



Migrant Voice UK Media-Monitoring Research Migrant Voices in Migration Stories

Background

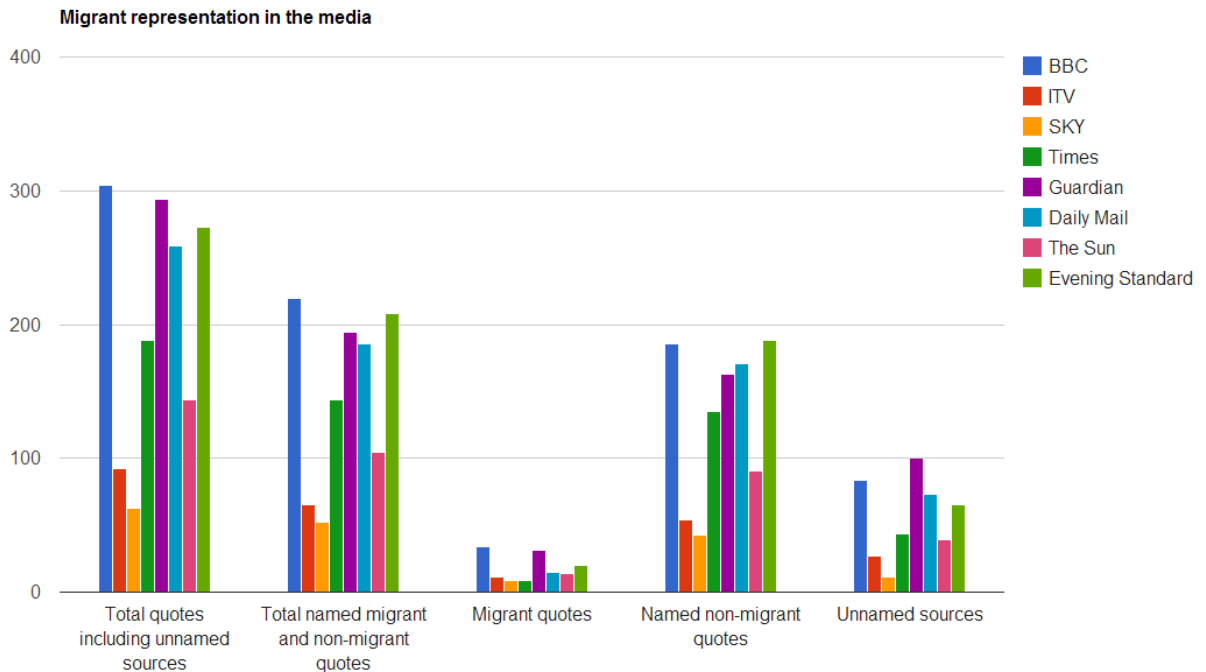
The debate on migration in the UK takes place largely within the media. Migrant Voice works to bring more migrant voices into the debate on migration because we believe that this contributes to a more accurate representation of migrants and a more factual debate. We feel that the media often lacks enough migrant voices and that it at times represents migrants inaccurately. We sought to find statistical evidence to either prove or disprove this idea through a small media monitoring research project we conducted in 2014.

Methodology

This research project was undertaken with the goal of assessing how migrants are represented in various media outlets within the United Kingdom. Questions asked in approaching this project include how many migration stories were in each media outlet, how many people were quoted, and how many of those quotes came from migrants. For practical reasons we have focused on a small number of online media sites, but ensuring a broad range of different types of outlets. Data was collected from The BBC, ITV, SKY News, The Times, The Guardian, The Daily Mail, The Sun, and The Evening Standard.

The study was conducted on a weekly basis. For each week, articles from the previous seven days were searched and read using keywords such as migrant, migration, immigration, refugee and asylum seeker. This research took place consistently over an 11 week span from 16 January 2014 to 2 April 2014.

Findings Related to Migrant Representation in the Media



The graph above illustrates the overall data found in the study. Each row shows the number of stories covering the subject of migration, the total number of individuals quoted, and the number of migrants quoted for each news outlet over the 11 week span. The outlet with the highest total number of stories on migration was The Evening Standard with 99 (BBC 82, ITV 67, SKY 19, Times 68, The Guardian 94, Daily Mail 89, The Sun 59), while The BBC had the highest total number of named individuals quoted with 220. The BBC also had the highest total number of migrants quoted, with 34. The Guardian had the highest total number of unnamed sources in their stories with 100.

