

# European migrants: burden or benefit for the British economy? The depiction of EU migrants in the UK and its consequences.

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## Introduction

It has become almost a cliché to remark that international migration is not a new phenomenon. Since the 1980's immigration has expanded to involve all regions of the world and plays a very important role in the globalization of the contemporary world. From 1993 until 2013, the number of foreign citizens in Britain increased from 2.9 million to slightly above 6 million (The Migration Observatory, November 2014). In 2006, there was a significant leap in the numbers of foreign workers in Britain which was the consequence of the opening of the British labour market to the workers from A8 ('Accession 8') countries: Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia in 2004. Moreover, in the year ending 2014, the significant increase of immigration to the UK was largely due to EU migrants who accounted for almost 70% of this increase (Office for National Statistics, 2014).

Therefore, this suggests that EU migrants represent an important part in the British society and their integration into this society is important. However, the 2004 entry of A8 countries to the EU raised concerns among British citizens over the impact of these migrant workers on the British economy. The presence of scepticism over Britain's profitability from migrants has been present in this country among its citizens since even before the A8 countries joined the EU (Dustmann, Frattini & Halls, 2010; Dustmann & Frattini 2014). This is also evident in the nature of press reports in Britain, since whether migrants are a benefit or a burden for the British economy has been a frequent topic in the British press (Dustmann et al., 2010; Robinson, 2010; Drzewiecka, Hoops & Thomas, 2014). The way these migrants are framed within the British society is therefore very important, since media messages may influence British citizens' perceptions of these migrants.

In this paper, examples from the following online mid-market newspapers will be used:

*MailOnline* (online version of the *Daily Mail*), and *The Express*. Obviously, not every British citizen reads these mid-market newspapers. However, Ofcom's research study (June, 2014) on news consumption in the UK, reports that the online version of *Daily Mail* has the highest news readership, followed closely by *The Guardian*, and *The Daily Telegraph* across the Adults 15+ category. Furthermore, according to the National Readership Survey (2014) of 'Adults 15+' category for the period from October 2013 until September 2014, 2353 British citizens/day reads *MailOnline* while only 1729 of the respondents/day read daily the online version of *The Guardian*.

The numbers for the printed version, for the same period for these two types of newspapers, differ even more: only 744 respondents read *The Guardian* every day, while 3833 survey respondents per day read the *Daily Mail*.

While *The Guardian* and other 'quality' newspapers' reports on EU immigration remain relatively neutral or positive, the two mid-market newspapers *Mail Online* and *The Express* tend to misrepresent EU migrants. For example, picturing them as an economic burden for the British economy. The questions that arise are whether these misrepresentative claims are true or not. Do EU migrants really come to Britain to abuse the country's welfare system? What harm these claims can cause - and to whom if they are unfounded - is yet another question to be taken into consideration in addressing these questions.

This paper is divided into three parts. First, this paper will outline the 2004 enlargement of the EU and the consequent opening of the labour market to A8 migrants in Britain. In addition, attitudes of British citizens to immigration as well as to the EU are important factors in this debate. Therefore, the paper also presents evidence about anti-immigration and anti-EU sentiment of British citizens in Britain. Second, it stresses the power of media messages and, it challenges two claims about EU im/migrants made by the mid-market newspapers with empirical evidence: Firstly, the 'benefit tourism' claim; and secondly, advantaged allocation of social housing to EU im/migrants in Britain, but also claims about

EU im/migrants' dependence on this type of housing. Finally, these claims will be refuted and it will be argued that the media are mainly responsible for influencing the opinions of citizens on immigration-related issues; this misrepresentation of the im/migrants in the media can have a detrimental effect on their integration as well as initiate or enhance discrimination of these migrants in the hosting society.

In this paper, a reference is made to EU and A8 im/migrants. This is because there are some statistical data that focused particularly on A8 im/migrants, while others attention was paid to EU im/migrants in general. Therefore, when reference to 'EU' im/migrant is used, it will always include the group of A8 migrants in its statistics.

In May 2004, eight countries from the former communist states of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) entered the EU. This 2004 enlargement of the EU was the largest single expansion in terms of territory, number of states and population in its history. The unequal economic conditions, as well as the desire to travel freely without restrictions were the most likely reasons that mobilised immigration from these A8 countries to older member states such as Britain.

