



**"Albanians in the Spotlight: The British Media  
Representations of Albanian immigrants between 2021  
and 2022"**

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## **Abstract**

In the realm of public opinion and policy direction, the media yields significant influence, in shaping public perceptions and directing legislative decisions. Yet, there have been instances where this influence has reinforced discriminatory perspectives about immigrants, thereby creating an environment imbued with scepticism and mistrust. This research probes into the nuanced portrayal of Albanian immigrants by the British media between 2021 and 2022, a period marked by heightened scrutiny and continued interest in this group, culminating in the securitization of the matter. While using the Critical Discourse Analysis methodology, this study focuses on the British media's themes during this timeframe and tries to locate the stereotypes present in its discourses about Albanian immigrants. 93 news articles from 7 important media outlets in the United Kingdom (The Guardian, Daily Mail, BBC, The Telegraph, The Financial Times, The Sun, Mirror), published online during January 2021 and December 2022 will be analysed for this study. The findings demonstrate that the British media in general had both similarities and differences in framing Albanian immigrants which is aligned with their ideological orientations. The right leaning media outlets, in particular, served as a courtesy for the British government, which successfully led to the creation of polarisation between 'Us' (British media and citizens) and 'Them' (The Albanian immigrants). The analysis suggests that through this negative framing of Albanians, the British media, particularly the right leaning media outlets, successfully securitised the issue of Albanians immigrants in the UK.

**Keywords:** Albanians, Asylum Seekers, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Immigration, Migration, Refugees, Media, Securitisation Theory, Social Representation Theory.

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## Chapter I – Introduction

The topic of migration frequently dominates British news headlines, while keeping the British public up to date with developments around this topic, the media yields a significant influence in shaping their perceptions and beliefs about migrants. While negative attitudes towards migration are not a modern-day phenomenon, literature suggests that British media discourse is increasingly hostile towards migrants (Ceyhan and Tsoukala, 2002; KhosraviNik, 2009; Spigelman, 2013; Lawlor, 2015; Allen, 2016; Arif, 2018; Ullmann, 2023). Illustrative of this phenomenon was the Sun's Mr Man spoof, which raised several complaints by the public (Byrne, 2003). Through this thought-provoking piece titled "Mr Men behaving badly," it tried to reflect, as they described it, "the sad side of Britain" (Rae, 2003) at that time. Within this satirical feature, an interesting figure was spotlighted — the "Mr Albanian Gangster":

Mr Albania Gangster didn't like it in Albania so now he lives in Britain. He hangs out with Mr Drug Dealer and Mr Asylum Seeker. He often likes to do the same things as them...

(Rae, 2003)

Two decades later, such portrayals of Albanian migrants still resonate. The growing number of Albanians seeking refuge in the UK (Figure 1.1) has sparked considerable political and public debate. "Invasion on our southern coast" and "very harmful, serious and organised criminality" are only some of the phrases used by the UK Home Secretary, Suella Braverman and the Tory politicians to describe the arrival of Albanians (Thomson, 2022) to justify failures in migration and asylum governance and justify measures taken against the Albanian immigrants (Malik, 2022). However, such xenophobic rhetoric has not only created an unpleasant atmosphere for Albanian asylum seekers, which has resulted often in unfair decisions on deportations (Taylor, 2022), but it has also led to an increased negative media portrayal of Albanian immigrants. Such coverage mainly coming from the right leaning media has further increased the stigmatisation of the Albanians in the country (Syal, 2022a). Consequently, this has heightened the securitization of their immigration to the UK.

Number of Albanian asylum applicants per year, UK, 2010 to 2022

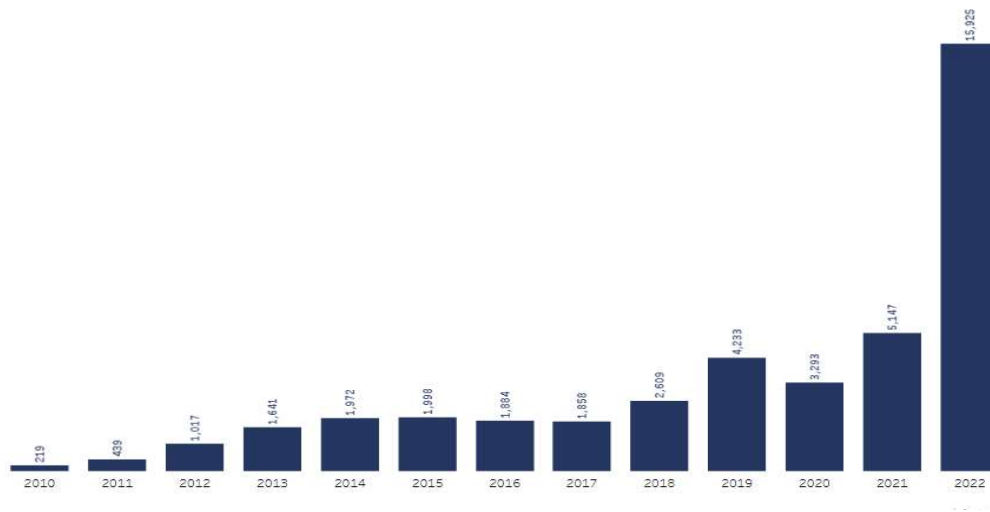


Figure 1.1

Source: [The Migration Observatory](#)

In this context, this study seeks to analyse the portrayal of Albanian immigrants by the British media which has led to the securitization of Albanian immigrants in the United Kingdom (UK). While the current literature covers a variety of themes that arise in the British discourse during the coverage of migration news, there is a significant gap when it comes to the British media's portrayal of Albanian immigrants and its role in securitising the Albanian migration to the UK, particularly post 2020.

Therefore, the central aim of this study is to examine the linguistic strategies employed within the British media from January 2021 to December 2022, regarding the Albanian immigration, and the role that the media outlets had in securitizing this issue. In this context, this dissertation will seek to answer the below questions: how are Albanian immigrants portrayed by the British media outlets during 2021 and 2022? What are the key frames that emerge in the British media discourse during this timeframe?

For this research the author will utilise the theoretical framework of Securitisation Theory and Social Representation Theory which offer useful analytical tools to explore how media discourses shape anti-immigrant public perceptions and reinforce securitised policies. By utilising the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) research methodology, this

thesis will gather the sampling and coding of the data from seven media outlets with different political ideology. This study will utilise Microsoft Excel Spreadsheets to facilitate the coding and subsequent examination of themes and their analysis.

This study is organised in 5 chapters. In line with the introductory content of Chapter 1, Chapter 2 aims to provide a comprehensive review of the relevant literature pertaining to this research. It will review the literature on migration, the European media framing on Albanian migrants while at the same time including a brief overview of the Albanian migration post 1990s followed by explaining the research gap currently on the issue.

Chapter 3 includes the research methodology and design of the study. Further, elaborating on the significance of relevance, and limitations of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a methodology for this dissertation. This section will provide an explanation of Allen's (2016) Manual Code Book and its intended application, along with an exploration of the key themes that have emerged in existing literature, which will guide the data analysis process.

Chapter 4 presents the main findings while simultaneously engaging in a discussion that pertains to these outcomes. This part presents the findings of the data on how media used particular frames and themes. Simultaneously, the author will delve into the repercussions of securitization, specifically focusing on how the representations of Albanian immigrants in the British media have influenced the framing of them as a matter of national security.

Finally, the conclusion chapter is a brief overview of the dissertation, again briefing the main findings and highlighting potential trends regarding the topic as well as research possibilities through the process of analysis.

## **Chapter II - Literature Review**

This chapter will explore the present literature on the British media's portrayal of Albanian migrants during 2021 and 2022. It will first delve into the academic work investigating the media's role in shaping both public perceptions and policies of government stakeholders. After that, it will look into the scholarship on the role of media in influencing the public and policymakers in a negative way when it comes to refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and immigrants, especially in Europe. It will have a particular look at the works done to explore the role of the British media in this regard. Furthermore, this chapter will explore the previous literature on the representation of Albanian immigrants in European countries, by primarily focusing on Italy, Greece and the UK. Lastly, it will explain the literature gap on the topic of this dissertation, which will be tried to minimise through this study.

### **2.1 Media and Migration**

The existing academic scholarship identifies media as a major source in shaping public narratives and ideologies. Scholars emphasise that the role of media in both the construction and encouragement of 'certain ideologies' is very instrumental (Islentyeva, 2021). The mainstream media has the power of not only propagating certain 'agendas' and deciding what the masses should see but its role in influencing people's understanding of the socio-political order is highly critical (Deverux 2015, p. 267). People use the information and discourses coming from mass media as a source of knowledge, which can shape their perceptions and attitude towards day-to-day or even large events happening around them (Islentyeva, 2021). Similarly, the mainstream media also determines the 'attitudes and policies of those who are at the helm of affairs, as it has the power to determine the policy agenda for politicians and policymakers (Walgrave et al., 2008). Therefore, when it comes to the issues of migration, the media plays a crucial role in impacting public perceptions and also policies of those in power regarding refugees. King and Wood (2013) point out that the media has the power to influence public opinion and policymakers' decisions on migration issues, as there is a resemblance in the discourse of mainstream media with that of the political parties on the issue.

Media outlets have a significant influence on shaping public perceptions of individuals, culture, and societal dynamics. How social groups are portrayed in the news has a



significant impact on how individuals not only perceive themselves and their identity, but also how they view others, often creating clear distinctions between 'us' and 'them'. The media serves as a platform to these social groups to amplify their voices and convey their objectives to the general public. However, scholars argue that the selection and manner of presenting different perspectives are contingent upon factors like the prevailing economic and political framework, the press's institutional role, and the broader media landscape (Pietikäinen, 2003, p. 583). A large number of scholarly works have critically explored the way the media frame the topic of migration, and present refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants and migrants, especially in Western countries (Philo et al., 2013; Esses et al., 2013; Maneri, 2011; Fotopoulos and Kaimaklioti, 2016). These scholars belong to different subjects offering a multidisciplinary approach and analysis to the issue. However, despite their disciplinary differences, these studies largely tried to see the response of the public and policymakers in the country where refugees arrive, mainly in Europe, and also how the newspapers in that country have covered it. Academics held the media responsible for promoting certain narratives regarding migration and but also in determining the timing of their introduction to public and policy discourse (Haynes et al., 2016).

The present literature argues that media has been a major source of generating anti-immigration perceptions and attitudes at the public and policy levels. The media's biased and partial portrayals of ethnic minorities have been harshly criticised in the academic discourse, claiming that the media frequently frames such groups within contexts of problems and criminality, thus perpetuating narratives favouring the dominant group (Cottle, 2000; Halloran, 1998; Teo, 2000). There is empirical evidence presented by various scholars working on this area that the media has promoted the 'dehumanisation' of refugees by portraying them as threats to society and public order and, consequently, justified inhuman treatment of them and actions against them (Esses et al., 2013, p. 531). Khosravi Nik (2014) writes that research on the framing of migrants in newspapers suggests that despite the differences in the tones and approaches of the newspapers towards the issue, there is a similarity in their presentation of immigrants mainly in a negative way. Critical scholars blame the media for framing various groups of migrants through discourses in which there is a widespread 'stereotyping, scapegoating and criminalising' of refugees and asylum seekers, migrants and immigrants (Philo et al., 2013; Thorbjørnsrud, 2015). Scholars also argue that often migrants are portrayed as

criminals or connected with illegal acts, regardless of where they originally come from. Such a strategy has the aim to maximise their audience reach while portraying the migrants as the villains and the host society as victims (Gemi et al., 2013, p. 272). According to scholars, when the media's main goal is to sell their products, migrant-related news frequently lacks depth because often it tends to be presented from government authorities' perspective rather than those directly involved, therefore, marginalising immigrants' voices (Ibid). According to scholars (Van Dijk, 2015) in this form the media becomes a channel for elites to shape the perceptions of the general public, thus giving traction to racist perspectives. Expanding on this through a vast array of research focused on racial prejudice and discrimination, van Dijk (1987) delves into various socio-cognitive tactics employed in the discourse that serve the dual purpose of fortifying the dominant group's position and undermining the minority. Specifically, the tactics he identified are:

1. **Scare Tactics:** Employing exaggerated figures and intense focus on alleged dodgers to the powerful groups, thereby inducing panic and delegitimizing the minority group.
2. **Categorical Generalization:** Assigning generalised characteristics to the minority group, often based on stereotypes or cognitive biases.
3. **Positive Self-Presentation:** This is contrasted against the negative portrayal of the 'other'.
4. **Positive Discrimination/Justification for the Discrimination:** Framing the minority as a drain on societal resources, thereby justifying discriminatory attitudes of the majority.
5. **Problematization:** Amplifying issues surrounding the minority, like immigration etc
6. **Victim Blaming:** Painting the minority as the creators of issues
7. **Disclaimers:** Articulate rejections or denials of any discriminatory undertones.
8. **Mitigation:** A subtle approach involving minimizing or using milder terms to describe the majority's negative actions.

Likewise, the media is also blamed to use various other techniques such as 'personalisation, and quantification' in order to emphasise the viewpoint that immigrants are an administrative burden (Isentyevra, 2021). This burden extends further, associating

migrants with financial burden (Eberl et al., 2018 and 2013; Greussing and Boomgaarden, 2017) wherein public resources designated for the native population are allocated to support migrants (Madra and Adaman, 2014; Quinsaat, 2014; Greussing and Boomgaarden, 2017).

By drawing upon existing literature on framing and perspectives concerning immigration, an alternate frame emerges in the media: that of victimisation (Greussing and Boomgaarden, 2017; Amores et al., 2020). Immigrants are often depicted as victims, subjected to the whims of unjust government policies, traffickers, or facing widespread racism and xenophobia (Masini et al., 2018, p. 2331). For instance, scholars (Fotopoulos and Kaimaklioti, 2016) have noted that Syrian refugees are frequently portrayed as desperate and helpless victims by the Greek, German and British media.

According to scholars such different portrayal in the media is because journalism relies heavily on already made substance. According to them, news stories fulfilling journalistic requirements or the ones already published in another source such as official institutions have a greater chance to be received as news (Tsaliki, 2008). As a result, the media often is described as a “courtesy of government spokespeople” (McDonald and Jacobs, 2005, p. 30). As a result, the power for shaping the narratives in migration related news tends to be held by the elite groups. Conversely, it tends to disadvantage those without such influence such as the minority groups who rarely are in such a position of power to influence news coverage (Pietikäinen, 2003, p. 589).

## **2.2 Securitisation, Migration and Media**

The Copenhagen School's scholars—among them, most notably Ole Waever, Barry Buzan, developed the term "securitization" to describe the process of redefining an issue in terms of security risks (Buzan et al., 1998). The scholars recognise that both reality and threats, to some extent, can be constructed. According to them, securitization requires three essential components: the securitizing actor, the referent object, and the intended audience (ibid). The securitizing actor is the entity that presents the issue as a security risk, the referent object is the issue being securitized, and the target audience is the intended audience that is expected to respond to the securitizing actor's request for extraordinary measures. More specifically, securitization is defined by Barry Buzan, as a phenomenon in which the securitising actors use speech acts to present an ‘existential

threat' to a 'referent object' and thereby the actors take an issue from one day-to-day political domain to an emergency situation. It is aligned with language theory which argues that words translate into actions (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 24-26)

Hence, the Copenhagen School examines the political dynamics of threat construction and the use of speech acts to legitimise apolitical decision making. In this context, securitization can occur when a securitizing actor argues that an issue exists without considering whether the threat involved is real or not. It argues that an issue becomes a security issue, including "state security" and "societal security, just when the audience perceives it as such. State security is concerned with defending the nation from external threats and preserving territorial integrity, whereas societal security focuses on the formation of collective identity and the connection between identity and interests (Krause and Williams, 1996, p. 243). Therefore, the primary objective of a securitizing actor is to gain the audience's acceptance and establish a foundation from which emergency measures taken to "protect" a state or society can be justified. Hence, it can be argued that such actions would have been impossible to take or out of the norm without reframing the discourse in terms of existential threats.

Another significant contribution comes from the Parisian school, who views securitization as an intersubjective process. In contrast to the Copenhagen School, the Paris School refocuses attention away from the securitizing actor's internal dynamics and onto the interactions and perceptions of other actors in the securitization process, such as the securitised object and the audience, shedding light on the social construction of security issues. According to Balzacq (2011) securitization consists of a large number of acts whereby 'heuristic artefacts' such as policy tools, visuals, speeches, texts, prevail stereotypes in the society, analogies and feelings are manipulated by the securitising actors in a particular context. As for securitisation audience is important which accepts the securitisation act of, therefore the securitising actors try to mobilise the feelings, emotions and thoughts of the audience regarding a referent object facing the 'existential threat' (Balzacq, 2011, p. 03). The securitising actors presents the threat in a way that the audience accepts the emergency measures of the actors to stop the threat from impact the referent object (Ibid).

Therefore, in a nutshell, securitisation is a process that aims to persuade the masses that a particular problem presents a threat at the existential level which demands urgent actions

to resolve. The scope of securitization research includes, but is not limited to migration, borders, crime etc.

Given the profound connection between media and perceptions, the media becomes an important player in the process of securitisation. Through the strategic use of certain words, phrases, and narratives, it can influence the mass perceptions of a certain 'phenomenon' by presenting it as a 'challenge' or 'existential threat' to the public, social, economic, or political security and order (Tagliapietra, 2021). The politicians and their parties manipulate the media influencing role to create such a hysterical perception about even normal non-political issues and present them as saviours in such an emergency (Ibid). For instance, when it comes to the topic of migration, the media in Europe has portrayed it as a threatening phenomenon despite the fact there is not enough empirical data to suggest that it is threatening (Ibid). Consequently, this led to the securitisation of the migration issue whereby the public developed worsened perceptions of the refugees and migrants and much support for 'anti-immigrant' right-wing political parties (Ibid). The securitisation of immigrants is linked to the racialised and antagonistic approaches that media uses while framing issues especially related to immigrants (Gray and Frank, 2019). For instance, the media called Muslim men a threat to the safety of women in public areas of the host counties, and it termed Muslim women as 'suppressed victims' in the countries they came from (Ibid), which depicts a racialized framing of Muslim men and women. This kind of representation, resultantly, builds the perception that Muslims arriving in European countries are a potential threat and have bad intentions (Van Hootegem and Meuleman, 2019).

### **2.3 Migration, Media and Europe**

In the case of Europe, Thorbjørnsrud (2015) argues that the media has presented migration as a 'law and order' issue which led to various controversial policies. For instance, Maneri (2011) writes the securitised language used by the media while presenting immigrants is the result of certain immigration-related policies such as control practices. Islentyevra (2021) writes that the European media use the frames 'deserving' and 'undeserving' to portray different groups of migrants and thereby the media decides who should be accepted as legitimate migrants and who should not be. For example, low-skilled immigrants were mostly represented by the media while using a 'negative'

framework such as that of the ‘undeserving’ migrant (Ibid). The European media while talking about immigrants depicted a situation of emergency and crisis where refugees are ‘taking over’ Europe (Andersson, 2016). The implication of such media representation of immigrants in Europe led to crisis-centric policies and also strict and high border mechanisms among European states. The negative portrayal of immigrants by the media with phrases such as ‘undeserving’ and ‘economic migrant’ brought severe implications for these groups (Vollmer and Karakayali, 2017). For instance, right-wing populist parties and leaders used such frames in their populist appeals against immigrants. Furthermore, Hobolt (2016) argues that Eurocentric media evoked fears in society against immigrants by referring to ‘potential threats’ to globalisation and European integration and mass immigration.

A large share of the academic work on media and its role in shaping public opinion and policies towards refugees has largely focused on specific country cases. For instance, Jelínková (2019) finds how the Czech media legitimised anti-refugee policies. It is argued that refugees were presented as a security threat and a burden on the administration ‘imposed’ by the EU. Czechia, Poland, and Hungary have been reluctant to imply European legal obligations when it comes to refugees, and therefore, these countries were also summoned to the European Court of Justice (Jelínková, 2019). These countries received much public support for their reluctance to accept refugees which implies how the public perception was built thanks to the media’s negative presentation of refugees (Ibid).

