

# Migration narratives in media and social media

## The case of the United Kingdom

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## Abstract

Migration regularly features front and centre in the British media, and the media landscape plays a critical role in framing discourse on immigration. This report analyses the emergence and dissemination of narratives on migration in the British media. It focuses on the coverage of three events: the Calais 'migrant crisis' in the summer of 2015; the 'Windrush scandal' in 2018; and the jihadist suicide bombing at Manchester Arena in 2017. Applying a mixed methods approach, this report examines narratives in the British press, on television and Twitter. This data is supplemented by interviews with journalists who reported on the events. The empirical analysis demonstrates the centrality of political actors and commentators in driving narratives on migration in the public domain via the media. It also suggests that dominant narratives corresponded with established public and political discourses on immigration in the United Kingdom.

**Keywords:** migration, narratives, media, social media, United Kingdom, Calais, Windrush scandal, Manchester Arena, terrorist attack

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## Acronyms

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
Brexit	Britain's exit from the European Union
COBRA	Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms meeting
CUKC	Citizens of the UK and Colonies
EU	European Union
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham
ITV	Independent Television
RT	Retweet
UASC	Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
US	United States of America

# 1. Introduction

The United Kingdom (UK) has been considered a country of immigration for over four decades, owing to its historical ties and labour market needs. An estimated 14% of the population of the UK, or 9.5 million UK residents, are non-UK born or non-British nationals (ONS 2020). This figure reflects an increase in immigration to the UK over the past two decades, mirroring a wider trend in the European Union (EU). Although immigration to the UK is not a new phenomenon, it is highly politicised and central in public debate. According to opinion polling, immigration frequently tops the list of issues of most concern to the British public (see the monthly [Ipsos Mori Issues Index](#)). Whilst its prominence in public discourse may wax and wane in response to current affairs and political debate, immigration rarely disappears from the public domain altogether.

Exogenous and endogenous events in recent years have contributed to renewed interest and increased salience of migration issues in the UK over the past decade. As various scholars have convincingly argued, immigration was central to the debate on the UK's membership of the EU (Brexit)<sup>1</sup>. The Remain and the Leave campaigns politicised EU free movement and EU nationals resident in the UK, specifically their access to benefits and the welfare state. Immigration also became highly salient within the context of the European migration 'crisis' in 2015/16, especially concerning the onward migration across the English Channel of displaced people living in camps in and around Calais in France.

Other events that have instigated renewed focus on immigration include the so-called 'Windrush scandal', which highlighted the unintended consequences of the 'hostile environment' immigration policies when long-term British residents who had come to the UK from former British colonies as children were labelled 'illegal immigrants' by the Home Office. The scandal came hot on the heels of the Grenfell Tower fire, which sparked debate on migrant rights and social stratification since many of the inhabitants of the building were identified as having a migrant background. The case of Shamima Begum, a British national stripped of her citizenship after she travelled to Syria to become an ISIS bride, sparked debate over rights to citizenship, nationality, and the role of gender and identity.

These events represent a handful of examples among many that illustrate the centrality of migration issues in public and political debate in the UK. Migration issues are regularly featured front and centre in the British press, and the media landscape plays a critical role in framing discourse on immigration. In this report, I examine why some migration narratives in the British media became more dominant than others and what made them successful. In order to achieve this, I focus on news coverage of three 'events': the Calais migrant 'crisis' in 2015, the 'Windrush scandal' in 2018 and the Manchester Arena terrorist attack in 2017.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Dennison and Geddes (2018); Favell and Barbulescu (2018); Gietel-Basten (2016); Goodman and Narang (2019); and Taggart and Szczerbiak (2018).

## 1.1 Research questions and design

In coordination with the other BRIDGES partners, this country case study report aims to explore the following questions:

- Who are the voices that gain access to the public arena and which structural positions and strategies allow them to shape prevailing narratives?
- Where do narratives emerge and what is their path across different social actors, media, and platforms?
- What are the features behind the relative success of competing narratives, whether in the realm of news-making routines, commercial considerations, political opportunities, or story qualities?
- When, that is in which contexts and under which circumstances do certain narratives obtain a competitive edge?

For the UK case, three ‘events’ were selected for analysis that correspond with the sub-genres: ‘arrivals and migration crises’, ‘debates on migrants’ rights’, and ‘supremacist or jihadist terror attacks’. Firstly, the so-called Calais migrant ‘crisis’ in the summer of 2015 was selected in relation to sub-genre number one. The focus is on a period of peak media coverage of migrants’ attempts to access the Eurotunnel in France to reach the UK. For the sub-genre on debates surrounding migrants’ rights and citizenship, the so-called ‘Windrush scandal’ was chosen, focusing on the political culmination of the debacle that resulted in the resignation of Home Secretary Amber Rudd in April 2018. Finally, for sub-genre number three on terror attacks, we selected the Islamist extremist suicide bombing at Manchester Arena following a concert by American singer Ariana Grande on 22 May 2017.

In each case study, I gathered and analysed all the pertinent news stories published during the peak period of coverage by three major newspapers and two prime-time television newscasts. News sources were selected to encompass a range of political leanings while still taking circulation figures into account<sup>2</sup>. The following news outlets were selected:

- *Daily Mail/The Mail on Sunday*. The *Daily Mail* is a daily tabloid newspaper founded in 1896. It is considered the highest-circulated daily newspaper in the UK. Its editorial stance is right-wing, and the paper is traditionally a supporter of the Conservative Party. Its sister paper, *The Mail on Sunday*, was founded in 1982. Both papers are known for adopting an anti-immigration stance.
- *The Guardian* is a British daily newspaper that was founded in 1821. It is considered left leaning or progressive and has reported extensively on immigration issues. For instance, it broke the ‘Windrush scandal’ in the autumn of 2017.
- *The Times/ The Sunday Times*. *The Times* is a daily broadsheet founded in 1785 and owned by Rupert Murdoch. Whilst the paper has endorsed the Conservative party in recent years, it supported the Labour party prior to 2010. Given its historical tendency

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<sup>2</sup> The decision was taken not to include local newspapers given their very low circulation figures. Moreover, an initial examination of the cases revealed that newsworthy local/regional stories, such as the impact of the crisis on businesses in Kent or the impact of the Manchester bombing on the local community, were also reported in the national newspapers.

to change political alignment (see Stoddard [2010]), it is generally considered a mainstream/centre-orientated newspaper.

- The *British Broadcasting Corporation* (BBC) has been broadcasting news and current affairs since 1922. It is authorised by royal charter but operates independently from the government.
- *Independent Television (ITV) news* has been producing news for *ITV* since 1955. It is a private broadcaster and the second most popular television news producer after *BBC news*.

Articles were selected based on extensive keyword searches in Nexis. Copies of the original print editions of *Daily Mail/The Mail on Sunday* and *The Times/The Sunday Times* articles were sourced via *The Times Digital Archive* and *Daily Mail Pressreader* to enable an analysis of the layout of articles and accompanying images. In contrast, articles in *The Guardian* were retrieved from *The Guardian* online. This was due to limited access to the print editions of *The Guardian* for the time frame under analysis, which is not accessible in electronic format and, to the best of my knowledge, is only held in hard copy at the British National Library in London<sup>3</sup>. *The Guardian's* Twitter account (@guardian) provided the data on whether the events analysed were featured on the newspaper's front page. Television news clips were identified using a similar keyword search to the articles on the television news websites and cross-referenced with their corresponding YouTube channels.

In addition to traditional news outlets, social media was also analysed via *Twitter*. The 100 tweets with the highest user engagement during the same time frame were examined. User engagement was measured by the frequency of retweets. Tweets were retrieved using keywords and relevant hashtags, which were identified through extensive manual searches utilising the advanced search engine on Twitter (Eriksson Krutrök and Lindgren 2018). A caveat of this approach to the sample selection is that British national newspapers do not generally utilise hashtags in their Twitter content. However, it was determined that this challenge was not insurmountable since the newspapers uniformly tweeted the titles and links to the articles already selected for analysis without additional commentary or analysis. Therefore, this data was already being captured. Moreover, these tweets did not feature among the most retweeted content on Twitter. In addition to the in-depth analysis of the most retweeted messages, we also performed a quantitative analysis using indicators of high user engagement over a longer period of time.

The methodology applied to both traditional and social media was content analysis. With the aid of two code books, data was captured on the journalists, news genre and format, dominant narratives, frames, key characters and voices, labels, processes, visual devices (photos, footage etc.) and emotions. This data facilitated a quantitative analysis of dominant narratives and a qualitative analysis of the emergence and dissemination of these narratives across media outlets and platforms over time. Finally, for each case study, this data was supplemented with a small number of semi-structured exploratory interviews with journalists involved in reporting on the events. Interviews proved incredibly difficult to secure and the final

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<sup>3</sup> Given that *The Guardian's* online articles largely reflect its print editions, which is not necessarily the case with other newspapers, it was decided that multiple trips from Edinburgh to London would not be a justifiable use of time and resources.

interviews conducted were almost entirely reliant on snowball sampling. For a list of the interviewees, see Appendix 1.

The subsequent report is organised into three main sections, each dedicated to a different UK case study. For each case study, I conduct an analysis of the media production of narratives before returning to our research questions with the help of supplementary information gathered during the interviews with journalists. The final section draws on the empirical analysis, discusses the commonalities and differences between the coverage of the events and news outlets and reflects on insights gained on the diffusion of migration narratives in the British media landscape.

## 2. Case Studies

### 2.1 Calais migrant ‘crisis’

In the summer of 2015, inhabitants of the migrant camps around Calais, France, made thousands of attempts to access the Channel Tunnel terminal at Coquelles to board trains and vehicles to the UK. In June 2015, the situation was exacerbated by strikes by French port workers, which disrupted ferry and Eurotunnel services, resulting in queues of hundreds of lorries in Calais and Kent. This generated new opportunities for people to make increasingly bold attempts to board vehicles headed to the UK. The situation came to a head on the night of 27-28 July 2015, when according to the Eurotunnel travel company, around 2,100 attempts to access the Channel Tunnel were intercepted in a single night (O’Neill and Ford 2015; Travis 2015a).

This was followed on 28-29 July 2015 by an estimated 3000 migrants making 1500 attempts to access the Eurotunnel during the night, marking a new record according to French authorities and resulting in the death of a Sudanese man (Travis 2015a). He became the ninth person to die trying to access the Channel Tunnel since June 2015. The tunnel was temporarily closed as a result and British Prime Minister David Cameron called for a Cabinet Office Briefing Room meeting (COBRA) to address the crisis, which took place on 31 July 2015 (Halliday 2015).

In the days that followed, British media coverage was dominated by stories outlining the causes of the Calais migrant ‘crisis’<sup>4</sup> on the British-French border, detailing the consequences and impact of events as they unfolded, and allocating blame and responsibility for the situation to a variety of domestic and international actors. By 20 August 2015, Home Secretary Theresa May and French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve signed a joint ministerial declaration on cooperation and security in Calais and the area (Ministère de l’Intérieur and Home Office 2015). The agreement set out measures to ensure effective security at the Eurotunnel terminal,

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<sup>4</sup> The term ‘crisis’ is referred to in quotation marks to denote the constructed nature of the crisis. As will be briefly discussed, some actors framed the events in Calais as a humanitarian crisis whilst others as a security threat. Moreover, within the context of the wider European migrant crisis, the relative numbers of migrants trying to reach the UK was low, suggesting that the situation could be interpreted as a political or policy crisis as opposed to one of numbers (see, for instance, Trilling 2015).

the port of Calais, and in Paris, stipulating cooperation between French and British law enforcement and border forces and the continued commitment to joint funding for security and policing infrastructure, including fencing, floodlights, CCTV, and infra-red detection technology.

The situation in Calais has been ongoing since the late 1990s following the establishment of the Sangatte migrant camp set up by the French Red Cross in Pas-de-Calais. The influx of migrants at this time resulted in the re-establishment of juxtaposed border controls in France and the UK under the Le Touquet Treaty (UKTS 2003). Following the dismantlement of Sangatte, the 'Jungle' migrant camp (known officially as Camp de la Lande) near Calais emerged, with an estimated 5000-7000 inhabitants, as well as smaller camps that sprung up along the French coast, such as the Grande-Synthe migrant camp at Dunkerque. These camps are perceived as the main source of unauthorised attempts to enter the UK (Home Affairs Committee 2016). Whilst the 'Jungle' was dismantled in October 2016, it has since been replaced with a 'new jungle' as displaced people seeking shelter have built a new shanty town in the area.

The ongoing situation in Calais and attempts by migrants to reach the UK via the Eurotunnel have received waves of media coverage and public and political attention as camps have grown or been dismantled, in correlation with patterns of movement, and developments in bilateral relations between France and the UK. The 'episode' of increased migratory pressure in July/August 2015 represented a peak in coverage on Calais and the most tangible manifestation of the European 'migration crisis' for the UK, given its geographical proximity on the UK-French border, the impact on transport and businesses in southern England, especially Kent, and the increased salience of immigration issues due to extensive media coverage of developments at the time.

*a) Main, collateral, and counter-narratives in traditional and social media*

**TABLE 1. Coverage of the Calais migrant crisis by news outlet, 28 July – 10 August 2015, absolute values**

News outlet	News items	Front page	Airtime (seconds)
Daily Mail/The Mail on Sunday	24	7	
The Guardian	26	3	
The Times/ The Sunday Times	14	4	
BBC news clips	8	n/a	1392
ITV news clips	1	n/a	195
Total	73	14	1587

For this case study, I selected all the pertinent newspaper articles and television news clips focused on the events as they unfolded in the period of maximum media coverage, between 28 July and 10 August 2015. These dates were selected in collaboration with the French team, who deployed a similar analysis of French media coverage on the attempts to breach the Eurotunnel site over the same period. The keyword searches conducted to identify articles in

the three chosen newspapers were as follows: ‘Calais’ AND ‘crisis’ AND (‘migrant’ OR ‘immigrant’ OR ‘refugee’). Television news clips were identified using a similar keyword search on the news outlets’ websites and their corresponding YouTube channels.

During the two-week time frame, the five news outlets produced an average of 3.7 reports per day, with on average a front-page newspaper story every day (see Table 1.). The *BBC* and *ITV news* clips included a combination of edited footage with a narrating voice-over and live reporting from Calais, suggesting that the developments were considered high-profile news that warranted a journalist and camera crew filming on site in France.

### **Dominant narratives in traditional media (press and television)**

The empirical analysis revealed several dominant narratives in news outlets that can be grouped into three general categories, as outlined in Table 2. Firstly, I identified narratives that address the impact or consequences of the crisis in Calais, predominantly with reference to the local and national levels. Secondly, narratives were identified that allocate responsibility or place ‘blame’ for the situation on various domestic and international actors. The third category constitutes narratives that address the root causes of the ‘crisis’ in Calais, largely reflecting new and/or established discourses on ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors that drive migrant flows to the UK.

**TABLE 2. Dominant narratives on the Calais migrant crisis, 28 July – 10 August 2015**

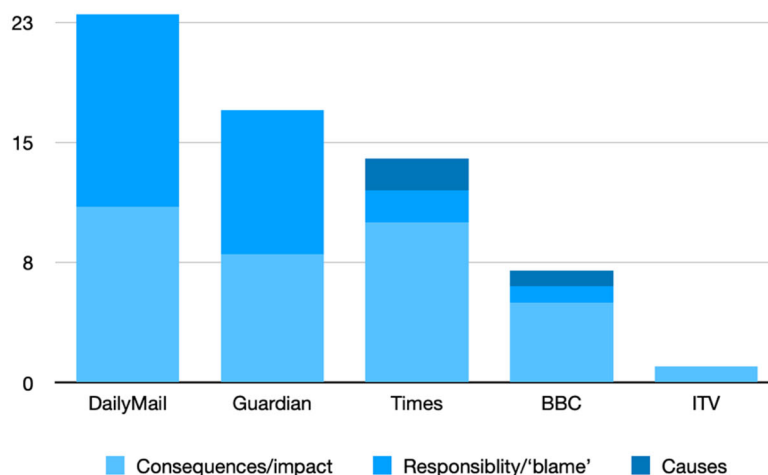
<b>Consequences/impact</b>	Invasion
	British economy & infrastructure
	British holidaymakers
	Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
<b>Responsibility (‘blame’)</b>	United Kingdom
	France
	Eurotunnel
	Migrants
<b>Causes (‘push’/‘pull’ factors)</b>	British labour market (‘Land of milk and honey’)
	Liberal asylum policies (‘safe haven’, ‘soft touch’)
	Britain’s shadow economy
	EU policy (Schengen)

The following sections explore this typology in greater detail before investigating the temporal distribution of the dominant narratives. It should be noted that the subsequent analysis does not constitute support or legitimisation of these narratives but reflects the most frequently occurring migration narratives in the British media coverage on Calais.

## Consequences/Impact

The most frequently occurring migration narratives in traditional media during the two-week time frame fall in the 'consequences/impact' category. As illustrated in Figure 1., 59% of the core narratives in articles and television news clips across all five news outlets fell within this first classification. A core narrative is understood as the central story in news coverage, in contrast to a secondary or supplementary narrative that may be associated with the topic but is not the principal focus of the story.

**FIGURE 1. Core narratives on the Calais migrant crisis by news outlet, 28 July – 10 August 2015, absolute values**



The most prominent narrative within the consequences/impact category was the '**invasion**' narrative. Indeed, 55% of narratives in this category could be interpreted as the 'invasion' narrative. Moreover, 33% of the total number of core narratives across all articles and television clips were narratives on 'invasion'. This reflects existing research on the predominance of the 'invasion' narrative on immigration in the UK. It can be traced back to the 1960s and Enoch Powell's infamous 'Rivers of Blood' speech on race relations and the impact of Commonwealth immigration in 1968 (see Comte [2021]).

Within the context of the Calais migrant 'crisis', the 'invasion' narrative applied to the perceived security threat of immigrants trying to enter the country irregularly<sup>5</sup>. The narrative took two distinct forms. The first depicted chaos at the British/French border due to the large number of migrants attempting to access the Eurotunnel site in Coquelles, France. Migrants are portrayed as 'wreaking havoc' thereby threatening border security, immigration control, and stability and order in the area (i.e., according to the *Daily Mail* migrants 'lay siege' to the site and engaged in a 'systematic invasion'). The second narrative describes migrants themselves as posing a security threat to the UK. This narrative casts those trying to reach the UK as potential terrorists

<sup>5</sup> 'Irregular' in this context refers to the '[m]ovement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination' (IOM n.d.).

or criminals, linked to criminal trafficking/smuggling rings (see, for instance, Nicol and Powell [2015]).

The central character of the 'invasion' narrative is migrants, who are cast as the 'villains' of the story; they represent a threat at the border and to national security and are described as criminals and/or ascribed criminal behaviour. For instance, the most common modifier of 'immigrants' in articles focusing on the 'invasion' narrative was 'illegal' and the (il)legality of migrants' actions was foregrounded (e.g. 'trespassers', 'intruders', 'sneaking into England'). Despite being the protagonists of the story, migrants are rarely given a voice in this narrative, referred to instead as a defuse and often indistinguishable group or collective (e.g., 'big hoards', 'organised mob', 'thousands of migrants', 'gangs', 'foreign interlopers').

The main setting of this narrative is the physical border between France and the UK, which under Le Touquet Treaty (UKTS 2003) lies in France, specifically the Eurotunnel railhead site in Coquelles, near Calais. The solution to increased migratory pressures at the border according to the 'invasion' narrative is tighter border controls and security measures, including more law enforcement and border forces, and funding for security and policing infrastructure, including fencing, floodlights, CCTV, and infra-red detection technology.

The 'invasion' narrative was identified in all news outlets. However, it was particularly dominant in the *Daily Mail* coverage during the height of the crisis, reflecting the paper's anti-immigration stance. Despite the normative aspect and security frame of this narrative (the UK was not actually experiencing a 'migration crisis'), it was evident in straight reporting on events in Calais. Nevertheless, a counter-narrative was also identifiable in analyses and opinion pieces in *The Guardian* and *The Times* in particular.

The counter-narrative embodied a critique of media coverage of Calais. For instance, an article by *The Guardian*'s Home Affairs correspondent, titled 'The only 'migrant madness' is the tabloid pretence about events in Calais', claimed that it was 'time to end the lie that a few hundred migrants trying to enter the UK via the Channel tunnel amount to a mass invasion' (Travis 2015b). Three analysis pieces specifically identified 'damaging rhetoric' and coverage in the *Daily Mail* as problematic and perpetuating the 'invasion' narrative through the use of misleading and dehumanising language. However, it should be noted that coverage of this kind was limited.

Other narratives in the consequences/impact category included those that addressed the impact of the Calais 'migrant crisis' on the British **economy**, shifting the setting to the UK. The focus was predominantly on the damage to the economy and British supply chains due to the disruption to Britain's cross-Channel haulage industry. Articles highlighted the eight-hour queues on the M20 motorway in Kent because of Operation Stack<sup>6</sup> and the impact on the perishable goods sector, such as the Scottish seafood industry. According to a *Daily Mail*

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<sup>6</sup> Operation Stack refers to measures implemented by the Kent Police and the Port of Dover to manage traffic flows on road network by parking (or 'stacking') lorries on the M20 motorway in Kent in the event of severe disruption to services across the English Channel, such as those through the Channel Tunnel or from the Port of Dover, due to bad weather, industrial action, or derailments in the tunnel.

article, the queues were costing businesses £250 million a day in lost trade (Slack and Martin 2015).

The impact on local businesses in Kent was also emphasised in interviews with local business owners and Kent County councillors. According to an article in *The Times*, Operation Stack had cost Kent £1 million by the end of July 2015 (Ford and Haynes 2015). The impact on British tourists trying to reach the continent and tourism in Kent was also problematised, with senior politicians, including Prime Minister David Cameron, apologising to British **holidaymakers** (Taylor, Wintour, and Elgot 2015). Finally, the increase in the number of **unaccompanied asylum-seeking children** (UASC) arriving in Kent, three times the previous year, was leaving local social services unable to cope according to a reoccurring narrative. The solution to the situation in Kent included calls for the British army to get involved, either to regain control of the situation in Calais (Ford 2015), or in relation to the Ministry of Defence's decision to turn barracks in Kent into temporary lorry parks to relieve travel chaos (Ford and Haynes 2015).

The setting of these narratives was Dover, the M20 motorway through Kent, and Kent County Council. Moreover, the central characters and voices are overwhelmingly British nationals or British residents ('lorry drivers', 'business owners', 'councillors', 'British holidaymakers', 'Chief Executive of the Road Haulage Association' etc.). These narratives were identifiable in straight reporting on events across all media outlets. However, they were predominantly secondary or continuing narratives and rarely the core narrative of a news story.

### Responsibility ('blame')

The second category of core narratives relates to the allocation of 'blame' or responsibility for the Calais 'migrant crisis' (39% of the total core narratives identified). These narratives assigned 'blame' and/or responsibility to four actors in particular: the British Government (or members thereof, e.g., Prime Minister David Cameron), the French Government and French authorities (e.g. police, border guards, Gendarmes), the Eurotunnel, and migrants.

The first and most prominent narrative in this category allocated 'blame' and responsibility for the situation to the **British Government** and, correspondingly, Prime Minister David Cameron. It suggested that the British Government had lost control of the UK border under the juxtaposed border controls. It was argued that more funding for fencing and sniffer dogs was insufficient to resolve the crisis and only a 'sticking plaster' policy response (Slack and Martin 2015). Moreover, more leadership was needed to hold the French Government to account. According to these articles, criticism that the government was not doing enough to address the problem came in particular from the Eurotunnel operator and the British haulage industry.

Another dominant narrative at the height of the 'crisis' was that **'the French'** had lost control of the situation in Calais. British commentators and politicians accused the French government of shirking its responsibilities and failing to properly police the site at Coquelles. It was argued that since the situation was unfolding on French soil, the French government should maintain law and order, process asylum claims and deport migrants without a 'genuine' claim to protection (McKinstry 2015; Travis 2015a).

Conservative backbenchers were reported as blaming the French government for their 'inadequate response' and 'ushering the migrants towards the UK' (Slack, Martin, and Peev

2015). By helping establish a camp at Calais, French authorities had created a 'departure lounge' for migrants trying to reach the UK (McKinstry 2015). Acting Labour leader Harriet Harman is quoted stating that 'France should pay compensation to British holidaymakers and haulage companies for the disruption caused by the 'migrant crisis' and wildcat strikes' (Elgot 2015). Meanwhile, *The Guardian* quoted Chair of Home Affairs Select Committee, Keith Vaz, calling on French authorities to deport migrants found to have arrived illegally in Calais, 'rather than do what they have done which is to release them back into the countryside' (Halliday 2015b).