Britain along with the other 14 existing countries in the EU, had a choice to impose restrictions on employment for workers of these eight countries for up to seven years (European Commission, 2014). Yet Britain, unlike Austria or Germany, decided to open its labour market to A8 countries straight after their accession to the EU. There was, however, one minor requirement that these im/migrants workers were conditioned to if they wished to work for a UK employer for more than a month. They were required to register their employment with the Home Office's Worker Registration Scheme (WRS), but once they completed a 12-month period of registered employment, they were no longer subject to the WRS (Department of Work and Pensions, 2011). The purpose of this scheme was to monitor the impact of these migrants on the British economy, for example, the type of work they undertook, and how long they stayed. In May 2011, after the seven-year period, this required registration for workers from A8 countries ended. This meant that A8 nationals

were no longer required to register their employment to be treated as workers, but were able to access the labour market on the same terms as other EU nationals (HM Revenue & Customs, 2011).

To be more precise, it was the British government who was in favour of the 2004 enlargement of the EU, but not the British public (Dursun-Ozkanca, 2011). What followed, was immigration of significantly larger numbers than initially predicted and expected (Parliament, 2008). Consequently, over the last ten years, the net migration has been driven mainly by EU citizens (Office for National Statistics, November 2014). In more detail, statistical data covering the period from January 2005 to June 2014 shows that the employment of A8 nationals had a growing tendency (Office for National Statistics, 2014). Arrival of A8 nationals to the UK for work-related purposes is still very high at the present. As of June 2014, the majority of A8 citizens (72 %) arrived in Britain for work-related purposes (Office for National Statistics, November 2014).

Britain, on the other hand, has been a member of the EU for over thirty years. One would think that for such a multicultural country as Britain, the arrival of new EU migrants groups would not be an issue. But despite Britain being a country that “advocates cultural pluralism” (Koopmans, Statham, Giugni & Passy; 2005:92) immigration in the UK is generally unpopular (The Migration Observatory, November 2014). Large majorities in Britain have been opposed to immigration since the 1960’s and, approximately three-quarters of British citizens are in favour of reducing immigration (The Migration Observatory, November 2014). Moreover, the country has been sceptical toward the EU for several years now (Wellings, 2010). Wellings further argues that “resistance to European integration has laid the ideological foundations of a contemporary nationalism” (2010:490). One could wonder what happened to those advocates of multiculturalism. Britain seems to have adopted a sceptical view of the EU which has also been reflected in the media too (Alarcón, 2010). Here, the question arises whether this Euroscepticism in the country has been initiated by the media or whether it is the attitudes of British citizens that have influenced the media or not.

Nevertheless, these high levels of anti-immigration and anti-EU feelings of British citizens may be sensitive to the way the media report on immigration-related issues in this country. Inaccurate media messages could create more tension in society. For British citizens, the need to be provided with accurate information about immigration-related issues is important for their political participation. For example, the information they hear, read and consequently believe - may be a decisive factor in elections. However, journalism as much as other businesses, is also an industry that strives for profit. The media sector is highly competitive and thus each newspaper competes for their market share.

In order to get readers' attention, the media often use attractive, provocative, and attention-catching words in their headlines aiming to catch the readers' attention, while perhaps unconsciously compromising the value of information. The lexical choice of a journalist is however very important, since newspaper headlines "express the major topic of an article" (van Dijk, 2000:42). Yet, the competitive nature of the business can lead to a focus on 'selling' rather than 'informing'. This can be problematic, since some of the newspaper readers may not want to read every single article, but only the headlines. There are studies that support this claim. For example Marquez (1980) found that some newspaper readers may read the headlines only and form their opinions on these alone.

The next section will therefore focus on evaluating the role of the media and its part in framing British public opinion. Even though it is known that different newspapers reflect different views and tend to favour certain political ideologies, one would expect newspaper reports to be accurate and based on facts.

Some headlines, of course, are more positive or negative than others. In this paper, it is the negative media messages (headlines and article contents) that are going to be challenged. This is because negative media messages can have "negative consequences on the 'minds' of the recipients" (van Dijk, 2000:38). To clarify, there is no doubt that the British press contains media messages on immigration-related issues with positive or neutral contents, nor is there doubt that there are very good professional journalists in the British press.

However, recent research studies confirm that the media do misrepresent im/migrants (Drziewiecka et al., 2014; Spigelman, 2013; Esses & Medianu, 2013; Leveson, 2012; Gemi, Ułasiuk & Triandafyllidou, 2012; Fox, Moroșanu & Szilassy, 2012; Robinson, 2010; Spoonley & Butcher, 2009; Migration Policy Institute, 2009). Since it is the negative types of media messages that cause outrage, it seems only natural to pay attention to these and to challenge their validity with statistical evidence.