## **2.4 Migration, Media and United Kingdom**

The existing academic scholarship has also covered the media’s representation of migration in the UK. Allen (2016) and Islentyeva (2021) argue that the mass media has played an extraordinary role in influencing public behaviour when it comes to the topic of migration in the UK. Because migration has been a recurrent and ‘popular topic’ in the British media, particularly in the last ten years (Allen, 2016; Islentyeva (2021). By giving much attention to the topic of migration, the British media has been a fundamental source of shaping mass narratives, discourses and attitudes towards refugees, migrants, and associated things. Since the media’s presentation of refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and immigrants has been mostly negative, therefore the public perceptions and attitudes

towards these groups have turned further antagonist. The researchers have found that in the British media while referring to migrants the scale of the terminologies such as ‘mass’ ‘net’ and ‘unregulated movement of foreigners’ have increased (Ibid). Smith and Deacon (2018) write that despite certain fluctuations in the ways immigrants were presented in British media the overall portrayal of them was negative. They also try to answer the question that why the media uses a negative frame while discussing migrants. While the media relied on such terminology which comes from the official discourses, it at the same silenced the voices of the migrants leading to their ‘authorisation’ and presentation as ‘unworthy migrants’ (Arif, 2018). It is argued that one of the basic reasons, for such negative representation, is the dependence of media on official sources and excluding the perspective of the refugees and migrants (Smith and Deacon, 2018). This one-sided view of the overall immigration phenomenon is problematic because not just it excludes the voices of the migrants, but it also talks about borders and official policies while not giving coverage to the impacts of these policies on refugees (Allen and Blinder, 2018). While the official discourses have been against refugees and migrants, the media has played an instrumental role in the promotion of such discourses. The media’s role in the promotion of official discourses is evident from the fact that it relied on government institutions’ statistics while discussing the topic (Allen and Blinder, 2018).

Balch and Balabanova (2010) say that the British government adopted various policies between 1997 and 2010 to restrict the arrival of ‘unwanted’ migrants to the UK. And during the same time, the media’s negative coverage of the migrants increased while frequently framing them as a ‘problem’ and an impending ‘crisis for British society’ (Moore, 2013). Likewise, Cohen (2006) writes that the British media focused a lot on how the population of immigrants is increasing in the UK along with the illegal entry of immigrants into the country. The British media has also to a great extent presented refugees as economic-driven migrants while not shedding light on the situations that push them to leave their countries and come to the. While generally, the British media has tried to negatively portray immigrants, the right-wing media has been more anti-immigrant in its approach to framing the topic of immigration. For example, Berry *et al.*, (2015) write that the right-wing media in the UK framed asylum seekers as ‘bogus’ and said that they do not have any genuine reasons to seek asylum. This kind of representation of immigration topic, as the scholars argue, has two grave implications for those arriving in the UK. First, it has impacted the public perceptions towards them and generated

antagonist attitudes. Philo *et al.*, (2013) refer to 32 studies that found British media trying to build fear of refugees and migrants, which consequently, resulted in public hysteria and fear of these groups. Due to the representations whereby refugees and migrants are portrayed as potential criminals and terrorists, the public found it difficult to feel any sympathy towards them and easily accepted the government's restrictive measures against them. Secondly, it also reinforced the anti-immigrant policies of the government. This resulted in a cycle whereby the government discourses were adopted by the British media and the same media portrayal further handed official policies towards immigrants.

The way British media has been portraying immigrants is quite evident from how it has represented Romanian immigrants. British media has mostly associated Romanians with crimes, terrorism, and organised crimes and has extensively called them financial burdens. A 2014 study titled '*Bulgarians and Romanians in the British National Press*' by The Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford found that the British newspapers while discussing Romanians 'often focused on crimes and anti-social behaviour.' They were called 'gang, criminal, beggar, and thief'. Cheregi (2015) finds through a comparative analysis of three British newspapers that there were similarities and also differences in the ways these papers represented Romanians in the UK. The British media has been using frames whereby it tried to 'otherize' the Romanians (Cheregi, 2015). The British media uses a 'top-down, national(ist), expert and elite knowledge-based approach' to Romanian migrants which results in perceptions that this is an 'abstract' issue which can be dealt with at the policy level (Medroane, 2012). The crimes committed by Romanian immigrants have been covered by the British media in an extensive way and with titles which demonstrate a dehumanisation, generalisation, and criminalisation of Romanian immigrants by the British media. For instance, the British media used titles such as 'How Romanians criminals terrorise our streets' (Dawer 2013), around 28000 Romanians have been detained on criminal charges in the UK for five years when only 68,000 of them live here (Doyle, 2013), (Marinescu and Marinache, 2018)

## **2.5 Albanians, Media and Europe**

### **2.5.1 Brief overview of the Albanian migration to Europe**

After the fall of communism, in the 1990s, significant number of Albanian migrated to Europe (Vullnetari, 2007, p.32). Given the geographic proximity, the majority of the



Albanians migrated to Greece and Italy (ibid). The collapse of pyramid saving schemes in 1997 caused political, social, and economic unrest. With not much confidence and in the state of justice, the Albanians started taking law into their hands (Fischer, 1999; Sadiku, 2014) leading to the onset of a civil war. This led to an increase in the number of killings. According to statistics, around 70% of the killings and deaths in violent ways were because of revenge (*Human development report*, 1998) which continue to have a lasting impact in numerous Albanian families, with many of them still continue to remain in blood feuds (Xhaxho, 2018). All these reasons combined led to a large number of Albanians to flee Albania and migrate to Europe. Another wave of Albanian migrants was seen during the Kosovo war. In order to flee genocide and ethnic cleansing, more than a million Albanian refugees from Kosovo were forced to fled the country, moving to Albania or other Europeans countries, mostly in Germany, Switzerland and the UK (Barjaba, 2019; Vullnetari, 2007, p.34). A large number of citizens from Albania mixed with these refugees from Kosovo, and were granted asylum in various European countries (Vullnetari, 2007, p. 34).

In the last two decades another mass migration of Albanians has occurred. Due to high unemployment rates and a lack of prospects, many Albanians, taking advantage of visa liberalisation, migrated to Europe in search of a better life. During the 2010 and 2019 timeframe, more than 194,000 Albanian citizens attempted to seek asylum in Europe for the first time (*Western Balkans asylum applications in the EU 2009-2019*, 2020). The UK is one of the desired destination countries where the Albanians are migrating. Some Albanian after Greece and Italy, started moving towards the UK to find better opportunities as a result of the Greek and Italian economic and financial crisis (Seiger et al., 2020). After Brexit an increasing number of Albanians tried entering the UK irregularly (see Figure 2.1 for a comprehensive illustration of their typically irregular entry route), which impacted the latter's politics and economy, especially the asylum system. The motives of seeking asylum included animosities due to blood feuds, family disputes, being gendered minorities, and also being endangered for persecutions or trafficking (by the UK - based Albanian origin organised crime) or domestic violence and, to a smaller degree, individuals at risk of religious radicalization (Shpresa et al., 2017). As the Dublin Regulation is not applicable to the UK, the British cannot deport the Albanians to the country where they first arrived. The processing of their asylum claims can take up to two years (Iraklis, 2023).



Figure 2.1

Source: (Wilcock, 2022)

Therefore, the causes of the Albanian migration to the UK are different and quite complex. At different times, different events and crises have pushed majority of the Albanians to migrate to the UK. For example, the War in Kosovo, Albanian's naturalisation in the EU, the socio-economic conditions in Southern Europe especially after the 2008's global financial crisis, and now the Brexit and the Covid-19 have played a huge role in such migration (Dimitriadis, Iraklis, 2023).

### 2.5.2 Representation of Albanian migrants in the Greek, Italian and British Media

As Albanians started to migrate to European countries in the early 90s, they were kindly welcomed by the host society and were predominantly covered positively in the media (Zinn, 1996; King and Mai, 2008; Zenelaga and Goga, 2021). Particularly, in Italy the victimisation frame was prevalent in the media, in which Albanians were portrayed as 'pitiful, backward and helpless' (King and Mai, 2002), who were in need of Italian support since they were escaping from the 'darkness of communism' (Zinn, 1996, p. 241-49). But such positive portrayal was short-lived as the number of Albanians migrating to European countries increased.

The mass migration of Albanians to Italy had a profound effect on the country, that according to scholars (Chaloof, 2008), the ships carrying thousands of Albanians to Italy

in 1991, continue to reappear in newspapers to symbolise immigration (Chaloof, 2008, p. 5). As these ships carried Albanians to Italy, the media outlets portrayed this phenomenon as an 'Albanian invasion', categorised by an influx of 'ungrateful, lazy and violent criminals' (King and Vullnetari, 2003, p. 35). The portrayal of Albanians as criminals gained significant attention during the mid-1990s, where there was a surge of media headlines portraying them as migrants entering illegally and coming for economic purposes and taking part in transnational organised crimes (Kosic and Phalet, 2006). Furthermore, the Italian media extensively portrayed Albanian migrants through various other frames including, chaos, backwardness, poverty, desperation (King and Vullnetari, 2003, p. 35). All these framed led to the portrayal as the Albanian migrants as the 'constitutive other' (ibid), comparing them with the idealised notion of the "good society" in Italy, which is associated with progress, civility, and a European identity (King and Mai 2008; 2019).

Similarly, the Greek media played a huge part in influencing public opinion about the Albanian migrants, leading to their portrayal as the 'constitutive other' in Greece (Mai and Schwandner-Sievers, 2003). Kapllani and Mai (2005) emphasised three main recurring themes in the portrayal of Albanian migrants within the Greek media: a tendency towards criminal behaviour, inherent poverty and backwardness, and as 'invaders' and 'traditional enemies' due to their ethnicity and religious affiliation. In fact, the two famous Greek newspapers, Ethnos and Kathimerini, labelled the Albanian migrants as freed prisoners detained for their political affiliations would commit crimes such as violence as soon as they would enter the country (Baldwin-Edwards, 2004; Tsaliki, 2008) creating panic within the Greek society.

Interestingly, Liza Tsaliki (2008) argued that the framing of Albanian migrants in the Greek media is influenced by the political orientation of the newspapers resulting in their stigmatisation and marginalisation within Greek society. By analysing the portrayal of Albanian migrants in the three main Greek newspapers, she found that; the centre-left newspaper "Ta Nea" tends to frame political articles about Albanians in a negotiatory manner, while the centre-right newspaper "Kathimerini" and the left newspaper "Avgi" often frame them in a conflictual manner (ibid).

Scholars did also note that some Greek media outlets did include the voices of immigrants and those of different NGOs working in the migration field in the migration news stories

where issues surrounding minority and immigrant (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2005, p. 10) were covered. The study found that these media outlets analysed and reported the Albanian immigrant labourers' poor social and economic conditions to the public, and sometimes they even opposed and criticised the Greek government's policies towards this minority group (ibid 10).

Despite a large number of Albanians migrating to the UK and increasing British media attention towards such phenomenon, there is not much in the existing academic works that examined the British media discourse on Albanian migration to the UK, especially post 2021. There were just two study found from Gëzim Alpion (2005) and Marsela Musabelliu (2022), that had their only focus on the portrayal of Albanians in the British media. Notably, despite an interval of nearly two decades between these studies, the depiction of Albanians persists as poor migrants with a tendency to become involved in organised crime. Musabelliu (2022) provides a more current image of the current situation regarding the media portrayal of Albanian immigrants by the British media. Her main findings are that the Daily Mail, dramatized the Albanian influx, highlighting economic motives and potential system abuses (Ibid., p. 4). She noted that tabloids intensified this narrative by linking Albanian immigrant to crime and drugs (Ibid.). In contrast, she observed that another media perspective showed many Albanians being granted asylum, dismissing the economic migrant narrative (Ibid.). This discourse, some suggest, might mask larger political issues, with Albanians used as scapegoats for the UK policy failures (Ibid., p. 5). While Musabelliu's brief weekly analysis offers initial insights, it falls short of providing a comprehensive understanding of the general British media representation of Albanian immigrants. Therefore, to fill the major gap in literature about how the British media portrays Albanian immigrants and their immigration, particularly concerning the years 2021 and 2022, this study aims to assist in comprehending British media's perspectives on Albanian immigration to the UK.

## **Chapter III - Research Design and Methodology**

This chapter will present the methodological framework applied to conduct this study. First, it outlines the research methodology with a focus on the key features of critical discourse analysis along with the justification of choosing this methodological approach. Second, it will explain the research design of the study while elaborating on the process of data selection, coding and analysis. It will also present the justifications for choosing the respective data, its time framework, and sources. After that, it will highlight the ethical considerations made as well as the limitations that were experienced during the conduct of this study.

### **3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a research methodological approach to analyse discourses (texts and speeches). It aims to unearth the relationship between language and society (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 158). Language, in this context, is regarded as a 'constitutive' of social relations, identities, knowledge and beliefs (Fairclough, 1995, p. 55). This inference is drawn from Halliday's (1985) theory on systemic linguistics which argues that language does mainly three things: represents the surrounding, enforces social relations and identities, and relates to the context. Based on this, Fairclough and Wodak (1997, p. 258) argue that discourse creates social relations, identities, and knowledge and also shapes relations between people and different groups. The CDA scholars emphasise the power of discourse which they see as fundamental in the creation and reinforcement of injustices, inequalities, and oppression in the society. They also perceive discourse as hegemonic and thus a medium for the powerful to create hegemonic ideologies which further sustain those inequalities and injustices. van Dijk (1993) argues that the analysis of linguistic structures and discursive strategies of discourse can help us in identifying power struggles, and social and political injustice along with other kinds of socio-political or economic issues. Therefore, CDA is a very useful approach to investigating discourses from the point of view of power which, consequently, paves the way for injustices such as the scapegoating, criminalising, and dehumanising of immigrants.

CDA as a research methodology has been chosen to conduct this study. CDA's various analytical tools make it an appropriate and useful methodological approach to analyse discourses present in British newspapers about Albanian immigrants. Different categories

and strategies in CDA will be helpful and relevant in the conduct of this research, the discriminatory discourse strategies will be more useful to locate how the British media portrayed the Albanian immigrants in a negative way. While helping in the analysis of the data, CDA will also complement the theoretical frameworks, The Social Representation Theory (SRT) and also Securitisation Theory. SRT is a useful theoretical framework in explaining the representation of different groups. It offers a valuable framework to analyse how media represent migrants and which, consequently, influences the host society's public perception and attitudes towards these migrants. As Tran (2022, p. 53) argues that SRT has the potential to pinpoint the media's ways whereby it portrays things in a simple and sensational way impacting people to a large extent. Given the theory's focus on group portrayals, CDA emerges as a relevant research methodology for examining the discursive elements shaping social relations, identities, and collective thought processes. The specific three-level-text analysis in CDA will be used, as it will be a useful strategy for examining the discursive group dynamics and exploring the representations of three important social groups, Albanian immigrants, UK nationals, and the UK government. It will help in identifying questions, actions and arguments regarding these three groups present in the media discourses.

This thesis, examines the discourses surrounding Albanian immigrants in the British media, drawing upon Pedersen (2009) to understand the intricate relationship between these discourses and power dynamics. Following the constructivist approach posited by Pederson, we posit that individuals shape their social identities and socio-political and economic interactions based on their environment, suggesting that such realities are, in essence, social constructs. These ideas and, consequent, social relations, are reinforced through discourses prevalent in media communications. The profound focus on discourses makes the CDA the most suitable and plausible approach to conducting this study.

### **3.2 Data Collection, Justification, and Coding**

Although the rapid developments in the digital world have impacted the British media, newspapers still hold a paramount impact when it comes to public and official discourses, perceptions and narratives (Allen, 2016; Allen and Blinder, 2018). As Balch and Balabanova (2017) argue that the narratives driven by newspapers are an essential part of

public and policy debates. While recognising the impact of newspapers on public perceptions and policymakers in the UK, this dissertation has chosen articles from seven British newspapers; The Guardian, Daily Mirror, BBC News, The Financial Times, Daily Mail, The Sun and The Telegraph (see table 3.1.) to assess the representation of Albanian immigrants in the British media through a critical discourse analysis method:

***The Following six prominent British Media Outlets were selected:***

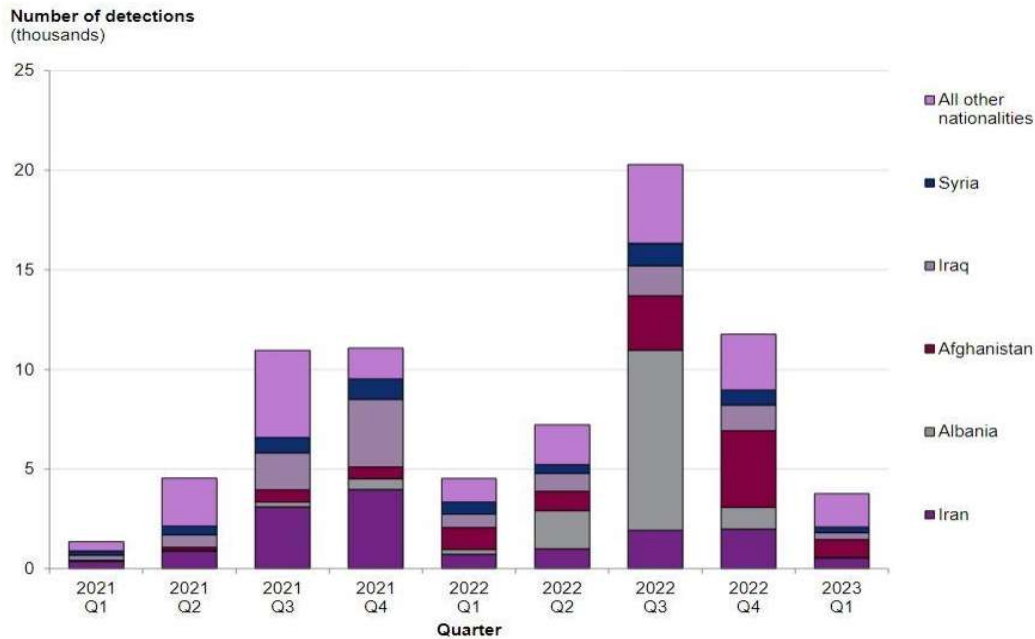
<i>Left-wing</i>	Mirror
	The Guardian
	BBC News
<i>Centre</i>	The Financial Times
	The Daily Mail
<i>Right-wing</i>	The Sun
	The Telegraph

Table 3.1

As indicated in Table 3.1, the seven media outlets were chosen due to their representation of the diverse political affiliations (left-leaning, centre, and right-leaning) within the British press, all boasting substantial circulation. While British newspapers don't formally align with political parties, they do exhibit inclinations towards specific ideological orientations (Allen and Blinder, 2018). The ideological and political differences in these newspapers give different perspectives on how the British media approached the issue of Albanian immigration to the UK. Additionally, it is useful in locating the similarities in their approach to framing Albanian immigrants despite having ideological differences.

This research gathered and analysed 93 online newspaper articles (see Appendix A). In this study, we systematically sampled the dataset to ensure its relevance to our research focus. Specifically, we examined references to Albanian immigration within the British context, published during the period from January 2021 to December 2022. This time period was chosen because, in 2021, there was an increase in the number of immigrants

entering the UK after a smaller number entering in 2020 during the peak of Covid-19 (see Figure 3.1). However, the significantly increased number of Albanians entering illegally in the UK in 2022 (see Figure 3.1) attracted major media attention and while also being labelled as an ‘invasion’ by the British Home Secretary, Suella Braverman (Sparrow, 2022).