The third narrative in this category argues that whilst **Eurotunnel** blamed the French authorities and both governments for not doing more to prevent the incursion of people trying to access the tunnel, it was in fact the operator that was not responding quickly enough with increased security measures. The French Interior Minister, Bernard Cazeneuve, was reported stating that the Channel Tunnel operator was not doing enough (Martin 2015) and called on Eurotunnel to address security issues (Ford 2015). Theresa May reportedly also put strong political pressure on the Eurotunnel to accelerate its installation of £7 million 'UK-funded' security fencing (Travis 2015a).

Finally, the prevalence of the security framing, such as in the case of the 'invasion' narrative, implicitly suggests that migrants were to 'blame' for the situation. This narrative suggests that the people amassed in Calais were not 'genuine refugees' fleeing persecution but economic **migrants** seeking a better life (McKinstry 2015). For instance, Cameron's remark that a 'swarm of people coming across the Mediterranean...[were] seeking a better life wanting to come to Britain' (ITV News 2015) received extensive coverage. This reflects a prevailing migration narrative in the UK on the 'deserving' and 'underserving' migrant, dependent upon the route through which they have entered the country or applied for international protection.

The setting of these narratives includes the Calais site as well as the policy domain since they frequently referred to what political elites in the UK and France *should do/should have done* in response to the crisis. As stated, the central characters of these narratives include members of the British and French governments, especially David Cameron and Home Secretary Theresa May. The proposed solution to the situation included the British government holding the French government to account, calls for Cameron and May to return from their holidays, and calls for members of the British government to visit Calais to witness the situation first-hand.

Narratives on 'blame' and responsibility appeared overwhelmingly in the *Daily Mail* and *The Guardian*. *The Guardian* placed responsibility for the situation predominant upon the British Government, reflecting the political affiliation of the newspaper. *Daily Mail* coverage incorporated extensive criticism of the French Government's handling of the situation, with articles such as 'Why the French are to blame' (McKinstry 2015). In the *Daily Mail*, narratives shifting blame to one (political) actor, or another were identified in straight reporting and analysis on Calais. In *The Guardian*, these narratives were also identified in national news stories, editorials, and analyses on Calais.

### Root causes

The third group of narratives relates to perceived 'push' and 'pull' factors that drive immigration to the UK. The first narrative argues that Britain's **growing economy** (at the time), low

unemployment, and the welfare state act as a 'pull' factor. According to this story, the strength of the British economy and the availability of jobs paints Britain as a 'land of milk and honey' and the 'promise land' for migrants seeking a better life (Fraser 2015).

A related narrative was that a thriving **irregular economy** ('shadow economy', 'black market') which readily employs 'illegal immigrants' 'without papers' was acting as a 'pull factor' (Sylvester 2015). According to the *Daily Mail*, French politicians played a significant role in disseminating this narrative. One article reported that 'the French said the 'migrant crisis' was caused by foreigners coming to work in appalling conditions in Britain's black economy' (Slack, Martin, and Peev 2015), whilst another stated that former French Employment Minister, Xavier Bertrand, said the situation was acute because 'British firms were too ready to employ illegal migrants' (Martin 2015). Moreover, the British Government was responsible because it refused to introduce identity cards.

This perception within the context of onward migration from Calais to the UK gained further resonance in the press when the British Government problematising irregular migration in the UK in response to the crisis. James Brokenshire, Minister for Security and Immigration at the Home Office, was quoted in *The Times* stating that 'rogue employers who give jobs to illegal migrants are denying work to UK citizens and legal migrants and helping drive down wages' (O'Neill 2015) as he introduced new legislation that criminalised undocumented workers and a potential five-year prison sentence for landlords renting to irregular migrants.

This leads us to another core narrative regarding 'pull factors', which suggests that the UK is a '**soft touch**' on immigration. A combination of lax border controls and 'liberal' immigration policies mean that 'illegal migrants' are not sent back to their country of origin (BBC News 2015a). Generous welfare benefits, free healthcare and education and a perceived low likelihood of deportation act as 'pull factors', whilst 'push factors' are largely ignored in this narrative.

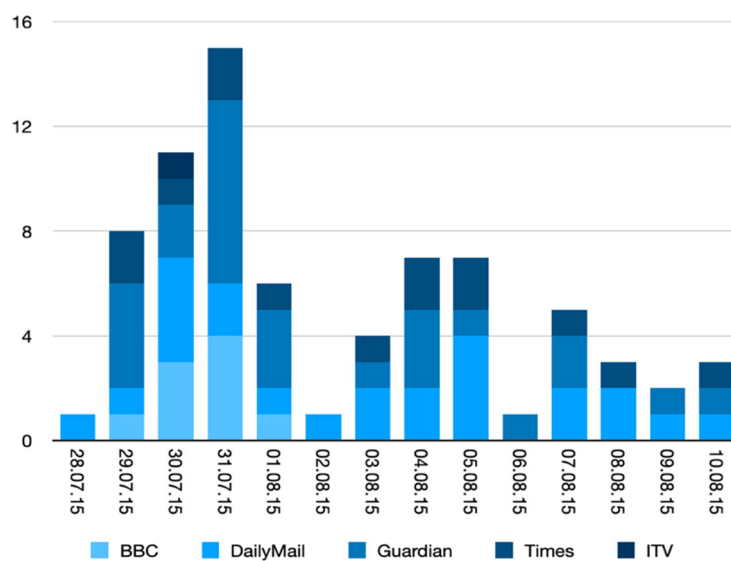
According to narrators, including Conservative politicians, solutions to the 'problem' included scrapping the Human Rights Act to make it easier to deport failed asylum seekers. Moreover, Cameron pledged to fast-track the 2016 Immigration Bill to make it harder for 'illegal immigrants' to remain in the UK ('hostile environment' policy measures). This approach reflects the **deterrence** paradigm on immigration flows. According to this narrative, migrants can be 'deterred' from trying to reach the UK by curtailing rights and access to the welfare state upon arrival in the country. This rationale underpinned the implementation of the 'hostile environment' policy measures first suggested in 2012 and enacted through the 2014 and 2016 Immigration Acts.

The final core narrative on the root causes of the situation in Calais suggested that the **European Union** was the issue. According to this argument, EU immigration governance, specifically the no-borders Schengen area, was acting as a 'pull factor' to Europe and exasperating the situation in Calais. One *Daily Mail* article argued that the 'Calais crisis is the ultimate symbol of the failure of the EU project' (McKinstry 2015), whilst another suggested that 'the British' should 'take back control of immigration' from EU institutions (Slack, Martin, and Peev 2015). Meanwhile, commentary and opinion pieces in *The Guardian* highlighted the worldwide refugee crisis (Kingsley 2015) and a need for Cameron and May to deal with the 'problem at source' in the Middle East (Taylor, Wintour, and Elgot 2015).

## Temporal distribution of narratives

Exploring the temporal distribution of these narratives by tracing the dominant narratives chronologically and in combination with peaks in coverage and key events across all five news outlets suggests several different narrative stages in the coverage of the Calais migration 'crisis'. Intriguingly peaks in coverage appear to not only follow the developments of events on the ground but also reflect statements made by key politicians in the press (see Figure 2.).

**FIGURE 2. Coverage of the Calais migrant crisis by date & news outlet, 28 July – 10 August 2015, absolute values**



Following weeks of increased pressure from migrants trying to access the Eurotunnel terminal in Calais and industrial action by French ferry workers, the events of 27 and 28 July 2015 triggered a **first narrative stage**, in which newspapers and television news on 28 and 29 July reported on the latest developments in Calais, specifically a large number of attempts to access the Channel Tunnel. The coverage during this stage is dominated by the 'invasion' narrative. It can be characterised as predominantly reactive to events as they unfold, which as clearly illustrated in Figure 2., resulted in a significant increase in reporting on Calais. A central theme in the narratives at this stage is a 'loss of control' on the UK-French border and 'chaos' in Calais. The dominant narrative describes how thousands of 'illegal immigrants' (with significant variation regarding the number of people, the number of attempts to breach the Eurotunnel and the number of arrests) tried to 'storm' the Channel Tunnel in one of the 'worst security breaches in its history' (Slack and Ellicott 2015, 5).

The challenge of border management in Calais, the juxtaposed border controls under Le Touquet Treaty (UKTS 2003), disruption to British holidaymakers due to the strikes by French ferry workers, and the impact of Operation Stack on the inhabitants of Kent feature in the coverage at this stage. Nevertheless, commentators and politicians are predominantly quoted as emphasising that the French and UK governments are, according to Home Secretary Theresa May, working 'in close collaboration on this issue' (Slack and Ellicott 2015). Prime Minister David Cameron is quoted stating that 'there is no point in trying to point fingers of

blame. It's about working with the French' (McKinstry 2015). Alongside news and live coverage from Calais, reporting focused on political statements on new government spending on security infrastructure, such as fencing and border and security personnel in Calais.

On 30 July 2015, we can discern a shift in tone in the coverage, which marks the beginning of the **second narrative stage**. This can be traced back to the introduction of new narratives by key political actors, which initiated a change in the tone of media coverage and is characterised by shifting blame or 'blame avoidance' (Weaver 1986). Firstly, in a 7.00 am interview with *ITV news*, David Cameron blamed the crisis in Calais on 'a swarm of people coming across the Mediterranean...heading to Britain and seeking a better life' (ITV News 2015). His interview was picked up by all news outlets the same day and was on the front pages of both the tabloids and broadsheet newspapers by the following morning. The *Daily Mail* ran with an article titled 'The swarm on our streets' in block capitals, which took up approximately a third of the front cover on 31 July.

Cameron's use of dehumanising language, likening migrants and asylum seekers to insects, his vow to deport 'illegal migrants' to 'stop the swarm' and warnings that the UK was 'no safe haven' were quoted extensively by the British media (BBC News 2015b; Taylor, Wintour, and Elgot 2015). The Prime Minister was highly criticised for his 'awful, dehumanising language from a world leader' by rights organisations and charities, such as the British Refugee Council (Elgot and Wintour 2015), and opposition leaders, such as Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron, who described it as 'deeply alarming' (BBC News 2015b). In addition to an 'invasion' narrative, the Prime Minister's remarks reflect the prevalence of the deterrence narrative that the displaced inhabitants of the camps at Calais can be deterred from trying to reach the UK through the threat of deportation.

The second change in coverage is the emergence (or increased prevalence) of narratives allocating blame and/or responsibility for the Calais 'migrant crisis'. On 30 July the *Daily Mail* published two articles titled 'Why the French are to blame' (McKinstry 2015) and 'France: It's your fault for being soft on migrants' (Martin 2015). The core narrative of the former is that 'the French' should take responsibility for the crisis and process the asylum claims or deport the inhabitants of the migrant camps. Moreover, the article accuses Natacha Bouchart, the Mayor of Calais, of acting as a 'one-woman advertising campaign' and encouraging the onward movement of migrants to the UK by highlighting the positives of life in Britain (McKinstry 2015). Along similar lines, a *Mail on Sunday* article suggested French police looked the other way whilst people tried to board lorries in Calais (Roberts 2015). The latter article reports that French politicians had shifted blame for the situation in Calais onto the irregular economy in the UK and British firms employing 'illegal migrants', as well as the lack of identity cards in Britain (Martin 2015).

These articles illustrate an apparent shift from straight reporting on events to the inclusion of more analysis. Strikingly, we can also identify the prominent role of politicians' statements in changing the tone of coverage to allocating blame and responsibility for the situation. Overwhelmingly, members of government and Conservative backbenchers are quoted in the *Daily Mail* shifting the 'blame' onto their French counterparts, the EU, or migrants and calling for Britain to 'take back control of immigration' and to 'send in the army' to re-establish law and order on the UK-French border (see, for example, Slack, Martin, and Peev [2015]).

Meanwhile, French voices, including Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve and former French employment minister Xavier Bertrand are reported to blame the crisis on the UK's irregular economy ('black economy') (Martin 2015). Intriguingly, Figure 2. would indicate that Cameron's 'swarm of people' comment and the increased politicisation of who was to blame for the situation in Calais resulted in more coverage than the previous two nights of increased migratory pressures at the Eurotunnel site. This suggests that politicians' statements on the crisis were considered just as, if not more, newsworthy than the events as they transpired in Calais.

By early August 2015, we can identify a third narrative stage, reflecting a shift towards a more analytical appraisal of events and responses to the Calais 'migrant crisis' and a drop in overall coverage. Coverage is less focused on events in real-time and headlines become less sensationalist. The *Daily Mail* is the exception by continuing to publish articles with headlines such as 'Say you are gay to get to the UK!' or 'It's easy to get past the Gendarmes, see you in England!' reflecting both their intended audience and their stance on immigration issues. It is during this **third narrative stage** that we can see coverage on the impact of the crisis on the British economy, infrastructure, the haulage industry, and businesses in Kent coming more to the fore. Moreover, coverage increasingly incorporated individuals' stories and interviews with lorry drivers and small business owners in Kent. A number of new narratives on the impact of the crisis also emerge at this stage, including reports that Kent social services were struggling to cope with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and proposed new legislation to 'crackdown on illegal migrants' in the UK through evictions and a clampdown on 'rogue businesses' (Wright 2015).

Nevertheless, we can continue to observe coverage corresponding with politicians' statements. For instance, the peak in coverage on 4 and 5 August 2015 reflects reporting on a remark by Philip Hammond, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, that the UK had 'got a grip on the crisis', which sparked renewed debate on the government's response to the situation (Slack and Kent Smith 2015). The next increase in coverage on 7 August reflects reporting on Abdul Rahman Haroun, a Sudanese national from Darfur, who managed to evade security measures and walk from Calais to Britain through the Channel Tunnel (Ford and Sage 2015). Finally, we see a slight uptake in coverage on 10 August following reports of another statement by Hammond in an interview with *BBC news* in which he stated 'desperate marauding migrants' across Europe were 'threatening to undermine living standards' (Slack 2015).

In sum, the analysis of dominant narratives suggests that narrative stages and peaks in coverage were not just triggered by significant events but also by reports of statements and interviews with key political actors and commentators in France and the UK, which functioned as political pivots that changed the prevailing narrative or tone of coverage on the crisis. In fact, straight reporting was often hard to distinguish from commentary, with analysis and opinion from key stakeholders and politicians often dominating coverage of the developments in Calais as they unfolded.

### **Main frames**

Scholars have convincingly argued that migration has become increasingly *securitised*, referring to the move of migration 'issues' from the realm of day-to-day politics to that of 'high politics' and the security of the state (see, for example, Bigo [2002]; Bourbeau [2011];

Huysmans [2006]). It has also been argued that media frames play a significant role in reproducing a sense of crisis and threat by portraying migrants and asylum seekers as 'enemies at the gate' (Esses, Medianu, and Lawson 2013, 519).

The analysis of the dominant frames in British media coverage of Calais supports these findings, with coverage across traditional media overwhelmingly consisting of a security frame. This comprised either a 'crisis at the border' frame or a 'migrants as a threat' frame. The prevalence of the 'crisis' and security frame is particularly intriguing given that within the context of the wider European 'migrant crisis', the UK was not experiencing particularly high pressures in terms of absolute numbers of asylum seekers applying for protection. For instance, the UK received 38,370 first-time asylum applications in 2015. This represents 3% of the total number of first-time asylum claims lodged in the EU that year and a 19% increase compared with 2014 (Eurostat 2016). Asylum applications to the UK had returned to 'pre-crisis' levels by 2016, and the relatively low number of applications is thrown into sharp relief when compared with the 84,130 applications for asylum registered in 2002, the highest recorded number of asylum claims in the UK to date (Home Office 2003).

Coverage that adopted a more humanitarian frame, including voices and stories on the background and journeys undertaken by migrants at the Calais camps, often opened with descriptions of migrants engaging in 'illegal' or threatening behaviour, such as breaching border infrastructure (fences) ('storming', 'rushing', 'breaching'). It was particularly noticeable that television coverage often opened with footage of violence, such as confrontations between migrants and the French Gendarmes or people engaging in threatening or criminal behaviour, before shifting to interviews with individual inhabitants of the 'Jungle' migrant camp. A similar pattern could be identified in *The Guardian*, which included more reporting on individual migrant stories than the other news outlets. However, the inclusion of both a security and a humanitarian frame in the same articles was striking.

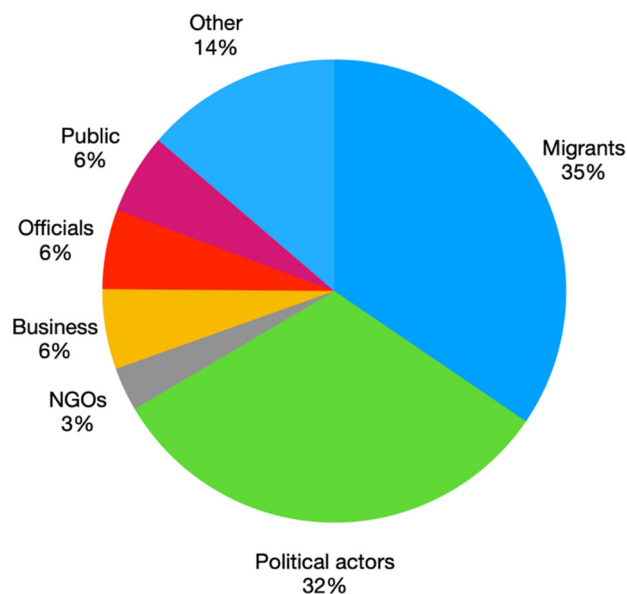
### **Settings, characters, emotions, symbols and metaphors**

Having detailed the dominant narratives across media sources, the following section takes a closer look at specific narrative elements across the corpus of empirical data analysed. The **setting** of the narratives predominantly focuses on the site of the Eurotunnel railhead in Coquelles, Calais, France. We see some variation when the focus shifts to the impact of the crisis on local services and businesses in Folkestone or Kent, in the UK. The only discernible difference between news outlets was that the press was more extensive than television, providing insight into details of life in 'the Jungle' or at the railhead site ('damaged barbed wire fences', 'sniffer dogs', 'tents', 'sleeping bags'). Intriguingly, although the narrative was predominantly set in France, both articles and television coverage reported on Calais as national news. This reflects the juxtaposed border controls but also suggests that the issue is framed as a national security concern related to controlling national borders as opposed to a foreign policy or humanitarian crisis abroad.

An analysis of the different **characters** represented, illustrated in Figure 3., highlights that political actors and migrants were the protagonists in British media coverage of Calais. Disaggregating the data further reveals an intriguing picture regarding how news coverage was framed. Migrants are identified as one of the central characters in 35% of the coverage. However, only 9% refer to migrants as named or quoted individuals. Most coverage referred to 'migrants' as indistinct or indistinguishable groups or collectives ('migrants', 'immigrants',

'illegal immigrants', 'illegals', 'economic migrants', 'foreigners' etc.). The representation of those attempting to reach the UK via the Channel Tunnel as a singular group or collective, as opposed to individuals, applied to all traditional media with no discernible variations between newspapers or between the press and television.

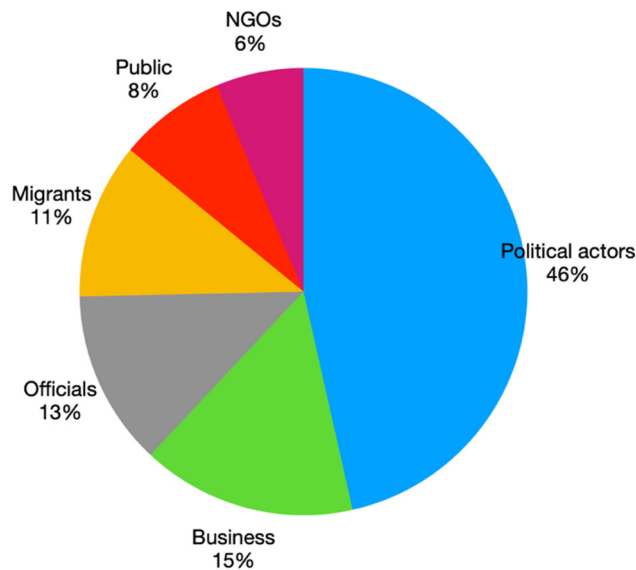
**FIGURE 3. Characters in coverage of the Calais migrant crisis, 28 July – 10 August 2015, percentage**



The second most frequently referenced 'characters' in the coverage are political actors (32%). In this case, 78% of the political actors identified were members of the Conservative government or Conservative backbenchers, with Prime Minister David Cameron featuring most frequently, followed by Home Secretary Theresa May and Philip Hammond, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. The Labour opposition was mentioned only 6% of the time when political actors were the central characters of a story. No significant variation between newspapers or between the press and television was identified, regardless of political affiliation.

The dominance of political actors is also reflected in the frequency of direct quotes and **reactions** to the Calais migrants crisis in media coverage. As Figure 4. demonstrates, 46% of direct quotes in traditional media were from political actors, of which 64% were from Conservative politicians (30% of the total number of reactions). This is followed by direct quotes from representatives of businesses, companies, and industries, predominantly the Eurotunnel operator and representatives of the haulage industry (e.g., the British Road Haulage Association). The comparatively low inclusion of migrant voices is also noteworthy. Once again, no significant variation between newspapers or between newspapers and television coverage was identified, regardless of their political affiliation or editorial stance on immigration.

**FIGURE 4. Voices in coverage of the Calais migrant crisis, 28 July – 10 August 2015, percentage**



Examining the labels and qualifications applied to migrants highlights some variations between news outlets. The most common modifier of ‘immigrants’ or ‘migrants’ in the *Daily Mail* was ‘illegal’, stressing migrants’ alleged illegality. Other labels also emphasised the ‘criminal’ angle (‘criminal gangs’, ‘foreign interlopers’, ‘stowaways’, ‘organised mob’, ‘intruders’, and ‘trespassers’), with very few references to refugees or asylum seekers. Labels in *The Times* largely reflected the *Daily Mail*. In *The Guardian*, we see a much broader range of labels, including ‘migrants’, ‘asylum seekers’, ‘new arrivals’, ‘desperate people’, ‘refugees’, ‘displaced people’, ‘illegal entrants’, ‘undocumented migrants’, and ‘unaccompanied children seeking asylum’. The use of legal labels (‘asylum seeker’, ‘refugee’) suggests a focus on rights to protection. We also find many more adjectives denoting countries of origin (‘Sudanese man’, ‘Syrian refugee’ etc.).

All news outlets described migrants as possessing agency in Calais. Descriptors of social actions in the *Daily Mail* and *The Times* support the securitised frame of migrants (‘lay siege’, ‘trying to sneak into Britain illegally’, ‘break in’, ‘raid’, ‘storm security fences’). Moreover, articles were heavily imbued with metaphors and rhetoric invoking imagery of floods/flooding (‘migrant tide’, ‘stormed’, ‘wave’, ‘pouring in through holes in the fencing’) and insects (e.g., ‘swarms’, ‘hoards’). Representations of migrants’ actions in *The Guardian* were slightly more neutral (‘trying to cross to Britain’, ‘trying to access’, ‘fleeing war and persecution’); however, it also included rhetoric depicting criminal behaviour (‘illegally enter Britain’, ‘playing the system for a better deal’, ‘sneak into the UK’, ‘taking clandestine journeys across Europe’).

Television coverage included far fewer labels overall but also reflected the securitised frame, referring predominantly to ‘illegal immigrants’. However, representations of migrants’ actions were more neutral (‘travelling’, ‘arriving’, ‘flee persecution and torture’, ‘seeking asylum’). Across all media outlets, migrants were described as the recipients of the same actions (e.g., ‘processing’, ‘deporting’, ‘dispersal’, ‘arrested’, ‘detained’, ‘returned’, and ‘relocated’).

However, the *Daily Mail* described far more instances where migrants were acted upon, often foregrounding the state's role in controlling immigration. The majority of actions and processes described are material and behavioural with very few mental processes recorded (Halliday e Matthiessen, 2004), other than a few associated with desperation or hope for a better future in the UK.

The analysis of labels and social action also revealed some interesting insights regarding the use of enumeration. Descriptions of migrants were frequently accompanied by vague numbers ('hundreds' or 'thousands' of migrants). Adopting a vocabulary of numbers added to the sense of drama and newsworthiness. For instance, the sense of threat was heightened by describing 'thousands of migrants storm Calais terminal' (O'Neill and Ford 2015), as opposed to significantly fewer people attempting to access the Eurotunnel site multiple times in a single night. In this sense, using numbers in descriptions of events becomes a device that increases the apparent threat and urgency of the situation.

An analysis in *The Guardian* published on 31 August 2015, criticising media coverage of the Calais 'migrant crisis', picked up on this specific point, stating:

*It is a sad fact that this week's bout of 'migrant madness' was triggered by a misleading Eurotunnel claim that 2,000 migrants had attempted to enter Britain on Monday night, without making it clear they meant many repeated attempts by the same group of a few hundred migrants. But the original claim was enough to leave the clear impression that Britain was now under nightly siege and the government was powerless to do anything about it. (Travis 2015b)*

Whilst this analysis demonstrates some degree of reflexivity among journalists, the tendency to utilise vague figures thereby increasing the drama of a news story was identified in all news media.