To illustrate this point with an example of a real case: in 2006 Wiktor Moszczynski, Research Officer of the Federation of Poles in Great Britain, complained to the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) about the inaccurate and discriminatory portrayal of Poles (but also Eastern European im/migrants in general) in a daily British newspaper (PPC, 2006). Although the newspaper apologised for the coverage, the damage was already done. A different study of five Dutch national newspapers found that the more reports with negative contents on immigration-related issues, the higher the support for anti-immigration parties in the Netherlands (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007). Interestingly, the same study concluded that more positive content of the media messages would decrease the support for anti-immigration parties. The finding from this study is very important, since it shows that the Dutch audience was sensible to particular types of media messages. Consequently, this could mean that perhaps if the media reported more positive messages on immigration-related issues in the UK, the anti-immigration feeling among British citizens would be lower.

Turning to challenging the claims made in the British press, this paper now illustrates nine newspaper headlines from two mid-market newspapers. As has been established previously, a newspaper headlines “express the major topic of an article”:

*“Migrants DO take our jobs: Britons losing out to foreign workers, (...)” (Express, 2014)*

*“EU migrants could be required to register with police on arrival to the UK”*

*(MailOnline, 2014)”*

*“Jobless migrant to be DENIED housing benefit: Minister insists UK’s generous welfare system will no longer be a magnet for citizens of other EU states”* (MailOnline, 2014)

*“The truth about East European migration: One in 30 Latvians are living in Britain, one in 60 Poles are also over here - and statistics don’t even show latest influx”*

(MailOnline, 2014)

*“Britain must say ‘no’ to European workers”* (The Telegraph, 2013)

*“Migrants more likely to claim work benefits than Britons”* (The Telegraph, 2013)

*“EU says UK must dole out MORE benefits: Brussels takes legal action to force Britain to lift restrictions on migrants claiming handouts”* (MailOnline, November 2014)

*“Revealed: How 500,000 immigrants have been given social housing in last decade as number of families on waiting list hits record high”* (MailOnline, 2013)

*“Britons ‘less likely to have a job than East European migrants’: Findings contrast with other countries with high immigration”* (MailOnline, April 2013)

What kind of messages do these headlines send out to British citizens about the EU im/migrants? What topics do they express? The context into which the main actors - the EU im/migrants and Britain are framed is as follows: the EU im/migrants come to “take” jobs; they are accused of benefit tourism and of relying on the country’s welfare: “UK’s generous welfare system will no longer be a magnet (...). On the other hand, Britain and its citizens are portrayed as those whose economic situation is threatened under the influence of this

“influx” of EU im/migrants. Furthermore, by voicing measures such as cutting benefits (both in-work and out-of work) and by Britain saying “no’ to European workers” the voice in these headlines calls for some kind of mobilization of British citizens to take collective action in order to protect what maybe they perceive belongs more to the British than to others.

Consequently, these (mis)representations of EU migrants in the press may partially explain why the majority of British citizens believe that EU labour migrants bring more costs than benefits to the UK (The Migration Observatory, November 2014). So, is it really these welfare benefits that triggers their migration? Secondly, do they really “take” jobs from British citizens? Even so, these two claims that migrants take British jobs and that they are triggered by the country’s welfare system, contradict each other. Still, how can they abuse the British welfare system as well as work legally, pay taxes and thus make contributions at the same time?

### Challenging the claims with evidence

The evidence from Dustmann & Frattini’s (2014) investigation of the fiscal impact of immigration on the British economy from 1995 to 2011, disputes the claims about EU migrants abusing or relying on the welfare system. The study shows that the net EU contribution to the UK economy was higher than what these immigrants received in state benefits from Britain, which means that the UK’s economy benefited from EU migrants. Data from the same source for the same period shows that the contributions made by EU immigrants were 10% higher (in relative terms) than those made by the native citizens. This means that not only did EU migrants contribute to the UK’s economy, they also contributed more than the native citizens.