**Figure 3.1: Top nationalities arriving via small boats in the UK from January 2021 to March 2023**

**Source: Irregular migration to the UK - Irr D01**

Such a sampling approach guarantees the data's relevance in relation to the research questions, facilitating analytical comparison of the articles based on context, format, and content. Literature review-induced frames helped in determining the ways codes, categories were formed to do the analysis. The existing literature on the topic helped in identifying the predominant themes and codes. While doing the analysis, most of the focus was on how much media gave coverage to migration, and how similar themes and frames were used by different media groups. Similarly, prior research (Allen, 2016; Tran, 2022) also provided further help in doing the analysis. In this study, we utilized a codebook (refer to appendix B) to systematize the newspaper data. This was undertaken to pinpoint key narrative components within the newspaper articles as part of the



qualitative Manual Content Analysis (ibid.). Allen's approach not just provided the impetus to the analysis process but also assisted in ensuring the consistency of the themes (Roberts et al., 2019). Given the dependency of newspapers on various perspectives, mostly ideologically driven, the use of a codebook proved highly useful in locating those narratives.

In this study, we utilized keywords like 'Albanian illegal im/migration', 'Albanian undocumented im/migrant', 'Albanian irregular im/migration', and 'Albanian people smuggling' to access the broadest spectrum of data. These terms were selected based on their frequent use by the British media when portraying Albanian irregular migrants. Our search focused on relevant online newspaper articles using these specific terms. Each identified article was examined by its headline, and essential metadata such as publication date, newspaper name, link, and author's name were noted. Exact data cleaning efforts were made. It was noted that many unrelated articles appeared when using relevant keywords. However, through coding data on Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet, relevant and required data was gathered. The spreadsheet coding helped in generating themes. It also helped in generating graphs and charts which resultantly provided valuable help in the analysis of the data.

### **3.3 Limitations and Ethical Consideration**

Finding news articles on Albanian immigrants was a difficult process, as I had to rely on looking for headings which had 'Albanian(s)' in them. Due to this, the articles that discussed Albanians but did not have the word 'Albanian(s)' in their headings could not be found easily and therefore could not be included in the data. Despite using keywords such as 'Albanian illegal im/migration', 'Albanian undocumented im/migrant' and 'Albanian people smuggling', many irrelevant articles also appeared which made it difficult to filter the relevant ones. Thirdly the large number of articles made it a tiring process to evaluate and include all the data. It is also possible that some of the articles might have been missed given the possibility of human error (see Appendix A). However, despite these limitations, it was made sure that there is no compromise on choosing the required and relevant data, doing its analysis and generating a thorough discussion.

As the data gathered for this study is based on openly available sources such as newspaper articles, therefore the researcher did not face many ethical limitations. But still it was

made sure that even the minute ethical questions were taken into consideration. The biggest one, in this regard, is the researcher's personal identity as an 'Albanian' which could be the reason for personal biases and thus weakening of this study. Although, I acknowledge my personal connection is one of the strong reasons to choose to do this research and I also agree that my position here is not completely apolitical. However, all efforts were made to conduct this study as objectively as possible by following the proper research process to conduct this study, which is based on evidence, data and mythological-driven analysis.

## **Chapter IV- Main Findings and Discussion**

The analysis of the 93 articles (see Appendix A) is presented in this chapter, along with the major findings that can be drawn from it. A particular emphasis is placed on the dynamics, trends, and key themes that emerged from the British press's coverage of the Albanian immigration during the two-year period of 2021 and 2022. The findings are divided into two sections.

The first section gives an overview of the general trends in the British discourse over the two-year period. Firstly, it starts by analysing the number of newspaper articles published between January 2021 and December 2022 classified by publication title and the political orientation of the respective media outlets. Furthermore, building upon insights drawn from previous research (Allen, 2016; Tran, 2022), the examination delves into the subsequent categories: the problem, content focus, type of migration, underpinning justification, messenger, and the characters responsible for the problem. The overarching aim of this analysis is to discern overarching patterns in news representation, pinpointing the prevalent themes and the prominence of narrative classifications.

In the second section, the identification of significant themes on the discourses becomes the primary objective. This section delves into the content of the news articles to identify and analyse the key themes and discourses, arising from the literature, surrounding Albanian immigration during 2021 and 2022. The analysis explores the various perspectives, arguments, and narratives presented in the press coverage, aiming to uncover the underlying dynamics shaping public discourse on this topic.

This chapter, in general, aims to offer a thorough review of how the British media outlets report on Albanian immigration, encompassing the distribution of articles, narrative categories, and significant topics and discourses. Through this examination, this study hopes to gain a deeper insight into the British media landscape and the prevailing narratives surrounding Albanian immigration in the UK will be achieved.

#### **4.1 Overview of media coverage of Albanian immigration to the UK from 2021–2022**

First and foremost, the political leanings of the British media outlets were analysed when examining the coverage of Albanian immigration to the UK. This was important because many scholars have emphasised the influential role of “media outlets' political leanings in shaping the discourse surrounding immigration” (Tsaliki, 2008; Allen, 2016). Therefore, recognising the political leanings of media outlets became crucial in understanding the potential biases and nuances present in their coverage of Albanian irregular migration during the period in question.

Figure 4.1 provides a depiction of the trajectory of newspaper article publications across all political leanings over the selected time period. Beginning in 2021 with 21 articles and peaking in 2022 with over 70 articles. As shown in figure 4.1, during 2021 and 2022, the right-leaning media outlets covered twice as many articles about Albanian immigration to the United Kingdom compared to the left-leaning media, which can reveal a lot about the dominant narratives surrounding this topic during that period.

Notably, between 2021 and 2022, the portrayal of Albanian immigrants as potential threats was markedly pronounced in right-leaning media outlets (the Daily Mail, the Sun and the Telegraph). These publications predominantly emphasised the irregular entries by numerous Albanian immigrants, while concurrently shedding light on their illicit transportation methods and motives. Such a narrative aligns with previous studies (Berry et al., 2015) indicating that the British media's spotlight on the uncontrolled entry of foreigners has persisted since the late 1990s. In essence, right-leaning newspapers, predominantly the Daily Mail, painted a scenario of an uncontrolled migration crisis associated with the unauthorised entry of Albanian immigrants in the UK shores, particularly in 2022. The main argument against irregular Albanian migrants is rooted in the predominantly implied perspective that this external group breaches British laws, often pointing to their engagement in organized criminal activities, thereby advocating against their entry into the UK.

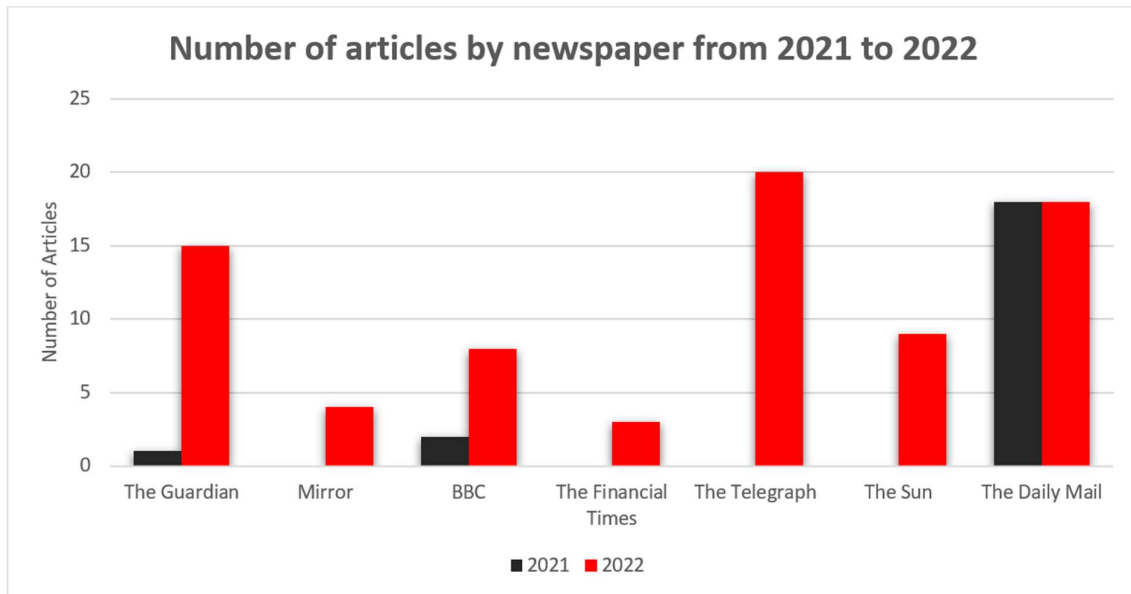


Figure 4.1

#### 4.1.1 Problem

An analysis of the underlying arguments in the papers showed that the British press during 2021 and 2022 mainly focused on issues relating to the number of Albanian immigrants entering the UK (see figure 4.2). Unsurprisingly there was a sharp rise in news articles published by the British media focusing on this issue as there was an influx of Albanian immigrants (Home Office, 2023). The findings are consistent with many scholars (Lubbers et al., 1998; Checa-Olmos and Arjona-Garrido, 2011), who discovered that, in some countries, immigration received more attention as the number of new immigrants rose. Particularly, there was a large debate in the majority of these articles around how the influx of Albanian immigrants, places pressure on British taxpayers. Many scholars have found a link between the volume of news reported through a welfare lens and the influx of new immigrants (Berganza et al., 2019, p. 39), with news about migration in the United Kingdom, in particular, having a more economic focus during periods of increased immigration (Berganza et al., 2019, p. 50). As a result, the large number of articles putting the blame on Albanian immigrants and portraying them as undermining welfare systems are not surprising.

Additionally, over a two-year period, discussions centred on crimes committed by irregular Albanian immigrants were used to portray Albanian immigrants as a threat to British security. As scholars argue, the media tends to link immigrants with violence and

criminality (Checa-Olmos and Arjona-Garrido, 2011). Such as has been the case, where in the British media organised crime dominated the news in 2021, Furthermore, articles covering mostly Albanian immigrants' involvement in drug and human trafficking showed a slight rise in 2022. The focus on crimes committed by a small fraction of the Albanian migrant population contributed to a distorted and sensationalised narrative that many times made all Albanian immigrants look like criminals. Such findings are not surprising, since many scholars have already previously highlighted the media's tendency to portray immigrants using stereotypes and adopting an unfavourable stance (Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart, 2009; Schemer, 2014; Van Klingeren et al., 2015).

Numerous articles over a two-year period discussed laws, such as the modern slavery law, that were perceived as being too weak and, as a result, were being abused by Albanian migrants who were able to use the weak UK policies to remain in the country. The prevalence of articles claiming that laws are weak is not unusual given that, as William Allen (2016) points out, the British media frequently asserts that "existing laws and rules were weak, abused, or ineffective when discussing illegal immigration" (Allen, 2016, p. 14). Nonetheless, there were a few articles discussing how the laws or measures taken against Albanian migrants were excessively stringent or illegal. From 2021 to 2022, there was a rise in coverage of what many view as the unfair treatment of Albanian immigrants by the British government. Many of these pieces focus on the problem of using Albanians as a scapegoat for the country's own policy failures. A few articles also discussed how criminal organisations were exploiting the Albanian immigrants.

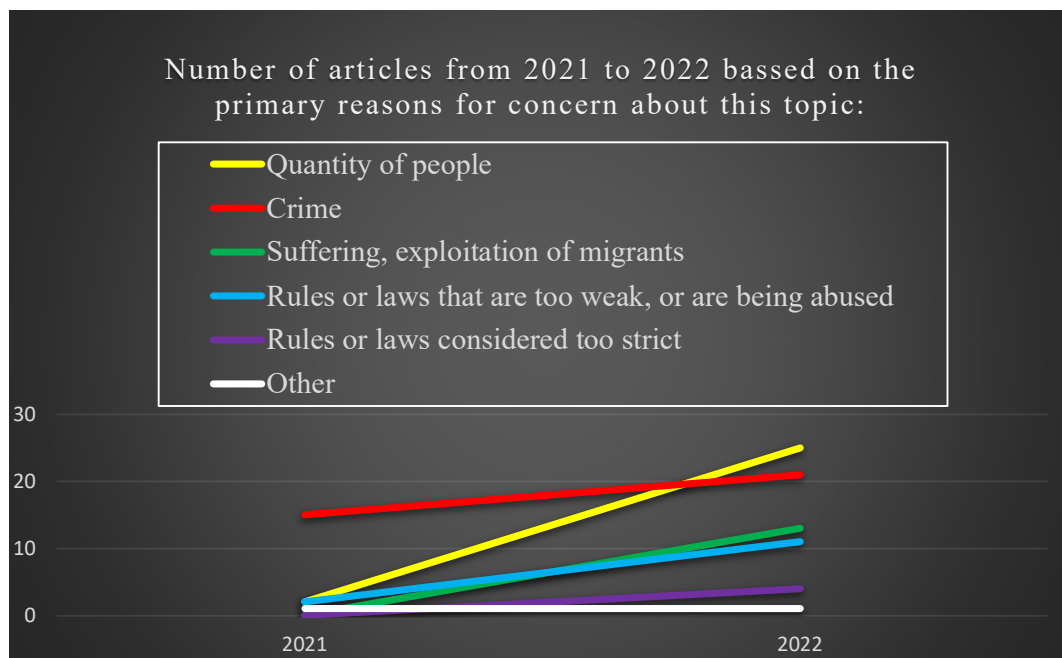


Figure 4.2

#### 4.1.2 Content focus

A notable pattern in the focus of newspaper articles appeared during the two-year study period, from January 2021 to December 2022. Albanian immigrants received far greater coverage than the Government in articles related to immigration—roughly four times as much (see Figure 4.3). This discrepancy can be linked to the influx of Albanian immigrants who entered the UK in 2022 (Home Office, 2023). However, the predominant media portrayal of Albanian immigrants in the UK centres on their involvement in criminal activity or threats to national security. The widespread coverage of criminal activity committed by Albanian migrants is indicative of a larger trend of British media covering topics likely to interest the most readers, such as crime, conflict, violence, and scandal (Gemi et al., 2013, p. 272).

Government officials were primarily mentioned in two contexts within the articles: some articles focused particularly on the hostile policies implemented by the British immigration policy, while others praised the government for taking action to address the issue. These articles acknowledged the government's response to the issues caused by Albanian immigrants and praised its response as a positive step forward. In this instance, it would be possible to deduce that, as in many other countries, the media primarily serves

as a conduit for the government's messaging (Pan et al., 2022). However, it is also possible that journalists' prejudice against Albanian migrants drives their support for government policies. The academic community generally agrees that the feeling of fear leads to the endorsement of restrictive policies motivated by the desire to prevent potential future repercussions (Iyer *et al.*, 2014).

On the other hand, various media outlets expressed critical viewpoints, highlighting concerns and dissatisfaction with the policy's approach to immigration matters, which was characterised by some media outlets as hostile (Malik, 2022; Buchan, 2022). A substantial percentage of these articles also focused on the concerns raised by the prime minister of Albania and other prominent Albanian figures regarding the disparaging remarks made by British officials about Albanians immigration to the United Kingdom. The concerns raised by the prominent Albanian figures demonstrate their dedication to advocating for the rights and well-being of their citizens abroad. This commitment is consistent with the view of numerous academics who assert that sending states, in this case Albania, frequently demonstrate a greater interest in supporting international human rights for migrants than receiving countries, like the United Kingdom (Balabanova and Balch, 2010, p. 385). Furthermore, by focusing on these complaints, the articles aimed to shed light on the potential implications of such remarks on not only the Albanian community in the UK but also the diplomatic relationship between Albania and the UK.



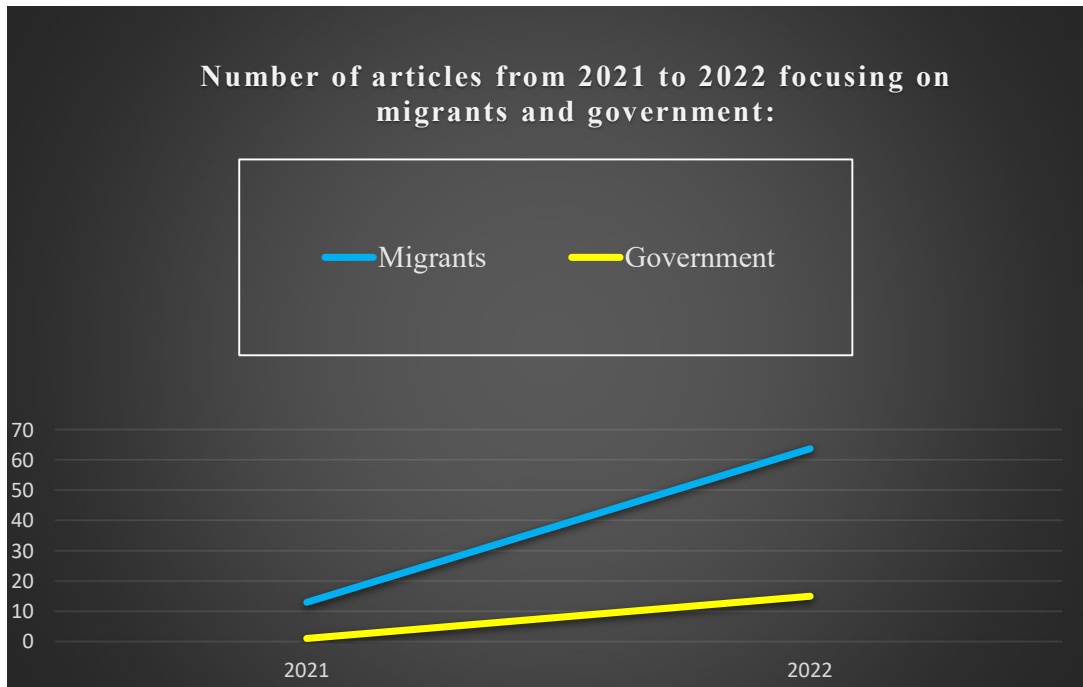


Figure 4.3

#### 4.1.3 Type of migration

During a two-year period, the majority of references to the type of migration in British newspapers concerned the illegal entry of Albanians and migration in general (Figure 4.4). Particularly, the media coverage of illegal entry increased over the course of 2022, reaching its peak in the second half of the year. Such a peak is attributable to the fact that the arrival of Albanian migrants to the United Kingdom increased significantly in 2022 (Home Office, 2023). The sharp increase in media coverage during the second half of 2022 reflects the issue's prominence and urgency at that time in the UK.