Finally, **images** played a significant role in the reporting on Calais<sup>7</sup>. Images consisted predominantly of photos of groups of people from a distance, either walking along railway tracks, scaling, or climbing through fences, or alongside motorways, climbing into the back of lorries. The individuals pictured often have their faces covered and appear to be predominantly young men. These images overwhelmingly contributed to the security frame, reinforcing narratives of 'invasion' and a loss of control at the Coquelles site. As one interviewee stated, the images appearing in the press and on television during the height of the crisis were either of violent clashes and confrontations between migrants and the French Gendarmes or of 'migrants in the shadows' (UK\_I\_1). The dominant emotion invoked by these images in the audience is one of fear or anger.

Images were notably sourced from the larger press agencies and media companies, such as the European Pressphoto Agency or Getty Images. The use of stock images provided by the larger press-photo agencies meant that the most dramatic imagery depicting developments in Calais were used across different media outlets regardless of their political affiliation or stance on immigration issues. For instance, the same imagery of violent clashes between the French

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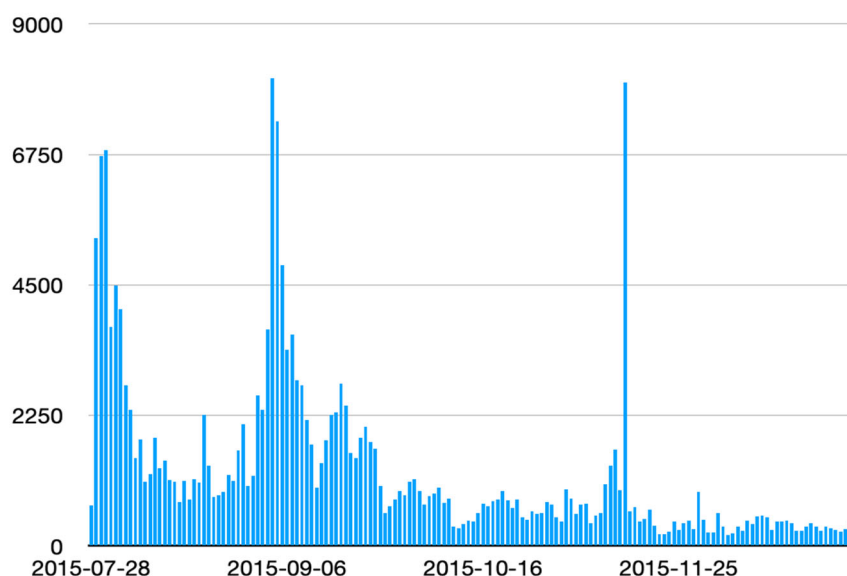
<sup>7</sup> Please note that the original images have not been included in this report following legal advice on copyright implications regarding the use of images from newspapers.

Gendarmes trying to stop migrants on the Eurotunnel site at Coquelles, supplied by the Agence France-Presse and stocked by Getty Images, featured in *The Guardian*, *The Times*, and the *Daily Mail* on 30 July 2015. Similarly, an aerial image from Getty Images depicting two individuals clinging to the roof of a lorry leaving the Eurotunnel terminal in Folkestone featured prominently in both the *Daily Mail* and *The Guardian* on 31 July 2015.

### **Dominant narratives on social media (Twitter)**

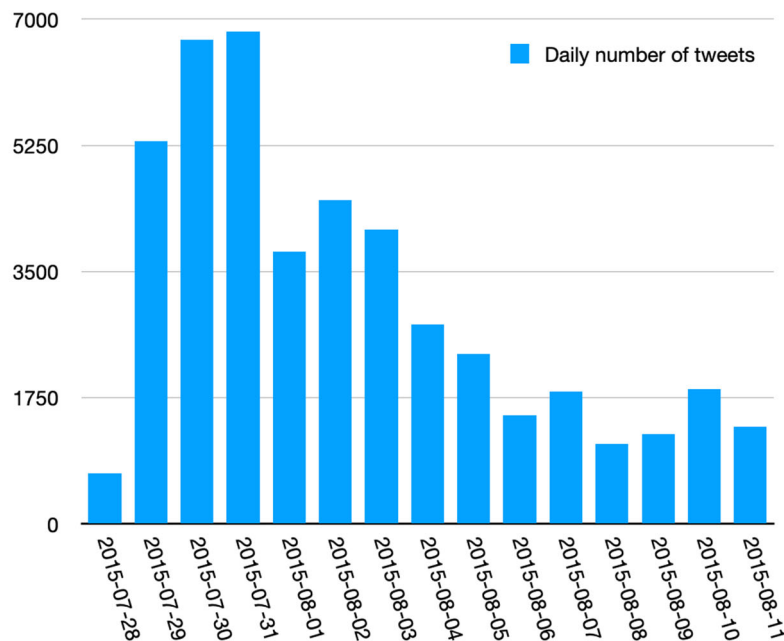
In addition to the 74 news items from newspapers and television news clips, I also analysed the 100 most engaged-with content on the Calais 'migrant crisis' on *Twitter*. The hashtags selected for the analysis of the 100 most retweeted posts were: #calais OR #calaiscrisis OR #calaismigrants OR #migrantcrisis. The selection largely reflects a quantitative analysis of the most frequently used hashtags concerning 'Calais' during the same timeframe, which identified #migrantcrisis/#MigrantCrisis, #Calais/#calais, #refugeecrisis, #refugees and #calaismigrants as the top five most frequently used hashtags in posts on the topic. This provided data on the most retweeted posts during the time frame under investigation. Moreover, a longitudinal quantitative analysis of tweets on Calais suggests that whilst the time frame was not the only spike in related *Twitter* activity, we can see an identifiable increase in the number of tweets referring to 'Calais' during this period (Figure 5.).

**FIGURE 5. Frequency of daily tweets on the Calais migrant crisis, 28 July 2015 – 27 January 2016, absolute values**



*Twitter* activity on the Calais migrant 'crisis' during the two-week period reflected a similar pattern to that of the traditional media outlets, demonstrating an increase in tweets related to Calais directly following the events of 28-29 July and 29-30 July 2015 and tailing off by mid-August 2015, as illustrated in Figure 6.

**FIGURE 6. Frequency of daily tweets on the Calais migrant crisis, 28 July – 10 August 2015, absolute values**



A closer examination of the data reveals which actors were engaging in discourse on the Calais ‘migrant crisis’ on *Twitter*. Tweets by politicians make up 20% of the sample. Of these 20 tweets, two were from No.10 Downing Street, one was by an SNP MP, and an overwhelming 17 posts in the top 100 most retweeted tweets on Calais were by UKIP politicians, 7 of which were posted by former UKIP leader Nigel Farage. NGOs working in the migrants and refugee rights sector, such as the Refugee Council, and Calais Migrant Solidarity and Doctors of the World, both charities that were active onsite in Calais at the time, make up 6% of the tweets. Tweets by news organisations make up a further 16%. The remaining 58% of posts are by journalists tweeting from personal accounts, self-proclaimed migrants and human rights activists, and individuals.

Applying the typology developed in the analysis of traditional media to the analysis of *Twitter* yielded few clear results. Apart from the category on allocating ‘blame’ or responsibility, tweets did not clearly fit within the categorisations. The main challenge for identifying migration narratives on *Twitter* lies in the length of tweets since it is difficult to express a complete narrative as defined in the wider BRIDGES project (see, for instance, McBeth and Jones’ [2010] definition of a narrative) in under 280 characters. Moreover, most tweets in the sample were significantly shorter and did not link to other material (articles, images, memes etc.). Consequently, the subsequent analysis represents more accurately a frame analysis with parallels drawn between frames and narrative features that reflect the narratives identified in the traditional media analysis.

In contrast to news articles and television clips, tweets overwhelmingly adopted a humanitarian frame (57%). This included tweets arguing that the crisis in Calais was a humanitarian and not a security crisis, stating that ‘[t]hey are humans, not numbers. They are refugees, not migrants’. Parallels were drawn with the treatment of refugees during the Second World War and the

Holocaust. Moreover, the comparatively low number of asylum applications received in the UK is highlighted when compared with elsewhere in Europe and the worldwide refugee crisis. 19% of tweets are critical of the British government or the government's response to the crisis. The use of dehumanising language by members of the government is specifically criticised. According to a self-proclaimed 'refugee advocate', who authored 14 of the most retweeted posts during this period, the government was doing more than 'scaremongering' over the crisis; it was 'encouraging race hatred'. A total of 7 tweets explicitly criticised Cameron for using the word 'swarm' in relation to people.

The diametrically opposed position was also identifiable, predominantly in tweets by members of UKIP. Here the security frame is once again identifiable with themes reflecting 'invasion' narratives and deterrence. Farage repeatedly tweets about how it needs to be made clear that 'illegal immigrants' who make it to Britain cannot stay and details the hundreds of 'illegal' migrants who made it to the UK that month. Nevertheless, the counter-narrative is more pronounced with individuals retweeting articles opposing anti-immigration sentiment, such as a Daily Mirror article titled 'They are not migrant hordes – they are people, and they're probably nicer than us' (Boniface 2015). A handful of tweets also focus on the impact of the crisis on businesses and travel chaos caused by Operation Stack in Kent. An additional three tweets suggest that the EU is to blame for the situation in Calais.

A total of 19 tweets in the top 100 allocated blame or responsibility for the crisis in Calais to a particular actor. This small sample does suggest a pattern of note. We can identify two distinct groups of actors that were tweeting about responsibility and blame for the developments in Calais: British residents (8 of total tweets allocating blame (42%)) and British politicians (9 tweets (47%)). British residents predominantly assigned blame to the British Government ('Sniffer dogs? We're doomed if that's our best'). The government's focus on British holidaymakers whilst people were suffering in migrant camps was highly criticised ('Another migrant...found dead...PM says his sympathies are with holidaymakers', 'We've lost it!'). This suggests that *Twitter* was utilised to critique the government's response to the crisis. This is supported by an analysis of the actors allocated the most blame/responsibility by frequency, which is consigned foremost to the British Government (26%), followed by the French Government (16%), politicians, specifically David Cameron (11%), migrants (11%), the European Union (11%), and finally media coverage (11%).

All posts in which politician's allocated blame to other actors in the sample were authored by UKIP politicians. Moreover, 6 out of 9 posts were either authored by Nigel Farage or directly quoting the politician without additional commentary (one *BBC* tweet and another from the official UKIP account). These posts allocate blame to several different actors, including the British Government, the French Government, French authorities, migrants, Operation Stack, and the European Union (EU). Nigel Farage's posts received hundreds of retweets (255.5 retweets on average).

Finally, in contrast to more traditional media, on *Twitter* narrators used black humour to support an argument. For instance, one commentator remarked on the labour party's new approach to the crisis in Calais, illustrated by a photo of people (migrants) trying to climb into the back of a lorry with a large 'vote Labour' sign on its side. Another stated that Cameron had employed specialist 'beekeepers' to deal with the 'swarms' coming to the UK, accompanied by an image of the Ku Klux Klan.

In sum, most *Twitter* content adopted a humanitarian frame and were critical of the British Government's response to the Calais crisis. This suggests that social media provided a platform for the electorate to hold the government to account for its actions in response to the developing humanitarian crisis in Calais. However, the pervasiveness of (anti)immigration narratives disseminated by members of UKIP suggests a disproportionately dominant voice for the right-wing populist party on social media, which during this timeframe held only a single seat in Parliament. Moreover, the most frequently recorded emotion that tweets potentially invoked in an audience was 'anger' (defined in the coding as hate, outrage, frustration (outward), hostility, impatience, scorn, resentment, disappointment, disgust, contempt, bitterness, shame (outward)). This suggests that regardless of whether Calais was framed as a security threat or a humanitarian crisis, social media content was polarised/polarising.

### *b) Narrative making and success*

#### **WHAT: What are the features of dominant narratives in traditional and social media?**

The analysis of the temporal distribution of narratives, of characters, and of voices highlights the importance of political actors in the emergence and dissemination of narratives on migration in the context of the Calais migrant 'crisis'. The most dominant narratives were legitimised by statements by key political actors and subsequently disseminated broadly across traditional media platforms. In this coverage, we can see phrases and wording that reinforce a particular narrative reappear multiple times within the same publication or across news outlets. This is particularly pronounced in the case of 'sound bites' from politicians or in relation to opposition statements. For instance, the pervasiveness of Hammond's 'marauding migrants' remark, and references to whether the British Government had 'got a grip' on the border, or responded with 'sticking plaster' policy measures, reinforced an 'invasion' narrative, emphasised the perception of migrants as a threat at the border, and narratives allocating 'blame'.

The most pronounced example relates to Cameron's 'swarm of people' comment, which was mentioned in over 20 articles. Whilst most references were critical of the Prime Minister's 'dehumanising' rhetoric, the pervasiveness of the remark in coverage on Calais inevitably spread the narrative. It was also established that the core narratives and security frame that dominated traditional media were enforced by striking images. However, according to one interviewee, this was not necessarily intentional. Apparently, people in the 'Jungle' or on-site at the Eurotunnel railhead would object to being photographed close-up or without covering their faces for fear that they could be identified (UK\_I\_1).

Stories on the inhabitants of the migrant camps (migrant stories) are conspicuous in their absence in the coverage of the situation in Calais. *The Guardian* and *BBC news* included the most direct quotes from individuals in the migrant camps. However, this was often secondary to more securitised core narratives. Moreover, we can identify some variations across news genres. Short feature films from a humanitarian perspective, incorporating extensive interviews with migrants, were often embedded in (online) news articles with a more securitised frame.

## **WHO: Who gains access to the public arena and which structural positions and strategies allow them to shape prevailing narratives?**

The analysis of characters and voices clearly illustrates the role that politicians play as narrators on immigration issues. It also suggests a significant hierarchy in who had access to public debate on the Calais 'migrant crisis' via the British media. As members of the government, Conservative politicians were at a significant advantage. Immigration control has been described as an obsession of the Conservative party (Hampshire and Bale 2015). Consequently, the prevalence of statements by members of the Conservative government may go some way to explaining the pervasiveness of narratives related to security at the border and the security frame.

The relative low inclusion of migrant voices is somewhat surprising. Interviewees suggested that the *BBC* and *The Guardian* sought to give voice to the inhabitants of the migrant camps in Calais (UK\_I\_1 and UK\_I\_2). However, this is not reflected by any significant variation between media sources in the data analysed for this report. On social media, we see the emergence of more independent voices. However, migrants are still conspicuous in their absence.

Surprisingly, pro-rights and pro-immigration organisations or social media campaigns did not feature as highly as expected on *Twitter*. However, individual human rights and refugee activists with consistent messaging featured prominently. Equally, populist far-right voices in the form of UKIP politicians were also highly visible on *Twitter* with clear and consistent messaging. Farage's social media presence, with 1,612,688 followers at the time, could in part explain why he was quoted or mentioned in 10 articles in the mainstream media and interviewed by *ITV news* on the Calais 'migrant crisis' despite holding a very limited position of power or politically relevant post at the time.

Finally, the role of journalists should not be underestimated. According to interviewees, journalists had significant autonomy over the content of their reporting (within the limitations of the exceptionally quick news cycle in the British context) (UK\_I\_1 and UK\_I\_4). We can identify instances where news commentators and journalists provided counter-narratives and held both the media and politicians to account for their rhetoric and discourse on Calais. For instance, an editorial in *The Times* on 31 July made direct reference to a two-page article in the *Daily Mail* the previous day (Sandbrook 2015). Responding to an article that argued that Cameron's predecessors had 'kept out Hitler and Napoleon' so it was time the government made a 'serious effort' to regain control of national borders, the *Times* journalist criticised the inflammatory rhetoric used by the media, stating:

*The rhetoric surrounding the crisis in Calais is overblown and nudging the government towards disproportionately dramatic measures. There are real strains but no impending mass invasion of immigrants: the barbarians are not at the gates. It is not a flood, nor even, despite the words of David Cameron yesterday, a 'swarm'. Nor are the inhabitants of the Calais camp a challenge that ranks with Napoleon or Hitler. (The Times 2015)*

Similarly, this point is supported by the previously mentioned article that questioned the use of numbers in media coverage of Calais.

## **WHERE: Where do narratives emerge and what path do they take among the various social actors, media, and platforms?**

In the case of the Calais 'migrant crisis', the mainstream media can be understood as the main communicative sphere for political actors and stakeholders. Whilst Calais was intermittently debated in Parliament, key political actors both in government and in opposition were keen to address the public via the media. Moreover, the media became a platform for political debate on the issue. For instance, Cameron's infamous comment that 'a swarm of people coming across the Mediterranean... heading to Britain and seeking a better life' (ITV News 2015) sparked a dispute in the papers between the Conservative government and the Labour opposition, with representatives of each party blaming the number of migrants trying to reach the UK via Calais on the policies implemented by the other whilst in government (Slack and Stevens 2015).

There is evidence to indicate some cross-over between social media and mainstream media in relation to narratives established through interviews with politicians and political press statements. For instance, individuals on *Twitter* responded to David Cameron's interview with *ITV news* by criticising his 'dehumanising' rhetoric. The British Government's focus on the impact of the Calais crisis on British holidaymakers, a narrative disseminated via the mainstream media, was also critiqued on *Twitter*. However, we do see new narratives emerge on *Twitter* that are picked up by the mainstream media.

This suggests an asymmetrical narrative relationship between social media and traditional media. Moreover, the voices and actors on *Twitter* deviated from the political and traditional media domain, consisting predominantly of individuals as opposed to political actors or representatives of news organisations. This was supported by the journalists interviewed, who stated that they neither used social media in their reporting nor checked social media for leads (UK\_I\_1, UK\_I\_2, UK\_I\_4)<sup>8</sup>. The prominence of UKIP on *Twitter* is the exception to the rule, suggesting that social media has become a communicative sphere for niche and populist radical right parties in the UK. Nevertheless, the dominant frame on *Twitter* was humanitarian, in contrast to both the mainstream media and the official position of UKIP on the Calais 'migrant crisis'.

## **WHEN: In which contexts and circumstances do certain narratives obtain a competitive edge?**

The most intuitive response to the question would be that migrant narratives emerge during a perceived migration crisis. It has been argued that 'crises' can generate opportunities for the emergence of new narratives or narrative change as an exogenous or endogenous shock generates new ideas that challenge established beliefs and demand the reframing of a policy issue or dilemma (Bevir and Rhodes 2003; Shanahan, Jones, and McBeth 2011). Indeed, as illustrated, much of the press coverage in the UK was reactive to events on the ground in Calais or statements by key political figures. Nevertheless, I posit that the crisis 'frame' galvanised existing beliefs and narratives on immigration in the UK.

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<sup>8</sup> One interviewee stated that they used Twitter to track down contacts but did not use it for information gathering purposes (UK\_I\_3).

The empirical analysis suggests that the dominant narratives in the press largely corresponded with established public and political discourse on immigration. For instance, the 'invasion' narrative that casts migrants as a threat to security, and potential criminals or terrorists, represents a prevailing narrative in the UK. The issue-linkage between immigration and criminality can be traced back to the UK's first immigration legislation, the 1905 Aliens Act, which defined in law the concept of an 'underserving immigrant' as a person who is a drain on the welfare system or engages in criminal behaviour (Ibrahim and Howarth 2018).

The 'invasion' narrative is also closely related to the persistent notion in public and political discourse in the UK on the need for immigration control. Immigration control (or the perception of a 'loss of control') is a pervasive narrative, especially within the Conservative party (Hampshire and Bale 2015). Moreover, it was being instrumentalised at the time by UKIP to politicise immigration ahead of the Brexit referendum. Furthermore, the use of numbers to generate a sense of crisis at the border reflected a paradigm shift in the way immigration was debated in the UK, to focusing nearly exclusively on numbers, following the introduction of the 2010 net migration target<sup>9</sup> (Boswell 2015). This suggests that the dominant narratives on Calais in the summer of 2015 resonated both with historical migration narratives and political discourse on immigration by the political elites. It also suggests that, in this case, the most successful narratives neither disrupted existing beliefs nor generated dissonance with established meta-narratives on immigration in the UK.

## **2.2 The 'Windrush scandal'**

The 'Windrush scandal' broke in the British press in late 2017 when it emerged that hundreds of people were being wrongfully detained, denied legal rights, and threatened with deportation from the UK by the Home Office. The 'scandal' – named after the HMT Empire Windrush that brought some of the first West Indian workers to the UK after World War II – concerned Commonwealth-born British residents who had settled in the UK on invitation before 1973. They arrived in the 1950s and 1960s as children, particularly from Caribbean countries, and had the right to remain indefinitely. However, when immigration rules tightened in 2014, many people could not prove their right to be in the UK and were classified as 'illegal immigrants' by the Home Office.

Under the British Nationality Act 1948, people who came to the UK from British colonies between 1948 and 1 January 1973 (when the immigration controls of the Immigration Act 1971 came into force) were citizens of the UK and Colonies (CUKC). Many arrived in the UK on their parents' CUKC passports or on their own and automatically gained the same rights as the resident population. When their country of birth became independent, they became Commonwealth citizens who could register for citizenship after 12 months (Williams 2020, 53). However, as an independent review commissioned by the House of Commons in 2020 explains, '[s]ince CUKC status included the legal right to come to the UK, no one needed, and nor did they get, legal documents. Many lived, went to school and worked in the UK without

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<sup>9</sup> The target was a Conservative party manifesto commitment to reduce annual net migration in the UK to the 'tens of thousands' (Conservative Party 2015, 29). First introduced by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government in 2010 and reaffirmed by subsequent Conservative governments, it was scrapped by the Johnson administration in 2019.

any official immigration record.’ (Williams 2020, 53). Moreover, many never formally naturalised or applied for a British passport, unaware of any reason to do so.

The issue then surfaced with the so-called ‘hostile environment’ policies aimed at tackling irregular immigration, implemented by the Immigration Act 2014, and extended by the Immigration Act 2016. The measures set out in the two acts mean individuals are required to provide documentary evidence of their right to be in the UK before they can access benefits, employment, and public services. Suddenly, people who had legally lived in Britain for decades were being asked to prove their legal right to remain in the country. Those who had not formally naturalised or regularised their status, or applied for a British passport, struggled to meet the Home Office’s burden of proof, which included four types of documentation proving continuous residency in the UK since arrival in the country. Consequently, they were labelled ‘illegal immigrants’ and subject to immigration enforcement measures.

The independent review determined that 164 individuals were wrongfully detained, of which 83 were voluntarily or involuntarily removed (deported) (Home Office 2019). In addition to those who were detained or deported, countless individuals lost their jobs, were refused access to benefits and free NHS healthcare, and were made homeless after failing to meet the Home Office’s burden of proof to prove their status, despite having been in the UK legally for decades. According to the National Audit Office, the estimated number of people who could struggle to document their right to be in the UK could run into the hundreds of thousands (National Audit Office 2018). The inquiry concluded that the ‘scandal’ was ‘foreseeable and avoidable’ and criticised ‘a culture of disbelief and carelessness’ in the Home Office (Williams 2020, 7).

Details of what was happening were first published in an article in *The Guardian* on 28 November 2017 (Gentleman 2017). The article presented the story of Paulette Wilson, a 61-year-old who had moved to the UK from Jamaica in 1968. After 50 years in Britain, during which she worked serving food in the House of Commons, she was taken to Yarls Wood Immigration Removal Centre and on to Heathrow airport for removal before her local MP was able to intervene and secure a reprieve. The publication of Wilson’s story inspired countless long-term British residents to come forward regarding similar experiences at the hands of the Home Office and the British immigration system. The ensuing political crisis was described by commentators as one of the ‘most damaging political crises for the British government in recent decades’ and ultimately led to the resignation of Home Secretary Amber Rudd on 29 April 2018 (Gentleman 2019, 13).

#### *a) Main, collateral, and counter-narratives in traditional and social media*

For this case study, I selected the pertinent newspaper articles and television clips on the ‘Windrush scandal’ between 12 - 30 April 2018. Following months of publications on the issue in *The Guardian*, this period saw the story taken up by other news outlets and the ensuing political crisis in the British government unfold in the media. The keywords used to identify articles in the three newspapers were ‘Windrush scandal’ OR ‘Windrush generation’. Television news clips were identified using a similar keyword search on the news outlets’ websites and their corresponding YouTube channels.