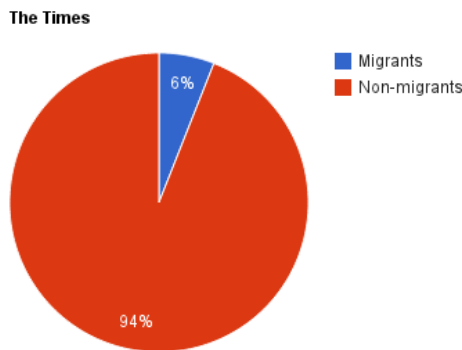
Some of the more interesting data we gathered includes:

- The average percentage of migrants quoted in the 577 stories the research looked at is 12% (12% of named sources)
- The highest number of migration articles published by a single news site in a seven day period is 14. The Guardian and The Daily Mail tied, each published the largest amount of articles on migration in a seven day period though with very different approaches to the subject.
- The BBC quoted the highest number of migrants in a seven day period. In the seven day period, 11 migrants were quoted in 13 stories.

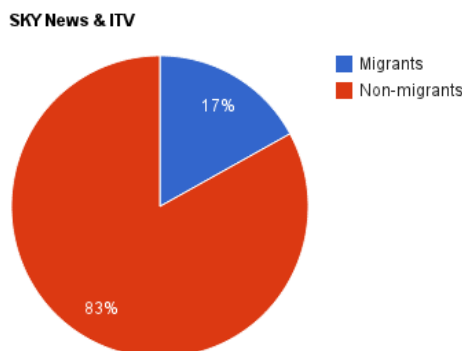
- ITV went nine straight weeks without quoting a migrant, a span comprising 43 total stories.
- The Guardian was the only online media outlet which never went a week without quoting a migrant.

Percentages of Migrant Voices Represented

The two graphs below illustrate the three media outlets with the best and worst percentage of migrants quoted over the 11 week period. This data takes the overall percentage of total migrants quoted out of the total quotes. (Data may not reflect the overall number of stories of that media outlet. It only reflects the ratio of total migrants quoted to total number of individuals quoted.) This excludes the unnamed sources.



The Times had the lowest percentage of migrants quoted with 6% of the quotes in stories concerning migration coming from migrants. (9 out of 144 named sources quoted. This excludes unnamed sources. The figure is only 5% if unnamed sources are included.)



SKY News and ITV tied as having the highest percentage of migrants quoted with 17% of the quotes in stories concerning migration coming from migrants. For ITV 11 migrants quoted out of 65 named sources quoted, for SKY News 9 migrants quoted out of 52 named sources quoted. The percentages are lower when including unnamed sources. (12% for ITV and 12% for SKY News)

For the other five media outlets the percentages of total quotes in stories coming from migrants are as follows: all excluding unnamed sources

- BBC 15% (34 migrants quoted out of 220 total quotes)
- The Guardian 16 % (31 migrants quoted out of 194 total quotes)
- Daily Mail 8% (15 migrants quoted out of 186 total quotes)
- Sun 13% (14 migrants quoted out of 105 total quotes)
- Evening Standard 10% (20 migrants quoted out of 208 total quotes)

Most of the quotes from the stories on migration come predominantly from politicians and academic experts even when excluding unnamed sources.

It is important to note that in many cases the migrants quoted by one media source in one week are in a small number of stories compared to the total on the topic. For instance, in one week, the BBC had 13 stories on migration with 11 migrants quoted, however, eight of these migrants were quoted in just two of the stories.

Topics Covered by Migration Stories

Over the 11 weeks of this research these were some of the key topics discussed:

- Syrian refugees
- David Cameron's nanny
- Mark Harper's cleaner
- Cost of migrants to UK economy
- Rising number of migrants
- Romanian and Bulgarian migrants
- Selling UK visas
- Migrants taking British jobs
- Benefits tourism
- Yashika Bageerathi's deportation

We observed that some weeks each media outlet wrote about the same topic, sometimes using the same quotes. The week this was most prominent was the final week of the first stage of this project when Yashika Bageerathi was deported to Mauritius. Some weeks there were stories that only one or two sites mentioned, while the other outlets did not report on them. The Daily Mail was the news outlet most likely to publish both positive and negative stories about individual migrants while also publishing mostly negative stories on groups or communities of migrants.

Headlines and Articles

Headlines ranged in content between positive and negative attitudes about migration. We recognize that positive and negative are 'selective criteria' depending on individual interpretation. Week by week having read eight different media outlets' coverage of migration, sometimes covering the same stories, we have defined positive headlines or articles in the following way: stories that are more sympathetic to the plight of migrants, that treat migrants as human beings, as individuals without stereotyped attributes, that cover the facts in-depth and in a more neutral voice, and with more complex context.