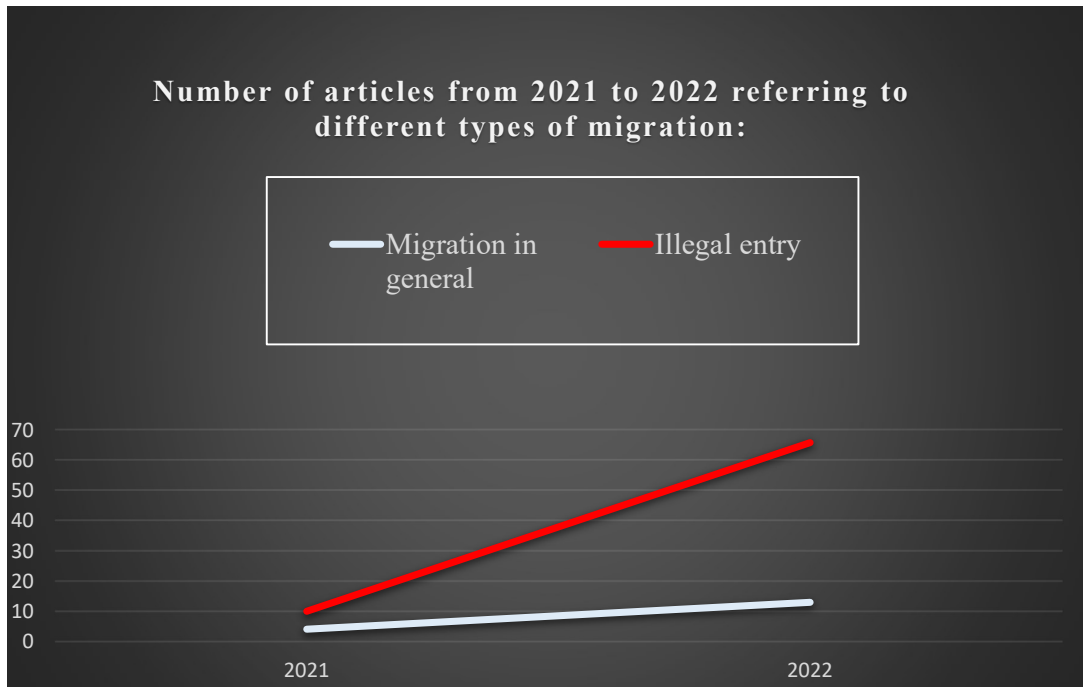


Figure 4.4

#### 4.1.4 Messenger

Throughout the two years, newspapers represented mostly government officials' views in relation to Albanian immigration, as shown in Figure 4.5. Even though in the first half of 2022 there was a decline on the trend, mostly due to lower coverage of Albanian immigration, in the second half of 2022, the government's official stance received considerable media attention, with over 30 articles featuring quoted officials in defence of deportation decisions regarding Albanian migrants or in support of the Home Office's hostile environment policy. The primary authorities frequently cited include officials from the Home Office, the Home Secretary, Suella Braverman, the UK Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, the UK Immigration Minister, Robert Jenrick, the previous UK Home Secretary, Priti Patel. In editorials and opinion pieces between 2021 and 2022, the subject of Albanian immigration received a lot of attention. As a result of the authors' opinions being expressed, this topic became the second-most-covered issue during the second half of 2022, showing that there was still interest in and discussion surrounding Albanian immigration, whether in support of or opposition to the Home Office's hostile environment policy.

Even though the media represented the views of members of the UK parliament in 2021 and 2022, there was almost no coverage of politicians from the opposition party, and only a handful of articles included comments from Yvette Cooper, the Shadow Secretary of State for the Home Department. This lack of coverage raises concerns about media bias and calls into question the objectivity of the reporting, as there is an absence of fair representation and coverage of all political parties. This, and Tory MPs' dominance in media coverage, not only restricts the public's exposure to alternative perspectives but also has the potential to sway public opinion towards a single political ideology. In fact, some scholars argue that audiences exposed to this type of coverage might come to view immigrants in a negative light, seeing them as villains while considering themselves the victim (Gemi et al., 2013, p. 272).

Intriguingly, when reporting on migration-related topics, the media rarely mention the dissatisfaction of government officials from the countries of origin of migrants regarding the treatment of their citizens or the immigration policies of destination countries. However, in the case of the Home Office's treatment of Albanians, there were notable and numerous instances of criticism from prominent Albanian political figures, such as the Albanian Prime Minister, Edi Rama, the Albanian Ambassador to the UK, Qirjako Qirko, the Crown Prince of Albania, Leka II, that were covered by British media.

Even though there were some articles representing migrants' perspectives in the second half of 2022, a sharp increase from none in 2021, migrant perspectives were mentioned the least frequently overall. Many academics have observed that the views of migrants are routinely ignored, disregarded, or judged unimportant (van Dijk, 2000, p. 38), which may explain this tendency of British media outlets when covering news about Albanian migration to the UK. In fact, even when migrants' perspectives made it into the news, the right-leaning media frequently covered articles about Albanian immigrants' regrets about coming to the UK. This practice demonstrates that the British media were still controlling and influencing the narrative around Albanian migration to the UK. Many scholars have highlighted the power dynamics at play in the media's portrayal of migrants, arguing that migrants have less influence over the sources and mechanisms igniting the public discourses on which daily news making is based (Gemi et al., 2013, p. 269).

In addition, although the lowest in number, some prominent non-governmental organisation (NGO) representatives were also quoted in news articles that criticised the

Home Office and its hostile environment policy towards Albanian migrants. Possible explanations for the media's underrepresentation of non-governmental organisations or human rights defenders defending the Albanian migrants might be due to the media aim of silencing minorities. This approach tends to amplify the voices of prevailing power figures, like political elites (Flowerdew et al., 2002).

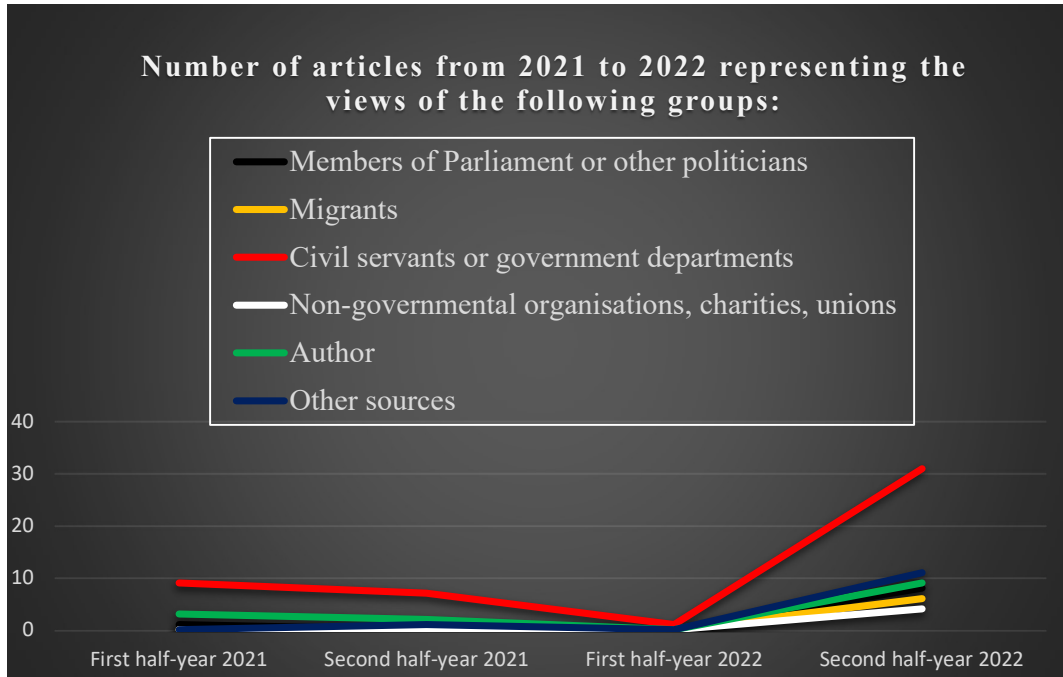


Figure 4.5

#### 4.1.5 Underpinning Justification

The British media have largely cited security concerns to back up their stance against Albanian immigrants (see Figure 4.6). In fact, in 2021 the British media was solely concerned with security issues, with right-leaning outlets, mostly the Daily Mail, emphasising the security threats posed by Albanian migrants. In 2022, another argument was raised against permitting Albanian migrants into the UK was the potential strain on public resources and services, even though the British media paid little attention to economic concerns in 2021. Notably, as illustrated in figure 4.6, human rights were not cited that much by the media outlets to justify their positions when writing articles on Albanian migrants in Britain in 2021 or 2022. In fact, in 2021, there was no coverage at all, and in 2022, the issue of justice was primarily brought up by left-leaning media outlets, such as The Guardian.

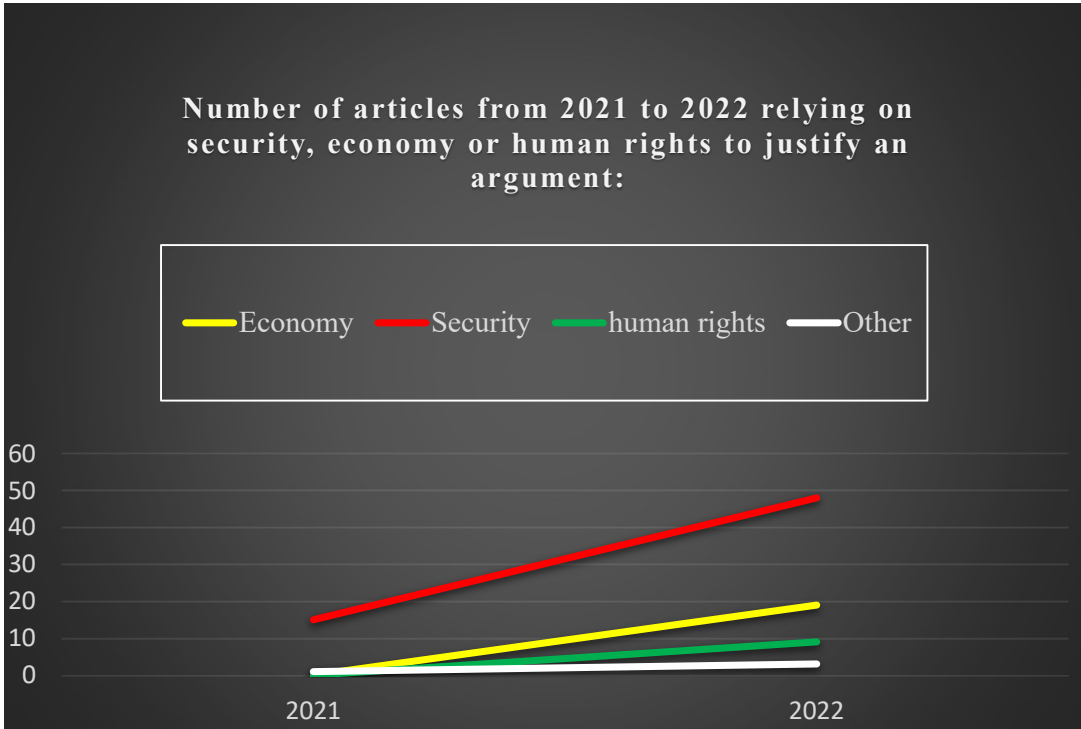


Figure 4.6

#### 4.1.6 Characters Responsible for Problem

In the two-year timeframe, most of the blame has been aimed at those assisting in migration, often labelled in the British media outlets as "traffickers" or "smugglers." There is a clear difference between which we deem important to highlight. Smuggler is described by Nassim Majidi, (2018) as someone who will only assist the migrant if he obtains money from him (ibid 107). Whereas a trafficker is someone who illegally transports individuals across the border for the purpose of exploitation (IOM, 2019, p. 217).

The Albanian immigrants themselves, were second on the list of entities blamed for the rise in irregular migration over the course of two years, after the migration facilitators. During 2021 and 2022, it is interesting to highlight that British politicians and other UK government representatives were not subject to strict accountability requirements. The introduction of several measures by the government, as well as the British government's ability to regain control over its allegedly "unprotected national borders," may have

contributed to a decline in the level of blame placed on the government over the course of two years. It's worth noting that in 2022, some media outlets claimed that Albanians parents, in their quest for wealth, send their kids illegally to the UK (Hookham, 2022a). Others speculated that Albanian "influencers" (Hill, 2022) or immigrant friends and family living in the UK might have played a role in the influx of Albanians migrants to the UK (Smith, 2022).

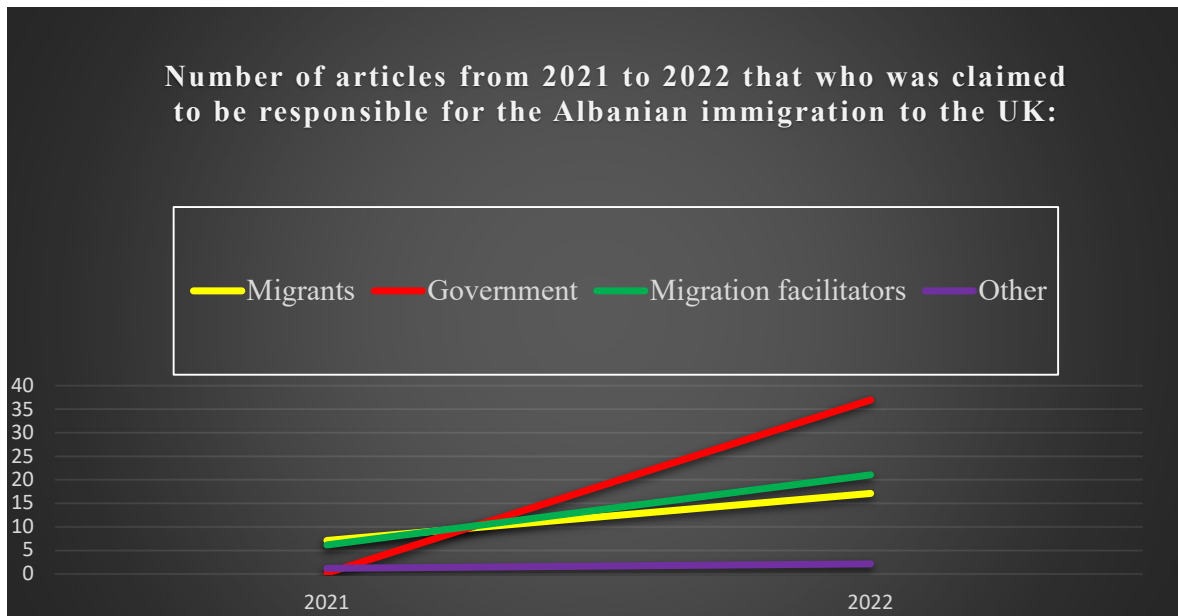


Figure 4.7

## 4.2 News Framing Analysis

In this section, we will discuss the themes that arose from the analysed newspapers. The literature and academic findings on the portrayal of Albanian immigrants in European media (see section 2.5 Albanians, Media and Europe) gave considered guidance to this section. The results showed that there were six media frames that appeared the most in the British press. These themes in the discourse were:

---

**Border Security frame**

---

**Organised crime frame**

---

**Smuggling and human trafficking frame**

---

**Economic frame**

---

**UK policies frame**

---

**Victimisation frame**

The following analysis looks at the aforementioned themes in the order that British media outlets have covered them.

### 4.2.1. Border security

Overall, **border security** was mentioned the most often on news articles analysed. Particularly in 2022, two-thirds of the analysed articles focused on the challenges and issues about the high number of Albanian immigrants entering the UK and the urgent need for UK border management. The British media used numerous WATER metaphors (Taylor, 2021; Porto, 2022), such as surge and influx, that conveyed negative repercussions to depict the immigrants from Albania entering irregularly the UK. According to scholars (Petersson and Kainz, 2017) the use of these metaphors by journalists are "likely to divert readers' attention from the risky journeys taken" (ibid., p. 54), in this case, by Albanian immigrants to enter the UK. By focusing on the high numbers of arrivals, the media outlets, directly or indirectly, oversimplify their journeys to the United Kingdom by focusing on the high successful rate of arrivals.

‘Exponential rise’ in Albanian migrants crossing the Channel this year. (Southworth and Hymas, 2022)

It is claimed as many as 6,000 of the record 23,000 migrants who have reached the UK are from Albania, even though it is a NATO ally which aspires to join the European Union and has seen no conflict for more than 25 years. (Hymas, 2022g)

However, it should be noted that some media outlets did publish personal stories of Albanian immigrants that showed the risky journeys they took to reach the UK. Mostly, these stories focused on the regret that immigrants had for choosing irregular ways to enter the UK. For instance, an Albanian immigrant interviewed by the BBC said that he wished he had “never tried to enter the UK illegally” (Inwood and Kasapi, 2022), further adding that:

“It was an unimaginable terror. For certain I'd say don't choose the dinghy. If there is a legal way, with a visa, then yes leave, but please never think about leaving on a dinghy.” (Inwood and Kasapi, 2022)

Arguably, the main aim of such coverage could have been to stop other Albanians from entering the UK through irregular ways. Furthermore, it becomes evident that the British media's employment of terms like 'influx' and 'surge' when referring to Albanian immigrants carries implications. Such language suggests a potential negative socio-cultural influence on the UK. In 2022, mostly by the right-leaning media, these metaphors were frequently used in the news article' headlines and body. Here are some common examples from the articles examined:

[Headline] Security fears over Albania boat surge: Arrivals hit 5,000 for the year so far as the nation dominates Channel crossings... and crooks are now recruiting 'cleanskins' with no criminal record to join UK operations. (Barrett, 2022c)

[Headline] There's been a surge in the number of Albanians arriving from northern France. (Barrett, 2022b)



[Body] Former Tory leader Iain Duncan Smith said the influx proved people were arriving not to flee war but “on an economic migration ticket” and abusing the asylum system. (Harvey, 2022)

[Body] It is understood that serious and organised crime by Albanians is “rising up the security services’ list” of priorities because of the surge in arrivals from the Balkan state. (Hymas, 2022i)

As shown above, the most common strategies used by the journalists were extensification and scare tactics. Such strategies were dominantly employed by the right leaning media outlets, to depict the purported scale of irregular Albanian migration and its implications for British society:

Mrs Braverman said: ‘The number of people reaching the UK illegally in small boats is at an all-time high and is putting our asylum system under intense strain.’ (Barrett, 2022a)

Home Office figures revealed on Thursday that the number of Albanians crossing the Channel has risen 100-fold in a year. Up to 6,000 are said to have arrived in the UK in 2022 after paying people smugglers. That represents a quarter of the record 24,000 total this year, double last year’s rate. (Hymas, 2022i)

The number of Albanians arriving in England via small boats across the Channel has risen dramatically to more than 40 percent of recorded migrants using this route, according to official data. The proportion of small boats carrying Albanians rose from nearly 3 percent in 2021 to 18 percent in the first half of 2022, according to Home Office data released on Wednesday. From May to September the level jumped to 42 percent (Wallis, 2022).

The media's use of terms like "exponential" and "risen dramatically" to describe the increase of Albanian immigrants is a prime illustration of the aforementioned panic-inducing language. These articles paint a picture of a migration crisis, leading the reader to believe that the current ‘influx’ of Albanian immigrants is dangerously out of hand, endangering national security. As a consequence, the media outlets successfully securitize the issue of irregular entry of Albanians in the UK.

Furthermore, this inflated depiction of an out-of-control situation regarding the ‘influx’ of Albanian migrants into the UK was often used by the media to increase public anxiety over the anticipated arrival of even more Albanian immigrants in the UK:

Influx of Albanian migrants expected as people smugglers take advantage of calm weather. (Hymas, 2022e)

The surge will put the asylum processing centre at Manston in Kent under fresh pressure after the Home Office dispersed more than 2,800 migrants to hotels and other accommodation from the “catastrophically overcrowded” site to reduce numbers to 1,147. (Hymas, 2022h)

Predictions made by government officials about the potential burden that the impending influx of Albanian immigrants might bring about strengthen the idea that British society will face big challenges and that the Albanian immigrants should be held accountable. As many academics (Flowerdew et al., 2002) have noted, this tactic is crucial in deflecting blame and simultaneously serves to rationalise the majority group's discriminatory behaviour.

In fact, the constant efforts of Albanian immigrants to reach the UK in irregular ways, particularly in 2022, were presented as a persistent and significant challenge for British authorities to put an end and protect the UK borders. The Mirror published a news article, focused on the increasing number of Albanians migrating to the UK, citing the Border Force Staff who “warned the Home Secretary (that) the surge in criminal migrants poses a “significant risk” to national security” (Hill, 2022). Due to these warnings from the Home Office officials, the British media has focused excessively on the need for border control as a means to address and manage the problem, making border control a prominent theme in their reporting on the high number of Albanian immigrants entering the UK irregularly. Mostly, the British media focused on the ability of the British authorities to protect the UK borders and difficulties they were facing to control immigration from Albania. The following quotations from the UK Home Office, in some of news articles analysed, illustrates several aspects of this theme:

A Home Office spokesperson said: “The continued rise in dangerous small boat crossings is causing an unprecedented strain on our asylum system... Despite the lies they have been sold, they will not be allowed to start a new life here.” (Taylor, 2022)

These remarks clearly show that the Albanian immigrants are seen as ‘undesired foreigners.’ By categorising them as an ‘outgroup,’ these officials reinforce a sense of otherness and establish a clear separation between ‘us’ and ‘them.’ This rhetorical division, present in the news articles, encourages a climate in which the presence of Albanian immigrants is seen as a threat, creating the impression that they do not belong in the UK. Additionally, the portrayals of the increasing number of Albanian immigrants arriving by boats on the UK shores creates the impression of an ‘invasion.’ In fact, it is worth noting that the fear of invasion was also evident in this coverage. The right-leaning media, particularly the Daily Mail, covered the remarks made by Home Secretary, Suella Braverman, who called the Albanian migrants a group of “invaders” expressing clear sentiment that the ethnic group was undesirable in the UK.