**TABLE 3. Coverage of the Windrush scandal by news outlet, 12 April – 30 April 2018, absolute values**

News outlet	News items	Front page	Airtime (seconds)
Daily Mail/The Mail on Sunday	12	2	
The Guardian	36	4	
The Times/ The Sunday Times	11	3	
BBC news clips	1	n/a	182
ITV news clips	10	n/a	1467
Total	73	9	1649

During the two-and-a-half-week period, the five news outlets produced an average of 4.8 reports per day (see Table 3.). This included 9 front-page articles in the press. The *BBC* and *ITV news* clips included edited archival footage of the arrival of migrants, notably of people disembarking from HMT Empire Windrush in 1948, with a narrating voice-over linking the footage to the current political ‘scandal’. This footage was often combined with live interviews with the British residents affected, politicians, and Caribbean politicians and diplomats, illustrating the salience of the issue and the perceived newsworthiness of the political crisis.

### **Dominant narratives in traditional media (press and television)**

In order to analyse the event and issue-specific narratives in British media coverage of the so-called ‘Windrush scandal’, it is important to acknowledge the broader historical context of these narratives. Reporting on the ‘Windrush scandal’ - and its name - is rooted in an established meta-narrative based on the **Windrush myth**. As the BRIDGES working paper, ‘The Emergence, Uses and Impacts of Narratives on Migration’, explains, ‘[m]yths are enduring cultural stories about some aspect of society, which tend to be formulaic and metaphoric, often repeating the interpretation that culture makes of itself, with familiar characters and predictable outcomes’ (Boswell et al. 2021, 7).

The HMT Empire Windrush docked at Tilbury Docks in Essex on 22 June 1948, with an estimated 1027 passengers en route from Jamaica to London. The arrival of the ship was widely reported in the media and *Pathé* footage captured the fanfare and ‘welcome’ of the new arrivals from the Caribbean, creating an audio-visual media event. Kushner (2012, 179) argues that due to the extensive media coverage, the arrival of the HMT Empire Windrush was mythological even as it took place. The ship came to represent the beginning of black Caribbean immigration to the UK and to ‘symbolise the start of Britain’s transition to a multicultural nation’ (Gentleman 2019, 9).

However, the ‘welcoming’ imagery of the arrival of Caribbean ex-servicemen who had served the British empire during World War II and were invited to the UK to address a labour shortage did not tell the whole story. Caribbean migrants were not the only passengers aboard the ship, and, for example, the small group of Polish migrants aboard are largely omitted from the narrative. Moreover, in juxtaposition to the ‘welcome’ narrative, within days of the HMT Empire

Windrush’s arrival, eleven Labour MPs wrote to British Prime Minister Clement Attlee calling for a halt to the ‘influx of coloured people’ (Royal Museums Greenwich n.d.), illustrating the discrimination these individuals faced.

Scholars have highlighted the problematic nature of the enduring Windrush narrative by arguing that it ‘omit[s] racialised people who were in Britain before Windrush and downplay[s] the importance of those arriving at different times or in different ways’ (Peplow 2019, 214). It also fails to capture the imperial and colonial roots of immigration before the mid-nineteenth century<sup>10</sup>. Nevertheless, the introduction of commemorative events over the decades, including oral histories, books, *BBC* documentaries, the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary in 1998, the erection of Windrush Square in Brixton, London, the inclusion of footage of the Windrush during the 2012 Olympic Games, and the establishment of the ‘Windrush Day’ (22 June) in 2018 have cemented the arrival of the HMT Empire Windrush as an origin story of ‘multi-racial’ Britain (Perry 2018).

In relation to the ‘Windrush scandal’, the reference to HMT Empire Windrush is a misnomer. Most of the people caught up in the ‘Windrush scandal’ were part of later migration movements to the UK from the West Indies in the 1950s and 1960s. However, as cultural historian and campaigner Patrick Vernon explained in 2010, the Windrush came to symbolise not only the Caribbean people who arrived on the ship, but ‘everyone who came from the Empire; British subjects who saw Britain as their mother country’ (Vernon 2010). On 6 April 2018, Vernon, whose parents had emigrated to the UK from Jamaica, created a parliamentary petition titled ‘Amnesty for anyone who was a minor that arrived In Britain between 1948 to 1971’ (Parliamentary petition 216539). In the petition, Vernon made the connection between the (mis)treatment of long-term Commonwealth-born UK residents at the hands of the Home Office and the upcoming 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of HMT Empire Windrush, essentially giving the ‘scandal’ and those caught up in it, the ‘Windrush-generation’, their name.

**TABLE 4. Dominant narratives on the Windrush scandal,  
12 April – 30 April 2018**

<b>Consequences/impact</b>	Windrush-generation stories British values EU migrants
<b>Responsibility (‘blame’)</b>	‘Hostile environment’ policies The Home Office Prime Minister Theresa May Home Secretary Amber Rudd

Within this broader narrative context, coverage of the ‘Windrush scandal’ falls into one of two categories, illustrated by Table 4. The first group of narratives set out the consequences or impact of the debacle, predominantly focusing on the stories of the individuals entangled in the ‘scandal’ but also on the fallout from the political crisis; secondly, narratives that assigned blame or responsibility for the crisis to political actors, policies, and institutions. The following

<sup>10</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the Windrush myth see, for instance, Hall 1999; Peplow 2019; Perry 2018.

section elaborates on these narratives in more detail before engaging in a temporal analysis of the emergence and dissemination of narratives in the British media landscape. It should be noted that a quantitative illustration of the distribution of core narratives across media outlets was unhelpful in this case, since nearly all news articles and TV clips incorporated a combination of the narratives detailed below, as opposed to a single narrative.

### Consequences/impact

The first category of narratives on the consequences or the impact of the 'Windrush scandal' is dominated by human-interest stories or **migrant stories** describing how the enforcement of the 'hostile environment' policies was affecting people's lives. *The Guardian's* first article on Paulette Wilson's story was published on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017 (Gentleman 2017). This was followed by a series of interviews with people whose lives had been ruined by the situation, published over approximately five months. They described the experiences and struggles of nine individuals as they tried to navigate the requirements of the Home Office to prove their immigration status.

These human-interest stories set out details of people's lives, including their country of birth, the age they were when they arrived in the UK, the number of years they had lived in the UK, their employment history, education, family background and interests, and finally the 'inhumane' treatment they experienced at the hands of the Home Office and how it had ruined their lives. For example, 'Renford McIntyre, 64, who came to Britain from Jamaica when he was 14 to join his mum, worked as a tool setter, and is now homeless and unemployed' (Younge 2018a).

These stories detail struggles to meet the Home Office's burden of proof, which included four pieces of documentary evidence per year from the date of arrival; struggles with inaccessible Home Office caseworkers (Paulette Wilson); loss of employment (Kenneth Williams and Dexter Bristol); refused readmission to the UK (Junior Green and Briggs Levi Maynard); stays in immigration removal centres (Paulette Wilson and Anthony Bryan); living with the fear of deportation (Jeffrey Miller); lifesaving NHS medical treatment withheld (Albert Thompson); and the loss of homes, resulting in homelessness (Winston Jones, Renford McIntyre and Leighton Joseph Robinson) (see, for instance, *The Guardian* [2018a]).

The expense of naturalisation was also thematised. Unable to work or access benefits, people were being pushed into destitution, leaving them unable to afford legal advice or pay the fees to regularise their immigration status. The coverage included calls for the government to intervene and amend the 'cruel' policies. These stories, first published in *The Guardian*, were picked up by *The Times* (Burgess 2018) and the *Daily Mail* (Hardy 2018) by the third week of April 2018. Moreover, *The Guardian* revisited the individuals they interviewed, reporting on developments. According to Amelia Gentleman, the *Guardian* journalist who painstakingly researched the issue over months and ultimately 'broke' the story, the quickest way to get one's immigration issue resolved was to get a story in the newspaper, resulting in hundreds of people coming forward to tell their stories (Gentleman 2019).

The 'scandal' led some commentators and journalists to question the **British values** of 'fairness' and 'tolerance'. In a counter-narrative to the idea of a 'tolerant and welcoming Britain', *The Guardian* questioned the compatibility of the notion of 'fairness' and the 'hostile

environment' policies. An editorial following Home Secretary Amber Rudd's Windrush apology on 16 April argued that:

'When Mrs May first spoke of a hostile environment, she presented it as a matter of fairness: making sure that all abided by the same rules. But treating people as guilty until proved innocent, making mistakes at the cost of those applying, and handling lives so callously sits oddly with the sense of decency and fair play so often claimed as inherently British - whether those involved arrived from the Commonwealth half a century ago, or much more recently.' (The Guardian 2018a)

This sentiment was picked up by Labour politicians, who expressed concern in relation to the government's anti-immigration rhetoric. In an impassioned speech on the 'Windrush scandal' in the House of Commons, Labour MP David Lammy stated that '[i]f you lie down with dogs then you get fleas. That is what has happened with this far-right rhetoric [on immigration] in this country' (The Guardian 2018a). Lammy's remarks were widely disseminated in the media.

Meanwhile, the right-wing tabloid newspaper the *Daily Mail* interpreted the public outcry about the 'scandal' as evidence that the UK was a country committed to the 'fair treatment' of people. An article in the *Daily Mail* on 21 April argued that the 'public outcry' to the 'scandal' 'from all parties across the political spectrum including UKIP' demonstrated '[w]hat this country has learned over the decades since MV Empire Windrush arrived...that immigration policy must be guided by the values of fairness and decency' (Osborne 2018).

The third narrative of note on the impact of the 'scandal' relates to **post-Brexit EU migration**. The episode raised concerns over the fair treatment of EU residents after Brexit (Hewitt 2020). European Parliament Brexit Coordinator and Chair of the Brexit Steering Group, Guy Verhofstadt, linked the Windrush debacle and EU citizens' fears over post-Brexit immigration rules and evidencing residence status (indefinite leave to remain) for EU nationals already based in the UK. He argued that '[t]his will be deeply worrying for millions of EU citizens in the UK who will now fear similar treatment after Brexit' (Boffey, Rankin, and O'Carroll 2018). Moreover, the press picked up on the contradiction between the government's post-Brexit promise to reignite closer trading ties with Commonwealth countries whilst simultaneously mistreating long-term Commonwealth-born British residents.

### **Responsibility ('blame')**

The second category of narratives includes stories that allocate blame for the 'Windrush scandal' to political institutions or actors. The first narrative refers to the '**hostile environment policies**' as persecutory by design. The 'hostile environment' label originally came from an interview by Home Secretary Theresa May (2010-2016) published in The Telegraph on 25 May 2012, in which she stated that '[t]he aim is to create here in Britain a really hostile environment for illegal migration' (Kirkup and Winnett 2012). However, politicians started to distance themselves from the rhetoric of the 'hostile environment' in late 2017, rebranding the approach as the 'compliant environment', despite the policies remaining unaltered (Poole 2018).

Critical narratives of the 'hostile environment' identified 'significant discriminatory elements' of the policies, highlighting that individuals in the NHS, banks, landlords and higher education institutions were being assigned the role of immigration officers when checking immigration statuses without any training or expertise (Gentleman 2018b). According to the editorial line in

*The Guardian*, untrained people rely on 'proxies' to determine whether immigration checks should be conducted, such as foreign-sounding names, skin colour, or accents: '[t]hey are bad laws because they are designed to turn every Briton - doctor, landlord or teacher - into a border guard, and every migrant, whether they have a right to be here or not, into a suspect.' (Younge 2018b). Moreover, according to editor-at-large Gary Younge, the effects of the policies were 'no accident' but rather 'cruelty by design', stating that 'this is not a glitch in the system. It is the system' (Younge 2018a).

The second narrative in this category assigns responsibility for the 'crisis' to the **Home Office**, stating that it was not fit for purpose. It argued that the 'hostile culture' in the Home Office was driven by immigration targets, such as the 2010 net migration target of 100,000 introduced by Theresa May when she was Home Secretary (Booth and Hopkins 2018). The narrative was legitimised by Home Secretary Amber Rudd's public apology for the impact of the 'hostile environment', during which she placed blame for the 'scandal' on her own department, stating that she was 'concerned that the Home Office has become too concerned with policy and strategy and sometimes loses sight of the individual' (Gentleman 2018d).

A *Guardian* exclusive reported that according to a former employee, the Home Office had destroyed landing cards of 'Windrush generation' people and their children in 2010 (Gentleman 2018g). Nevertheless, the new rules placed an incredibly high burden of proof on the same people to prove their right to be in the country, whilst being threatened with deportation (Gentleman 2018f). Advice from the Home Office to seek legal aid was also criticised, since immigration issues meant people could not afford legal costs as they were neither allowed to work nor claim benefits. Finally, a revelation from the General Secretary of the Union for Border Immigration and Customs, Lucy Moreton, that the Home Office had 'net removal targets' (Walker 2018), further strengthened the narrative that the Home Office was obsessed with targets and unfit for purpose.

The third narrative in this category blamed **Theresa May** as the arbiter of the 'hostile environment' policies during her time as Home Secretary. Moreover, as Prime Minister, she is presented as out of touch with public opinion. For example, May's initial refusal to meet with Caribbean heads of government to discuss the treatment of Commonwealth citizens was described as a 'miscalculation' based on the assumption that there would be no 'public outcry' regarding the situation (Gentleman 2018b). The Prime Minister's refusal to intervene when it emerged that Albert Thompson<sup>11</sup>, a Windrush victim who was denied NHS cancer care unless he could pay a £54,000 bill upfront, was used as another example of May's error in judgement (The Guardian 2018a).

An editorial penned by Hugh Muir, Executive Editor (opinion) at *The Guardian*, argued that '[i]f you look at May's bloodless, technocratic approach to government, you easily understand how those who serve her feel able, or perhaps compelled, to do their jobs unburdened by any demand for compassion or empathy. She sets the tone. She must change it' (Muir 2018). The Prime Minister's response to the Grenfell Tower fire, when she initially refused to meet with victims, was reported as another example of May's 'lack of any moral grounding or emotional intelligence' (Kenber, Elliott, and Coates 2017).

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<sup>11</sup> His real name was Sylvester Marshall but he used the name Albert Thompson in interviews with the media until his immigration status was regularised.

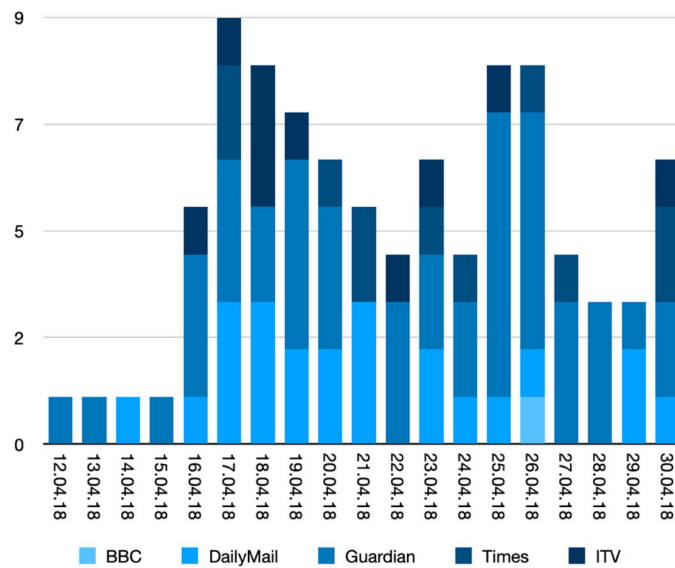
The final narrative allocating 'blame' focuses on Home Secretary **Amber Rudd** as the 'villain' of the story. This narrative predominantly focused on when the Home Secretary established that the Windrush cases were a systemic problem. This coverage concentrated on when she knew about 'net removal targets' in the Home Office and whether or not she had lied to the House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee when giving evidence on the situation. The Home Secretary was the focus of straight reporting in *The Times* that tended to focus on the political crisis, with comparatively little coverage of 'migrant stories'.

### **Temporal distribution of narratives**

Exploring the temporal distribution of these narratives by tracing the dominant narratives chronologically and in combination with peaks in coverage and key events across all five news outlets suggests three different narrative stages in the coverage that directly reflected the developing political crisis in the British Government. *The Guardian's* first article on Paulette Wilson's story was published on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017 (Gentleman 2017). This was followed by a series of feature articles on the experiences and struggles of nine individuals as they tried to navigate the requirements of the Home Office to prove their immigration status. These human-interest stories were not picked up by other news outlets (UK\_I\_4) and can be interpreted as the **first narrative stage**. The final article of the initial series in *The Guardian* was published on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2018 and featured Michael Braithwaite, a special needs teaching assistant who lost his job of 15 years after a new routine immigration check determined he was an 'illegal immigrant' (Gentleman 2018a).

That week, several prominent stakeholders, led by the High Commissioner for Barbados to the United Kingdom, Guy Hewitt, launched a Windrush campaign to increase public awareness and put pressure on the government to act, hosting a press briefing on 12 April 2018 (Hewitt 2020). The group which Hewitt later dubbed the 'coalition of the willing', comprised the High Commissioner for St Kitts and Nevis to the United Kingdom, Professor Kevin M. Isaac, parliamentarians Lord Ouseley and David Lammy, *Guardian* journalists Gary Younge and Amelia Gentleman, and civil society leaders Satbir Singh, Chief Executive Officer of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, and Dr Omar Khan, Director of The Runnymede Trust (Hewitt 2020, 120).

**FIGURE 7. Coverage of the Windrush scandal by date & news outlet, 12 April – 30 April 2018, absolute values**



That same day, *The Guardian* published an article in which High Commissioners from Caribbean Commonwealth nations condemned the Home Office's treatment of long-term Commonwealth-born UK residents as 'illegal immigrants' (Gentleman 2018b) and another the following day in which Church of England Bishops called for the government to fix the 'illegal immigrant anomaly' and for public support, promoting Veron's parliamentary petition (Sherwood 2018). Both articles made the link between the affected Commonwealth-born settled migrants and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of HMT Empire Windrush. Moreover, they emphasised that the heads of government of 52 Commonwealth countries were arriving in the UK the following week for the 25th meeting of the Commonwealth of Nations, with the UK due to assume the role of Chair-in-Office.

The story was picked up by the *Daily Mail* on 14 April, which launched a campaign calling for a lower burden of proof for those who arrived in the UK before 1971 (Hardy 2018). The first article in the *Daily Mail* included summarised material from *The Guardian* and a new interview with one of the individuals featured in *The Guardian* series earlier in the year (Gentleman 2019, 202). However, it was not until the following week that media interest significantly grew, as reflected in Figure 7. Members of the Windrush campaign and Caribbean diplomats were increasingly featured in the media giving interviews on the situation (see, for instance, ITV News [2018]). Then, on Sunday, 15 April, *The Guardian* published an article detailing how Prime Minister Theresa May had refused a request for a meeting on the treatment of Commonwealth citizens with Caribbean heads of government (Gentleman 2018c). Political pressure on the government to respond was growing from all sides.

On Monday, 16 April, Labour MP David Lammy, chair of the all-party parliamentary group on race and community and the son of 'Windrush generation' parents from Guyana, sent a letter signed by 140 MPs from all parties to Theresa May, expressing concern about 'Commonwealth-born, long-term British residents' who had been 'incorrectly identified as illegal immigrants' and calling for a 'swift resolution of this growing crisis' (Gentleman 2018e).

He also held an impassioned speech in the House of Commons that morning, referring to the 'scandal' as 'a day of national shame', which was reported across all outlets (Coates 2018; Drury and Groves 2018; Gentleman 2018d).

An admission by Immigration Minister Caroline Nokes on *BBC Two Daily Politics* that '[we] have made some mistakes, which we cannot continue to make' (BBC Two 2018) marked a shift in the narrative from the British Government and **the start of the second narrative stage**. She stated that the Home Office had a duty to 'regularise' the status of people from the West Indies who had been invited to settle in the UK in the 1950s and 1960s. By noon on 16 April, Home Secretary Amber Rudd issued an unprecedented apology. The front cover of *The Guardian* on Monday, 17 April 2018 (16 April online) reported on the apology alongside the portraits of the nine individuals featured in *The Guardian* series.

Amber Rudd stated that 'how they have been treated has been wrong - has been appalling - and I am sorry' (Gentleman 2018d). *The Guardian* described the apology as a 'highly unusual acknowledgement that the government's hostile immigration policy is having a catastrophic effect on individuals' lives' (Gentleman 2018d). However, an editorial pronounced the government's U-turn 'too little, too late' (The Guardian 2018a). Meanwhile, Prime Minister Theresa May agreed to a meeting with the Caribbean heads of government or their representative's (Hewitt 2020). That evening Rudd's apology, including the announcement that application and citizenship fees would be waived and a new Windrush taskforce set up in the Home Office, dominated all news outlets.

By 17 April, the 'Windrush scandal' was on the front pages of all British newspapers, including *The Times* and the *Daily Mail*, illustrated by the peak in coverage in Figure 7. That day, *The Guardian* also broke the story that the government had destroyed thousands of landing cards<sup>12</sup> of 'Windrush generation' migrants (Gentleman 2018g). That evening *ITV news* reported that the Home Office had admitted that many landing cards had been destroyed in 2010 (ITV News 2018b). Prime Minister Theresa May's apology and promise to Commonwealth leaders two days later to do 'whatever it takes' to 'resolve the anxieties and problems' experienced by the 'Windrush generation', including payment of compensation, reflected the scale of the political crisis (Stewart et al. 2018).

The political 'scandal' now dominated all news coverage. Despite the shift forward reporting on the political crisis in the Government, *The Guardian* continued to publish human-interest stories detailing the impact on individuals. Continuing the theme of the initial series, on 20 April, *The Guardian* published an article titled, 'It's inhumane': the Windrush victims who have lost jobs, homes and loved ones', describing the horrific consequences of the enforcement of the 'hostile environment' policies on 20 individuals (The Guardian 2018b).

The **third narrative stage** was instigated by calls for clarification on the number of 'deportations in error'. A leaked memo from the Home Secretary to the Prime Minister, published in *The Guardian* on 20 April, revealed plans to give the immigration system 'teeth' and 'refocus immigration enforcement's work to concentrate on enforced removals' (Booth and Hopkins 2018). The revelation from the General Secretary of the Union for Border Immigration

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<sup>12</sup> It was later ascertained that the landing cards had not actually been destroyed but moved to the National Archives and were no longer easily accessible to Home Office immigration case officers (Hewitt 2020).

and Customs, Lucy Moreton, that the Home Office had 'net removal targets' while giving evidence to the Commons Home Affairs Committee on 25 April 2018 (Walker 2018), further ignited media interest in forced removals since the comment directly contradicted Rudd, who had explicitly stated that 'we don't have targets for removals' (Elgot 2018). The focus of coverage became when Amber Rudd became aware of 'net removal targets' at the Home Office and whether she had lied to Parliament. The following morning, Rudd changed her tune stating that the Office had been 'using local targets for internal performance management' (Elgot and Stewart 2018).

This U-turn was picked up by all media outlets that day, reflected by the peak in coverage on 25-26 April, demonstrated in Figure 7. Moreover, according to an exclusive in *The Guardian* on 27 April, Rudd was informed about the removal targets by Home Office staff in a six-page internal memo leaked to the newspaper. The document stated that the Home Office had a 'target of achieving 12,800 enforced returns in 2017-18' and boasted that they had 'exceeded [their] target of assisted returns' (Hopkins and Stewart 2018). The revelations regarding 'removals' strengthened the narrative that the government had become obsessed with targets. As former Conservative party chair and cabinet minister, Sayeeda Warsi, stated in *The Guardian*, the party had an 'unhealthy obsession with numbers. We were wedded to unrealistic targets, targets that we still haven't met unfortunately a decade on - and yet we continue to remain wedded to targets' (Perkins 2018). Amber Rudd's political *faux pas* resulted in extensive calls for her to take responsibility and ultimately led to her resignation two days later, on 29 April 2018.

### **Main frames**

As previously discussed, coverage on the 'scandal' was framed by the Windrush myth. The narrative of ex-servicemen who 'arrived in Britain to help to rebuild the country after the Second World War' and 'help rebuild post-war Britain' was particularly pronounced in *The Times* (Ford 2018) and the *Daily Mail* (Drury and Groves 2018). Beyond this meta-narrative, nearly all coverage was critical of the government's handling of the situation. In *The Times*, 66% of articles were critical of the government, the Home Office, Prime Minister Theresa May, or Home Secretary Amber Rudd. The remaining 34% of articles represented straight reporting on events and reflected a neutral frame.

Articles in *The Guardian* were uniformly critical of the government. Mirroring the narrative stages until 16 April, reporting framed the 'scandal' from the perspective of those affected – it was critical of the government but focused on the impact of the debacle on the individuals affected. From approximately 16 April onwards, we can see the frame shift from being critical of the government and the Home Office, utilising the individual stories of those affected (human-interest stories), to framing events as a 'political crisis'. From 25 April onwards, the dominant frame shifts again to focusing on the specific topic of deportations. Coverage concentrates on the number of deportations 'in error', 'net removal targets' at the Home Office, and what the Home Secretary knew and when.