The data for the post-2000 migrants alone show very similar results. Since the year 2000, these immigrants have contributed considerably more in taxes than they have received in state benefits. The relative fiscal contributions of this particular cohort were also higher than the contributions made to the British economy by British citizens. The investigation

further shows that between 2001 and 2011, A10 immigrants ('A10' means A8 immigrants plus immigrants from Cyprus & Malta) contributed almost £5 billion to the British economy. In addition, it needs to be noted that they also made a net contribution of £2 billion during the crisis period between 2007 and 2011. According to Dustmann & Frattini (2014) even in 2011, A10 immigrants' contributions were still 23% higher (in relative terms) than those made by native citizens which again shows that these migrants are beneficial for the British economy and were economically active even in the last year of the crisis. This cohort of immigrants in particular was also 17% less likely to be in receipt of state benefits or tax credits than native citizens in Britain, which shows that some of the above newspaper headlines clearly misrepresented these migrants. The data controlled for the same age group still showed the immigrants as being 15.5% less likely than natives to receive state benefits or tax credits.

Furthermore, the study of Dustmann & Frattini shows that the EU migrants reduced the financial burden of fixed public expenditures over the 2001- 2011 period in Britain. This, consequently, helped the UK economy made savings of approximately £24 billion. Inevitably, this evidence undoubtedly refutes the claim about 'benefit tourism' of EU migrants in the UK.

Interestingly, the above data reveals that it is the group of A8 immigrants in particular, responsible for the positive impact on the UK's economy since 2004. This is because in each fiscal year since the 2004 enlargement, this group of A8 migrants has had a positive effect on the British economy "despite the fact that the UK has been running a budget deficit over the last few years" (Dustmann, Frattini & Halls, 2010:1). Dustmann et al. (2010:2) explain this phenomenon further by stating that: *"This is because [A8 immigrants] have a higher labour force participation rate, pay proportionately more in indirect taxes and make much less use of benefits and public services."*

So far in this paper, it has been shown not only that the vast majority of EU migrants are economically active, but that their contributions to the British economy are higher than the

contributions of native citizens. With respect to economically inactive EU migrants in the UK, the data shows that this number is trivial. As of February 2014 EU migrants represented 2.5 % of the total group of the 5.3 million working-age benefit claimants in the UK (Parliament, 2014). With relation to A8 migrants in particular, they accounted for 1.3% of total benefit claimants in the UK as the same source reports. This clearly shows that the vast majority of A8 nationals are employed in the UK and thus, do not abuse the welfare system in this country.

Furthermore, according to Scott (2012), employers from sectors such as UK horticultural and food industry prefer to hire A8 (and A2) migrant workers rather than domestic workers (Scott, 2012). Scott conducted a survey of 268 horticulturalist farmers (employers) and interviewed 37 employers from another 30 English horticultural companies about their experiences with EU migrant workers. The interviews with these employers revealed that that they not only preferred to hire A8 and A2 migrant workers, but they reported that the UK horticultural and food industry success almost depends on the Eastern and Central European migrant labour. For example, in their interviews, the employers reported that:

*“The majority of English unemployed are too lazy to do a day’s work. The Czechs and Polish do work!”* (Scott, 2012:465).

*“It is a problem with staff in this job because the English people, they don’t want to sort of bend their backs, you know, these days I’m afraid”* (Scott, 2012:465).

Additionally, a different study conducted by a governmental body: the Migration Advisory Committee (2014), employers have also expressed their preference for hiring EU migrants (in the low-skilled sector) rather than British citizens. Their main reasons for this choice were that migrants, especially those from Central and Eastern Europe, “worked very hard, were flexible in their hours of work, were polite, pro-active, punctual and reliable” (Migration Advisory Committee, 2014:120). Yet again, some employers in the healthcare

sector stress that they would not be able to fill their vacancies and that the importance of these immigrant workers is crucial, since *“if it were not for the migrant workers...I think we would struggle to provide care at all or at the quality we wish.”* (Migration Advisory Committee, 2014:202).

To sum up, the statistical evidence on EU migrants' economic performance in the UK clearly refutes the claims about the benefit tourism' of EU migrants in this country. The same group of migrants cannot be 'benefit tourists' as well as legal workers who contribute and pay their taxes at the same time. Besides, there is no empirical evidence to support the claim of 'benefit tourism' of EU migrants in the UK (Migration Policy Institute, 2013).