... Home Secretary described an ‘invasion’ of migrants... She told the Commons on Monday: ‘If Labour were in charge they would be allowing all the Albanian criminals to come to this country, they would be allowing all the small boats to come to the UK, they would open our borders and totally undermine the trust of the British people in controlling our sovereignty’. (Robinson et.al, 2022)

In this depiction, the Home Secretary characterizes Albanian immigrants as being determined to aggressively enter the UK, framing them as ‘invaders’ with hostile motivations. Home Secretary uses this rhetoric to justify the harsh measures taken against the Albanian immigrants and perpetuate narratives that portray them as an external threat to the UK’s borders and sovereignty which are reinforced and propagated by the right leaning media. Numerous instances of employing comparable rhetoric have been identified, aligning with prior studies that underscore the tendency of anti-immigration politicians to leverage the concept of a nation’s land as ‘private property’ in order to legitimize their discourse (Tran, 2022, p. 73). This strategy often frames local residents as casualties of an ‘alien incursion’ (Ibid.). As the British media covers these political narratives, whether intentionally or inadvertently, it plays a role in normalising and legitimising such ideas, thereby becoming complicit in their propagation.

Furthermore, the media's portrayal of "Albanian migrants being smuggled into the UK with Christmas presents and festive goods through a new lorry scam" (Hymas, 2022e) introduces an additional negative layer to their representation. This coverage can be associated with the "Trojan horse" metaphor, implying that the Albanian immigrants might be perceived as deceitful or dangerous, similar to the Spartans using a wooden horse to infiltrate Troy (Fagles and Homer, 1997). This analogy further strengthens the concept of invasion and emphasises the potential narrative of threat. In fact, the Telegraph painted a dire picture of the situation, going so far as to publish an entire story about how the British government had appointed "One of Britain's top generals, who fought in the Afghan war" (Hymas, 2022a) to deal with the high number of Albanian immigrants entering the UK irregularly. Media coverage of the appointment of a high-ranking military figure to address Albanian immigrant crossings not only increases the importance to tackle this issue, but also magnifies the threat that Albanian immigrants pose to British society.

#### **4.2.2. Organised crime**

In parallel with the growing number of Albanian immigrants in the UK, so did the level of discussion surrounding the security threats posed by this minority's involvement in criminal activity. In fact, the *organised crime* theme was the second most discussed in the British news articles between 2021 and 2022. During this period, particularly in 2021, the media portrayed Albanian migrants as a threat to British society due to their alleged involvement in organised crime. These findings align with previous studies (Suri, 2011; Mike et al., 2016; Islentyeva, 2021), which also highlighted the media's tendency to depict immigrants as posing a threat to the host society. Over the time period analysed, the negative characteristics associated with Albanian immigrants in the media, such as criminality and drug trafficking, received direct and immediate coverage in media reports, especially in the right leaning media outlets. Particularly in 2021, stories about the involvement of Albanian immigrants in drug trafficking dominated the news. This increase in news coverage of crimes committed by Albanian immigrants is a result of the media's increased emphasis on portraying immigrants as the criminal "Other" as noted by Marta Martins (Martins, 2021). British media have disproportionately focused on crimes committed by Albanian immigrants, often drawing connections between these crimes and the migrant population as a whole to play on public fears and perpetuate the stereotype

that Albanians are criminals and a threat to British society. This trend mirrors Mondli Makanya's (Williams, 2002) observations on the media's portrayal of Nigerian migrants, highlighting that “the behaviour of some nationals from that country specifically influences” the overall media representation of the entire community. In fact, the Daily Mail ran a series of articles following this pattern, where the origin of the offenders would often be included in the headline:

Albanian drug lord, 35, deported from UK three times is jailed for more than seven years for running 'Deliveroo style' cocaine delivery service in Kent. (Catling, 2021)

Illegal immigrant, 22, who was caught with cocaine then deported to Albania in 2019... is found drug-dealing back in Britain six months later and jailed for three years in UK jail. (Gordon, 2021)

Revealed: Albanian crooks suspected of murder, drug-trafficking and armed robbery are holed up in the UK and protected by crime syndicates as a safe haven to evade justice. (Hookham, 2021)

The Daily Mail's frequent coverage of Albanian immigrants associated with criminal activities appears to contribute to the proliferation of 'xenophobic sentiments' within the British public. Drawing upon the observations of scholars such as van Dijk (2000) and Flowerdew et.al (2002), it can be posited that the propagation of unfavourable attributes about immigrants can, regrettably, cultivate 'stereotypes in readers' perceptions of, in this context, the Albanian immigrants. Therefore, because of reading articles like this, there is a high probability that the British citizens may view all Albanian immigrants negatively because of their alleged ties to organised crime. Using the alleged perpetrator's ethnicity as an example, Florian Arendt (2017) explains, increases the audience's threat perception of people of that ethnicity in general. A perfect example that proves this argument is the choice of a headline by the Sun journalist, Graeme Culliford, where he refers to Albania as a “Narco State” (Culliford, 2022), pointing to a central motif that drug trafficking is deeply embedded in Albanian society and implying that the presence of Albanian immigrants in UK could introduce this criminal element. News articles, particularly their headlines, play a significant role in the press's reinforcement of harmful stereotypes and production of discriminatory ideologies that fuel xenophobia towards Albanian immigrants. According to scholarly perspectives, the deliberate use of negatively

connoted language in news headlines and leads contributes to the establishment of a biased position regarding the immigration matter (Flowerdew et al., 2002, p. 331).

Furthermore, the use of generalisation and stereotyping strategies by the media, when emphasising on the role of Albanians in drug trafficking, especially cannabis farms, contributed to the widespread belief that the Albanian immigrants coming to the UK are either involved in or eventually end up getting involved in drug-related criminal activity.

Albanian migrants are walking out of hotels to work on cannabis farms within three days of arriving in the UK across the Channel...The Albanians dominate the cocaine market in the south of England and have displaced the Vietnamese as the biggest producers of domestically sourced cannabis. It follows warnings last week by the Border Force union that the surge in criminal migrants poses a “significant risk” to national security, as traditional asylum seekers have been replaced by “young fit males” with suspected links to organised crime. (Hymas, 2022f)

In another article, while covering a case about the capture of several people involved in drug trafficking, the media argued that “all were Albanians in the country (England) illegally” (Catling, 2021). In the portrayal of the "illegal Albanian migrant" as a "criminal," readers are presented with an image of a perilous Albanian, potentially jeopardizing the social equilibrium of the host society.

Nevertheless, generalisation strategies used by the British media to reinforce the antipathy stereotyping of Albanian immigrants are easily visible in most of the news articles that were analysed. For instance, the Daily Mail, published several articles that highly contributes to the widespread perception that majority of those immigrating to the UK from Albania were criminals, further incite fear and panic among the readers:

Albanians suspected of crimes including murder, drug-trafficking and armed robbery are using the UK as a safe haven to evade justice ... the fugitives use people-smuggling routes to cross the Channel and are then protected by Albanian criminal syndicates. (Hookham, 2021)

...Albanian gangs are bringing people across the Channel by small boat to be used as workers in the drugs trade.(LODGE and Barrett, 22 December 2022)

Furthermore, the British media covered several stories of criminals who were able to re-enter the UK, despite being deported multiple times. A specific story covered by the Guardian, specified the number of times each offender re-entered UK while also writing in detail the crime that they have committed while living in UK:

Some Albanian criminals have sneaked back into the UK after being deported, only to be arrested again. Mauricio Myftaraj was jailed for 15 years over firearms and drugs offences after police raided his home, where they also found 40 rounds of ammunition and £20,000 in cash. He was deported in 2015 and banned from returning after he was jailed three years earlier for a firearms offence – but he managed to return illegally. Another Albanian county lines drug dealer, Xhenson Duka, was caught with more than £10,000 worth of cocaine and a knife after returning following deportation. He was jailed for three years at Maidstone crown court and has since been deported. Flogert Farruku, who was found acting as a “gardener” at a £60,000 cannabis farm, had previously been deported, having been caught doing exactly the same activity. He has now been jailed once more and again faces deportation upon his release. (Syal, 2022c)

Such portrayals by the media, while utilising an extensification strategy, contribute to the general myth that the Albanian immigrants are repeat offenders and as a result a continuing security threat to British society. Furthermore, by covering similar cases, the Daily Mail journalists made sure to emphasise that majority of foreign inmates in UK are Albanians, while failing to mention the crimes for which Albanians are typically convicted, to further paint a threatening image of Albanians, mostly Albanian men, in the eyes of readers:

Selami Cokaj, once on Interpol's most wanted list, fled to Britain after escaping from prison in Albania where he had been jailed for stabbing a man to death in 1994. He was sent back to his homeland in 2009 but sneaked back to the UK in 2015 before setting up several businesses and living openly in Leicester...Albanians make up the largest number of foreign nationals in UK jails, totalling 16 per cent of overseas offenders. (RYAN and OWEN, 2021)

In the context of the dense number of Albanian migrants in UK jails, it is critical to recognise that such figures may have been artificially inflated as a result of the holding of Albanian immigrants awaiting expulsion (Ministry of Justice and HM Prison and

Probation Service, 2021). Furthermore, as scholars argue, due to the complexities of judicial proceedings, such figures do not necessarily indicate that Albanian immigrants have a propensity for criminal activity (Ceyhan and Tsoukala, 2002, p. 26).

In addition, the media's coverage of stories about the behaviour of Albanian immigrants in Direct Provision centres reflected the dominant discourse centred on the stereotypical image of Albanian migrants, mostly men, as dangerous and intimidating. In fact, in a news article published by the Daily Mail, the journalist also uses numbers to strengthen his arguments regarding the behaviours of Albanian immigrants. He claimed that:

The concentration of 600 Albanians in the centres – all male – has led to 'challenging behaviour', with intimidation of staff and other detainees... (Barrett, 2022c)

The above examples show how the criminal figure constructed in the discourse of British newspapers in 2021 and 2022 is implicitly an immigrant male Albanian. Scare tactics, like the high percentage of Albanians in UK jails and the involvement of certain Albanian men in organised crime, were used to bolster this portrayal in the media, as evidenced by almost all of the articles presented above. Such tactics effectively perpetuate the perception of a potential threat posed to British society by migrants, particularly men, belonging to this specific ethnic group. The framing of the Albanian male migrants as criminals meant to spark disapproval among British population condemnation and encourages the British citizens to form a negative attitude towards the Albanian migrants. The findings of this study align with existing research that highlight that the media has a negative portrayal of certain male foreigners (Gray and Franck, 2019) as undeserving and dangerous, which is then used to justify the demand for a reduction in the overall migratory flow of Albanians to the UK.

#### **4.2.3. Smuggling and Human trafficking**

The theme of the *smuggling and human trafficking* of Albanian immigrants to the UK was another theme mentioned most frequently in 2022 and framed from two perspectives. The prevailing view centred on the Albanian immigrants who, in order to enter the UK, cooperated with smugglers and criminal groups. Right-wing media outlets, especially the Daily Mail, have been particularly vocal in tying the sharp rise in Channel crossings to close coordination between these criminal groups and Albanian immigrants:



A total of 1,075 Albanians crossed the Channel in small boats organised by people-smuggling gangs during a six-week period this summer. (Hookham, 2022b)

...the number of Albanians crossing the Channel has risen 100-fold in a year. Up to 6,000 are said to have arrived in the UK in 2022 after paying people smugglers. (Hymas, 2022b)

Mr Jenrick said many of those arriving from Albania as ‘young males who are fit, healthy, prosperous enough to pay the criminal gangs to get here’. (Wilcock, 2022)

In fact, several articles discussed the substantial sums of money being paid to smugglers by Albanian immigrants, while also providing insight into the complexities of the migration process and the extent to which criminal groups facilitate such activities for financial gain. The following excerpts are taken from a number of news articles that have been analysed that delve into this subject matter:

Inside Albanian people smuggling network driving surge in asylum seekers: How migrants book cheap B&Bs in Dunkirk to await £4,300 crossing into UK after they are recruited by 'middle men' in Albania and handed over to Kurdish gangs in charge of boats. (Wilcock, 2022)

The Telegraph revealed on Wednesday how Albanian people-smuggling gangs are offering free minibus trips from southern Europe to the northern French coast for migrants seeking to cross the Channel as well as “reduced” prices as low as £3,500 per person. (Hymas, 2022g)

He (Albanian immigrant) had paid Kurdish people smugglers around £3,500 (\$4,169) for the perilous trip across the English Channel, borrowing the money from friends and family. (Inwood and Kasapi, 2022)

An Albanian people-smuggling gang taking migrants to the UK via Spain has been "dismantled"... The crime network smuggled mostly Albanian migrants through the northern Spanish cities of Bilbao and Santander into the UK using ferries and freight shipping routes to Portsmouth, Southampton and Liverpool, said the NCA... It is believed that migrants paid between €3,000 and €15,000 (£2,600 to £13,000) to be smuggled. (BBC News, 2022a)

Seven people have been arrested in an operation that police hope will have 'significantly disrupted' a people smuggling network which moved hundreds of Albanian migrants to the UK illegally charging up to £25,000-a-head, it was revealed today. (Robinson, 2021)

The media coverage also emphasised how smugglers were connecting with Albanian immigrants through social media platforms, particularly TikTok. A number of investigations were done by the Daily Mail and other news outlets, shedding light on this issue:

Albanian criminals charging up to £20,000 to smuggle migrants to the UK brazenly tout their services on TikTok and other social media sites. (Kelly, 2021)

The TikTok 'summer sale' for migrants: Smuggler gangs launch 'closing down sale' and slash price of Channel crossings by £1,500 per person as traffickers target Albanians on social media. (Robinson, 2022b)

TIKTOK TRAFFICKERS People traffickers using TikTok to sell £4.5k Channel crossings to Albanians – insisting 'the French won't stop you'. (Harvey, 2022)

People smugglers are offering "TikTok Black Friday" cut-price Channel deals to Albanians to beat a Government crackdown ahead of the bank holiday. (Hymas, 2022d)

People smugglers are using TikTok to advertise £18,000 deals where they fix it for (Albanian) migrants to be smuggled into the UK as "second drivers" in lorries bringing Christmas goods into the UK. (Hymas, 2022e)

Furthermore, a striking observation arises when analysing the news articles, where we find that the British media tended to employ labelling bias. Specifically, it becomes apparent that individuals involved in smuggling Albanian immigrants, when identified as Albanians, are consistently characterised as criminals, whereas when their ethnic background is different, such categorization is notably absent. Below are three typical examples of this biased portrayal:

Albanian criminals charging up to £20,000 to smuggle (Albanian) migrants to the UK brazenly tout their services on TikTok and other social media sites... (Kelly, 2021)

Detectives arrest three seamen over bid to smuggle 69 Albanian migrants from Belgium to the UK on a fishing boat. (NIKOLIC, 2021)

EXCLUSIVE: Woman, 36, admits trying to smuggle two Albanian illegal migrants into the UK in her car boot. (Sales, 2021)

In many articles analysing the voices of those who opposed the migration of Albanians to the UK are used as part of a discursive strategy employed by the British media to further reinforce the narrative of the Albanian immigrants not as threatened but as threatening. British authorities, British government officials, and Tory MPs were among the voices mediated and amplified by British media in their news stories. In one particular news article published by the Daily Mail, the Tory MP for Dover, Natalie Elphicke, support such narrative and claims that:

‘Everyone knows Albanians are not fleeing from war or persecution. This is plainly illegal economic migration organised by criminal people smuggling gangs.’ (Hookham, 2022a)

Not only does she question the real motives of Albanians migrating to the UK, but by using phrases like "everyone knows," she implies a presumption of consensus among the British public regarding the allegation she makes about Albanian migrants. Moreover, the deliberate decision by right-leaning media outlets to include such rhetoric in their news articles, is an example of the British media tendency to employ generalisations and scare tactics, with the intent to draw attention and inciting fear among their readers by framing Albanian immigrants as a threat to British society. This finding aligns with existing research (Flowerdew et.al, 2002) that suggests that politicians, use the media to further their own ideologies by portraying some migrants not “as threatened but as threatening” (Flowerdew et.al, 2002, p. 332) thus excluding them from the vulnerable category.

When it came to covering the stories about Albanian immigrants being smuggled to the UK, right-leaning newspapers, employed the discursive strategy of individualization. This linguistic approach, as detailed by KhosraviNik (2009), emphasizes individual narratives by sharing ample personal details. The intention behind this strategy appears to be to amplify immigrants' voices primarily to underscore their perceived negative attributes or challenge their ethical standing. A case in point is the Telegraph's coverage

which featured a story about Albanian immigrants engaging in work on cannabis farms shortly after their arrival in the UK:

“We were kept for three days in a detention centre then transferred to a hotel. I managed to talk with my relative who came and took me from the hotel. I am working in a cannabis house to pay the money I borrowed to pay for the journey on the boat” ... (Hymas, 2022f)

This portrayal highlights the Telegraph’s tendency to spotlight individual cases that reinforce a negative perception of Albanian immigrants, perpetuating a biased narrative. This bias is also evident in other news articles by the Telegraph, where it uses the discursive strategy of "blaming the victim" to claim that immigrants are members of "smuggling gangs" who are "determined to smuggle themselves into the UK":

Marsel and Rovina, both 18 and from Albania, told The Telegraph they wanted to play “the game” so they could find better work in the UK... “There’s more opportunity,” said Marsel. When asked about how he plans on obtaining a visa upon arrival on British soil, the young man went silent. After making nervous eye contact with someone in the distance, he apologised and ran off. (Rosman, 2022)

By emphasising their determination to irregularly enter and remain in the UK, the article willingly portrays these two Albanian immigrants as clandestine intruders with ulterior motives, reinforcing potential hostility towards Albanian immigrants among readers. This depiction, while compelling, risks conflating definitions and attributing blame to irregular immigrants, a strategy often employed to hold them responsible for supposed criminal activities (Flowerdew et.al, 2002). By attributing criminality to irregular immigrants, attention is diverted from the humanitarian aspects associated with irregular border crossing. The Guardian, explores this issue and reports that there are very limited legal channels available to Albanian migrants to enter the UK (Malik, 2022).

#### **4.2.4. Economy**

Following an increase in Albanian immigration to the UK, the *economy* was another major theme of discussion in the British media. The media portrayed the illegal Albanian immigrants as "economic migrants" who were dishonestly seeking asylum (Reid, 2022b), but in reality they were “rushing to fill job vacancies or work for gangsters” (Wallis et.al,

2022). This narrative has been perpetuated, notably by right-leaning media outlets. For instance, The Daily Mail, The Sun, and The Telegraph frequently published articles that purported to "prove" that economic factors were what drew Albanians to the UK in the first place:

... many Albanians coming to the UK in small boats are not fleeing from war or persecution – they are economic migrants. (Robinson et.al, 2022)

“The Albanians are coming for economic reasons. There is huge poverty in Albania and they want to get to the UK for a better life and good employment. Most end up working in the black market, especially in construction.” (Hymas et.al, 2022)

Saimir Boshnjaku, the director of immigration police, said: “Some people have to leave because they get caught up in blood feuds, or they have fallen out with criminal gangs and they are in fear of their lives. But most are economic migrants. (Culliford, 2022)

Mr Morina says they are not asylum seekers. ‘Their parents let them go. They think it will be a better life in your country for their child. It is an economic decision,’ he says... Residents rely heavily on money sent back from the UK by their sons to make ends meet... The mayor explained: ‘We would face a big disaster if the children didn’t go because they send money back to their mothers, fathers, younger brothers, their sisters. (Reid, 2022b)

"I didn't seek asylum. I told them I was an economic migrant," said Artan... Unlike other Albanians who have entered the UK illegally on small boats and claimed asylum he was quickly sent home. (Inwood and Kasapi, 2022)

Moreover, the "Positive Us-presentation and Negative Them-presentation" is another notable strategy employed by the media. In these articles, Albania is portrayed as a nation plagued by widespread poverty and corruption, whereas the United Kingdom is portrayed as a prosperous nation with abundant opportunities (Reid, 2022b). A key illustration of this tactic is the use of statements such as ‘rely heavily on money sent back from the UK’ and ‘We would face a big disaster if the children didn’t go’(ibid). The United Kingdom is portrayed as a saviour not only for "poor" Albanians seeking a better life, but also for their families left behind. Attention-grabbing headlines such as "We have built our dream

home in Albania using money our son sent – after he illegally snuck into the UK" (Perrie, 2022) and "How every family in one Albanian town dubbed 'Little London' has links to Britain and a burning ambition to send their children over to return with money and a 'flashy car" (Hookham, 2022a) further serve the purpose of captivating audience's attention and to reinforcing such narrative in the public discourse.