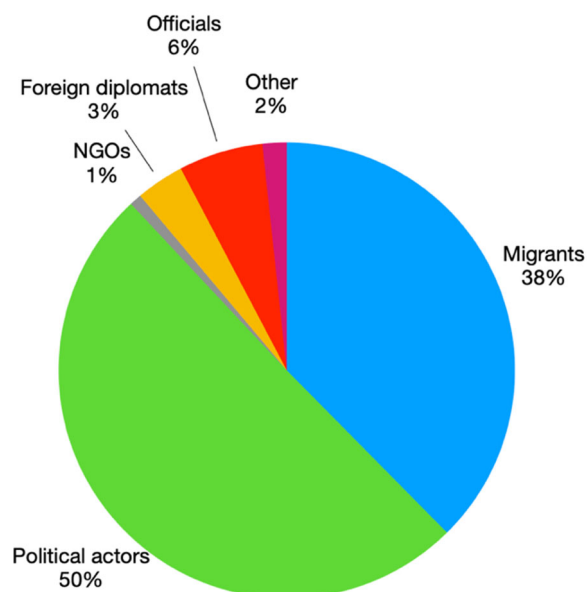
In contrast to expectations given the newspaper's political affiliation and reputation as an 'anti-immigration' tabloid, the coverage in the *Daily Mail* was overwhelmingly critical of the government and supportive of 'Windrush migrants', providing a mix of reporting on the political developments and the impact on individuals caught up in the 'scandal'. TV coverage was also overwhelmingly critical of the government's handling of the situation and combined straight

reporting on the latest developments in the political crisis with snippets from interviews with members of the 'Windrush generation', thereby including the human-interest story in the same news clip.

### **Settings, characters, emotions, symbols and metaphors**

In contrast to the first case study, the 'Windrush scandal' did not occur in a single time or space. This is reflected in the breadth of words denoting the '**setting**' of the situation, which range from the Caribbean countries of birth of those caught up in the 'scandal', their homes, places of work and education, to the political, policy and media spheres in which the 'scandal' was unfolding, and decisions were being made (the 'Home Office', 'the government', 'Downing Street'), and finally locations of immigration enforcement (e.g., 'Yarls Wood Immigration Removal Centre'). Nevertheless, there is a single physical object that appears in nearly every piece of coverage: the documentary evidence required to prove an individual's right to be in the UK ('paperwork', 'papers', 'documents', 'landing cards', 'passports'). There is no discernible variation in representations of the setting of the narratives between the different news outlets.

**FIGURE 8. Characters in coverage of the Windrush scandal, 12 April – 30 April 2018, percentage**

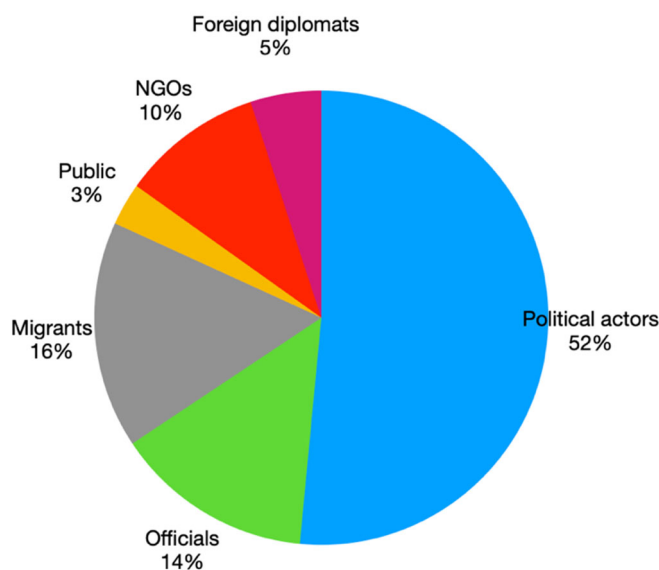


The dominant **characters** in the coverage are, once again, political actors (50%), as illustrated by Figure 8. The politicians that are mentioned most frequently are predominantly members of the British government (73%), in particular, Theresa May both in her capacity as Prime Minister when the story broke or as the former Home Secretary and Home Secretary Amber Rudd. Members of the Labour opposition party represent 17% of the total political actors identified as main characters in the coverage.

The second most frequently referenced characters in the coverage are those caught up in the ‘scandal’ (38%)<sup>13</sup> who are either featured as a collective group (57%) or as individuals (43%), predominantly based on the most high-profile cases set out in the series of stories published in *The Guardian*. Within the context of the Commonwealth of Nations heads of government meeting and the campaign launched by the High Commissioner for Barbados, Guy Hewitt, foreign diplomats also featured in this case (3%). The only discernible variation across news outlets was that *The Times* featured fewer individual ‘migrants’ as central characters, focusing instead on political actors and straight reporting of political developments.

The dominance of political actors is also reflected in the frequency of direct quotes and **reactions** to the ‘Windrush scandal’. As Figure 9. demonstrates, an overwhelming 52% of direct quotes in traditional media were from political actors, of which 53% were from Conservative politicians and 35% were from the Labour opposition party. This is followed by direct quotes from ‘migrants’ (individuals caught up in the ‘scandal’) (16%). We also see Home Office officials frequently quoted (14%). In this case, ‘foreign diplomats’ nearly exclusively represented commentary from the High Commissioner for Barbados, Guy Hewitt, suggesting his advocacy on behalf of ‘Windrush migrants’ was being successfully taken up in the media. No significant variation between newspapers or between newspapers and television coverage was identified, regardless of their political affiliation or editorial stance on immigration.

**FIGURE 9. Voices in coverage of the Windrush scandal, 12 April – 30 April 2018, percentage**



Examining the **labels** and qualifications applied to ‘migrants’ highlights some variation between news outlets. *The Guardian* used the widest range of labels that foregrounded that the people being discussed were British residents (‘long-term Commonwealth-born UK residents’, ‘Windrush-era citizens’, ‘Windrush generation’, ‘Windrush-generation British residents’,

<sup>13</sup> Note that they represent the ‘migrant’ group in this case study. However, as detailed in the introduction, their legal status and right to British citizenship as former citizens of the UK and Colonies and Commonwealth citizens is more complex.

‘Commonwealth-born, long-term UK residents’, ‘retirement-age UK residents’, ‘children of Windrush-era migrants’). *The Guardian* also consistently included qualifying details about the individuals (‘people who arrived in the UK as children from the Caribbean’). Meanwhile, the labels predominantly used in *The Times*, the *Daily Mail* and TV coverage were a little simpler (‘Windrush generation’, ‘Windrush immigrants’, ‘Commonwealth citizens’, ‘Caribbean immigrants’). Another intriguing observation was that the labels used by government members (observable in direct quotations) appeared to change as the political crisis escalated. By 20 April, the Prime Minister is quoted stating that ‘these people are British’ (Stewart et al. 2018)

The coverage focuses on the ‘Windrush generation’ as the recipients of actions by others and the system (‘denied health services’, ‘prevented from working’, ‘facing destitution, detention and possible deportation’ or ‘encountering serious immigration problems’). However, the sense of limited agency and helplessness at the hands of the British immigration system is juxtaposed with the active and law-abiding lives that these same individuals had lived in the UK for decades (‘studying’, ‘working’, ‘bringing up children’, ‘paying taxes’, ‘contributing to society’). Mental processes and emotions of those caught up in the ‘scandal’ are associated with the profound ‘fear’, ‘stress’, ‘anxiety’, ‘worry’ and ‘upset’ of the ‘struggle to justify their existence’ and living under the constant threat of deportation from a country ‘believed to be their own’. There is no significant variation between news outlets.

This juxtaposition between the lives created by the settled migrants and their treatment as a result of enforcing the ‘hostile environment’ policies is further highlighted by a recurring theme in *The Guardian*: the notion of cruelty. Whether referring to the immigration system as ‘cruelty by design’ (Younge 2018a), referring to the ‘cruelty’ of the ‘hostile environment’ policies (Gentleman 2018f), or to individual political elites - ‘May leads with coldness and cruelty’ (Muir 2018) – the discourse provokes anger towards the government and the Home Office in the audience and empathy for the individuals affected.

**Images** also played a significant role in building the narratives of the ‘Windrush scandal’. Firstly, all newspapers and TV news used archival images of the newly arrived migrants in the 1950s and 1960 as well as the *Pathé* newsreel footage of the arrival of HMT Empire Windrush in their coverage. Scholars have identified the *Pathé* newsreel footage as central to the emergence of the Windrush myth (Kushner 2012). Moreover, the imagery emphasised the historical nature of the migrant movement and that this group of people were invited workers from Commonwealth countries. The use of archival footage is particularly pronounced in TV coverage that frequently incorporated historic footage with a voice-over and interviews with stakeholders, politicians and individuals caught up in the ‘scandal’.

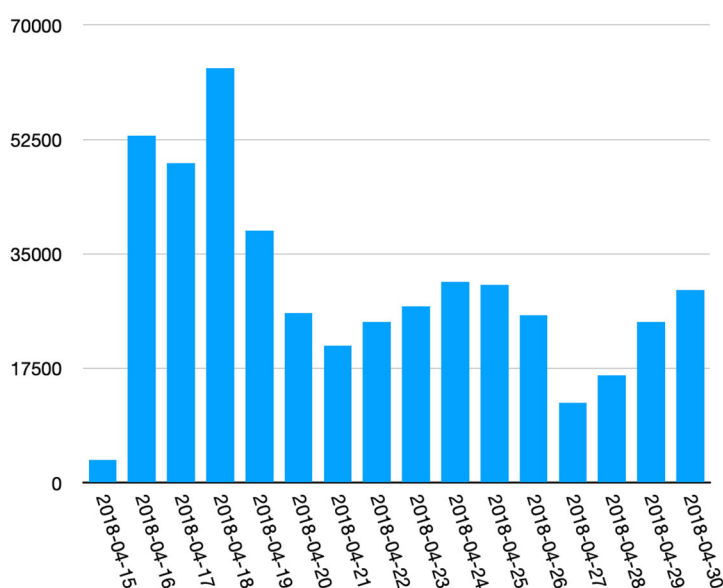
Secondly, in contrast to the stolen shots in the Calais ‘migrant crisis’, coverage of Windrush was accompanied by portraits of those affected. These photos printed in *The Guardian* consisted of high-quality portraits of the protagonists of the human-interest stories looking straight into the camera and often photographed in their own homes or local environment. These images had a profound humanising effect. Moreover, articles in *The Guardian* were frequently accompanied by short, embedded clips from interviews, such as Albert Thompson (real name Sylvester Marshall) describing his shock when he received a £54,000 bill for his NHS cancer treatment.

## Dominant narratives on social media (Twitter)

In addition to the 90 news items, I also analysed the content of the 100 most retweeted content about the 'Windrush scandal' on *Twitter*. The hashtags selected were #windrush OR #windrushscandal. The selection directly reflects a quantitative analysis of the most frequently used hashtags in relation to the debacle during the same timeframe, which identified #windrush/#Windrush and #Windrushscandal as vastly exceeding the frequency of any other hashtags on the topic. This provided a set of data of the most retweeted posts during the time frame under investigation. The other most frequent hashtags included #HostileEnvironment, #Grenfell, and #Brexit suggesting similar issue-linkage on social media as in traditional media.

A longitudinal quantitative analysis of the frequency of tweets on Windrush supported the proposition that the salience of the issue peaked during the second half of April 2018, with a significant jump in the number of tweets on the topic on 16 April 2018, the date that the 'scandal' featured on the front cover of *The Guardian* for the first time. A closer look at the data over the two-week period, illustrated by Figure 10., suggests *Twitter* activity reflected the pattern in traditional media with similar if slightly less pronounced, peaks in the number of tweets from 16-18 April, around 25 April, and again on 30 April 2018.

**FIGURE 10. Frequency of daily tweets on the Windrush scandal, 12 April – 30 April 2018, absolute values**



In contrast to the previous case, tweets on Windrush are predominantly authored by politicians (42% in total). The top 100 tweets are particularly dominated by posts by members of the Labour party (35%), including Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, Shadow Home Secretary Diane Abbott, and Labour MPs David Lammy and Angela Rayner, among others. The most retweeted tweet on Windrush was posted by Labour MP David Lammy and comprised a summary of his remarks in the House of Commons on 16 April with a link to the live footage on Parliament TV. It received 9435 retweets. In fact, the top three most retweeted posts were authored by Lammy, who appears a total of 16 times in the top 100 tweets on Windrush. With 752124 followers at the time, he was retweeted an average of 2507 times.

Members of the public represent the second largest group (32%), followed by the media and journalists (26%). Reflecting David Lammy's popularity, posts by Amelia Gentleman, the *Guardian* journalist who broke the Windrush story, appear three times in the top 10 most retweeted tweets and 16 times in the top 100 tweets. The content of tweets largely mirrors the narratives in traditional media, reflecting salient moments as the 'scandal' unfolded in the public domain, be it in the media or in Parliament. For instance, events highlighted on *Twitter* include David Lammy's address in Parliament ('inhumane treatment at the hands of the Home Office', 'If you lay down with dogs, you get fleas!', 'a day of national shame'), Theresa May's initial refusal to meet with Caribbean leaders, the apologies by May, Amber Rudd, and Caroline Nokes, the destruction of landing cards, deportations 'in error', human-interest stories on the affected individuals (in particular Albert Thompson's access to cancer treatment), and finally Rudd's resignation.

All the tweets are critical of the 'scandal' and supportive of the 'Windrush generation', without exception or any significant variation between politicians, journalists and members of the public. The dominant frame is best described as a critique of the government ('when was the last time this government did anything competent, kind, decent, successful', 'not only morally bankrupt but pure self-sabotage'). We can identify some variation between posts on the impact of the 'scandal' on individuals ('Albert Thompson still in dark about cancer treatment despite May's promise'). However, the vast majority of tweets express dismay ('utterly disgusting') and assign blame to the 'hostile environment' policies ('vile, cruel, racist policy'), the Home Office ('destroyed Windrush landing cards'), Theresa May ('should be taking personal responsibility'), or Amber Rudd ('lied to Parliament'). Not all criticism by the Labour party was levelled at the Conservative government; in two tweets Diane Abbott acknowledges that the Labour party leadership should have voted against the 2014 Immigration Bill. Meanwhile, leader of the Liberal Democrats, Vince Cable, argued 'these people deserve to be British citizens, to question their identity and legitimacy is callous and illogical', receiving nearly 1000 retweets.

The theme of 'cruelty by design' is also present on *Twitter* ('#windrush cruelty was NOT a mistake', 'appalling cruelty exposed'). We can also observe issue-linkage to the Government's promise of a 'Global Britain' and post-Brexit Commonwealth trade, with one tweet commenting that the government had now destroyed 'the summit, relationship and reputation', 'what a joke'. We can also observe some evidence of counter-narratives. For example, a tweet by Amelia Gentleman, suggested that the focus on deportations was 'a red herring' since the 'wider issue' was the much larger number of people who had been 'ruined in other ways' (lost jobs, made homeless etc.). The overwhelming emotion invoked in the audience across all tweets is 'anger'.

Finally, in the case of the 'Windrush scandal' we can identify significant cross-fertilisation of narratives between traditional media and social media. Not only are the dominant voices on social media the same journalists and politicians giving public statements on the 'scandal' via traditional media but also 25% of tweets directly link to newspaper articles on the 'scandal'. A total of 12 of tweets link to articles in *The Guardian* and 4 to the left-wing tabloid, the Daily Mirror, reflecting the journalists and political affiliation of the politicians engaging on the topic on social media.

Given the dissemination of narratives from traditional media, we can also identify the different narrative stages on *Twitter*. Initially, tweets focus on the impact of the scandal – expressed in David Lammy's statement to Parliament – before shifting to the political crisis and the apologies

from the Home Secretary and the Prime Minister, and finally shifting focus onto the 'deportation targets' at the Home Office, picking up on Amber Rudd's conflicting statements on targets – 'The Home Office is not fit for purpose' – and ultimately her resignation. Social media is also self-referential with four tweets by Labour politicians in particular reposting a tweet from January 2014 by Jeremy Corbyn questioning the potential consequences of the Immigration Act 2014.

#### *b) Narrative making and success*

#### **WHAT: What are the features of dominant narratives in traditional and social media?**

A central theme of the coverage of the 'Windrush scandal' was the human-interest stories, first published in *The Guardian*, that captivated and engaged the audience, inspiring countless people with similar stories to come forward and influencing public opinion (UK\_I\_4). A key feature of these stories was the detailed descriptions of the experiences of the individuals whose lives had been ruined by the situation, accompanied by high-quality portrait images of the protagonists.

According to an interviewee, it was an editorial decision at *The Guardian* to invest in the commission of high-quality portraits of people in their homes or local environment to proactively humanise the stories' protagonists (UK\_I\_4). Moreover, the human-interest stories in *The Guardian* and subsequent online coverage were often accompanied by embedded videos featuring segments of the original interviews with those impacted. These editorial decisions personified the victims of the stories, giving them faces and personalities, provoking 'compassion' in the audience and 'anger' at the immigration system, the Home Office, and politicians.

Statements made by key political actors also featured heavily in the coverage. Whether it was Immigration Minister, Caroline Nokes' admission that 'mistakes had been made', Home Secretary Amber Rudd's apology for the 'appalling' treatment of individuals, Prime Minister Theresa May's apology to the heads of government of Commonwealth countries, or Labour MP David Lammy's day of 'national shame' remark, by 16 April momentum had grown. The government had finally succumbed to political pressure to respond to the crisis resulting in a slew of newsworthy statements and commentary from the top levels of government.

Finally, Patrick Vernon's parliamentary petition titled 'Amnesty for anyone who was a minor that arrived In Britain between 1948 to 1971' (parliament petition 216539) made the connection between the treatment of long-term Commonwealth-born UK residents at the hands of the Home Office and the upcoming 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of HMT Empire Windrush. In the process, Vernon created a collective brand for the people caught up in the 'scandal', calling them the 'Windrush generation'. As previously stated, these people were predominantly part of later migration movements from the West Indies. However, the label generated an 'imagined community' with their (mis)treatment at the hands of the Home Office in common.

According to an interviewee, despite the inaccuracy of the terminology, the label helped simplify a complex issue and developed a narrative to illustrate the consequences of the 'hostile environment' policies (UK\_I\_4). In a nutshell, by linking the situation to an accepted narrative of the past, the label created a narrative that was comprehensible and plausible for the public. The label was used in the context of the 'scandal' for the first time in *The Guardian*

on 9 April 2018, in the newspaper's final article in its initial series on individuals caught up in the enforcement of immigration measures. By the following Monday (16 April 2018) the term appeared in the title of a page-two article in the *Daily Mail* and was in *The Times* by 17 April 2018.

**WHO: Who gains access to the public arena and which structural positions and strategies allow them to shape prevailing narratives?**

The analysis of central characters and voices in the coverage illustrates the dominance of political actors in British media reporting on immigration issues. Given the political crisis resulting from the 'scandal', key members of the Conservative government took centre stage across all media outlets. That said, statements by opposition politicians, not least Labour MP David Lammy's 'day of national shame' remarks also received considerable coverage. Moreover, the appearance of 'foreign diplomats' as one of the voices in some stories suggests that Hewitt's 'coalition of the willing' successfully advocated for the 'Windrush generation' via the media.

As previously stated, coverage of Windrush was initially driven by *The Guardian* and a small number of journalists who investigated the story. *The Guardian* gave journalists, such as Amelia Gentleman, considerable autonomy to pursue the story over months of research and conducting interviews, which formed the basis of the 'migrant stories' in *The Guardian* (UK\_I\_4). This suggests that the newspaper and journalists applied a proactive and long-term strategy to increase awareness of the scandal among the public and hold decision-makers to account. Even once the story had spread to other news outlets, Gentleman continued to author or co-authored the articles in *The Guardian* (28% of *Guardian* articles analysed). According to Guy Hewitt, the High Commissioner for Barbados to the United Kingdom, 'without the tenacity of the journalist Gentleman and, most importantly, the courageous testimonies of a handful of those injured in the 'Windrush scandal', we would not be where we are now' (Hewitt 2020, 118).

Moreover, in the case of the 'Windrush scandal', journalists such as Gentleman placed 'migrant stories' at the centre of their reporting, giving those affected by the crisis a platform and a rarely heard voice to tell their stories. The prominent role of key journalists and politicians was also reflected on *Twitter*, with leading Labour politicians and Gentleman dominating the top 100 most retweeted posts on the topic and disseminating the core narratives as they emerged in the political realm, predominantly as a result of commentary on political statements in Parliament, and in traditional media.

**WHERE: Where do narratives emerge and what path do they take among the various social actors, media, and platforms?**

The 'Windrush scandal' is a unique example that demonstrates the role of the media and investigative journalism in holding governments and decision-makers to account. The impact of the 'hostile environment' policies on British residents was initially revealed in articles published in *The Guardian*. *The Guardian* also published several exclusives during the time under analysis, including the destruction of 'Windrush-generation' era landing cards and the leaked memo on 'net removal targets' in the Home Office, the political fallout from which resulted in the Home Secretary's resignation. Moreover, the empirical analysis suggests other newspapers, including the *Daily Mail*, summarised content from the interviews with 'Windrush

migrants' first published in *The Guardian* (Gentleman 2019, 202). This suggests that *The Guardian* not only 'broke' the story but also drove the narrative on the 'Windrush scandal' in the British media.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that other news outlets showed little interest in the story during the five months prior to the second half of April 2018. Describing the sudden media interest in the story, one commentary stated:

*For many months now, the Guardian reporter Amelia Gentleman has trodden a lonely path in trying to highlight these stories, without exciting the sort of supplementary interest from other media that might persuade ministers and their advisers that failure to do so placed their own futures in jeopardy. But in recent days, other newspapers and broadcasters have begun to expose the government's failure to act. The equation, and with it the level of risk to politicians and bureaucrats, has changed. That speaks to the power of the media even now to hold the system to account, a vital component of our democracy. (Muir 2018)*

By the third week of April, the political crisis had escalated to the extent that senior political editors and political correspondents across media outlets were reporting on the issue. This generated considerable pressure on the government to respond to the crisis. Intriguingly, in the case of Windrush, we can also observe a significant cross-over between traditional media and social media. A total of 25% of tweets analysed included links to press articles, especially articles published in *The Guardian*.

**WHEN: In which contexts and circumstances do certain narratives obtain a competitive edge?**

The story only spread from *The Guardian* to other news outlets once it was apparent it had become a political crisis. The issue had become sufficiently salient through the efforts of a campaign initiated by the Windrush coalition increasing the newsworthiness of the story. The involvement of the Caribbean heads of government reported in *The Guardian* appears to have reflected a key moment. The campaign was also further supported by public involvement. The parliamentary petition calling for amnesty for the 'Windrush generation' reached over 100,000 signatures, the threshold for a debate in the House of Commons, by 16 April 2018, suggesting a significant amount of public interest. The debate on the 'Windrush scandal' took place in the House of Commons on 30 April 2018.

The sense of political crisis also dramatically increased the breadth of coverage, including breaking news as well as analysis of who was to blame for the crisis. The empirical analysis suggests that public salience and political momentum was driven by statements by key political actors, in particular acknowledgements of mistakes made and apologies by the Home Secretary and the Prime Minister in Parliament. This in turn activated media interest beyond reporting in *The Guardian* and generated 'media hype' (Wien and Elmelund-Præstekær 2009). Leaked documents and revelations 'broken' in *The Guardian* further contributed to generating media attention.

## 2.3 Manchester Arena bombing

On 22 May 2017, Salman Abedi, a 22-year-old British citizen with Libyan heritage (second generation), detonated a nail bomb in the foyer of the Manchester Arena as people were leaving a concert by American pop singer Ariana Grande. The attack killed 22 people and injured over 800 people, many of them children. The following day, ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack (BBC News 2017a). Whilst evidence of Islamic States' involvement was limited, it was initially suspected that Salman Abedi did not act alone. His brother was arrested along with three other men in Manchester in the days following the attack. Meanwhile, Abedi's father and younger brother were arrested in Libya. 22 people were arrested in total in connection with the attack. However, all were later released, and it was ultimately concluded that whilst some people may have been aware of Abedi's plans, he acted alone.

The Manchester attack was the most severe terrorist attack in the UK since the 7/7 central London bombings in 2005, which killed 52 people and injured a further 700. It was condemned both at home and abroad for 'deliberately targeting innocent, defenceless children and young people' (BBC News 2017e). The Ariana Grande fans that made up the crowd consisted predominantly of young girls, teenagers, and their families. All political parties agreed to suspend campaigning for the British general elections on 8 June 2017 in the wake of the attack until 25 May 2017. Moreover, the bombing occurred just two months after Khalid Masood, a Muslim convert, drove a vehicle into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge in London, killing four people, stabbing, and killing a police officer before being shot by police.