Moving on to the debate of unfair allocations of social housing to EU immigrants which is yet another "most frequently cited injustice" in the British media and politics (Robinson, 2010:57). In May 2007 Margaret Hodge (Minister of State) claimed that EU (and non-EU) migrants' housing needs are prioritised in allocations of social housing over the needs of British citizens in the UK (Robinson, 2010; Shelter, 2008). Margaret Hodge was mostly concerned with A8 migrants, since they exceeded the number that Home Office in the UK expected. However, in reality the number of all foreign nationals living in social housing was trivial and the number of migrant workers in social housing was almost non-existent (Robinson, 2010). As Robinson's study reveals further, this particular 'social housing' topic is frequently used by far-rights in their political campaigns. For example, UK Independence Party (UKIP) took these (false) claims and used them in their campaign for local elections in 2007. This is despite the fact that during 2007, only 0.7% of A8 workers lived in social housing in the UK, the rest rented privately (Shelter, 2008). The concerns about the privileged allocations of social housing to migrants, however, has remained in the press and political discourse until today. More recently, Prime Minister David Cameron has proposed that migrants should not get social housing until they have been in the UK for four years (The Guardian, 2014). The newspapers' messages, as well as Cameron's policy propositions both reflect concerns of British citizens regarding social housing in the UK. However, as many studies claim, there is no such evidence available to support the claims about the

unfair allocation of social housing at the expense of British citizens (Battiston, Dickens, Manning & Wadsworth, 2014; Parliament, 2014).

In fact, all migrants residing in the UK in the period from 1995 to 2011 were less likely than native citizens to live in social housing accommodation (Dustmann & Frattini, 2014). This is because the migrants are more likely to live in privately rented accommodation in more detail, migrants who have lived in the UK for five years or less, made 80% of renters in 2013 (The Migration Observatory, October 2014). Those migrants who have been living in the UK more than five years lived in accommodation similar to native population in 2013 (The Migration Observatory, October 2014). Furthermore, the same study also shows that immigration had no negative impact on house prices. For example, as a result of immigration, the prices of houses in England and Wales decreased by almost 2% in 2010 (Sá, 2011).

Therefore, the evidence presented in this paper dismisses the claims about EU migrants made by the press. The false accusations of 'benefit tourism', the unfair allocations/dependency of social housing - do not match the data gained by extensive research.

However, it seems the truth is that a large majority of these economic migrants migrated to the UK for work. Although they are well educated, their return for their human capital is very low (Clark & Drinkwater, 2008) and (Scott, 2012). Nevertheless, they fill the gaps in employment in the UK horticultural and food industry as shown above. Some employers from these industries, in fact, prefer to hire A8 migrants and refer to them as honest, hard-working people with a very high work ethic.

The immigration process can be risky and demanding. These migrants, in order to improve their capital, leave their home countries temporarily or even permanently. One could argue that due to the economic inequality, they are forced to do so. For those with social

networks across the borders, this process of migration and integration might be less risky than for those who have no ties in the receiving country.

Yet, in the press, EU migrants are often pictured as economic opportunists rather than genuine economic migrants seeking a better life in the UK. As a result, this misrepresented stereotyping may damage the reputations of these migrants who come to the UK with genuine reasons. Moreover, the scapegoating tactics employed by some of the press unnecessarily raise public concern to an inappropriate level that is not apparent to any rational threat, nor supported by actual data. In return, this perceived threat is more likely to be responsible for the negative perception (and reception) of migrants by the native citizens in the hosting society. As Transatlantic Trends (2013) shows, British citizens indeed perceive immigration as the main issue facing their country. In addition, the press seems to call for a collective action of British citizens in order to protect the country's economic resources and national identity. McLaren & Johnson (2007) note that 'outsiders' can pose a threat to country's economic resources and national identity. These calls in the press, however can be detrimental and discriminatory of migrants and other minorities.

One may wonder why then despite this publically available evidence about the positive impacts of EU migration on British economy, the press still misrepresents these migrants. It seems that the controversial media messages and newspapers' profits have gained preference over well-researched and sophisticated topics (not in all newspapers of course). With regard to this question Triandafyllidou notes:

*"(...) media, although to different extents - depending on whether elite or tabloid outlets tend to highlight controversial and conflict aspects of migration rather than opt for well-researched, investigative and substantial reports of the social contexts of the relevant news occurrences" (2012:240)."*

For example, the extensive two-part investigation of Lord Justice Leveson into the press's ethics and behaviour – 'The Leveson's Inquiry' (2012) reported that the British press indeed portrays immigrants and refugees inaccurately and with tendency to discriminate these minorities. In more detail, it was concerned with misleading headlines, reckless inaccuracy, discriminative and unbalanced reporting on immigration (and other minorities).