It is also worth noting that the right-leaning media often cited mostly Tory politicians, to further legitimise their claim that Albanian immigrants were economic migrants rather than legitimate asylum seekers. This depiction in the media corresponds with the viewpoint presented by Bianca-Florentina Cheregi, who posits that the press might utilise specialised or authoritative information to establish an inaccurate sense of credibility by incorporating misleading stance (CHEREGLI, 2015, p. 17). This is illustrated by the following statements, made by the Tory politicians, which appeared in articles published by the Sun and the Daily Mail:

Natalie Elphicke, Tory MP for Dover, said: 'It's clear many Albanians coming to the UK in small boats are not fleeing from war or persecution – they are economic migrants. (Robinson, 2022b)

Former Tory leader Iain Duncan Smith said the influx proved people were arriving not to flee war but “on an economic migration ticket” and abusing the asylum system. (Harvey, 2022)

Furthermore, media coverage has also largely focused on how Albanian immigrants are a financial burden, with remarks like "it is not up to the British taxpayer to support them" (Robinson, 2022b) being commonplace. These findings are in line with previous research (Baker *et al.*, 2008) that found that the terms, such as ‘immigrants’ and ‘asylum seekers’ are closely associated with the frame of economic burden. Since the Home Office was already struggling to deal with a rapidly expanding migrant crisis (Capurro and Mendick, 2022), the media used estimated statistics to convince the British public that the ‘influx’ of Albanian immigrants would be a serious financial burden on British society. To amplify the perceived severity of the situation, the figures cited were the highest possible estimates:

Albanians now account for 60 per cent of migrants crossing the Channel... Most are being housed in hotels where more than 35,000 asylum seekers are living at a cost to taxpayers of £4 million a day. (Hymas, 2022f)

Albanians accounted for over a third of people in Channel crossings this year... The number of asylum seekers receiving taxpayer-funded support has topped 100,000... Most receive free accommodation and a subsistence allowance of £40.85 a week for each person in their household, unless they get meals provided by the taxpayer. (Barrett and Carr, 2022)

Albanian families who reached Britain by boat are among dozens *being housed in a luxury Lincolnshire hotel*... rooms are as much as £200 a night. (Capurro and Mendick, 2022)

The government has spent £493 million over seven years trying to stop migrants Forty per cent of Channel migrants are from peaceful Albania... (Hookham, 2022b)

The Telegraph even published an article focusing on how the Albanian immigrants were being accommodated in luxury hotels that the British citizens were no longer able to access. The following excerpt demonstrates how the article makes use of intriguing language to illustrate the situation at hand:

Albanian migrants among dozens of refugees housed in luxury hotel... Members of the public are banned from the hotel and it is guarded by private security. The hotel, with its picturesque grounds in the rolling countryside south of Grantham, has been taken over since September, with multiple couples having their wedding plans cancelled. (Capurro and Mendick, 2022)

The Telegraph paints a picture of injustice in which British citizens are the victims by asserting that they are being denied access to the hotel's amenities, which may make the reader feel sympathetic towards them. Also, the use of the phrase "taken over", creates the image of an Albanian immigrant as an 'invader', which is another example of scare tactics employed often by the right-leaning media. By framing the issue around luxurious accommodations and the alleged denial of access to British citizens, the choice of words and tone by the British media could further be seen as an attempt to stir up resentment and fuel anti-immigrant sentiments towards Albanians within British society.

What seems unusual during the analysis is the significant prevalence of government sources in the media landscape who constantly criticise the government, accusing it of misusing taxpayer funds to house irregular Albanian immigrants in luxury hotels.

Alarming migrants placed in luxurious hotels... A senior government source told The Telegraph it was alarming that migrants were being placed in luxurious country hotels when ministers were supposed to be pursuing a policy of deterring them from making the dangerous crossing. “This looks like we are putting asylum seekers in a stately home. How does that help keep the numbers down?”, they said. (Capurro and Mendick, 2022)

By employing official voices, the media cleverly stirs public concerns about the issue. Moreover, such statements and ongoing criticism suggest that there may be internal conflicts or hidden agendas within the government, which seeks to further call for stricter measures in order to gain public support for its campaign to deport and discourage Albanians to immigrate to the UK.

#### **4.2.5. UK policies**

Another recurring theme in the media discourse revolved around *the UK policies*, with particular emphasis on the shortcomings of its immigration policy. This is exemplified by an insightful commentary made by the Financial Times, which observes, “the UK refugee policy has so many holes it frustrates both sides of the political spectrum” (Quach and Bush, 2022). Throughout the analysis of this theme, a clear interplay became clear among the British media, public opinion, and the British government decisions regarding the right of Albanian immigrants to remain in the UK.

Following the number of Albanian immigrants growing, the more the media started to focus on the narrative that the Albanians were abusing the system to gain entry into the UK or to evade deportation back to Albania. Albanian immigrants were portrayed as exploiters of the vulnerable asylum system and the loopholes in the UK legislation, particularly in the Modern Slavery Act. By relying on official sources, the media tended to further magnify the seriousness of the issue by claiming that Albanians are:



... 'abusing' the act and delaying deportation attempts. Home Office figures show the number of Albanian migrants claiming to be victims of modern slavery is set to double this year to 5,000... Fuelling the illegal trade is the perception of the UK as a 'soft target' compared to other wealthy European nations, officials say. (Wilcock, 2022)

The Daily Mail adopts a victim-blaming approach, where Albanian immigrants are accused of manipulating the system for their advantage and thereby delaying the deportation orders. Consequently, this description conveys an image of an ineffective British administration, where the Home Office appears to be inefficient in managing deportations of Albanians, by attributing such failure directly to the actions taken by the Albanian immigrants. This perception, in combination with the media's sensational headlines, aimed to spark public debates which could significantly influence public perceptions about Albanian immigrants. Some of the attention-grabbing headlines included:

Finally, Albanians expose 'asylum' scam...told you so (Muroki, 2022)

Albanian migrants 'exploiting modern slavery law loophole' as record numbers cross Channel (Rosman, 2022)

These headlines not only perpetuated damaging stereotypes, but it became increasingly clear that the media carried considerable power in shaping public opinion and even influencing policy decisions in the UK. Particularly, in the second half of 2022, there were some extraordinary measures taken by the British government to prevent, deter and reduce asylum claims made by the Albanian migrants. However, these extraordinary measures taken by the government resulted in a nuanced and diverse range of reactions from the media.

The right-leaning media welcomed most of the UK government legislative restrictions aimed at curbing what they depicted as the influx of criminal Albanian immigrants who were exploiting the asylum system and the anti-slavery laws. The Daily Mail, in particular, served as a platform to bring these issues to the forefront, publishing several articles that showcased images of deported Albanian immigrants. Of note, as seen below, many of these headlines conflated the deportation of criminals and immigrants into a single story:

Nine Albanians are deported straight from the Home Office processing centre after arriving in the UK by small boat as officials crack down on foreign criminals and illegal immigrants (Barrett, 2022b)

EXCLUSIVE: More than 40 Albanian criminals and migrants who tried to enter the UK via boat arrive back in their home country aboard a Home Office removal flight after being deported (LODGE and Barrett, 2022)

The attention-grabbing headlines used to describe the deportation of criminals and immigrants in the same story has a significant impact on how British citizens perceive the alleged threat posed by Albanian immigrants. Moreover, these news articles tended to portray Albanian immigrants as shameless and exploiters of British hospitality, particularly highlighting instances where the deportees showed little remorse upon their return. For instance, when reporting on the deportation of Albanians, the Daily Mail wrote that:

...Albanian deportees appeared to show little shame or remorse. After the formalities in the police station where relatives hugged them and laughed...sent the message that Britain has still not closed its borders to Albanians who want to abuse our hospitality. (Reid, 2022a)

However, journalists also tended to add their own analysis and opinions on the matter rather than merely reporting the facts. For instance, one journalist expressed:

If you happen to have been born in Britain and are at your wits end about our immigration system, I'll see your frustration and raise you exasperation, agitation and embarrassment...Because those migrants abusing our generosity are making things particularly difficult for those economic migrants who respect our system... the system is exploited by conniving smugglers and frauds in dingies. (Muroki, 2022)

Such terminology is a double-edged weapon used to sway public opinion, exploiting the British people's prejudices and fears to make the situation seem worse than it actually is, in order to gain more backing for the government's crackdown on Albanian immigrants.

In fact, the UK Home Secretary and the Tory party, who are pushing for stricter border controls and a stronger Modern Slavery Act, were active participants in the discourse. The official statements by the British government regarding the Albanian immigrants consistently employed a technique of negative agenda-setting. As researchers contend, these intimidating official declarations received extensive coverage in the media. Consequently, the government's approach of using fear-inducing tactics, as conveyed through the press, becomes ingrained and effectively triggers apprehension and animosity among the general population in relation to the migrants (Flowerdew et.al, 2002, p. 333). Such coverage by right-leaning media outlets, as illustrated below:

‘Abuse of our immigration system’... Ms Patel has also ordered an overhaul of anti-slavery laws which have been used by Albanians to avoid deportation by claiming to be victims of trafficking. (Hymas, 2022g)

At the time, the Home Secretary said: 'I am determined to fix our immigration system, clamp down on illegal entry, and remove those with no right to be in UK as swiftly as possible...' I make no apology for removing dangerous foreign criminals to protect the British people...(Hookham, 2022b)

This depiction clearly demonstrates that the media not only acted as a platform for conveying the government's and anti-immigration politicians' perspectives but also provided room for the British government to present their proposed solutions to tackle the issue. As academics have posited, the media's portrayal of governmental matters related to migrants can “wittingly or unwittingly, serves as the mouthpiece for the government” (Flowerdew et.al, 2002, p. 337). The following are examples of such occurrences:

Alongside measures in our Nationality and Borders Act, this will help end the cycle of last-minute claims and appeals that can delay removals. We will stop at nothing to remove those with no right to be here as the public rightly expects.” (Hymas, 2022c)

Ministers have repeatedly vowed to crack down on young male migrants from Albania, with immigration minister Robert Jenrick vowing the Government would work on a ‘fast-track’ system to speed up the removal of migrants with no right to stay in Britain... Other proposals could see Albanians deported before they can appeal against

rejected asylum claims, put on immigration bail or tagged to prevent them absconding. (Wilcock, 2022)

'And we'll keep going with weekly flights until all the Albanians in our backlog have been removed.' (LODGE and Barrett, 2022)

A Home Office spokesperson said: “Individuals who make the dangerous and unnecessary journey across the Channel will be removed as quickly as possible. We continue to refuse entry to and remove individuals with no right to be in the UK, as the public rightly expect, and are continuously looking for improved ways of efficiently dealing with unmeritorious claims.” (Adu, 2022)

The media's detailed coverage of the government plan against Albanian migrants provides space for the government to assert that their actions align with public expectations, safeguarding British citizens from Albanian immigration. By emphasising the public's expectations through the media and labelling the danger journeys that Albanians take as unnecessary, such rhetoric aims not only to justify the government's rigorous approach but also to create the idea that the whole British society shares these expectations. This perceived unanimity, on the government measures taken against the Albanian immigrants, is further promulgated by the Cabinet Office minister, Brendan Clarke-Smith, which states that:

'The Home Secretary is right to call out this criminality and the support she has received from the public shows the vast majority of people in this country feel the same.' (Robinson, 2022a)

This calculated emphasis on showcasing a unified national stance, in absence of tangible statistical evidence, aims to legitimize the prejudiced approach of the British authorities by associating it with the shared intent of the British populace. Furthermore, this tactical approach seeks to rebuild trust in their capacity to manage irregular migration from Albania and subsequently enhance their reputation as a government prioritising the welfare and interests of British citizens.

However, on the other hand, even though the left-leaning media outlets acknowledged that there were holes in the UK's immigration laws (Quach and Bush, 2022), they also highlighted that Albanian immigrants were inadvertently entangled in the aggressive

immigration policy environment (Malik, 2022). The Guardian, for instance, offered a counter-narrative that fundamentally challenges the conventional governmental rhetoric and the discourse perpetuated by right-leaning media. According to them, the reason why there is a high rise of Albanian immigrants is that the government neglects the broader socio-political context and the fact that there are only very limited legal possibilities for Albanian migrants to enter the UK arguing that:

... the real problem is Britain's refusal to open legal routes, even for those whose lives are in mortal danger, and to whom Britain owes a moral obligation; that those who cross the Channel on small boats are mostly genuine refugees forced to make that journey because of Home Office intransigence; that the policy of mass deportation of unauthorised migrants is dangerous and immoral. (Malik, 2022).

In a broader sense, this criticism indicates a prevailing sense of scepticism concerning the government's management of migration concerns. The unfavourable portrayals of actions taken by the government, including the use of terms like 'unethical,' are aimed at directing readers' attention to embracing a discerning viewpoint regarding their own ingroup. This suggests that the government may have exhibited bias and maybe disregarded existing laws in their efforts to deport a significant number of Albanians. The Guardian even reported an incident in which a group of 11 Albanians were illegally deported from the UK shortly after their arrival:

Last month, the Home Office was forced to concede that it did not have the right to do so, after earlier claims from former home secretary Priti Patel that the UK could quickly return asylum seekers who arrived in the UK and made "spurious" claims. The Albanians are thought to have arrived in the UK last week and were taken from Manston in Ramsgate where the Home Office processes small boat arrivals, to Stansted airport from where they were put on a plane back to Albania on Wednesday. It is thought to be the first time small boat arrivals have been put on a plane directly from Manston. (Taylor, 2022)

The event reported by The Guardian exposed a fundamental flaw in the UK's approach to the hostile environment, revealing that this strategy was a significant contributor to the unjust and unlawful expulsion of eleven individuals from Albania. The handling of the Albanian immigrants and the proposal to accelerate their deportation highlighted a

deficiency in the understanding of precise immigration regulations among Home Office personnel. This is intended to influence the reader's perception that the British administration lacks competence, therefore, indirectly indicating that measures taken against the Albanian immigrants are often unjust.

In addition, the Guardian strengthened the significance of this case by citing criticisms against the government from credible sources. By mediating the viewpoint of those who criticised the Home Office, the significance of these unjust actions was underscored, not only in relation to Albanian immigrants but also for all the migrants in the UK:

Critics have described the incident as a case of “zero notice removal” non-government sources have told the Guardian the 11 Albanians were not given an opportunity to have their asylum claims considered before they were put on the plane. Mishka Pillay, campaigns consultant at Detention Action, said: “This removal of 11 people to Albania is an indication that people in Manston may be deprived of due process. We have had serious concerns about Manston. The most vulnerable people are being hidden away from vital support and access to justice.” In August, Patel announced a scheme to expedite the removal of Albanians who arrive to the UK in small boats... However, following the threat of legal action from the charity Care4Calais, the Home Office conceded a few weeks ago that officials do not have the right to fast-track the deportation of Albanian asylum seekers after they arrive in the UK. (Taylor, 2022)

The inclusion of such concerns by the media is intended to demonstrate that this practice may lead to misinterpretation of cases and the denial of due process to other migrants. Furthermore, the argument that the Home Office conceded that officials do not have the authority to expedite the deportation of Albanian immigrants only after being threatened with legal action by the charity Care4Calais serves to challenge the government's migration policy once again. This approach seeks to sway public opinion against policymakers, such as the Home Secretary, by depicting them as inept officials who don't properly adhere to the established policies and standards. Interestingly, the representation of the British government as incompetent in dealing correctly with the migration crisis, is further amplified in the media discourse, through the coverage of the remarks made by the Albanian Prime Minister, Edi Rama. Rama attributes the perceived inability of the British government to manage the migration crisis to the UK's flawed policies,

particularly the “failed policies on borders and on crime” (Robinson, Barrett and WARREN, 2022). He even suggests that:

The UK government should look to Germany to learn how to cope with a wave of immigrants... “I have never heard any German politician or government minister talk about an ‘invasion’ and I never heard any minister or interior minister here talking about being criminals,” ... “Instead of fuelling the crazy narrative of invaders and gangsters to cover up for totally failed policies on borders and crime, the British representatives need to come to Germany and learn quickly. “To single out a community and to talk about gangsters and about criminals doesn’t sound very British, it sounds more like screams from a madhouse,” Rama said. (Syal, 2022b)

Rama's statements and choice of words not only serve to diminish the challenge that the British government faced with the growing number of Albanian immigrants entering the UK but also sketch a picture of antagonism versus amiability countries, with the UK government depicted as the antagonistic. Furthermore, by including all of the above remarks of government critics, the Guardian promotes an arbitrary and ‘xenophobic’ image of the British government. As a result, this study expects that the Guardian’s readers are more likely to have empathy for the Albanian immigrants.

#### **4.2.6. Victimisation**

Measure undertaken by the government as a response to the flux of Albanian immigrants in the United Kingdom by introducing increasingly restrictive measures and harsh rhetoric, it confronted increasing criticism from left-leaning media outlets and non-British government actors. This resulted in the emergence of another theme, observed in approximately 15% of the examined news articles. The *victimisation* theme mainly focused on condemning discrimination, highlighting the unjustifiability of targeting Albanian migrants and advocating against xenophobia and discrimination on ethical grounds.

The left-wing newspaper portrayed a clear division between different groups by sympathising with Albanian immigrants and criticising right-leaning media and UK government actors’ approach towards this group. The findings show that frequently the

Albanian immigrants are portrayed as "vulnerable" and the right-leaning media and the UK government are characterised as "discriminatory" by the left leaning media (Malik, 2022). The UK's Home Secretary, Suella Braverman, was the target of media attention and criticism. According to a report by The Mirror, the Home Secretary has consistently targeted Albanian asylum seekers as she battled "to shift blame for the flurry of small boats away from her door" (Buchan, 2022).