In contrast to the previous two case studies, the Manchester bombing was not a 'migration event' per se. However, the link with Islamist extremism implicated (British) Muslims in the attack. In the month following the bombing, anti-Muslim hate crimes in Manchester increased by 500% compared with the previous year (Halliday 2017). Moreover, existing research suggests that terrorist attacks, especially Jihadist terrorism, have increased xenophobic and anti-immigration sentiment in the West in recent years (Nail 2016; Mancosu, Cappiali, and Pereira 2018). Research by Mancosu and Ferrin Pereira (2021) supports this proposition finding that the Manchester bombing contributed to worsening attitudes towards immigrants and refugees in the UK.

Consequently, this case study investigates the portrayal of immigration and migrant communities in the aftermath of the Manchester bombing and how narratives of terror attacks and their perpetrators are linked in traditional and social media. Salman Abedi was the son of refugees who came to the UK in 1992 after fleeing Ghaddafi's regime and had since returned to Libya. Therefore, the analysis investigates the extent to which narratives in the British media explicitly or implicitly reify a link between immigration and terrorism. Special attention is paid to the portrayal of terrorism/extremism, victimhood, Muslims, Islam and whether the Manchester terror attack fed into broader narratives on refugees, asylum seekers and immigration in the UK.

### *a) Main, collateral, and counter-narratives in traditional and social media*

It has been argued that not enough attention has been paid to the emergence of discourses in the immediate aftermath of terror attacks (Mancosu and Ferrin Pereira 2021). Hence, I selected the pertinent newspaper articles and television clips on the Manchester bombing

during the first week following the attack (22 May – 29 May 2017). In the direct aftermath of the attack, we can observe the emergence of narratives in the British media related to what occurred, the victims, the perpetrator and his motivations, and the response from the local community, as well as domestic and international audiences. The keywords used to identify articles in the three newspapers were ‘Manchester attack’ OR ‘Manchester bombing’ AND ‘Manchester Arena’. Television news clips were identified using a similar keyword search on the news outlets’ websites and their corresponding YouTube channels.

**TABLE 5. Coverage of the Manchester bombing by news outlet, 22 May – 29 May 2017, absolute values**

News outlet	News items	Front page	Airtime (seconds)
Daily Mail/The Mail on Sunday	12	5	
The Guardian	28	5	
The Times/ The Sunday Times	13	4	
BBC news clips	18	n/a	2463
ITV news clips	8	n/a	1682
Total	79	14	4145

During the one-week period, the five news outlets produced an average of 11.1 reports per day (see Table 5.). This included 14 front-page articles in the press. The *BBC* and *ITV news* clips include live reporting from the studio in the immediate aftermath of the attack, live footage of the attack and aftermath with a narrating voice-over, and edited reports in the days that followed on arrests, threat levels, the perpetrator and the impact on Manchester and its community. This footage was often combined with live interviews with eyewitnesses, the Greater Manchester Metropolitan Police, and local and national politicians.

**TABLE 6. Dominant narratives on the Manchester bombing, 22 May – 29 May 2017**

<b>Consequences/impact</b>	The investigation Victims Solidarity
<b>Responsibility (perpetrator)</b>	Bomber’s identity Libyan heritage Drugs/mental health
<b>Root causes</b>	Critique of Muslims/Islam Defence of Muslims/Islam Extremism in Manchester British foreign policy

## **Dominant narratives in traditional media (press and television)**

Despite the variation between case studies, the 'crisis' frame of a terror attack enables a similar typology to group the dominant narratives as the previous two cases. As illustrated by Table 6., the dominant narratives fall into one of three categories. The first represents narratives that describe the impact of the attack on the victims and on the local community in Manchester and the UK. The second category focuses on the perpetrator and his motivations. The final category focuses on narratives that outline the perceived societal, structural, and systemic 'root causes' of the terror attack.

### **Consequences/impact**

A significant proportion of coverage of the Manchester bombing was not in narrative form (storytelling) but consisted of straight reporting on factual information on the incident. This included articles and 'breaking news' stories on television, reporting on the latest developments in **the investigation** into the attack. These accounts consisted predominantly of reconstructions of events and initial reactions from key actors, voices of authority and experts. The protagonists of this coverage are primarily made up of the police and security services as they made arrests in the Manchester area and the UK, increased the threat level of another terrorist attack in the UK to 'critical' and released information on the identity of the bomber. The repertoire was similar across all news outlets. However, it was dominated by TV news coverage reporting live from the studio as new information became available or key actors, such as the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police, Ian Hopkins, addressed the public via the media.

The second group of narratives in this category consisted of emotive human-interest stories on the 22 individuals who lost their lives in the attack. As the **victims** of the attack were officially named, coverage included tributes from friends and family and details of their lives. One of the themes of this coverage is a focus on the gender and age of the victims. This is reflected in the labels and descriptors used to describe them ('young girls', 'groups of children', 'young people', 'teenagers', 'innocent', 'beautiful little girl', 'beautiful soul'). A feature of the narrative on the victims was that the attacker had targeted 'innocent' 'young' people. This notion was central to Prime Minister Theresa May's first statement following the attack on 23 May:

*All acts of terrorism are cowardly attacks on innocent people, but this attack stands out for its appalling sickening cowardice deliberately targeting innocent defenceless children and young people who should have been enjoying one of the most memorable nights of their lives (BBC News 2017e)*

The narrative is strengthened by portraits of the victims provided by friends and family that accompany articles and TV coverage.

Another dimension of this coverage focused on the experiences of the concertgoers, foregrounding the suffering and destruction on the night. These stories concentrated on the 'high drama' of the incident, often drawing on footage taken on mobile phones from within the Arena and eyewitness accounts, thereby increasing the story's impact. In this sense, accounts of human suffering were woven into journalists' accounts of the violence, horror, and senseless

of the attack. The emotion invoked in the audience is predominantly 'fear' and 'sadness' ('grief', 'distress', 'suffering', 'shock'). These narratives were observed in all legacy media.

The third narrative in this group relates to a sense of **solidarity and heroism** in the face of the atrocity. A reoccurring theme in the coverage is the notion of resilience in the wake of an attack that was designed to 'divide' communities and the country. This sentiment is expressed by several political actors, including Prime Minister Theresa May, Andy Burnham, the Mayor of Manchester, and Sir Richard Leese, Leader of Manchester City Council (ITV News 2017d). In a TV address the day after the bombing, Theresa May said:

*The cowardice of the attacker met the bravery of the emergency services and the people of Manchester. The attempt to divide us met countless acts of kindness that brought people closer together and in the days ahead, those must be the things we remember* (ITV News 2017d)

The same day, Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn stated that 'we do not allow our communities to be divided by this kind of appalling atrocious act of violence', during an interview with the *BBC* (BBC News 2017c).

The narrative of solidarity was further solidified by stories of heroism and kindness in the wake of the attack. An ITV clip titled 'the **Spirit of Manchester**' told the story of a homeless man panhandling outside the Arena when the bomb detonated. He spent all night helping the injured. Describing the 'hero' of the story, the narrator states that 'homeless or not, he's a Mancunian, and he had to help' (ITV News 2017c). Meanwhile, recalling the incident, the protagonist said:

*... when we've seen children like that with blood and we're having to pull nails out of their arms and stuff and a couple out of this little girl's face, I mean...obviously we've got to give a little bit back as well and that's why we stayed last night* (ITV News 2017c)

Another example was a 'cabby' (taxi driver) offering free lifts all night. When interviewed by *ITV news*, he stated: 'we're a proud people, a proud bunch of Northern people, and we help each other out; when time get touch - we help - we help each other out and that's the Mancunian spirit' (ITV News 2017c). These stories of people coming together to offer help and support invoke an emotional tone of 'compassion' and 'hope' in the face of the atrocity.

Along similar lines, during a vigil in the centre of Manchester on the evening of 23 May 2017, English poet Tony Walsh recited an emotional ode to Manchester titled 'This is the Place'. Walsh stood alongside a diverse group of religious leaders and the Mayor of Manchester. The crowd cheered when Walsh described Manchester as the birthplace of Emmeline Pankhurst, the political activist who organised the UK's suffragette movement, of North Soul music and computers. The vigil was broadcast live on *ITV news*, and the short clip of the recital was disseminated widely (ITV News 2017e). The Great Manchester Run that went ahead on 28 May 2017 and the One Love Manchester benefit concert on 4 June 2017 received similar coverage. Stories of solidarity and heroism were identified in coverage by the *BBC*, *ITV* and *The Guardian*.

## Responsibility (the perpetrator)

Narratives in the second group relate to portrayals of the perpetrator of the attack, **Salman Abedi**. Stories on the bomber's identity varied – and were occasionally contradictory – as the investigation into the incident progressed and depending on the narrator and the news source. The first mention of Salman Abedi's **Libyan heritage** emerged in a *BBC news* clip on 23 May (BBC News 2017d). He was the son of Libyan refugees who were granted asylum in the UK in 1992 after fleeing Gaddafi's regime but had returned to their home country in 2011 after, or possibly to fight in, the revolution. They were now thought to live between Tripoli and Manchester, although accounts varied.

Similarly, limited information on Abedi's possible ties to terrorist groups in Libya and Syria resulted in diverging profiles of the bomber in the media. Whilst the *BBC* initially described Abedi as a 'naïve individual' and speculated over the possibility that he was a 'mule' carrying the explosive device for someone else (BBC News 2017f); the *Daily Mail* portrayed the bomber as a 'caliphate soldier' who had undergone 'specialist' training in Syria and developed the expertise to build the improvised explosive device himself (Daily Mail 2017). Moreover, it emerged that family members had raised concerns that 'he was dangerous', and two members of the Libyan Muslim community in south Manchester had contacted the national counterterrorism hotline raising concerns about his 'extreme and violent views' in 2014 and again in 2015 (BBC News 2017g).

Meanwhile, in a *Guardian* article, a member of the Libyan community in Manchester described Abedi as 'such a quiet boy, always very respectful towards me... Salman was very quiet. He is such an unlikely person to have done this.' (Cobain et al. 2017). In stark contrast, an article on the front page of the *Daily Mail* on 25 May, titled 'The Jihadi Family', described Abedi and his family as suspected jihadis with close ties to Al Qaeda (Wright and Brown 2017). One narrative was that Salman Abedi had been recruited by a 'well-known jihadi recruiter' for Islamic State in Manchester and had possible ties to Mohamed Abrini. The latter was linked to the terror attacks in Brussels and Paris and was known to have visited Manchester in 2015 (Wright and Brown 2017).

Furthermore, Abedi's father was described as a 'revolutionary fighter' who had previously expressed support for an Al Qaeda-linked group in Syria; and a 'suspected jihadi who left the UK in 2011 to fight against Colonel Gaddafi in his native Libya' (Daily Mail 2017). Another *Daily Mail* article focused on Abedi's father's purported friendship with Abu Anas Al-Libi, a former Al Qaeda member named by US President George W. Bush as one of the 'most dangerous people in the world' (Reid 2017). The insinuation was that Abedi was trying to follow in his father's footsteps. Moreover, Abedi's brothers allegedly knew about his plans, and his younger brother was planning a terrorist act in Tripoli, Libya. Even Abedi's mother, Samia Tabbal, was described as a 'close friend' of the wife of Al-Libi, 'an Al Qaeda veteran', who was suspected of involvement in the bombings of two US embassies in Africa in 1998 (Wright and Brown 2017).

Another narrative was that Salman Abedi's 'problems' stemmed from an addiction to **drugs** and alcohol. It was argued that 'repeated drug abuse' had left him with severe 'paranoia' (Glover 2017). This narrative was legitimised by interviews with members of the local Muslim community in Manchester. Insiders from Abedi's mosque emphasised his '**unstable mental**

**health'** (Gardham and Hamilton 2017). Moreover, it was claimed that he was part of a growing issue with gang culture and drugs in the city. The settings of narratives related to Salman Abedi's identity include Manchester, as his place of birth, residence and disenfranchisement; the Libyan community in south Manchester and his local mosque, as a possible site of radicalisation; Libya, concerning his family ties and another possible site of radicalisation; and, finally, Syria, where it was reported that he had undergone 'terrorist training'.

Whilst all news media reported on the latest information about the attacker, the *Daily Mail* and *The Times* dedicated a comparatively high proportion of coverage to the bomber's identity and his family's suspected links to terrorist organisations or groups. This coverage was often accompanied by images of Salman Abedi, sourced from social media or CCTV footage released by the police. Whereas the CCTV stills contributed to portrayals of Abedi as a criminal, the social media images had the somewhat contradictory impact of humanising the perpetrator and presenting him as no different from other disenfranchised youth in the UK.

### Root causes

The final group of narratives explore the Manchester bombing as a symptom of wider societal issues. These narratives address the question of why and how it was possible that someone who was born in the UK - who went to school and university in Britain - could end up committing such a heinous act.

Although predominantly limited to editorials and opinion pieces published in the *Daily Mail*, one narrative on the root causes of terrorism constituted a **critique of Muslims/Islam**. An editorial in the *Daily Mail* titled 'Why is the liberal left so reluctant to call this man what he is: an Islamist terrorist' argued that the 'problem of extremism lies with the Islamic faith' and 'all recent attacks in Paris, Nice, Brussels, Stockholm...were done in the name of Islam' (Glover 2017). Describing Abedi as an 'Islamic fanatic', the article criticises Manchester's Mayor Andy Burnham for not taking a harder line, stating that whilst it is 'right to distinguish between decent, moderate Muslims and violent extremists', the challenges of extremism cannot be met without admitting there is an 'issue' 'peculiar to the Muslim community'.

In contrast to Islamophobic discourses, we can also observe a counter-narrative in **defence of Muslims and Islam**. The most prominent voice is that of Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham. In an extensive interview published in *The Times*, on 27 May, Burnham described a 30% rise in Islamophobic attacks in Manchester since the bombing and expressed his determination to prevent the Muslim community from becoming a 'scapegoat'. He also criticised the government's counter-terrorism Prevent programme, stating that it was fuelling division in communities. Burnham argued that there was a need to separate extremism from 'the peaceful religion of Islam', stating:

*the individual who did this no more represents the Muslims in Greater Manchester than the person who killed Jo Cox represents the white British community of West Yorkshire. Terrorism wants to provoke a cycle of violence, conflict and distrust. If you start wanting retribution, you are falling into the trap that the terrorists have made.* (Sylvester 2017)

He went on to claim that:

*the Brussels-based Paris attackers were living a lifestyle that was not in any way, shape or form true to the Muslim faith so on what basis do we just casually put that label on? They're not Muslims - it's that line from Walthamstow, 'You ain't no Muslim bruv'. There's a confusion that is used by extremists on both sides - Islamophobic extremists use it to say the whole religion is essentially corrupting. I'm as tough on terrorism and criminality as anybody ... but you've got to be careful to separate the two things out.* (Sylvester 2017)

Burnham's interview introduces another narrative feature prevalent in the coverage: the notion of the 'good' and 'bad' Muslim. This dichotomy is supported by reactions to the bombing from members of the Muslim community in Manchester. Both *The Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* quote Mohammed Saeed, a senior figure at Didsbury Mosque and Islamic Centre, stating that Abedi stopped going to the mosque in 2015 as he disagreed with Saeed's 'anti-IS sermons'. Describing the mosque, he said it was a 'moderate place that welcomed Muslims from Arabia, Africa, Asia and Europe' (Cobain et. Al. 2017). *The Guardian*, in particular, gave voice to the Muslim community. In a denouncement of the attack, the British-Libyan community in Manchester stated that '[t]hese depraved acts have no basis in Islam. All those responsible for senselessly destroying the lives of innocent people do not deserve to live in our community and should be behind bars' (Siddique et al. 2017).

Nevertheless, all news outlets highlighted apparent 'problems' with **extremism in Manchester**. As one *BBC* journalist stated, 'I think the Libyan connection is interesting because of course there was a strong involvement of British jihadis from Manchester in Libya at the time that Colonel Gaddafi was deposed from power in Libya' (BBC News 2017d). Both the *Daily Mail* and *The Guardian* also mention Abdalraouf Abdallah, who was jailed a year earlier after being convicted of funding terrorism and preparing acts of terrorism. The *Daily Mail* also described Manchester as 'one of the main centres of anti-Gaddafi activity in Britain', highlighting suspected links between the mosque frequented by Salman Abedi and his family and British Islamic State fighters.

Finally, the last narrative that is dominant in the coverage during the first week following the attack is that the **failure of British foreign policy** and the destabilisation of Muammar Gaddafi's regime in Libya by Western forces lead to the rise of Islamic fundamentalists in the region. The connection between British foreign policy and terrorism was initially made by Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn, who linked the Manchester attack with Britain's foreign policy in a speech in London. Corbyn argued that 'experts, including professionals in our intelligence and security services, have pointed to the connections between wars our government has supported or fought in other countries and terrorism here at home' (John Simpson 2017). However, Andy Burnham contested Corbyn's logic, stating that significant cuts to neighbourhood policing was to blame: 'we have seen a 20 per cent cut in police funding since 2010 and lost 2,000 officers [in Manchester]' (Sylvester 2017).

With narratives in this category, we can identify some variation in the coverage in the press. Critiques of Islam and explicit Islamophobic discourses were more prevalent in the right-wing and tabloid media. We can also observe differences in the treatment of 'terrorists'/'terrorism' as a topic. When Whitehall sources disclosed that intelligence officers had identified 23,000

Islamist extremists living in Britain, 3,000 of which were judged to 'pose a threat', to outline the challenge for the police and security services following criticism of their handling of Salman Abedi, all newspapers picked up the story. However, the *Daily Mail* ran a two-page article titled '3,000 Jihadis on the streets of Britain' (Drury 2017), and the front page of *The Times* read: 'UK home to 23,000 jihadists' (Swerling et al. 2017), playing into the shock factor for impact and setting a tone of fear. *The Guardian*, on the other hand, struck a more measured tone embedding the information in several articles on the investigation into the attack.

It is noteworthy that only one article in the corpus discussed immigration as a possible contributing factor to terrorism. The article in *The Guardian* on terrorists' profiles identified several 'risk factors' associated with the 'experience of immigration', including 'geographic dislocation', intergenerational cultural differences and 'identity issues', which can result in 'alienation', leaving youngsters vulnerable to radicalisation (Burke 2017). However, other news outlets do not explicitly address immigration.

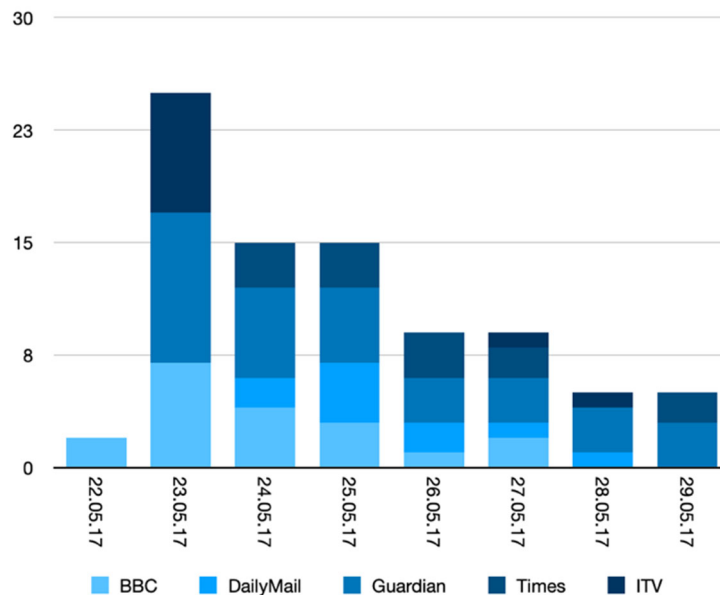
### **Temporal distribution of narratives**

In contrast to the two previous cases, the coverage of the Manchester bombing was very reactive to information as it became available and events as they unfolded. Therefore, we can not observe different narrative stages as such but merely peaks in coverage in response to events on the ground and as information becomes available. We can also observe the narratives that fall into the first category (impact of the attack) and the second two categories (the perpetrator and root causes of the attack) emerging and developing in parallel as more information became available regarding the victims, on the one hand, and the investigation into the attack progressed, on the other.

Shortly before midnight on 22 May 2017 and into the early morning hours, TV news dominated coverage as it reported live on the immediate aftermath of the Manchester attack, as illustrated by Figure 11. This coverage consisted of straight reporting of events from the studio, including live footage from Manchester Arena, footage from the mobile phones of concertgoers and eye-witness accounts. The focus was overwhelmingly on the violence of the attack and its victims.

On 23 May, ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack, which was reported across all new outlets. Throughout the day, more details emerged in *BBC* and *ITV* coverage titled 'How it Unfolded' and 'What we know so far', including details of the exact location of the bomb's detonation and the possibility that it was a nail bomb. Eye witness accounts described the 'stampede' 'chaos' and 'panic' in the concert arena as 'thousands scrambled to escape' (ITV News 2017a). TV coverage also featured emotive live interviews with parents and relatives still searching for their missing children and family members. Moreover, speeches by key political actors were broadcast live, including statements from Prime Minister Theresa May, who was the first to label the attacker a 'terrorist', and Andy Burnham, the Mayor of Manchester (BBC News 2017e).

**FIGURE 11. Coverage of the Manchester bombing by date & news outlet, 22 May – 29 May 2017, absolute values**



Initially, the Manchester police did not name the suspected bomber and asked for the public ‘not to speculate’ about his identity. However, his name and images of the crime scene were leaked to the American press and published by the New York Times on 23 May, forcing the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police, Ian Hopkins, to officially confirm the attacker's identity as 22-year old Salman Abedi live on TV that day (ITV News 2017b). The British media was highly critical of the leak and the New York Times's decision to publish the information just 12 hours after a terror incident and whilst the investigation was still live (see, for instance, Smith and MacAskill [2017]).

By 24 May, it was suspected that Salman Abedi had not been working alone and accounts of the arrest of his older brother in Manchester and his father and younger brother in Tripoli, Libya, emerged. Reports that Abedi had visited Libya in the weeks before the attack and that he could be part of a wider terrorist network or cell also surfaced. Moreover, experts and security services reported in the media that the sophistication of the bomb made it unlikely that Abedi had not received help (Hamilton et al. 2017). As a result, the UK terror threat level was raised from ‘severe’ to ‘critical’ for the first time in a decade. Thousands of troops were deployed to high-risk locations as part of Operation Temperer (Hamilton et al. 2017). It also emerged that Abedi was already known to intelligence services for his ‘extreme and violent views’, and had been reported to the British counter-terrorism hotline by acquaintances years earlier (BBC News 2017g). Meanwhile, political parties agreed to suspend campaigning for the British general elections on 8 June 2017 until 25 May 2017.

From 26 May, the coverage entered a more analytical stage, focusing on the identity of the bomber and his radicalisation. The *Daily Mail* published several articles focusing on Salman Abedi and suspected links to terrorist groups among members of his family (Wright and Brown 2017). On 28 May, the *BBC* broadcast segments of an interview with the New York Times

editor-in-chief Dean Baquet during which he stated that he had no regrets about publishing the crime scene images from Manchester Arena, despite criticism from police and politicians in the UK (BBC News 2017h). That same day *The Times* published an extended interview with Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham, during which he argued that Muslim communities should not be ‘scapegoated’ following the terror attack. In a striking juxtaposition, *The Times* also ran a front-page article that read: ‘UK home to 23,000 jihadists; the huge scale of terror threat revealed’ (Swerling et al. 2017).

On the 28 and 29 May, details about the bomber and his movements before the attack continued to emerge. The Manchester police released CCTV images of Salman Abedi on the day of the attack that were included in coverage in all news outlets the following day. *The Times* reported that the Manchester bomber prayed at a mosque attended by ‘at least two British members of Islamic State’ (Gardham and Hamilton 2017). Finally, a new theme in the coverage focused on national security and threat levels at public events ahead of the bank-holiday weekend.

### **Main frames**

As illustrated by Table 7, seven distinct frames were identified in the coverage of the Manchester terror attack. Attention was paid to the overall of articles and TV news clips, irrespective of whether one or more of the narratives discussed in the previous sections were present. The distribution of frames across news outlets was relatively even, with one or two exceptions.

**TABLE 7. Frames in coverage of the Manchester bombing, 22 May – 29 May 2017, percentage**

Victims/the missing	6
Solidary/Spirit of Manchester	8
Police Investigation	22
Reconstruction	13
Bomber’s identities	26,5
Reactions	16
Threat	6
Other	2,5

The most frequently identified frame was related to the bomber’s identity. The *Daily Mail* and *The Times* published the most articles on the bomber, Salman Abedi, which predominantly consisted of the latest information and analysis of his background, his family and relatives, and his suspected movements and motivations. The second most dominant frame was content that reported on the police investigation. In contrast to the previous two cases, there was a clear distinction between straight reporting and analysis and commentary in the days following the Manchester attack. This frame was prevalent in straight reporting on the latest developments and information released by the police and security services.