Negative headlines address topics including attitudes towards high EU migration to the UK, migrant employment, benefits tourism and the overall negative impact migrants have on British society. Some examples of these headlines are listed below.

Negative Coverage

The Daily Mail:

Young Britons beaten to jobs by 'new servant class' of immigrants: One in ten new roles created in a year went to people born in Romania and Bulgaria

- 144,000 from two countries had a job in the UK in last three months of 2013
- Sharp rise on 102,000 in work in 2012 ahead of January 1 deadline
- 1 in 10 new jobs in 2013 went to people born in Romania and Bulgaria
- Ministers hail fall in unemployment and record numbers of women in work

By MATT CHORLEY, MAILONLINE POLITICAL EDITOR and TIM SHIPMAN, DEPUTY POLITICAL EDITOR

PUBLISHED: 10:50, 19 February 2014 | UPDATED: 23:55, 19 February 2014

The Sun:

£200,000 to migrants with six kids abroad

Taxpayers fund crazy benefits to 61 families

The Daily Mail:

Sold out! Flights and buses full as Romanians and Bulgarians head for the UK

- One airline has even doubled number of flights to meet demand
- Some one-way tickets are selling for up to £3,000 each
- Buses leaving Bulgarian capital of Sofia until January 9 are fully booked

By ARTHUR MARTIN and JOHN STEVENS

PUBLISHED: 00:05, 31 December 2013 | UPDATED: 12:47, 21 February 2014

The Times:

Migrants have spoilt London, says Vettriano

The Daily Mail:

'Your benefits system is crazy. It's like finding a sackful of cash left on the road': How shocking admission by Rudi and his huge Romanian family debunks Eurocrat's claims that 'benefit tourism is a myth'

- Rudi Ion's huge family could consist of up to 100 children, with 25 cousins
- His family moved to a 3-bedroomed house in 'shabby' Nottingham suburb
- Laszlo Andor, announced to UK ministers: 'Benefits tourism is a myth.'

By SUE REID

PUBLISHED: 22:02, 14 February 2014 | UPDATED: 18:17, 20 February 2014

Positive Coverage

Positive headlines include accurate representation of migrants, real statistics that contradict the claims of extremely high rates of migration and evidence for the call of better treatment of migrants. Some of these headlines are listed below.

The Daily Mail:

Former refugee who fled Kosovo after witnessing arrival of Royal Marines achieves boyhood dream of joining them

- Arben Islami fled Kosovo in 1999 shortly after NATO troops arrived
- He travelled to the UK, hoping to find an uncle his family had spoken of
- In July 2012 Islami, now 28, was granted British citizenship
- A day later he signed up to join the 350-year-old Royal Marine Corps
- 'I wanted to join up and give something back to the country that helped me so much,' said Marine Islami

By LIZZIE PARRY

PUBLISHED: 19:31, 18 February 2014 | UPDATED: 01:57, 19 February 2014

ITV:

Non-EU immigration down by 9% last year

Last updated Thu 27 Feb 2014

The Guardian:

EU migrants bring talent to the UK – it would be a shame to shun us

The Tories, who claim to champion 'hardworking people', should see our value and ditch their nonsensical immigration targets

The Guardian:

Six reasons why the UK immigration bill needs to be amended

When even the immigration minister struggles to enforce the rules, what chance do private landlords have?

John Perry

theguardian.com, Tuesday 11 February 2014 12:14 GMT

Conclusion

We have been surprised at the statistical evidence revealed through this study. We had a sense that migrants are underrepresented in stories about them and about migration, but the evidence of this research clearly points out their representation is lower than expected.

Our recommendations to these media outlets to represent migrants in a more accurate way are as follows:

- It has been our observation that the online coverage of the same news outlet may not quote the same number of migrants as they do in the broadcast news. It is possible that broadcast outlets have greater migrant representation that may not be reflected online. Our recommendation is to use at least as many migrant voices online as in the broadcast news.
- It was clear to us as readers that when migrant voices were included in stories it added greater credibility and more depth to the articles. We recommend media outlets make an effort to interview migrants for stories that affect them or are about them. For example, in stories about migrants taking British jobs or benefits tourism it would have been interesting to address these claims from an individual migrant's perspective.
- It would be refreshing to read weekly migrants stories from a migrant's point of view.
- We ask media outlets to cover migration stories in the same way as other issues by always including a migrant in a story about migration, such as stories relating to women, people with disabilities, etc.