Such a narrative was also indirectly supported by the Albanian Prime Minister, Edi Rama, who played a prominent role in the discussion on this topic, drawing widespread attention from various media outlets. He pinpointed Britain's alleged act of scapegoating Albanians as a result of "failed policies", and directed particular criticism towards Home Secretary Suella Braverman, accusing her of "discrimination" against the Albanians. Numerous media outlets covered Rama's statements, highlighting the growing tension between the two countries regarding this issue:

Mr Rama, said it was 'insane' to blame his country for the UK's immigration and crime woes. He said he was 'disgusted' by the Home Secretary's language in a combative Commons debate this week in which she claimed there is an 'invasion' of England by migrants crossing the Channel. He said: 'It's about finding scapegoats and blaming others...He tweeted: 'Stop demonising us for your own internal political benefits. The UK has a population of 67 million, with 6 million emigrants (sic). 12,000 Albanians is not an invasion. The failings of British law enforcement is not our responsibility. A vast number of Albanians coming to the UK are from the EU and not Albania.' (Robinson, Barrett and WARREN, 2022)

Albania's prime minister has said politicians in the UK are fuelling xenophobia towards his citizens. Speaking to BBC Newsnight, Edi Rama said Albanians were being used as scapegoats and that UK border issues were down to "failed policies". Britain was once a role model for integrating minorities, he said, but now the country was becoming "like a madhouse". (*BBC News*, 2022c)

The aforementioned statements reflect a rejection of scapegoating, as the blame for the immigration issues in the UK is no longer placed solely on Albanian immigrants. Rather, the responsibility is attributed to the UK government, as expressed by the Albanian Prime Minister, who indirectly represents the concerns of all Albanians in the UK. These



concerns are also represented by the Albanian Ambassador to the UK, Qirjako Qirko in the discourse. He pinpointed the repercussions of the harsh rhetoric used by the UK government towards the Albanian immigrants, where as a result the Albanian youth endured xenophobic harassment in British schools. Such topic was covered extensively by the Guardian:

Qirjako Qirko spoke out after Albanians were singled out by ministers and sections of the media during the recent rise in the number of his country's citizens travelling across the Channel to claim asylum in the UK. He called for an end to the "campaign of discrimination" and warned against reinforcing negative stereotypes. His comments appear to be aimed at the UK government after Suella Braverman, the home secretary, singled out "Albanian criminals" during a debate on the crisis. The government, encouraged by right wing media outlets and MPs, is seeking to stop Albanians from being able to claim asylum in the UK. Qirko said more than 140,000 Albanians living in the UK had been negatively affected by the debate, which was "reinforcing negative stereotypes and racism". "This campaign of discrimination against Albanians living here in the UK should stop. There are people, especially youngsters, who are bullied in their schools because they are Albanians. Everyone who is responsible for this activity should apologise," he said. Earlier, he told MPs Albanian "doctors, lawyers, engineers, labourers of all sorts, pay taxes and contribute to the British society. Any other different portrayal of Albanians in the UK is a demonstration of a lack of knowledge of this reality. Reinforcing negative stereotypes over a prolonged time fosters only discrimination and racism."(Syal, 2022a)

The Albanian Ambassador statement fostered a portrayal of the outgroup as victims, emphasising possible challenges and prejudice that the Albanian community could face due to the harsh rhetoric used by the British government towards Albanian immigrants. By doing so the Ambassador aimed at generating sympathy towards Albanians among British readers. Therefore, such remarks serve a dual purpose: not only they shift the blame back to the British government spotlighting its inadequacies, but also, they contest the prevailing negative portrayal of Albanian immigrants in the British media and the British public perception. This observation underscores the intricate dynamics of blame attribution and responsibility exchange, revealing a complex interplay of narratives and perception.

Moreover, by granting the Albanian ambassador a platform to address this issue, The Guardian indirectly suggests its recognition of the UK government's role, alongside right-leaning media discourse, in fostering a climate conducive to anti-Albanian immigrant sentiments in the UK. This climate, in turn, correlates with instances of hatred faced by Albanians in the UK. In this context, the British media appears to be a courtesy of the Albanian government spokespersons, while at the same time acting as a strong criticizer of the right-leaning media and the UK government practices towards the Albanian immigrants.

Even though the Albanian immigrants were rarely quoted in discourse to argue against discrimination, the Guardian did cover a story where the Albanian immigrant's personal statements were present. By incorporating the personal stories of an immigrant, attention was drawn to the suffering of other Albanian immigrants whose despair was emphasised:

“The whole of this place [Harmondsworth] is full of Albanians. It looks like they're rounding us up to put us on a charter [flight] out of here. The guy I'm sharing a cell with, over half the wing, they are Albanians. It went through my mind that this is [a] revenge against us. It looks like the government are finding loopholes to take us out. Everyone is so distressed and scared – we don't know what will happen to us.”  
(Kelly, 2022)

The Guardian's coverage of this story sheds light on the plight of an Albanian man residing in the UK for a decade, who faced the possibility of deportation despite having British-born children. (Kelly, 2022) Additionally, the article explores the experiences of other Albanian individuals who share a detention cell with him. By interviewing a father who is being separated from his children, the Guardian portraying him as a victim of the government's unjust policies, aims to create sympathy in the reader's eyes. Furthermore, the Guardian employs a narrative approach that centres on individuals' stories and utilises extensivization techniques, such as direct quotations of Albanian migrants and comprehensive descriptions of emotional states of other Albanian immigrants, such as distress and fear, in order to cultivate British reader compassion towards marginalised people. This technique, as indicated by Majid KhosraviNik (KhosraviNik, 2009), is instrumental in shaping readers' perspectives.

Furthering this perspective, the Guardian incorporated insights from experts such as Lea Ypi, an Albanian author and academic. In an opinion piece for the Guardian, Ypi shed light not only on the recent discrimination faced by Albanian immigrants but also the broader Albanian community in the UK, attributing it to negative rhetoric propagated by the British Government against this outgroup. In a direct critique of the Tory government and the UK Home Secretary, Ypi noted:

It has been a curse because, contrary to what Tory propaganda would have you believe, nobody enjoys leaving their country just for the sake of annoying people in another. Even putting aside the dangers of unauthorised crossings, and even where legal routes are available, migration tears families apart, and brain drain is an open wound...Braverman's remarks were gratuitous, insulting and harmful to the tens of thousands of Albanians who contribute to their adopted country while carrying the trauma of having abandoned their native one.(Ypi, 2022)

It should be noted, however, that the typical Albanian immigrants most frequently cited by the media were not experts but rather ordinary people. Nevertheless, the inclusion of their opinions in the discourse played a key role in conveying similar message, that the government was attempting to shift blame for its failed policies onto Albanians:

'I work almost 18 hours a day and like many Albanians in the UK want to have a good life for myself. The British Government is just trying to blame us for its problems. 'It's not our fault that it can't get its act together and do something about the migrant crisis. So it's easier to pin it all on the Albanians...' (LODGE and Barrett, 2022)

Similar opinions were expressed by other Albanians, who also highlighted that criminals in the United Kingdom come from diverse ethnic groups, rather than consisting only of individuals of Albanian descent:

'Dritan Doda, 49, who runs a building company, insisted: 'Are we the only community in the UK that is involved in criminality and drug dealing? I don't think so. 'I have been in Britain for 25 years and I don't know why Albanians are now being blamed for everything. 'We are a small community in the UK but we are currently being blamed for all the big problems. It's racism in my opinion because it's easier for the Government to blame us than take responsibility.' Builder Ermond Dena, 50, who has

been in Britain for the past 10 years, added: ‘Lots of communities have criminals and drug dealers. Why only focus on Albania? ‘I have noticed an increase in the number of Albanians coming to the UK over the past few months but there have also been people arriving from other countries.’(LODGE and Barrett, 2022)

The aforementioned remarks portray Albanians as victims of government hostility, which may serve as a catalyst for raising awareness and empathy for Albanian immigrants in light of the current debate and hostile environment surrounding their migration to the UK. This emphasis reinforces the underlying idea of compassion for Albanian immigrants.

As a result, the minor theme of *compassion* for Albanian immigrants, that appeared in the discourse, is very strongly tied to the *victimisation* theme and could be considered a subtheme. This sub theme focuses on supporting pro-immigration positions that aim to defend Albanian immigrants in the UK. It highlights the issues of corruption and violence in Albania and emphasises that despite the absence of war, many Albanians are facing dangerous circumstances and are forced to flee. (Fagge and Chaudhury, 2022)

The subtheme emphasises the need for increased empathy and solidarity towards Albanian immigrants, specifically calling for the British government to shift “from crisis management of the asylum system to one that operates effectively and treats people with compassion.” (Hymas, 2022e) As a result, the credibility of the UK government's decisions and measures came under scrutiny often in the discourse, especially concerning its alignment with international human rights standards and obligations, by several organisations and refugee charities. For instance, Enver Solomon, argued that:

“Just because a country is not at war, does not mean that it is safe for all that live there. To pre-judge an asylum claim based on biases about the country of origin of the applicant is totally wrong, and undermining of our asylum determination process that seeks to ensure the opposite - that claims are assessed on their individual merit and the information provided. The fact that over half of Albanians who claim asylum here are given refugee protection by our Government speaks volumes for the clear dangers these people are facing.” (Hymas, 2022g)

In fact, Solomon's allegations that Albanian migrants seeking asylum in the UK are actually in danger were actually backed by left-leaning media sources and migration activists, who argued that:

The claim that Albanians don't need asylum because they come from a "safe" country is also belied by the data. In the year ending this June, 53% of Albanian claimants had been granted asylum, or other forms of leave to stay in the country, on first decision, and a higher proportion on appeal ... The data also gives the lie to the claim made by Priti Patel that most asylum claims are bogus and that "70% of people crossing the Channel... are economic migrants". In the year ending this June, three-quarters of all those claiming asylum were successful. (Malik, 2022)

Clare Moseley, founder of Care4Calais, said: "From colleagues in the charity sector who have closer links to Albania, we do understand that the country may not be at war but it doesn't mean it is a safe place. "There are serious issues of violence, coercion and people- trafficking, including child traffick-ing, and recent figures show a 55 per cent acceptance rate for Albanian refugees, so any claim they are all economic migrants may be presumptive. (Culliford, 2022)

The inclusion of Clare Mosely and others with similar statements in the discourse helps to increase compassion for the Albanian immigrants since it shifts the focus to the hardships endured by these vulnerable migrant communities. Also, Mosely highlights a key issue affecting many Albanian immigrants, that of being victims of smuggling and trafficking. The media draw attention to the dangers associated with the irregular entry of Albanian immigrants and the risk the face of ending up being part of organised crime resulting from various smuggling methods by relying mostly on legitimised sources. The following news excerpt illustrates such assumption:

An Albanian Border Police source told the Mail most traffickers were aged between 18 and 22, from poor areas of Albania and are recruited by criminal networks to work as cannabis farmers in the UK. He said: '[They] agree to take this journey and to work as cannabis farmers until they pay up to £20,000, the cost of the smuggling'... Another immigrant pleading guilty to his involvement in cannabis production due to being in 'debt bondage' to a criminal gang. (Kelly, 2021)

They (Albanian immigrants) often work in the black economy or end up in criminality such as harvesting cannabis plants in illegal farms run by Albanian gangs in order to pay off debts, say immigration officials. (Hymas, 2022g)

Albanian gangsters often act as middlemen in the cross-Channel people smuggling operations and then force some of those they have helped traffic to work as 'slaves' in their empires in the UK or recruit others as willing foot soldiers. (Hookham, 2022a)

Particularly, the vulnerability faced by children was emphasised, the British government was seen as accountable for their hardships. The situation in Kent County Council serves as a prime illustration of this issue. As critiqued by the BBC:

For a local authority which is taking on the role of a child's guardian, just one young person going missing is one too many. For Kent County Council, to not know the whereabouts of 39 of the Albanian children it was tasked with caring for must be extremely worrying. The council says candidly that it can be very difficult to prevent some children from going missing. It's trying to identify proactively those who might be at risk of exploitation, and, when missing children are found, it will carry out a debrief to see if lessons can be learned... Ecpat UK, which campaigns to protect children from exploitation, said the figures were very concerning. Laura Durán, head of policy, advocacy and research for Ecpat UK said this was a "really high" number of missing children. She said: "We're really concerned they are at risk of exploitation or have effectively been trafficked. "They could be facing labour exploitation in different industries such as construction or car washes; they could be criminally exploited in drug distribution or in cannabis farms, or they could be sexually exploited."(BBC News, 2022b)

Additionally, without directly including the voice of the Albanian immigrants, concerns were raised by non-governmental actors regarding the accommodations provided to these vulnerable groups:

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, said: "Hotels are not appropriate long term accommodation for vulnerable men women and children who have taken dangerous journeys to reach the UK. We know from our work that the day to day reality of living in what are often cramped conditions cut off from support is

that people's mental health and well being is badly affected." (Hymas, 10 November 2022)

... concern over Manston, a temporary tented site at an airfield designed to hold 1,000 small boat arrivals that reportedly has 3,000 on site currently, giving rise to conditions described as "a nightmare" by one of those working at the site... "The appalling inhumane conditions that we're seeing across reception facilities for men, women and children seeking asylum highlight an unacceptable lack of contingency planning by this government, that is causing serious damage to vulnerable individuals. Many of the children we support who are stuck in hotels or have been placed in Manston as age-disputed adults are traumatised by the fact they are not getting enough food, feel unsafe and, in some cases, are getting scabies." (Taylor, 2022)

By highlighting the adverse psychological and physical consequences stemming from inadequate living conditions in government-provided accommodations, the media utilises persuasive strategies to evoke empathy for Albanian immigrants. Furthermore, the portrayal of Albanian immigrants facing difficulties on their way to the UK not only shows that they were real refugees who took risks to travel to a safe country, but it also serves as a criticism of the unjust measures taken by the British government against this specific group.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, this study tried to examine how the British media framed the issue of Albanian immigration to the UK between 2021 and 2022, addressing a significant void in the existing literature on this subject. This study found that the high number of Albanian immigrants entering the UK irregularly, particularly in 2022, had a significant impact on the media discourse during the two-year period. In this study, we observe that within the specified period, right-leaning newspapers including The Daily Mail, The Sun, and The Telegraph predominantly spotlight the adverse facets of Albanian immigrants. They are frequently depicted as economic, cultural, or criminal challenges, contributing to the securitization of Albanian immigration to the UK.

Predominantly, the British media focused a lot on the challenges and issues related to illegal Albanian immigration, particularly the high influx of Albanian immigrants and the difficulties faced by the British authorities to control and secure the UK borders, where blaming techniques were predominantly employed. The linking of migration with crimes resulted in making migration a contentious subject based on anti-immigrant perceptions, which is also considered to have generated public support for government policies.

Furthermore, the analysis of articles about Albanian migrants in the discourse showed British journalists' strong interest in associating Albanian migrants to acts of violence. In both coverage of these topics the journalists employed scare tactics to evoke fear among their readers. Generalising immigrants as criminals and economic migrants was purposefully done to generate public condemnation and to lessen the public sympathies towards Albanian immigrants. In conclusion, the stereotypes about Albanian migrants spread in the right leaning news outlets were („frauds”, „criminals”, „drug dealers”, „exploiters”). By highlighting the fact that often the government is unable to take any action against them due to the sophisticated network of criminal organisations that protect these people, the media made efforts to build public fear and made the public believe in wrong perceptions that the by accepting Albanians immigrants in the UK, the society will face an unmanageable situation that would have severe consequences for the host society. Furthermore, such negative portrayal and framing of them in terms of economic and national security concerns, served to further legitimise the British government's measures and policies towards this group and securitise the issue. Therefore, in line with previous findings (van Dijk, 2000; Flowerdew, Li and Tran, 2002) it could be concluded that the



practise of discrimination in the British right leaning media is an ‘intragroup discourse about others’ (Flowerdew, Li and Tran, 2002, p. 331).

This study found that there is an obvious lack of Albanian immigrant perspectives in the media. Even when their voices were included, journalists frequently did not present them in a positive light. However, the visibility of Albanian immigration issues was present in the media, particularly in left-leaning media outlets like the Guardian. The denunciation of discrimination against Albanian immigrants by the government and the criticism of government immigration policies towards this group were the focus of left leaning media outlets such as The Guardian and The Mirror. This study found that various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and migrant charities, along with influential Albanian governmental figures, were predominantly cited by left leaning media outlets to support Albanian migrants and address related concerns. In contrast, the right-leaning media outlets viewed governmental institutions, such as law enforcement agencies and its affiliated agencies, that took a stricter approach to immigration as a significant source for their coverage of the Albanian migration to the UK.

However, such contrasts become even more evident in media outlets editorials, where the left leaning media editorials seem to have an attitude towards migrants which is based on more sympathy and understanding than the right leaning media outlets. In fact, the left leaning media often criticises the biased attitudes of the British government towards the Albanian immigrants and holds the British government accountable for the lack of legal routes for this group to enter the UK whereas the right leaning media outlets support it and even calls for more strict measures to be taken. This prompts a significant query: does the bias evident in right leaning media or the leniency portrayed in the rhetoric of the left leaning media accurately mirror the general sentiment of the British populace towards Albanian immigrants? Such an inquiry holds significant potential for further academic research.

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## Appendixes

### Appendix A: List of newspaper articles

The following newspaper articles are ordered by newspaper name (see Table 3.1) and date of publication.

#### *The Daily Mail*

15 February 2021

Albanian drug lord, 35, deported from UK three times is jailed for more than seven years for running 'Deliveroo style' cocaine delivery service in Kent

10 March 2021, The Daily Mail

Illegal immigrant, 22, who was caught with cocaine then deported to Albania in 2019... is found drug-dealing back in Britain six months later and jailed for three years in UK jail

07 April 2021, The Daily Mail

Albanian drugs gangs running cannabis farms across Britain are posing as victims of modern slavery and human trafficking to avoid prosecution

24 April 2021, The Daily Mail

Revealed: Albanian crooks suspected of murder, drug-trafficking and armed robbery are holed up in the UK and protected by crime syndicates as a safe haven to evade justice

09 May 2021, The Daily Mail

Mother of God! Priti Patel wins war against boss of OCG - by stripping Albanian gangster of his right to live in Britain (\*That's Organised Crime Group as Line of Duty fans know)

08 June 2021, The Daily Mail

Detectives arrest three seaman over bid to smuggle 69 Albanian migrants from Belgium to UK on fishing boat

17 June 2021, The Daily Mail

Police officer, 30, who worked undercover infiltrating the Albanian mafia but fled to the UK when his cover was blown is spared jail after he was caught selling cocaine for gangsters in London

09 July 2021, The Daily Mail

Priti Patel signs deal with Albania to speed up deportation of crooks who were born there but moved to Britain

11 July 2021, The Daily Mail

Victory for Priti Patel as Albanian killer who raked in £40k a year from car wash job - and was once on Interpol's most wanted list - is finally deported after five years

21 July 2021, The Daily Mail

Six men and one woman are arrested in raids targeting people smuggling network suspected of trafficking hundreds of Albanian migrants to UK

26 July 2021, The Daily Mail

The TikTok ads that promise to get migrants to Britain for £20k: People-smugglers are brazenly touting their services on social media sites, probe reveals

06 September 2021, The Daily Mail

EXCLUSIVE: Woman, 36, admits trying to smuggle two Albanian illegal migrants into the UK in her car boot

24 September 2021, The Daily Mail

69 Albanian migrants were 'smuggled into Britain on a converted fishing trawler', court hears

04 October 2021, The Daily Mail

Albanian government officials DENY claims that migrants arriving by boat to UK will be detained in new offshore asylum processing centre in Balkans

06 August 2022, The Daily Mail

FORTY PER CENT of Channel migrants are from ALBANIA - not a country devastated by war of famine - secret military report reveals

07 August 2022, The Daily Mail

'Ask a schoolboy about his future and he'll draw a boat heading to the UK': How every family in one Albanian town dubbed 'Little London' has links to Britain and a burning ambition to send their children over to return with money and a 'flashy car'

10 August 2022, The Daily Mail

The TikTok 'summer sale' for migrants: Smuggler gangs launch 'closing down sale' and slash price of Channel crossings by £1,500 per person as traffickers target Albanians on social media

19 August 2022, The Daily Mail

Security fears over Albania boat surge: Arrivals hit 5,000 for the year so far as nation dominates Channel crossings... and crooks are now recruiting 'cleanskins' with no criminal record to join UK operations

03 November 2022, The Daily Mail

Albania's PM says Britain is becoming a 'madhouse' as the country's Prime Minister Ledieta Leka brands MPs 'purely xenophobic' after Suella Braverman blamed Albanians for rise in number of migrant Channel crossings

03 November 2022, The Daily Mail

'There are so few left. They're with you now': SUE REID reports from the Albanian town where almost all the men have left for Britain's promised land