A different study of media messages over a ten-year period (1999 – 2009) conducted by the Migration Policy Institute shows that the national media in Britain "have produced a very negative view of what immigration is and might be" (2009:2002). Likewise, evidence from Spigelman's study (2013) shows that negative messages about Polish migrants in the media in the period from 2004 to 2008 were unfounded and did not match reality. Furthermore, Esse and Medianu concluded that the constantly negative and exaggerated media portrayals of migrants (and refugees) lead to "dehumanization" (Esse & Medianu, 2013:531) of these groups. Therefore, it can be inferred that media messages matter. The media are active agents in the process of shaping opinions of public. They set agendas and present issues.

While newspapers are entitled to express their opinions on immigration, it is important that these views are presented in accordance with the Code that editors and journalists have to obey. The first point under the heading 'Accuracy' in the Editors' Code of Practice Committee (2014) specifies that the press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information, including pictures. For every professional journalist, accuracy should be therefore one of the fundamental cornerstones of their practice. However as journalists are human beings, mistakes can happen. Yet, it is important to distinguish between the causes of these mistakes. For example, if frequent misrepresentations in the press happen as a result of careless journalistic practise, then it is a serious matter and should lead to consequences. In a study of Triandafyllidou (2012), journalists reported common reasons of what they believed may cause inaccuracies: "the lack of specialised knowledge"; "the limited time" and the fact that "a blunt piece of news has more news 'value'" (2012:240). While these reasons may seem understandable to a

certain degree, the impacts of such inaccurate claims made about immigrants, however, can be severe.

The media has long been perceived as an important actor in relationship-building between native and non-native citizens living together in the hosting country (Spoonley & Butcher, 2009). Some of the media, instead of enhancing and promoting cultural diversity in the hosting society have been “endorsing” or even “initiating” racism (Spoonley et al, 2009:355). The reputations of migrants, damaged by the media, raise yet another concern over migrants’ integration. The integration, naturally, requires engagement from both parts in the hosting society - the native and the non-native citizens. For migrants coming to a foreign country, successful integration is very important, since it could open doors to new networks and social capital for them. Social capital, as Putnam explains, refers to *“features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit”* (1995:66). The connections within these social networks may help them to secure resources in the new country. For example, most of the employers are native citizens, which means that bridging with them could lessen the migrant’s effort in order to secure a job in a foreign country.

However, the opportunity to bond and to gain social capital is complicated, if not impeded to migrants, as a result of some of the media’s misrepresentations. In addition, migrants are unable to defend these inaccurate claims. They do not possess the same power as the media do. Consequently, leaving migrants’ voices out of the story means that they become passive actors engaged in negative acts and are thus unable to prove their innocence (Gemi et al., 2012). This is to say that the migrants, unlike the media, have very limited access to public broadcasting via mass communication media. They are not usually able to dismiss the false claims as easily and quickly, nor do they possess as much credibility as the media do.

### Conclusion

The main focus in this paper has been to challenge the following two claims about EU migrants in the British press: firstly, benefit tourism; and secondly, the unfair allocation of social housing to EU migrants in Britain and their dependence on this type of housing.

The presented evidence showed that overall, the A8 migrants have had positive impact on the British economy since the year 2000. Moreover, the fiscal contribution of these migrants has been positive, which means that these migrants have contributed substantially more to the British welfare system than what they have received in state benefits and tax credits. Furthermore, their contributions (in relative terms) in the period from 1995 until 2011 were higher than those of the native citizens. In addition, as evident from other studies, some employers in food, horticultural and healthcare industries seem to be almost dependent on Eastern and Central European migrant labour.

Secondly, the press's claims about the advantaged allocation of social housing to EU migrants seem to be unfounded, since evidence which could support this claim is not available, as pointed out by some scholars. Furthermore, the evidence for the period from 1995 to 2011 presented in this paper showed that it was more the case of native citizens who were in social housing (in relative terms) than migrants residing in the UK during the same period. Moreover, EU migrants do not rely on the British social housing sector, since they are more likely than the native citizens to rent from the private sector, as supported by the evidence in this paper.

Thus, the evidence presented in this paper, in relation to both claims, clearly is controversial to what has actually been reported by the press in question. This discrepancy inevitably leads to misrepresentations of groups of migrants who are human beings with reputations. Hence, this paper suggests that accurate statistical information on migration workers in Britain is publically available and anyone interested has access to it. Secondly, it seems that some journalists lack cultural awareness and sensitivity, as well as possess only limited

knowledge about immigration-related issues. Therefore, raising their cultural awareness and educating them in the field may be beneficial to these newsmakers. Lastly, it is a question whether frequent misrepresentation and inaccurate mistakes in their reporting should be tolerated or not, as they are obliged to adhere to the Code.

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