is argued in the following sections.

In the quality press, Romanians and Bulgarians are often referred to as “EU migrants”, “A2 nationals” or “EU nationals”, the journalists thus raising the question of the number of people that are likely to come to Britain on 1 January 2014, when EU restrictions will be lifted. By framing Romanian people as “EU migrants”, the British journalists construct a stereotype, considering them as a threat to their country. They also mention the fear of invasion, comparing this phenomenon with the invasion of Poles in 2004. The number of Romanians and Bulgarians estimated to come to Britain reaches 35,000.

The economic migration is one of the main themes discussed in the quality press (“Bar on migrant workers ‘leads them to stay longer in UK and bring families’”, Daniel Boffey, 8 February 2013, *The Guardian*, “Government considers EU immigration cap of 75,000 a year”, Rajeev Sval, 15 December 2013, *The Guardian*). The British journalists argue that the government’s restrictions on Romanians working in the UK actually encourage migrants to stay and bring their families. On the other hand, they also present the benefits of migration: *In spite of a surge of anti-immigrant rhetoric from leading politicians, British people are happy to accept migrants from the East of Europe who learn English, get a job, pay taxes and become part of their local community.* (Daniel Boffey, 28 December 2013, *The Guardian*) Headlines such as “Fears unfounded: The public debate is becoming ever more xenophobic, but the reality is that foreign workers are good for Britain” (Editorial, 18 December 2013, *The Independent*), “Flood of Romanian and Bulgarian migrants ‘unlikely’, says report” (Nigel Morris, 5 April 2013, *The Independent*), “Ignore the xenophobic hysteria and welcome our EU neighbours. Britain is in the Orwellian middle of a Two-Minute Hate, but a Two-Year Hate” (Boyd Tonkin, 27 December 2013, *The Independent*), or “Mass immigration ‘unlikely’, as millions of Romanians and Bulgarians find work elsewhere” (Andy McSmith, 1 January 2014, *The Independent*) prove the quality press’s position in what concerns the immigration issue. Therefore, one can identify a pro-migration position, reinforced by the argument of a “xenophobic hysteria” present in the public debate.

On the other hand, in the tabloid press, Romanians and Bulgarians are also referred as “EU migrants” or “EU nationals”, mentioning large numbers of migrants from Romania and Bulgaria that will come in UK. The economic argument is that wages are up to five times higher than in their native countries (Romania and Bulgaria).

The tabloid press manages to create a “hysteria” regarding the number of people from Romania and Bulgaria heading to the UK. Headline and leads such as “120,000 Romanians and Bulgarians have already moved to Britain: Census shows in some parts of the country one in ten are Eastern European” (Steve Doughty, 26 March, *Daily Mail*), “A Romanian beggar and her child at one of London’s Marble Arch. Hundreds of thousands are expected to arrive, in a wave similar to the one that followed Poland’s accession in 2004” (James Slack, 18 February 2013, *Daily Mail*), “Britain faces fruit shortage next year as Romanians and Bulgarians are set to flood in to cities and desert countryside” (Steve Doughty, 15 February 2013, *Daily Mail*), “It is estimated that more than 700,000 people from Romania could try to find work and settle in Britain” (Steve Doughty, 11 June 2013, *Daily Mail*), “Sold out! Flights and buses full as Romanians and Bulgarians head for the UK” (Arthur Marin, John Stevens, 31 December 2013, *Daily Mail*) prove the anti-immigration position of the *Daily Mail* tabloid.

The British journalists often identify themselves with the British nationals, using the plural form of the first person pronoun *our*:

Immigration from Bulgaria and Romania from January seems unlikely to be on the same scale as from Poland and elsewhere in 2004 as many Bulgarians and Romanians will choose to settle in Germany or Italy – but frankly no one knows how many will come. Our population is already raising faster than in any other country in Europe, with one-third of this the result of immigration. The pressures on infrastructure and employment can no longer be ignored. (Sarah Wollaston, 25 November 2013, The Guardian).

As an alternative to the politics of deception and displacement activity, we might accept that our membership of the EU brings far more benefits than costs, but understand that in the absence of dependable labour standards, housing and other essentials, it could well fall into disrepute. (John Harris, 23 December 2013, The Guardian).

In the first example, one can notice forms of *positive self-presentation* of British people and *negative-other presentation* of Romanians and Bulgarians. The implicit assumption is that Romanian and Bulgarian migrants put pressure on the British infrastructure and employment. Furthermore, the journalist is posed in a high-power position, suggesting the *dominance of the power elites* (Van Dijk, 1993). *Constructive strategies* are also present, because of the use of the personal pronoun ‘our’, which implies the British national group and marginalizes the ‘other group’ – Romanian migrants. In the second example the pronoun ‘our’ suggests the fact that the British journalist appeals to national identity symbols to encourage citizens to be part of the public debate. The issue presented is related to the EU membership, suggesting an ideological discourse, based on the implicit assumption that immigration has an effect towards the bottom of the labour market. Hence, forms of *positive self-presentation* of Great Britain are present, along with *forms of negative-other presentation* of the EU migration. In Van Dijk’s perspective, “ideological discourse is generally organized by a general strategy of positive self-presentation (boasting) and negative other-presentation (derogation)” (2006: 126).