05 November 2022, The Daily Mail

EXCLUSIVE: Albanian migrants living in the UK accuse MPs of making them 'scapegoats' for 'broken' immigration policy and insist they DON'T claim benefits and 'aren't gangsters or thieves'



05 November 2022, The Daily Mail

Number of Albanian victims of modern slavery hits a record 28% high as country's PM accuses Suella Braverman of 'blaming' his country for Britain's migrant crisis

08 November 2022, The Daily Mail

Inside Albanian people smuggling network driving surge in asylum seekers: How migrants book cheap B&Bs in Dunkirk to await £4,300 crossing into UK after they are recruited by 'middle men' in Albania and handed over to Kurdish gangs in charge of boats

09 November 2022, The Daily Mail

More than 100 Albanians were among 350 foreigners deported by Home Office last month - including 22 Channel migrants removed directly from Manston processing centre

16 November 2022, The Daily Mail

Nine Albanians are deported straight from the Home Office processing centre after arriving in the UK by small boat as officials crack down on foreign criminals and illegal immigrants

16 November 2022, The Daily Mail

Four Albanian nationals are arrested after 'two migrants landed illegally in Kent beach and were driven away by two men'

25 November 2022, The Daily Mail

One in three of migrants crossing English Channel in small boats is Albanian and on some days they are four out of five, new Home Office figures show as total numbers receiving taxpayer-funded support tops 100,000 for the first time

29 November 2022, The Daily Mail

Suella Braverman pushes ahead with migrant crackdown: Home Secretary looks to put Albanian asylum seekers who cross the Channel in small boats on the fast track to deportation

03 December 2022, The Daily Mail

EXCLUSIVE: Albanian who smuggled himself into Britain hidden into the back of a truck reveals how he served lunch to Queen and Prince Philip

12 December 2022, The Daily Mail

First pictures of British flights sending criminals back to Albania: A group of drug dealers and illegal migrants - sentenced to 26 years between them in UK jails - were returned to Tirana last week as the Home Office ramps up deportation flights

23 December 2022, The Daily Mail

EXCLUSIVE: More than 40 Albanian criminals and migrants who tried to enter the UK via boat arrive back in their home country aboard a Home Office removal flight after being deported

### **The Sun**

06 August 2022, The Sun

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'FLOODING IN' Four in ten Channel migrants are from peaceful Albania, says leaked report

08 August 2022, The Sun

TIKTOK TRAFFICKERS People traffickers using TikTok to sell £4.5k Channel crossings to Albanians – insisting ‘the French won’t stop you’

09 August 2022, The Sun

Finally, Albanians expose ‘asylum’ scam...told you so

13 August 2022, The Sun

'NARCO STATE' How Albanians flocking to UK in dinghies end up in clutches of drug gangs as king pins drive Maseratis

25 August 2022, The Sun

Number of Albanian migrants crossing Channel in small boats jumps 100-fold

07 November 2022, The Sun

We have built our dream home in Albania using money our son sent – after he illegally snuck into the UK

14 November 2022, The Sun

Albanian protesters drape nation’s flag over Winston Churchill’s statue amid migrant row

28 November 2022, The Sun

All Albanian Channel migrants should be blocked from claiming asylum under tough new laws, MPs demand

10 December 2022, The Sun

Home Secretary Suella Braverman prepares to announce crackdown on Albanian immigration within days

### **The Telegraph**

31 October 2022, The Telegraph

Albanian migrants are not crossing Channel from 'war-torn' country, says Kent councillor

04 November 2022, The Telegraph

Albanian migrants among dozens of refugees housed in luxury hotel

08 November 2022, The Telegraph

Fifth of Albanian adult male migrants falsely claim to be children

09 November 2022, The Telegraph

Influx of Albanian migrants expected as people smugglers take advantage of calm weather

10 November 2022, The Telegraph

Albanian migrants pay £18,000 to be ‘second drivers’ in lorries bringing in Christmas presents

07 December 2022, The Telegraph

Albanian Channel migrants plead to go back home claiming to be ‘victims of TikTok’

12 December 2022, The Telegraph

Rishi Sunak set to announce deal to speed up return of Albanian migrants

**The Financial Times**

02 November 2022, The Financial Times

Home Office reports surge in Albanians crossing by boat to England

14 November 2022, The Financial Times

How poverty and fake promises are luring Albanians to the UK

15 December 2022, The Financial Times

UK refugee policy has so many holes it frustrates both sides of political spectrum

**BBC**

21/07/2021

Albanian people smuggling: Officers arrest seven in raids

17 November 2021, BBC

Harwich: Men convicted over 69 Albanian migrants found on boat

16 October 2022, BBC

Albanian people smuggling: Four arrested in ongoing investigation

08 October 2022, BBC

Albanian people-smuggling gang 'dismantled' after arrests in Spain

03 November 2022, BBC

Albanian PM Edi Rama in full: UK using migrants as scapegoats

04 November 2022, BBC

Channel crossings: Albanian migrants recruited to the UK by gangs

05 November 2022, BBC

Ros Atkins on... Albanian migrants coming to the UK

21 November 2022, BBC

Albanian migrant: 'I wish I'd never tried to enter the UK illegally'

02 December 2022, BBC

Channel crossings: Dozens of Albanian child migrants go missing

13 December 2022, BBC

Thousands of Albanians will be returned home - Rishi Sunak

### **Mirror**

26 November 2022, Mirror

Rapper accused of 'brainwashing' Albanian fans to risk lives and cross channel to UK

03 November 2022, Mirror

Albanian PM blasts Suella Braverman for making citizens scapegoats for UK 'failures'

13 November 2022, Mirror

Albanian protesters cover Churchill statue with flag as they demand Home Office apology

07 December 2022, Mirror

Albanian kids bullied in 'campaign of discrimination' fuelled by migrant crisis

**The Guardian**

03 October 2021, The Guardian

Albanians living in UK 'would work for free' to tackle fuel crisis

25 August 2022, The Guardian

Rise in Albanian asylum seekers may be down to criminal gangs

26 August 2022, The Guardian

Albanian with British-born children faces deportation after decade in UK

28 August 2022, The Guardian

The Guardian view on asylum challenges: don't scapegoat Albanians

28 August 2022, The Guardian

There are lies, damn lies, and then there is Home Office propaganda about migrants

26 September 2022, The Guardian

Home Office U-turn over deportation of Albanian asylum seekers



18 October 2022, The Guardian

Concerns raised over due process in case of 11 Albanians flown out of UK

27 October 2022, The Guardian

Albanians arriving in UK could get 'bespoke route' for immigration cases to be heard

02 November 2022, The Guardian

Albania criticises UK's lack of cooperation over Channel crossings

02 November 2022, The Guardian

Britain is targeting Albanians to excuse policy failures, says country's PM

04 November 2022, The Guardian

We Albanians are just the latest scapegoats for Britain's failing ideological project

04 November 2022, The Guardian

'Come to Germany and learn': Albanian PM criticises UK's immigration stance

05 November 2022, The Guardian

'We all want to leave': poverty, not crime, fuels the urge to flee Albania

03 December 2022, The Guardian

Almost fifth of lone Albanian child refugees in Kent missing, says council

07 December 2022, The Guardian

Albanian children facing racist bullying due to UK asylum row, says envoy

## **Appendix B: Codebook**

Following Allen (2016) the following coding scheme was used for the Manual Content Analysis of newspaper articles:

Section Identifier	Description of prompt	Description of codes
1. Topic Match	<p>This section asks you to confirm two things: (1) whether the item contains discussion or examples related to the topic for which it was pre-selected; and (2) that it deals with the UK or British context in some way, rather than another country.</p> <p>The pre-selected topic is given in the title of each dataset.</p>	<p>There are two codes: (1) meaning 'yes, it contains discussion about the topic for which it was pre-selected, and deals with the UK context', and (0) meaning 'no, it does not contain discussion about the topic although it may mention some individual words related to the pre-selected topic, AND/OR it does not deal with the UK context'. If coded as '0', STOP coding and continue with next item.</p> <p>The topics are as follows:</p> <p>'EU' relates to anything dealing with movement in, around, through, or from Europe or its constituent parts. This includes regions as well as specific countries within the EU, as well as groups or individuals who either have or are perceived to be of European origins. It also includes references to the European Union as an institution—its government, leaders, or constituent parts.</p> <p>'Illegal immigration' relates to anything dealing with movement of people that is somehow breaking established rules, orders, or policies about who has permission to enter a country. This can relate to individuals or groups, and can be statements about their perceived or actual legal status.</p>
2. Type of Item	<p>This section asks you to identify what kind of an item the piece is.</p>	<p>There are four codes for this section. Use '1' if it is a news item that is generally reporting on some event or happening. Use '2' if it is an editorial or opinion piece—often this can be deduced by the presence of 'I' or 'we', or a tone that seems to give a position rather than report on something. Use '3' if it is a letter—often identified by the presence of 'dear so-and-so' or a short main body that responds to another item ('in yesterday's item, I was surprised about...') Use '4' if it is some other kind of document, such as a film review, recipe, or travel guidance. Use '0' if you cannot tell what kind of item it is.</p>
3. Policy Focus	<p>This section asks you to identify whether the item contains discussion about government policies or approaches to the 'Pre-Selected Topic' in 1.</p>	<p>There are two codes for this section. Use '1' if the item contains some discussion about the actions, decisions, or objectives of the government as they relate to the pre-selected topic that you confirmed in Section 1. You can also use '1' if the item discusses the implications or consequences of these actions by the government, politicians' views on what should be done on a particular issue, etc. Use '0' if it does not consider any of the above points.</p>
4. Problem or Achievement	<p>This section asks you to identify whether the item primarily identifies a problem or achievement in relation to the pre-selected topic. This can be a problem/achievement identified by the article's author, or by another person quoted or discussed in the article.</p>	<p>There are four codes for this section, each of which will help determine which of the following sections you should use. Be careful to ensure that the article actually identifies a problem or achievement rather than simply reporting events that might be considered a problem or achievement by different people. For example, articles identifying a problem/achievement are likely to include references to blame/responsibility, criticism/praise, or language implying value judgments (e.g. "shameful" or "beneficial"). You should ignore discussion of problems/achievements in relation to topics that are not the pre-selected topic.</p> <p>Use '1' if the item primarily identifies a problem in relation to the pre-selected topic, but not a success. Then, continue coding in Section 5a.</p> <p>Use '2' if the item primarily identifies a success or achievement in relation to the pre-selected topic, but not a problem. Then, continue coding in 6a.</p> <p>Use '3' if the item identifies both a problem and success in relation to the pre-selected topic. Then, continue coding in both 5a and 6a.</p> <p>Use '0' if the item does not identify either a problem or success in relation to the pre-selected topic. Then, STOP coding and continue with the next item.</p>

Section identifier	Description of prompt	Description of codes
5a. Problem	Now that you've decided that the item mainly focuses on a problem related to the pre-selected topic, this section asks you to characterise the main rationale for concern about this topic. You can code up to two.	<p>There are 8 substantive codes (1-8), one 'Other' code (9), and one 'None' code (0).</p> <p>0: None provided. Use this code if there is no main cause for concern.</p> <p>1: Quantity of people entering putting pressure on space and/or public services. This relates to the perception or reality that the number of people entering puts strain on available space, land, and services like trains or hospitals.</p> <p>2: Characteristics of people entering. This relates to the specific non-racial qualities, perceived or actual, of people coming into the country. This may include skills, intentions, or objectives. Qualities related to criminality or intention to commit crimes should be coded under '6'. Qualities related to race or ethnicity should be considered under code '7'.</p> <p>3: Rules or laws that are too strict. This relates to the perceived or actual stringency of rules related to the pre-selected topic.</p> <p>4: Rules or laws that are too weak, or are being abused/poorly enforced. This relates to the perceived or actual leniency of rules related to the pre-selected topic, or the perception or reality of people taking advantage of existing rules for their own benefit, or that the government is not enforcing existing rules effectively.</p> <p>5: Crime, insecurity. This relates to the perceived or actual impacts of migration on levels of security or criminality. This may include violence, aggression, homelessness, anti-social behaviour, or community disorder.</p> <p>6: Racism, xenophobic reactions, or desire for restrictive policies. This relates to the perceived or real threats to a host country from migrants based on race, ethnicity, or a fear of non-citizens.</p> <p>7: Suffering, exploitation of migrants. This relates to the perceived or real mistreatment of migrants to a country, whether brought about by other individuals, governments, or institutions. This may include suffering or exploitation in physical, emotional, social, economic, or political terms, and may occur in host or sending countries.</p> <p>8: Poor quality of debate, or too little meaningful or 'effective' discussion about the issue. This relates to the perception or reality that public debate about migration issues does not fully consider a range of perspectives OR that it tends to focus on particular opinions or groups. Note that terms like 'meaningful' and 'effective' are interpreted from the perspective of whoever is writing the item. Be careful to distinguish this from racism/xenophobia which is coded separately as (6).</p> <p>9: Other. Use this code if the main cause for concern is not described by one of the above.</p>

Section Identifier	Description of prompt	Description of codes
5b. Success	<p>Now that you've decided that the item mainly focuses on a success or achievement related to pre-selected topic, this section asks you to characterise the main rationale for success or opportunity presented by the topic. You can code up to two.</p>	<p>There are six substantive codes (1-6), one 'Other' code (7), and one 'None' code (0).</p> <p>0: None provided. Use this code if there is no main cause for success or opportunity.</p> <p>1: Right number or type of people entering. This relates to the numbers; perceived or actual, of people coming into the country, or to the perceived or real economic labour market needs of the receiving country, possibly caused by changes in aging, fertility, or skills shortages.</p> <p>2: Government policies, rules, or procedures are working well. This relates to perceptions or reality that government actions on a migration issue are achieving their stated objectives.</p> <p>3: More security for host country. This relates to the perception or reality that movement to a country lowers the likelihood of violence, aggression, homelessness, anti-social behaviour, or community disorder.</p> <p>4: Multiculturalism, diversity. This relates to the perceptions or reality that migration raises the likelihood of co-existence among different ethnic, racial, or cultural groups in a host society, either of majority or minority status.</p> <p>5: Successful experience of, or integration into host society. This relates to perceptions or realities of migrants who are seen to have joined and contributed to a host society. This may take the forms of social, political, or cultural contributions at the local, regional, or national levels.</p> <p>6: Existence of meaningful or 'effective' discussion about the issue. This relates to the perception or reality that public debate about migration issues does fully consider a range of perspectives OR that it acknowledges a spectrum of opinions or groups. Note that terms like 'meaningful' and 'effective' are interpreted from the perspective of whoever is writing the item.</p> <p>7: Other. Use this code if the main cause for success or opportunity is not described by one of the above.</p>



Section identifier	Description of prompt	Description of codes
6. Underpinning Justification	<p>This section asks you to identify how the item justifies its position or interpretation of the pre-selected issue—whether as a problem or an achievement.</p> <p>What values and/or priorities appear to be most prominently featured in this item?</p> <p>Choose at least one, but up to the two strongest rationales made in the item. The order you place them in does not matter; you are coding for the presence of any justifications in relation to the pre-selected topic.</p>	<p>There are seven substantive codes (1–7), one 'Other' code (8), and one 'None' code (0). If you think there is only one justification, code this section as '0'. If in doubt about which problem the article is mainly about and one of them is discussed in the first paragraph, select the one discussed in the first paragraph.</p> <p>0: None provided. Use this code if there does not appear to be an explicit or implicit value, priority, or rationale in the item.</p> <p>1: Domestic Prosperity. Actions should deliver the best possible economic, social, and/or welfare outcomes for citizens of the host country</p> <p>2: Instrumental Prosperity. Actions should deliver the best overall possible economic, social, and/or welfare outcomes</p> <p>3: National Cultural. Actions should maintain or promote a 'national culture' or identity, whether already existing or imagined</p> <p>4: Multicultural. Actions should maintain or promote multiple cultures including majority and minority groups</p> <p>5: Public Order. Actions should preserve safety and combat anti-social behaviours</p> <p>6: Sovereignty. Actions should be based on the right of the host country to act according to its own rules and laws</p> <p>7: Social justice. Actions should be based on concepts of human rights and social justice</p> <p>8: Other. Use this code if the rationale or values do not appear to be captured by one of the above.</p>
7a. Characters Responsible for Problem	<p>This section now asks you to identify who is claimed to be responsible for this problem.</p> <p>List the characters in any order.</p> <p>Individuals should be coded for their institution or organisation if they are speaking on behalf of that organisation: e.g., 'Theresa May, Home Secretary' should be coded as (2: Home Office).</p> <p>Note: if you have coded Section 4 as containing BOTH a problem and success, complete BOTH sections 8a and 8b.</p>	<p>There are 10 substantive codes (1–10), one 'Other' code (11), and one 'None' code (0).</p> <p>0: None provided. Use this code if no individual, group, or organisation is identified as responsible.</p> <p>1: the Government in power or agencies of government</p> <p>2: the Opposition/Shadow government</p> <p>3: Members of Parliament or other politicians including candidates</p> <p>4: Non-governmental organisations, charities, unions (not think tanks)</p> <p>5: Think-tanks, including pressure groups or lobbying groups</p> <p>6: Businesses, private sector</p> <p>7: A court, judge, or legal organisation</p> <p>8: A European institution</p> <p>9: Members of the general public</p> <p>10: Migrants, asylum seekers, refugees</p> <p>11: Other. Use this code if the responsible party does not appear among the above codes. Then supply the name of the responsible party.</p>

Section identifier	Description of prompt	Description of codes
7b. Characters responsible for success	<p>If you have decided that the item mainly identifies a success or achievement, this section now asks you to identify who is claimed to be responsible for this success.</p> <p>List the characters in any order.</p> <p>Individuals should be coded for their institution or organisation if they are speaking on behalf of that organisation.</p> <p>Note: if you have coded Section 4 as containing BOTH a problem and success, complete BOTH sections 8a and 8b.</p>	<p>Use the same codes as in Section 9. If using (12: Other), then supply the name of the responsible party.</p>
8a. Main problem messenger	<p>This section asks you to identify who or what is communicating the main problem you've identified. Who is primarily saying that the problem matters?</p>	<p>There are nine substantive codes (1-9), one 'Other' code (10), and one 'None' code (0).</p> <p>0: No sources. Use this code if no sources are explicitly identified. 1: The author of the item (usually journalists themselves in an editorial or opinion piece)</p> <p>2: Members of Parliament or other politicians</p> <p>3: Civil servants or government departments</p> <p>4: University or research institute members (not think tanks)</p> <p>5: Non-governmental organisations, charities, unions (not think tanks)</p> <p>6: Think-tanks, including pressure groups</p> <p>7: Private sector organisations or businesses</p> <p>8: Migrants themselves</p> <p>9: Non-migrant members of the public</p> <p>10: Other sources. Use this code if the mentioned source does not appear among the above codes. Then supply the name of the source.</p>



Section identifier	Description of prompt	Description of codes
8b. Main success messenger	This section asks you to identify who or what is communicating the main success. Who is primarily saying that the achievement matters?	<p>There are nine substantive codes (1-9), one 'Other' code (10), and one 'None' code (0).</p> <p>0: No sources. Use this code if no sources are explicitly identified. 1: The author of the item (usually journalists themselves in an editorial or opinion piece)</p> <p>2: Members of Parliament or other politicians</p> <p>3: Civil servants or government departments</p> <p>4: University or research institute members (not think tanks)</p> <p>5: Non-governmental organisations, charities, unions (not think tanks)</p> <p>6: Think-tanks, including pressure groups</p> <p>7: Private sector organisations or businesses</p> <p>8: Migrants themselves</p> <p>9: Non-migrant members of the public</p> <p>10: Other sources. Use this code if the mentioned source does not appear among the above codes. Then supply the name of the source.</p>
9. Other Sources	This section asks you to identify any sources that are mentioned or quoted on the pre-selected topic in the item. In this context, 'mentioned' means that the item references this source to illustrate, substantiate, refute, or somehow reinforce a point.	Use the same codes as in 1.1a. If using (10: Other), then supply the name of the source.