The third frame refers to reactions from predominantly domestic and international political actors and commentators. This included, for instance, the coverage of statements by the Prime Minister and the Mayor of Manchester, but also statements and interviews that were given by the Leader of the Opposition, Jeremy Corbyn, and statements of support from, for instance, US President Donald Trump.

'Reconstructions' relate to coverage that reconstructed the exact order and location of events, often down to the smallest of details. This form of reporting appeared mainly in TV coverage and lengthier feature articles in *The Guardian* and was often accompanied by illustrations, graphs, and maps. 'Solidarity' refers to uplifting coverage or stories of heroism, survivorship and the community coming together in the wake of the attack. Similarly to 'victims/the missing', which consisted of human-interest pieces, the last two frames were not prevalent in *The Times* and the *Daily Mail*.

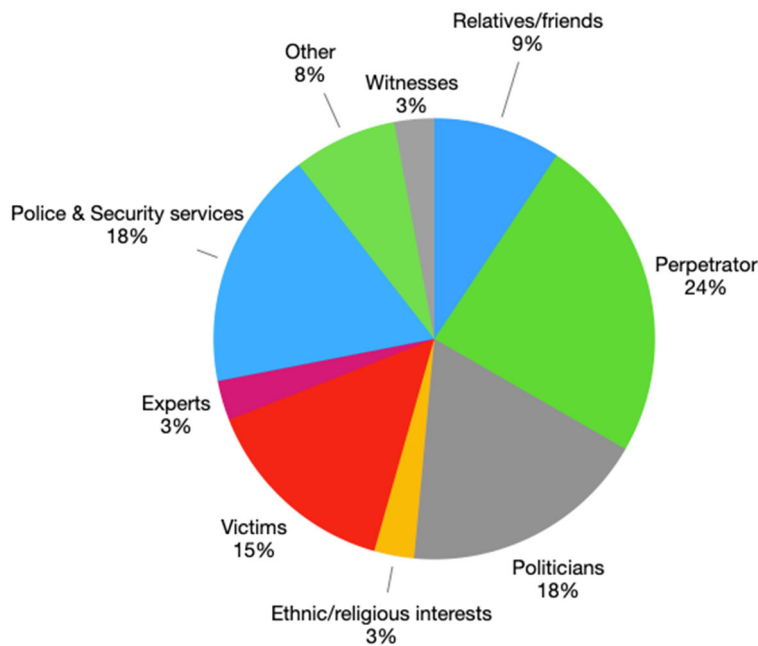
### **Settings, characters, emotions, symbols and metaphors**

The **settings** of narratives varied significantly depending on the focus of the coverage. Coverage of the police investigation initially focused on the site of the attack ('Manchester Arena', 'foyer') and details of the attack ('explosive', 'nail bomb', 'shrapnel', 'nails'). Narratives that focused on the human-interest stories and individual victims or concertgoers referred to home towns or cities, as well as where they ended up on the night of 22 May 2017 ('hospitals', 'hotels', 'taxis'). Articles and TV news focused on the perpetrator, and the possibility of a terrorist network or cell included a broader list of settings, from 'Salman Abedi's flat' in Manchester to Tripoli, Libya, and Syria.

As Figure 12. demonstrates, coverage of the Manchester bombing incorporated a much wider range of **characters** than the previous two case studies. The dominant character in the coverage was the perpetrator of the attack, suicide bomber Salman Abedi (24%). The bomber's relatives also featured in a lot of the coverage, in particular his father and brothers, who were also arrested on suspicion of involvement in the attack but later released (9%).

The police and security services tie as the second most frequently referenced characters with politicians, both at 18% respectively. Disaggregated by political party, 61% of politicians featured as central characters in the coverage were Conservative party members, 29% were Labour members, 3% were UKIP members, and 7% were foreign politicians. Victims of the attack featured as central characters 15% of the time. 'Ethnic and religious interests' relates to members of the Muslim community in Manchester who were neither relatives nor friends with Salman Abedi, such as the Imam of the Didsbury Mosque and Islamic Centre (3%). 'Experts' consisted predominantly of security and counter-terrorism experts who were not affiliated with the police or government (3%). Finally, 'witnesses' refers to members of the public who gave eyewitness accounts of the attack.

**FIGURE 12. Characters in coverage of the Manchester bombing, 22 May – 29 May 2017, percentage**



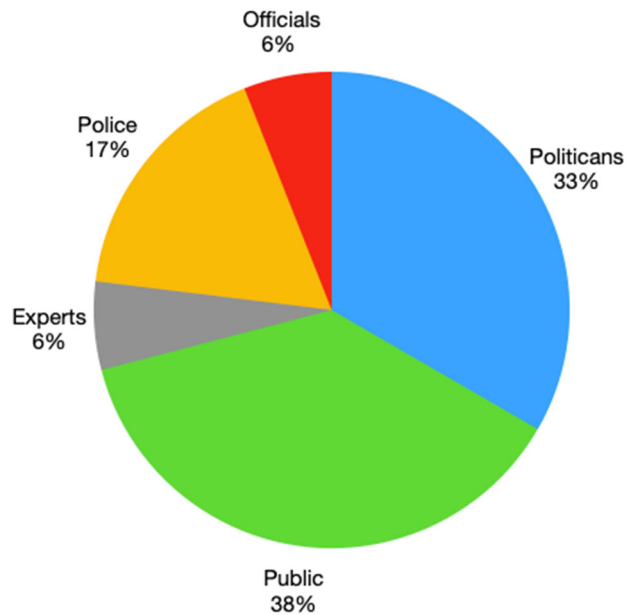
There was no significant difference in the selection of characters that feature as the protagonists of coverage between news outlets, except for the *Daily Mail*, which featured comparatively more stories focusing on Salman Abedi's friends and relatives than the other legacy media.

In stark contrast to the previous two case studies, the majority of direct quotes and **reactions** to the Manchester bombing came from members of the public (38%). As Figure 13. below illustrates, this is compared with 33% of direct quotes from politicians. If we disaggregate the data on the public, 61% of direct quotes were eyewitness accounts or relatives of victims; 30% were specifically from members of the Muslim community in Manchester, and 9% were remarks made by members of Salman Abedi's family, specifically his father and his sister.

A closer inspection of the data on direct quotes from politicians reveals that 51% were from Conservative politicians, predominantly Prime Minister Theresa May; 33% were from Labour politicians, in particular Andy Burnham, the Mayor of Manchester and Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn; 5% were from UKIP politicians; and, finally, 10% from foreign politicians, specifically US President Donald Trump. The third most frequently quoted actors were the police. This mainly reflected updates on the police investigation from Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police, Ian Hopkins.

Here, we can observe some variation between news outlets. Coverage in *The Guardian* favoured quoting the police and experts more heavily than the other legacy media. Meanwhile, *ITV news* coverage was dominated by commentary from members of the public, consisting predominantly of eyewitness accounts. Whereas the other news outlets demonstrated a range of voices in their coverage.

**FIGURE 13. Voices in coverage of the Manchester bombing, 22 May – 29 May 2017, percentage**



The nature of terrorism was not discussed in detail in the coverage and yet the descriptor ‘terrorist’ is applied to the protagonist, Salman Abedi, across all media. However, examining the **labels** and qualifications more closely highlights some variation between news outlets. Salman Abedi is first labelled a ‘terrorist’ instead of a criminal in Theresa May’s press statement on 23 May. *The Guardian* used the widest range of labels (‘22-year-old Salman Abedi’, ‘suicide bomber’, ‘attacker’, ‘a Mancunian with Libyan decent’, ‘a slightly withdrawn, devout young man’, ‘Manchester suicide bomber’, ‘terrorist’, ‘perpetrator’, ‘mule’), followed by the *Daily Mail* (‘Manchester suicide bomber’, ‘university drop-out’, ‘caliphate soldier’, ‘loser’). *The Times*, *BBC news* and *ITV news* use on average far fewer and less descriptive labels (‘Salman Abedi’, ‘Manchester bomber’, ‘Manchester suicide bomber’, ‘Manchester Arena bomber’).

Intriguingly, the labels used by both the left-leaning *Guardian* newspaper (‘British-born Abedi’, ‘dual British-Libyan national’, ‘British extremist’) and the right-wing *Daily Mail* (‘British-born Salman Abedi’, ‘British-born boys’, ‘British jihadis’, ‘extremists with British passports’) highlight that Abedi was a British national. *The Guardian* applies similar language to the community in which Abedi grew up: ‘British-Libyan community in Manchester’. The other news outlets appear to use ‘Muslim community’ and ‘Libyan community’ interchangeably.

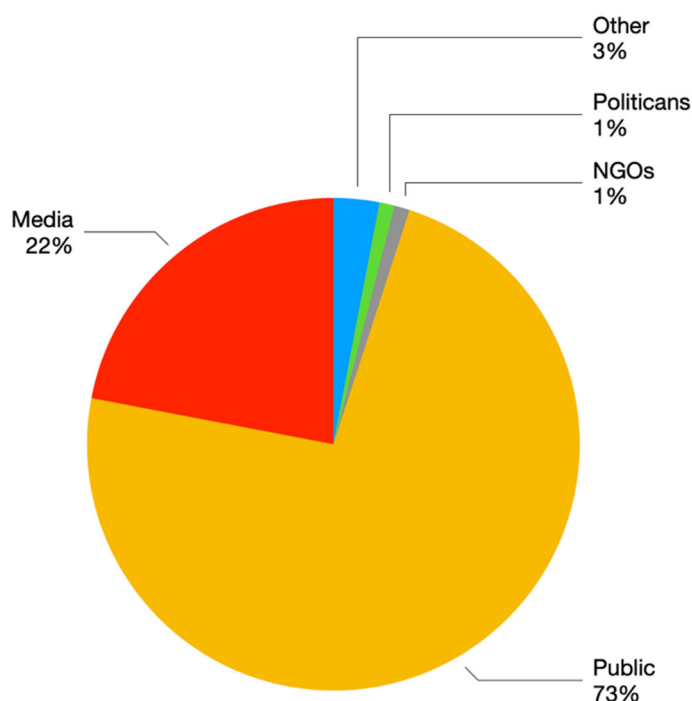
The coverage focused on Salman Abedi as the main agent of his heinous terror act (‘he carried out his act of mass murder’, ‘carrying improvised explosive device’, ‘killed and injured indiscriminately’). The reporting emphasised his agency and choice to commit violence (‘sought to destroy life rather than cherish it’, ‘choosing to kill, maim and tear into young lives’). Beyond the act, descriptions of the perpetrator’s mental processes or emotions are limited (‘quiet’, ‘conservative’, ‘isolated’, ‘paranoid’, ‘prone to angry flare-ups’).

### Dominant narratives on social media (Twitter)

In addition to the 'conventional' news sources, I also analysed the 100 most shared content on the Manchester bombing on *Twitter*. The hashtags selected to collect the dataset were #Manchesterattack OR #Manchesterbombing OR #Manchesterarean. This provided a data set of the most retweeted posts during the time frame under investigation. Other frequently appearing hashtags included #Manchester, #PrayforManchester, #ArianaGrande and #RoomForManchester. A second data set was also collected that included the search term 'refugee' to ascertain the strength of a narrative that linked the assailant with the fact that his parents were former Libyan refugees in Britain. The data suggests significantly higher user engagement in the aftermath of the Manchester bombing than in the previous two case studies. The top 200 tweets were retweeted 2,094 times on average and the top 100 tweets 3,504 times on average.

In contrast to the previous two cases, content on *Twitter* in the direct aftermath of the Manchester bombing was overwhelmingly posted by members of the public – 73% of the 100 most retweeted posts – as illustrated by Figure 14. Based on *Twitter* profiles, we can also ascertain that this included celebrities, such as Scottish actor Robert Carlyle, YouTubers, and social media influencers, such as the British far-right Youtuber Paul Joseph Watson. Moreover, at least 24% of the people posting were not residents of the UK (foreign, non-migrants). Many were based in the United States of America, including several American celebrities, such as the actor Christ Pratt and musician Missy Elliott who sent their 'prayers' to those affected. This suggests that unlike the previous 'events', the terrorist attack elicited an international response on *Twitter*.

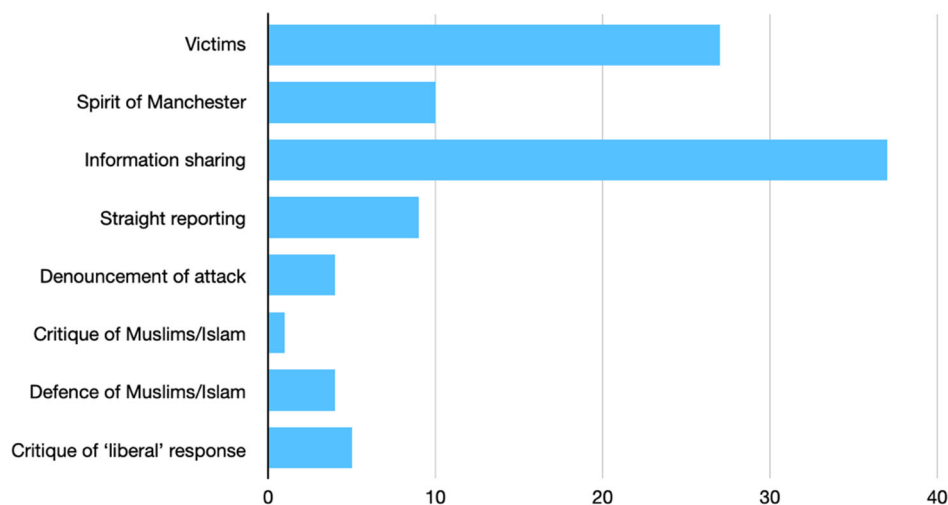
**FIGURE 14. Voices on Twitter, Manchester bombing, 22 May – 29 May 2017, percentage**



The second largest group of users engaging on *Twitter* in the direct aftermath of the attack were journalists and the media (22%). This content predominantly consists of straight reporting on the latest developments (e.g., ‘Northwest Counter Terrorism Unit is treating the incident...as a possible terrorist incident’). However, only four tweets were linked to ‘conventional’ TV news sources or online news articles. It is safe to assume that this was at least in part because real-time commentary occurring on social media was developing faster than legacy media was able to produce content. Moreover, statements by politicians and experts were still scarce.

Another striking differentiation from the other cases is the lack of political actors or political commentators – either tweeting or being cited – on *Twitter*. The only British politicians featured in the content were Andy Burnham, Mayor of Manchester, and Sir Richard Leese, Leader of Manchester City Council in a short clip posted by *Skynews* on 23 May, stating that the people of Manchester had the ‘best possible response to those who seek to divide us’, that ‘the spirit of Manchester will prevail and hold us together’, and ‘we will not allow this to divide us’. Meanwhile, a pro-Trump account shared a quote from Donald Trump’s press statement denouncing the attack (‘We stand in absolute solidarity with the people of the United Kingdom’) and another posted a quote by Ronald Reagan (‘Terrorism is the preferred weapon of weak and evil men’).

**FIGURE 15. Frames on Twitter, Manchester bombing, 22 May – 29 May 2017, absolute values**



Existing research suggests that positive content and information sharing is popular on *Twitter* in the aftermath of a terrorist attack (Fischer-Preßler, Schwemmer, and Fischbach 2019). This is borne out by a frame analysis of the *Twitter* data. *Twitter* content fell into one of eight different frames illustrated in Figure 15. The most common frame can be understood as ‘information sharing’ (37%). This was foremost concerned with sharing information on missing people to reunite family members and friends in the immediate aftermath of the attack. Users shared photos of missing individuals and called on others to ‘RT’ (retweet) until they were found. Some stranded teenagers and children were taken to a nearby Holiday Inn, and members of the public retweeted contact details so loved one could find them. Other *Twitter* content included offers of support from members of the local community, such as free accommodation, food,

and taxi rides home ('Sikh Temples in Manchester offering food & accommodation', 'open for ALL people', 'we will get you home safely').

The second most dominant frame consisted of emotive and human-interest stories focused on the victims of the attack (27%). The most frequently shared post in the dataset was dedicated to one of the victims by her best friend ('rest in peace my darling') and was retweeted 82,085 times. These tweets were dedicated to the 22 people who lost their lives and included tributes and condolences. A striking feature of this content is the many personal photos of the victims shared by their loved ones. The overwhelming emotional tone is one of 'sadness' and 'compassion' for the victims of the attack and their friends and families.

The third most common frame also supports the proposition by Fischer-Preßler, Schwemmer, and Fischbach (2019) and focuses on the resilience of Manchester and its communities. The second most retweeted post (shared 14,451 times) included a video of the Manchurian poet Tony Walsh reciting his ode to Manchester at a vigil in the city centre the day after the attack. Similarly, a video posted by *SkyNews* of the emotional tribute by actor/TV presenter James Corden, described the people of Manchester as 'strong, proud, caring people, with community at its core', and that 'the spirit of the people of Manchester will grow even stronger this evening'. This content invoked 'compassion' and a sense of 'hope' and 'togetherness' in the wake of the atrocity.

In addition to direct reporting by media outlets (9%) and denouncements of terrorism (4%) - the Muslim Council of Britain denouncing the attack as 'horrific' and 'criminal' was retweeted 1,525 times – we can also observe two frames related to the portrayal of Muslims and Islam. Intriguingly, explicit critique of Muslims or Islam was not very pronounced (1%) ('All Muslims may not be a problem—but Islam IS'). However, Islamophobic discourse was implicit in content criticising the 'liberal response' to the terror incident ('political correctness') (5%). Content such as '[w]hich is more important – not hurting Muslims' feelings, or our children being blown up?', 'are you awake yet?', and '[i]f Obama were still president we'd be getting a pompous lecture on the perils of Islamophobia' were predominantly authored by American right-wing political commentators and British far-right Youtuber Paul Joseph Watson. The emotional tone of this content is predominantly 'anger'. With 1,179,833 followers at the time, Watson's tweets were retweeted on average 1,976 times. This suggests that *Twitter* provided a platform for populist radical right commentary on the incident.

The proportion of tweets explicitly defending Muslims and Islam was a little higher at 4% (e.g., 'to blame muslims then you're fucking sick', 'we can honor the victims, work to end terrorism, and also not let either of those slip into Islamophobia'). One tweet expressing condolences was accompanied by an illustration of 'the rules of war in Islam', including 'don't kill a woman' 'don't kill a child' and 'don't kill old people'. Another highlighted that ISIS also targets Muslims. However, there was very little discourse on the characteristics of jihadist terrorism or the attacker, Salman Abedi, other than labels such as 'terrorists scum bags' and 'ISIS Evil Losers'.

The only post that refers to the attacker by name was also the only tweet that made the explicit link between the suicide bomber and his parents first arriving in Britain as asylum seekers, stating 'UK gave them sanctuary. They gave us Salman'. This tweet, authored by Watson was shared 5,605 times. Given the popularity of this content and the absence of other content

linking terrorism and immigration in the dataset, the decision was taken to collect a secondary scrapping of *Twitter* data. This time, the search included the key word 'refugee'.

This approach yielded a very limited data set of only 92 tweets, and only the first 8 tweets exceeded 50 retweets, with, on average, 922 retweets. This content blamed refugees and 'failed immigration policies' for the attack, framed refugees as 'barbarians', and expressed support for '#Trump' and the '#MuslimBan'. Whilst thematising immigration, except for the Watson tweet, this content was solely posted by US residents, including self-proclaimed 'nationalists', 'Republican political commentators', '100% America first' and Trump supporters. This suggests that the narrative of a link between immigration and the Manchester bombing was disseminated predominantly by far-right voices outwith the UK.

Joseph Downing, Sarah Gerwens & Richard Dron (Downing, Gerwens, and Dron 2022) highlight the difference between the Manchester bombing and earlier terrorist attacks in the UK, such as the July 7 2005 London bombings, regarding the role of the public in producing narratives on social media in the direct aftermath of the attack. Social media provides real-time commentary in the immediate aftermath of a terror attack when political statements and coverage in traditional media are still limited. Eriksson (Eriksson 2016) finds that *Twitter* also provides a discursive fora that circumvents or criticises traditional media narratives in the aftermath of a terror attack.

The empirical evidence supports the findings that social media contributed to a sense of 'togetherness' following a terror attack (Merrill et al. 2020), providing a sphere for a discourse of resistance to threat in Manchester and the UK. In contrast to narratives disseminated by 'experts', political commentators or journalists, *Twitter* provided a platform for narratives disseminated by laypeople. Islamophobic discourse was not as prominent as expected, and explicit statements in support of Muslims and Islam were more pronounced. In contrast to the previous two cases, the Manchester bombing elicited an international response on *Twitter*. Moreover, the link between terrorism and 'refugees' or immigration appeared to be only thematised by international users and populist radical right commentators.

## *b) Narrative making and success*

### **WHAT: What are the features of dominant narratives in traditional and social media?**

The reporting repertoire on the Manchester bombing in legacy media did not significantly vary between news outlets. It broadly reflected Elliot's (1980) definition of the 'press rite' used to cover terrorism events:

*(1) reports of bombings themselves and the aftermath in human-interest terms; (2) reports of messages of sympathy and acts of solidarity by civic, political and religious leaders; (3) reports of statements of condemnation by such leaders and (4) reference given to political and law enforcement issues and law and order activity'* (Matthews 2016, 175).

The perpetrator of the attack, Salman Abedi, was labelled a terrorist and constructed as the main villain of the story from the outset. However, there was no clear consensus on his profile. Whilst some coverage portrayed Abedi as a 'quiet' 'isolated' drug-taking young man incapable of masterminding an attack of this magnitude alone, other narratives portrayed him as a trained

‘caliphate soldier’ with extensive ties to jihadist groups, including Al Qaeda and ISIS. There was also no consensus on where and how he was radicalised. Some articles insinuated that the Muslim-Libyan community he grew up in, in south Manchester, was a ‘hotbed’ of domestic extremists in the UK. Meanwhile, other coverage pointed the finger at Abedi’s family and suspected terrorist ties in Libya and Syria. Interestingly, despite his Libya heritage, both left and right-wing media highlighted that Abedi was a British citizen born in the UK and that the attack was an act of homegrown terrorism. Moreover, images of Salman Abedi, sourced by the media from social media, humanised the perpetrator by portraying him as no different from other disenfranchised youth in the UK.

In the first few days after the attack, there was agreement that Abedi could not have acted alone (‘not dealing with a lone wolf situation’) and must have had help from a skilled bomb maker. The investigation ultimately concluded that there was no evidence to support the idea that he had help. However, during the first three days of coverage, the elusive bombmaker became a potential antagonist. The threat of an as-yet-unidentified bombmaker or terrorist cell poised to enact another terror attack on British soil permeated the coverage throughout the week. However, the dominant frames and themes in the stories focused on the latest information coming from the police investigation, reconstructing events, details about the bomber’s identity, and reactions to the incident. Meanwhile, *Twitter* content was overwhelmingly dominated by information sharing and tributes to the victims of the attack.

A key finding of this case study is that there was only limited issue-linkage between terrorism and immigration in media narratives on the Manchester bombing in the legacy media and on social media. Immigration and refugees did not feature prominently in narratives on the attacker or the ‘root causes’ of terrorism in the UK, despite Salman Abedi’s Libyan heritage. It was particularly intriguing that not even the tabloid newspaper the *Daily Mail* instrumentalised the attack to push an ‘anti-immigration’ agenda. We can posit several reasons why this may be the case. Firstly, it is plausible that issue-linkage between terrorism and immigration was not thematised in the immediate aftermath of the attack but may have emerged in the weeks and months following the atrocity once some distance allowed for more in-depth analysis of what had occurred.

Another explanation could be that it was not perceived as strategically advisable for news media to make the connection between terrorism and immigration; after all, Abedi was a British citizen. Moreover, the attack came two months after Khalid Masood, a Muslim convert born Adrian Russell Elms, attacked pedestrians on London’s Westminster Bridge, killing five people, including a police officer. An investigation into the incident concluded that Masood had no ties to ISIS or other jihadist groups and was a British domestic terrorist. Finally, the attack occurred during electoral campaigning ahead of the general election on 8 June 2017. Migration is considered a challenging and polarising issue for both the Conservative party and the Labour party, which divides their voter bases (Odmalm and Bale 2015). It follows that politicians were unwilling to link the issues of terrorism and migration this close to an election for fear of alienating sections of the electorate.

**WHO: Who gains access to the public arena and which structural positions and strategies allow them to shape prevailing narratives?**

The analysis of dominant characters and voices in the coverage sets coverage of the Manchester bombing apart from that of the previous two incidents. Whereas the perpetrator,

politicians and the police and security services served as the protagonists of the coverage, the group most frequently quoted were the public. Eyewitness accounts, tributes to victims and reactions to the terror attack from members of the public were ubiquitous across all news outlets. Interestingly, 30% of direct quotes from the public were from members of the Muslim community in Manchester; and 9% were reactions to the attack from members of Salman Abedi's family. This suggests that irrespective of whether the Muslim community was framed as the 'out group', members of the community were given access to the public arena via the media.