Another aspect worth mentioning is the way in which stories of Romanian people living in Great Britain are presented in the British quality press:

I am a Romanian living in the UK and I must say that until now I didn't really care much about my nationality. I never did because I find it really difficult to label myself as being of a certain nationality. As far as I was always concerned I am not really Romanian or European or really any nationality because to me that just doesn't matter. It just happened that some decades ago I was born in a place on earth that people call Romania, that carries a certain history and has certain problems but also offers certain benefits. I didn't choose it and maybe if someone gave me the choice I would have very much liked to be born in a country where everyone seems to suffer of post-colonial pride, in a nice middle-class family in London or anywhere in Britain, in an old Victorian house with a nice garden. (The Guardian, 3 January 2014).

I feel that both Romanians and Bulgarians have this “underdog” status attached to them to say the least; we got used to being told that we aren’t that great. Why? I guess we had a rough political background and now we’re still struggling to readjust and align ourselves to “Western” standards. I am not saying we’re ages away, but we’re not there yet. (The Guardian, 3 January 2014).

The first example mentions a Romanian which considers that nationality is not very important: “As far as I was always concerned I am not really Romanian or European or really any nationality because to me that just doesn’t matter”. One can notice the presence of *perpetuation and justification strategies*, because the argument implied is that being part of a certain nationality (in this case Romanian) may be harmful. Even if the source uses the personal pronoun ‘I’, it does not imply a national identity discourse. Paradoxically, the person identifies itself more with British people than with Romanian people. The second example, on the other hand, is built on *constructive strategies*, using the personal pronoun ‘we’ as a linguistic procedure to constitute the Romanians national group. One can identify forms of *positive other-presentation* of Great Britain, because the source argues Romanians should align to “Western” standards, seeing it as a positive model to be considered for the country development.

In the tabloids, Romanians are portrayed as being fraudsters, criminals, beggars, pickpockets, and poor. For example, one headline from *Daily Mail* stated: “Romanian arrested at seven times rate of Britons: 800 held in London last month” (Chris Greenwood, 13 December 2013). In the article, the British journalist also mentioned numbers to strengthen the arguments, such as “for every 1,000 Romanians in London 183 are arrested”. The strategy of discourse is based on differentiation, because the journalist from *Daily Mail* compares the delinquency rate of Britons with the number of Romanian people arrested in London. The argument is not very well constructed, as we can identify the fallacy of a false analogy between the two nations. The British journalist also quotes an official source in order to give fallacious legitimacy to the argument: “Police say that for every 1,000 Romanians in London, 183 are arrested. This compared to 26 Britons per 1,000.” One can also identify here the *dominance of the power elites*, in this case constituted by the British tabloid press.

The journalist uses *constructive strategies* when he talks about a “we-group”, appealing to the national solidarity and union of British citizens: *the last thing we want is another surge of migrants; we would like to protect our own borders but are unable to do so* (Stephen Glover, 16 January 2013, *Daily Mail*). Here, the journalist has also a civic role, he involves the citizens to act and protect their country. The *strategies of positive self-presentation* (British people) and *negative other-presentation* (Romanian and Bulgaria migrants) generate a polarization between the two entities. The argument implied is that Romanians and Bulgarians

are a threat to the UK borders, which involves the presence of *perpetuation and justification strategies*.

Another question addressed in this article is whether stereotypes of Romanian people employed in the British media shape the discursive construction of Romania's nation brand. Foremost, stereotypes are linked to the nation brand, because they define mental representations of other nations. Thus, considering that nation branding is a public issue discussed in the media, the international perception of the country image gains a special attention. Romanian journalists started debating about the nation brand soon after the country started to promote its image in order to attract potential investors, diplomats or tourists. Besides this, the journalists insisted on the ways in which Romania is described in the international press.

The theme of Romanians migrating in other countries is a public issue discussed in the media. This discussion is related to the way in which the actions of the migrants influence the country image – a key element of the “symbolic capital” of the nation (Beciu, 2012a, my translation). Hence, in a post-communist country, the construction of the nation brand (nation branding) is not just a concept, it is also a type of public issue: “Nation branding passes from the area of institutional and expertise discourses into the area of the public sphere, and generally, in the public discourses, including the quotidian life” (Beciu, 2013: 43). Therefore, the theme of Romanian people migrating to the UK has launched an intense debate in the media about migration in relation with the national image building problem.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The public sphere is now constituted around networks of communication. With the fragmentation of mass media channels and audiences, various media such as digitized press and television become interactively connected. This raises the questions of how media mobilizes the citizens to be part of the public debate and how do media present a certain issue in order to reach its commercial objective.

To see how the British media frames the theme of Romanian immigration, this article presents a frames analysis of the British press. The results show that the quality press (*The Guardian*, *The Independent*) focuses more on the economic consequences of migration, discussing about threats and benefits of Romanian migrants coming to work in the UK, while the tabloids (*Daily Mail*) are more interested in emphasizing human interest issues, such as poverty, rough sleeping, crimes, and begging.

The frames used by the British journalists in the coverage of Romanian immigration may redefine the public sphere, by introducing private issues in public contexts. When portraying Victor Spirescu, one of the first Romanian migrants coming to Britain at the beginning of 2014, the tabloids present his personal life as a threat to the British citizens, mentioning that he is a drug user and he beat his former girlfriend. This way, the private interferes with the public issue of Romanian

migrants, creating a hysteria around this subject. The question that emerges here is whether journalists reconfigure the public sphere when framing a public interest subject. This may be an interesting starting point for future studies.

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