A closer inspection of the data on direct quotes from politicians reveals a similar pattern to the previous cases. The dominant voices come from government members, specifically the Prime Minister and Home Secretary, followed by the Leader of the opposition and the Mayor of Manchester. However, in this case, foreign politicians, in the form of US President Donald Trump, also featured in the coverage. This could reflect Anglo-American security relations and intelligence cooperation following 9/11, as well as the incident of the intelligence leak by American intelligence services the day after the attack.

Content on *Twitter* in the immediate aftermath of the Manchester bombing was overwhelmingly produced and shared by members of the public (73%). In contrast to narratives disseminated by experts, political commentators or journalists, *Twitter* provided a platform for narratives to be produced and disseminated by 'laypeople'. Interestingly, this content was dominated by information sharing, and anti-immigration and Islamophobic discourses were not as visible as expected. The lack of political actors or commentators among the most shared content was also noteworthy. Nevertheless, the prevalence of content produced by a British far-right Youtuber suggested that *Twitter* provided a platform for populist radical right commentary on the incident. Finally, in contrast to the previous two cases, the Manchester bombing elicited an international response from politicians and celebrities in traditional media and on *Twitter*.

#### **WHERE: Where do narratives emerge and what path do they take among the various social actors, media, and platforms?**

In this case, we see the centrality of television coverage and live reporting come to the fore. TV broadcasters were reporting live on the latest information as it became available and as key experts and political actors updated the public on the latest developments via the media. There was some evidence of the diffusion of television coverage on social media, including footage of Tony Walsh's Ode to Manchester, a tribute to Manchester by James Corden which was broadcast in the United States, and statements made by the Mayor of City of Manchester and President of the United States Donald Trump shared on *Twitter*. However, only four tweets were linked to legacy media, and real-time commentary driven by the public outpaced more traditional sources of information and news outlets. Moreover, in the immediate aftermath of the attack, information from experts and political leadership was still scarce, leaving an information vacuum that social media was able to fill.

That said, in contrast to the asymmetrical narrative relationship we observed between traditional and social media in the last two cases, in this case, there was evidence of a two-way flow of information. In the aftermath of the bombing, narratives that emerged on social media were picked up by the press. An article in *The Guardian* focused on the many locals using the hashtag #roomformanchester to offer spare bedrooms for the night, food and support

in Manchester (Malkin 2017). Whilst another article detailed how Ariana Grande's fans ('Arianators') mobilised on *Twitter* to 'try and offer comfort' to those who had been affected by the attack (Hunt 2017). According to a third article in *The Guardian*, the British public rallied around the hashtag #Britishthreatlevels on *Twitter* (Belam 2017). Highlighting the apparent power of humour in the face of an atrocity, the article describes tweets that made fun of stereotypical symbols of British culture and identity, such as the importance of queuing correctly, making a good cup of tea and not making eye contact on public transport, followed by #Britishthreatlevels.

**WHEN: In which contexts and circumstances do certain narratives obtain a competitive edge?**

The emergence of narratives was predominantly reactive. News outlets were reacting to developments in the investigation into the attack and updates from news sources such as the police and security services and key political actors, such as the Prime Minister and Home Secretary. Intriguingly, any critical engagement with these news sources, including political actors, fell away, and it was assumed that all the information provided was accurate and reliable. Correspondingly, the role of the media was to update the public on the latest information as soon as possible and provide real-time commentary. This is reflected in the television coverage, which comprised of a comparatively large amount of live reporting from both the studio and 'on the street' in Manchester.

The highly critical response from the British media to the leaked information published in *The New York Times* also suggests an awareness of the media not to interfere with the ongoing investigation into the incident. In response to a *BBC* reporter who asked the editor-in-chief of *The New York Times* whether he had any regrets about potentially jeopardising an ongoing investigation into a terror attack, he responded by stating, 'no... we come from a very different media environment' (BBC 2017h). The response from the *BBC* insinuated that the media had a morale responsibility to work with the authorities and those in positions of power in the aftermath of a terror attack.

That said, party campaigning ahead of the general election restarted on 25 May. As a result, some narratives become increasingly pervasive across news outlets as they become politicised. For instance, the narrative that British foreign policy was the root cause of increased Islamic fundamentalism promptly surfaced in multiple newspapers after Theresa May accused Corbyn of blaming 'British military action overseas' for the Manchester bombing, stating, 'I want to make one thing very clear to Jeremy Corbyn and to you: it is that there can never, ever be an excuse for terrorism' (Swerling et al. 2017). As discussed in section 3.2.1, we can also posit that the political context, in this case ahead of a general election, will play a role in determining whether key political actors actively politicise a narrative on migration.

### 3. Conclusion

#### 3.1 WHAT: What are the features of dominant narratives in traditional and social media?

According to Jones and McBeth (2010, 329), a narrative can be characterised as ‘a story with a temporal sequence of events unfolding in a plot that is populated by dramatic moments, symbols, and archetypal characters that culminate in a moral to the story’. Moreover, narratives must possess the following qualities: 1) a setting or context; 2) a plot with a temporal dimension (beginning, middle, and end) that sets out relationships between characters and settings, and identifies causal mechanisms; 3) heroes, villains, and victims; and 4) a moral of the story or (policy) solution.

The three case studies examined in this report are very different. This is reflected in the array of **settings** of the diverse range of dominant narratives explored in the analysis; from the site of the border and the Eurotunnel railhead in Coquelles, France; the foyer of the Manchester Arena where the suicide bomb was detonated; to the halls of Whitehall where decisions were made that impacted the lives of many Commonwealth-born long-term British residents. Beyond the narrative-specific settings, the wider political context played a role in the emergence of narratives in all three cases. For instance, the political environment and public sentiment on immigration ahead of the Brexit referendum in the case of the Calais ‘migrant crisis’; the general elections in June 2017 and the terror attack just two months earlier in the case of the Manchester bombing; and the political crisis within the British Government in the case of the ‘Windrush Scandal’, all impacted the formulation and dissemination of narratives in the media.

Despite their obvious differences, all three ‘events’ were framed as ‘crises’. Consequently, the **plotlines** of the narratives that appeared in the British media predominantly constituted stories of causation and could be broadly grouped into a three-way typology: 1) narratives that addressed the impact of the ‘crisis’; 2) narratives that allocated ‘blame’ or responsibility for the situation; and, 3) narratives that outlined the root causes of the issue. Narratives in the first group tended to focus on the ‘victims’ as the story’s protagonists (e.g., the ‘Windrush generation’, those who lost their lives or were injured in the Manchester bombing, or the businesses disrupted by delays at Calais). Narratives in the second category focused on the ‘villains’ of the story: the suicide bomber in the case of the Manchester attack; migrants in the case of the Calais crisis; and the politicians held responsible for implementing ineffectual and ‘cruel’ policies in the ‘Windrush scandal’. Finally, the third group of narratives can be seen to address the wider societal, structural, and systemic issues that contributed to the crisis.

Within these three narrative categories, migrants were portrayed as **victims** and **villains**, depending on the frame, who was producing the narrative, and the political orientation of the media outlet.

- In the case of the Calais ‘migrant crisis’, the pervasive narrative cast migrants as the villains of the story; an indistinguishable group in the ‘shadows’, migrants were portrayed as the invading force at the border. Moreover, despite the efforts of some journalists, stories on the inhabitants of the Calais migrant camps (‘migrant stories’) were conspicuous in their absence in the coverage of the situation in Calais.

- In contrast, during the 'Windrush scandal', we see the 'migrant group' portrayed as the victims of the 'cruel' 'hostile environment' immigration policies. Led by *The Guardian*, the British media landscape framed the 'Windrush generation' migrants as part of the 'in-group'. They are described as long-term British residents and British citizens by heritage who belonged to the national community, as opposed to 'immigrants'.
- In coverage of the Manchester bombing, we see 'migrants', in this case, the bomber (second generation), his Libyan family, and the Libyan community in Manchester, once again cast as the story's villains. The right-wing media portrayed Abedi's relatives as suspected Islamist extremists, whilst the Muslim community in Manchester was framed in some coverage as a centre for British jihadis.

In all three cases, migrants were objectified and often blamed for problems. Moreover, the analysis suggests that the role that migrants play in the story is often defined by pre-determined perceptions of who belongs – e.g., the 'Windrush generation' – and who does not belong – e.g., migrants from Calais - to the national community.

We can observe some differentiation between the narratives in 'conventional' media and the narrative features on **social media**. In the case of the Calais 'migrant crisis', in contrast to traditional media, content on *Twitter* was predominantly humanitarian. Moreover, social media provided a platform for the electorate to hold the government to account for its actions in response to the developing humanitarian crisis in the migrant camps in Calais. Similarly, in the case of the 'Windrush scandal', *Twitter* was used to criticise the government's policies and response to the crisis. This suggests that *Twitter* provided a forum for bottom-up political contestation. Finally, in the immediate aftermath of the Manchester bombing, we see the social media platform overwhelmingly used as an information-sharing tool and as a means to offer support and services to those impacted by the attack. The empirical analysis also suggests that *Twitter* provided a forum for spreading more populist 'anti-immigration' narratives disseminated by far-right politicians and commentators that were not as prevalent in traditional media.

Finally, the role of images was found to be significant in all three cases. Striking images were used strategically to increase the impact of stories and reinforced core narratives in the coverage. For instance, **images** played a significant role in building the narratives on the 'Windrush scandal'. Firstly, all newspapers and TV news used archival images of the arrival of HMT Empire Windrush. Moreover, *The Guardian* commissioned high-quality portrait images of the protagonists of the human-interest stories. These images had a profound humanising effect by giving the victims of the stories faces and personalities, invoking 'compassion' in the audience. Meanwhile, images of groups of migrants, often with their faces covered, in the shadows, strengthen the threat and invasion frame in coverage of the Calais 'migrants crisis'. Images of the victims of the Manchester attack were pervasive in traditional and social media coverage, highlighting the youth and 'innocents' of those who lost their lives in the atrocity and generating a sense of national mourning. Meanwhile, images of Salman Abedi, sourced from social media, had the somewhat contradictory impact of humanising the perpetrator.

### 3.2 WHO: Who gains access to the public arena to shape prevailing narratives?

The analysis of the three cases suggests a clear hierarchy of access to legacy media. We can see this in the visibility of migrants compared with other actors in the case studies. The analysis of characters and voices in the coverage highlights the importance of political actors in the emergence and dissemination of narratives on immigration. Statements by key political actors legitimised the most dominant narratives. Moreover, members of the government were the most visible actors in the coverage. This meant that Conservative politicians dominated the coverage of all three cases, followed by official sources and the leaders of political parties in opposition. Interestingly, the political affiliation of the news outlet did not appear to impact which politicians were featured in the coverage.

In contrast, migrants and NGOs were at the bottom of the hierarchy and gaining access to the media required clear long-term strategies. In the case of the Calais 'migrant crisis', migrant stories and voices were nearly invisible, despite the good intentions of some journalists. In the case of the 'Windrush scandal', the high visibility of the 'Windrush generation' migrants was only achieved through the long-term strategy of a coalition of journalists, diplomats, politicians, and pro-rights advocates. In the third case, migrants represented the attacker's family and the British-Libyan community in Manchester. At first sight, this case appears to be an exception to the rule; however, on closer inspection, whilst the 'migrant voice' was visible, it is proportionately less visible than other segments of society. Moreover, since the 'migrant characters' were cast as both villains and bystanders, the reliability of the 'migrant voice' is called into question. For instance, remarks from Abedi's father and friends expressing disbelief at his actions appear disingenuous, considering the information that emerges about the perpetrator and his family.

The 'Windrush scandal' illustrates the role of journalists and the media in the production and dissemination of narratives on migration. Data from the interviews suggested that journalists have significant autonomy regarding how a story is framed and may deploy journalistic strategies to strengthen a particular line or editorial position. Journalists in the British media also function as commentators and opinion leaders. For instance, the analysis of the allocation of 'blame' for the Calais 'migrant cases' revealed that a large proportion of the statements assigning blame were unattributed to other actors, suggesting that the journalist was engaging in the narrative production process. In these cases, the line of argument tended to reflect the political orientation and stance on immigration of the news outlet. Finally, the empirical analysis revealed instances where news commentators and journalists provided counter-narratives and held both the media and politicians to account for their (anti-immigration) rhetoric and stance.

In contrast to narratives disseminated by politicians and journalists in legacy media, *Twitter* provided a platform for laypeople to be the producers of narratives. 'Lay' in this context refers to people not engaged in the elite production of narratives in traditional media, such as politicians, policymakers, experts, journalists, researchers and stakeholders. In addition to members of the public, the analysis of the cases also suggests that social media provided a platform for the dissemination of populist radical right discourses. For instance, the prominence of Nigel Farage and other UKIP politicians on *Twitter* during the Calais 'migrant crisis' and content produced by the British far-right Youtuber Paul Joseph Watson in the aftermath of the

Manchester bombing suggests that social media was a communications tool for niche and populist radical right parties in the UK.

### **3.3 WHERE: Where do narratives emerge and what path do they take among social actors, media, and platforms?**

Narratives predominantly emerged in traditional media. In all three cases, the mainstream media was one of the main arenas for politicians to communicate their positions to the public and legitimise policy approaches to the 'crises'. Therefore, narratives emerged through media statements and interviews with politicians. In the case of the Manchester bombing, live coverage and eyewitness accounts also played a role.

Regarding the circulation of narratives, in the case of the Calais 'migrant crisis' and the 'Windrush scandal', we identified evidence of asymmetrical diffusion of narratives from traditional media to social media. This included links to TV broadcasts and online articles embedded in tweets. Moreover, *Twitter* users engaged in discourse and critique of political statements and narratives that emerged in the press or other news outlets. This included the proliferation of narratives blaming the government for the mistreatment of 'Windrush' migrants and a distinctly humanitarian discourse on Calais. In the case of the Calais 'migrant crisis', we can also observe a two-stage narrative flow, whereby a politician with a particularly strong social media presence on the topic, Nigel Farage, was able to impose himself into traditional media (see, for instance, the interview Farage gave *BBC news* on 29 July 2015).

Nevertheless, the most striking example of narrative diffusion between traditional and social media occurred in the immediate aftermath of the Manchester bombing. In this case, we see members of the public drive the narrative with real-time commentary on *Twitter*, outpacing more traditional sources of information and news outlets. Legacy media then picked up on content and narratives from social media for its own content. Four articles in the dataset published in *The Guardian* were based entirely on *Twitter* content, with an additional 21 articles referencing social media content.

### **3.4 WHEN: In which contexts and circumstances do narratives obtain a competitive edge?**

The crisis frame was key to a sense of newsworthiness in all three cases. During a perceived crisis governments communicate decisions to its citizens and are held accountable through increased media and public scrutiny. As Boin et al. (2017, 17) elucidate, '[i]n a crisis leaders are expected to reduce uncertainty by providing an authoritative account of what is going on, why it is happening, and what needs to be done' (Boin et al. 2017, 17). This leads to increased salience and the proliferation of narratives both in the media and in the political domain. The dominance of politicians in the coverage analysed supports this notion.

Along similar lines, the analysis suggests that the politicisation and instrumentalization of a migrant issue also leads to the proliferation of migration narratives in the media. This can be observed in the Calais 'migrant crisis' in the context of the Brexit referendum and calls from Leave campaigners to 'take back control of our borders'. However, the most striking example is the 'Windrush scandal'. It was only once the situation had escalated to the level of a political crisis in the government that all media outlets picked up the story. Moreover, it was only once

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Prime Minister Theresa May criticised Jeremy Corbyn for his remarks on British foreign policy after the Manchester bombing that the narrative was spread more widely. Finally, the fact that politicians did not politicise immigration within the context of the Manchester bombing could go some way to explain why the issues were not linked in the media.

The empirical analysis also illustrates how proactive and long-term strategies can lead to the dissemination of narratives. This was particularly pertinent in the case of the 'Windrush scandal' that played out in the context of half a century of citizenship and immigration law. However, through the narrative of the 'Windrush generation', journalists, politicians, and advocates were able to effectively communicate the plight of Commonwealth-born British residents caught up in immigration enforcement measures following the implementation of the 2014 Immigration Act. This suggests that 'packaging' information in a clear and comprehensible narrative with identifiable heroes, villains and victims can make complex information on immigration issues digestible to a wider audience.

This notwithstanding, the three cases suggested that narratives are more likely to become dominant when they align with established national myths, public philosophies, and meta-narratives on immigration. For example, the dominant narratives on the Calais 'migrant crisis' drew on the prevailing 'invasion' narrative and the notion of 'immigration control' that has been pervasive in public and political discourse in the UK for decades and has been described as an 'obsession' of the Conservative party (Hampshire and Bale 2015). Similarly, the 'Windrush scandal' tapped into the Windrush myth and pre-determined beliefs regarding who constitutes a migrant in the UK. This suggests that the dominant narratives in the media largely corresponded with established public and political discourses on immigration in the UK. Moreover, it suggests that the most successful narratives neither disrupted existing beliefs nor generated dissonance with established meta-narratives. Finally, it implies that migration narratives during a perceived 'crisis' may galvanise existing beliefs and approaches to immigration via the media.

## Appendix 1. Referenced news sources

### BBC News

- BBC News. 2015a. 'Nigel Farage: My Car Has Been Surrounded by Calais Migrants'. *BBC News*, 29 July 2015.
- 2015b. 'Calais Migrant Crisis: Cameron Warns UK Is "No Safe Haven"'. *BBC News*, 30 July 2015.
- 2017a. 'Islamic State Group 'claims the Manchester Attack'. *BBC News*, 23 May 2017.
- 2017b. Manchester Arena Explosion: Donald Trump Calls Suicide Bomber an 'evil Loser'. *BBC News*, 23 May 2017.
- 2017c. 'Manchester Attack: Jeremy Corbyn on 'traumatic Time''. *BBC News*, 23 May 2017.
- 2017d. 'Manchester Attack: What We Know so Far about Salman Abedi'. *BBC News*, 23 May 2017.
- 2017e. 'Theresa May on Manchester Arena Explosion'. *BBC News*, 23 May 2017.
- 2017f. 'Manchester Attack: Who Was Salman Abedi?'. *BBC News*, 24 May 2017.
- 2017g. 'Salman Abedi: 'Public Called Anti-Terrorism Hotline about Suicide Bomber''. *BBC News*, 24 May 2017.
- 2017h. 'Manchester Attack: 'No Regrets' over Bomb Photo Use, New York Times Editor Dean Baquet'. *BBC News*, 27 May 2017.
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- Fraser, Christian. 2015. 'Britain Remains the Promised Land'. *BBC News*, 30 July 2015.

### ITV News

- ITV News. 2015. 'PM Blames Calais Crisis on "swarm" of Migrants'. *ITV News*, 30 July 2015.
- 2017a. Manchester Terror Attack: How It Unfolded. *ITV news*
- 2017b. Manchester Terror Attack: The Investigation. *ITV news*
- 2017c. Manchester Terror Attack: The Spirit of Manchester. *ITV news*
- 2017d. 'Manchester Terror Attack: What We Know So Far'. *ITV news*

- . 2017e. Poet Tony Walsh's Stunning Ode to Manchester. *ITV news*
- . 2018a. 'What Is the Windrush Generation and Are They Safe in the UK?' *ITV news*
- . 2018b. 'Theresa May Forced into Apology over Windrush Generation Row'. *ITV news*

### **The Times/The Sunday Times**

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## Appendix 2. List of interviews

Code	Profession	Organisation	Gender	Date
UK_I_1	Journalist	The Guardian	Man	6 May 2022
UK_I_2	Journalist	British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)	Woman	23 May 2022
UK_I_3	Journalist	The Independent	Woman	22 May 2022
UK_I_4	Journalist	The Guardian	Woman	4 July 2022

## Appendix 3. Narratives in the British media

### CALAIS MIGRANT CRISIS: DOMINANT NARRATIVE THEMES & COMPONENTS

Narrative themes	Narrative components
<b>Causes (push/pull factors)</b>	
'Land of milk and honey'	Britain's growing economy and jobs; access to free education and welfare benefits act as 'pull factors'
Britain's 'shadow economy'	Thriving 'shadow' economy employing 'illegal immigrants'; lack of ID cards act as 'pull factors'
European Union	EU policy and the Schengen area act as 'pull factor'; link between arrival in EU and migrants staying needs to be broken; disparity in living conditions between Europe and countries of origin; stabilising countries of origin will prevent problem at source
<b>Responsibility (blame)</b>	
United Kingdom	UK government's slow and 'sticking plaster' response; border control is government's responsibility; juxtaposed border controls are the issue and UK border needs to return to UK
France	French authorities should offer asylum to those in camps; should deport migrants arriving in Calais illegally; not enough police allocated to Calais; Mayor of Calais and French politicians promoting UK as destination; border control is government's responsibility
French strikes	Strikes create opportunities for migrants to access vehicles and trains; chaos in Calais
Eurotunnel	Not fulfilling its commitments to secure Eurotunnel sites
<b>Consequences (impact)</b>	
Invasion	Loss of control at border poses security threat to UK; calls to send in the British army; terrorists among 'illegal immigrants' entering the country via Calais; migrants threaten standard of living
British economy	Impact on British economy; damage to cross-Channel haulage industry; perishable goods sector; Scottish seafood industry;
Strain on local services	Operation Stack causes chaos in Kent impacting local businesses; strain on local services; Kent council unable to cope with increase in UASC
British holidaymakers	Operation Stack; delays and queues at Channel crossing impacting holidaymakers and tourism in Kent

## WINDRUSH SCANDAL: DOMINANT NARRATIVE THEMES & COMPONENTS

Narrative themes	Narrative components
<b>Consequences/impact</b>	
Windrush-generation stories	Human-interest stories of the impact on individuals and their lives
EU migrants	EU settlement scheme does not issue documents; how can government guarantee that this will not happen again to EU citizens settled in UK prior to Brexit
British values	'Windrush scandal' forces the UK to question British values of 'fairness' vs. public outcry over the 'scandal' demonstrates British values of 'fairness'
<b>Responsibility (blame)</b>	
'Hostile environment'	Immigration Act 2014 is a cruel and inhumane immigration system by design;
Home Office	Obsessed with targets over people; unfit for purpose
Theresa May	'Hostile environment' implemented by Theresa May as Home Secretary; she knew about the potential consequences of enforcing new immigration policies
Amber Rudd	Knew about the consequences of enforcement long before apology; Home Office is her department; knew about deportation targets

## MANCHESTER BOMBING: DOMINANT NARRATIVE THEMES & COMPONENTS

Narrative themes	Narrative components
<b>Consequences/impact</b>	
Investigation	Straight reporting on developments; reconstructions of the attack and initial reactions
Victims	Victims and the missing; perpetrator targeted the 'young' and 'innocent'; Ariana Grande fans were predominantly young girls, teenagers, and their families
Solidarity	Acts of solidary and heroism carried out in wake of attack; 'we will not be divided'; 'Spirit of Manchester'
<b>Responsibility (blame)</b>	
Bomber's identities	The radicalisation of Salman Abedi; a lone terrorist or part of a cell/network; previously reported to anti-terror hotline due to 'extreme and violent views'
'Jihadi family'	Father a 'revolutionary fighter' in Libya and 'suspected jihadi'; older and younger brothers suspected of terror activity; arrested
Drugs/mental health	Quiet and isolated individual; addicted to drugs and alcohol; paranoid
<b>Root causes</b>	
Critique of Muslims/Islam	Not all Muslims are extremists, but Islam is to problem; reference to other terror attacks in Paris, Brussels, Stockholm
Defence of Muslims/Islam	Muslim communities should not be scapegoated; 'good' and 'bad' Muslims dichotomy
Extremism in Manchester	Suspected links to Islamic State in Muslim community; Abdalraouf Abdallah jailed for acts of terrorism
British foreign policy	Destabilisation of Muammar Gaddafi's regime in Libya by Western forces; the rise of Islamic fundamentalists in the region

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# BRIDGES

Assessing the production and impact of migration narratives

**BRIDGES:** Assessing the production and impact of migration narratives is a project funded by the EU H2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation and implemented by a consortium of 12 institutions from all over Europe. The project aims to understand the causes and consequences of migration narratives in a context of increasing politicisation and polarisation around these issues by focusing on six European countries: France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. To do so, BRIDGES adopts an interdisciplinary and co-productive approach and is implemented by a diverse consortium formed by universities, think tanks and research centres, cultural associations, and civil society organisations.

**The BRIDGES Working Papers** are a series of academic publications presenting the research results of the project in a structured and rigorous way. They can either focus on particular case studies covered by the project or adopt a comparative perspective.

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