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The discursive construction of *Romanian immigration* in the British media: Digitized press vs. Television documentaries

Abstract

This paper looks at how the media – particularly the British press and television – frames the issue of Romanian immigrants in Great Britain, in the context of the freedom of movement for workers in the European Union. The study focuses on the frames employed by the British journalists in constructing anti-immigration discourses in the digital and the TV sphere, comparatively. This study analyzes the stereotypes about Romanian people used in two British media formats and the way in which they affect Romania's country image overseas. Using a mixed research approach, combining framing analysis (Entman, 1993) with critical discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1993), and *dispositif* analysis (Charaudeau, 2005) this article investigates 271 news items from three of the most read newspapers in the UK (The Guardian, Daily Mail and The Independent), published online during January 2013 – March 2014. Also, the paper analyzes three film documentaries from BBC (*Panorama – The Romanians are Coming?* – BBC1, *The Truth About Immigration* – BBC2 and *The Great Big Romanian invasion* – BBC World News). The analysis shows that the British press and television use both similar and different frames to coverage Romanian migrants. The media also infer the polarization between “Us” (the British media) and “Them” (the Romanian citizens).

Keywords: Media frames, migration, critical discourse analysis, stereotypes, nation brand

Introduction

On the 1st of January 2014 the restrictions for Romanians and Bulgarians who sought work in the UK were lifted. Victor Spirescu was one of the Romanians to arrive in the UK on the first day of unrestricted access for Romanian workers. After introducing him as a Romanian who came in Britain to work, the British tabloid press moved on to frame the discussion in terms of health benefits, migration, employment, his personal life, and his plans to move his girlfriend over to London (“Romanian migrant No1 exposed as brute. Vaz shake newcomer is crook”, The Sun, 1 January 2014, “Washing car in Biggleswade, the Romanian welcomed to UK on New Year’s Day by Keith Vaz...meanwhile, his fiancée is left chopping wood in Transylvania”, Daily Mail, 3 January 2014, “Romanian migrant treated to Costa Coffee by Keith Vaz is accused of being a drug user who beat up his girlfriend and threatened to drown her”, Daily Mail, 8 January 2014, “Now Romanian migrant treated to Costa Coffee by Keith Vaz lands a 60 pounds-a-day building job in London after quitting car wash following just one shift”, Daily Mail, 18 January 2014). Furthermore, the press pictured him with politicians such as the Labour MP Keith Vaz, who greeted him at the Luton airport on his day of

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arrival in the UK. Victor Spirescu was a 30-year-old man living in a small village in Transylvania flying to the UK to work, being a symbol of the Romanian migrant in the face of the latest debates over immigration. Following months of stories in the media about “the wave” of Romanians and Bulgarians that would invade Great Britain starting on the 1st of January 2014, Victor Spirescu was perceived as a potential threat to the UK by the tabloid press (Daily Mail, Daily Express, and The Sun): he had quit his job after the first day, he was a drug user, and beat up his former girlfriend.

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

The way in which Victor Spirescu was portrayed in the British media is related to the frames employed by different newspapers and televisions when discussing about Romanian migrants in the UK. The tabloid press insisted on the human interest aspect, while the quality press revealed political and economic issues, having to do with the reason for which Keith Vaz waited for him at Luton airport, how much does he earn per month, what are his future prospects. Considering these aspects, this article looks at how the media – particularly the British press and television – frame the issue of Romanian immigrants in Great Britain, in the context of freedom of movement for workers in the EU. Furthermore, the paper aims to identify and discuss the stereotypes about Romanians used by the British media.

The British television often uses the same frames that can be found in the British press, with respect to Romanian migrants in the UK. For example, the abuse of the social benefit system is reinforced as an argument in a lot of articles from the tabloids and in television documentaries. However, television could frame the same issue completely different from the press. Therefore, a comparison between the frames applied by the press and television is necessary, in order to reveal the similarities and differences in the coverage of Romanian migrants in Great Britain. This study reveals how media frames are related to two different formats, considering the public issue of immigration.

This article begins with an overview of the *public sphere* concept, in the context of convergence between *old media* and *new media*. The Internet introduces new practices of communicating, in relation to the fragmentation and diversification of media channels and audiences. In this regard, the public sphere is a secondary dimension analyzed in this article, because the British journalists shape the media discourse through the frames they use when discussing about Romanian migrants. The framing process is a subject of constant debates in the academic literature, therefore theories and models of frames are explained and analyzed in a special section.

Changes in the media discourse and in the public sphere

According to Thompson (2000), the media have become one of the main institutions of the public sphere in the industrial society. The impact of modern societies on the conceptualization of the public sphere is also discussed by Habermas (2006), while revisiting the con-

cept of the public sphere. The German philosopher calls for the use of mass media in order to challenge the private interests of corporate media. He supports the idea of a "self-regulating media system", arguing that

„mediated political communication in the public sphere can facilitate deliberative legitimization processes in complex societies only if a self-regulating media system gains independence from its social environments, and if anonymous audiences grant feedback between an informed elite discourse and a responsive civil society". (Habermas, 2006, pp. 411- 412).

Consequently, the media should be independent from political interests. Likewise, Habermas imagines the public sphere as an intermediary system of communication between formally organized and informal face-to-face deliberations in the arenas both at the top and the bottom of the political system.

The public sphere that was once anchored around the national institutions has now shifted to a public sphere constituted around networks of communication. As the communication landscape gets denser, complex and participatory, the networking population acquires greater access to information, which means more opportunities and facilities to engage in the public sphere. Due to the development of mass media, the political function of the press has been replaced by a commercial function. The development of the capitalist economy led to the sacrifice of political content space to a more commercially viable content. With the fragmentation of mass media channels and audiences, various media have become interactively connected. In this way, information flows more easily across technological, social, and geographical boundaries. Therefore, this new public sphere is characterised by diversification, fragmentation and commercial norms.

Levinson (2009) discusses the role of new technologies in democratizing closed societies. He introduces the distinction between the information consumer and the producer. In the age of traditional media (print, radio, television), there was a literate population able to understand written messages. In the age of the Internet, blogging and social-media, each citizen is an information producer and speaks on behalf of himself/herself. Most importantly, new technologies allow everyone to be free from the gatekeepers present in traditional media. Therefore, anyone can be a producer of content and part of the conversation.

A divide between those who believe in the Internet's power to revolutionize the public sphere (Benkler, 2006; Castells, 2008; Downey & Fenton, 2003) and those who believe the Internet will be normalized into existing practices (Bohman, 2004) has thus emerged. For example, Downey and Fenton (2003) claim that the Internet use contributes simultaneously to the rise of new forms of social solidarity and fragmentation. They discuss about the notion of a *counter-public* in contrast with the notion of community, implying that it offers forms of solidarity and reciprocity.

Conversely, Castells (2008) argues that the connections between mass media and the "mass self-communication" of Web 2.0 social networks form the new global public sphere. The mass self-communication are defined as networks of communication that relate many-to-many in the process of sending and receiving the messages, in a form that bypasses mass media and often escapes government control (Castells, 2008, p. 90). The process of globalization has shifted the debate from national to global and the Internet provides both an organizing tool and a means for debate, dialogue and collective decision-making. As a consequence, the current global civil society has the technological means to exist independently from political institutions and from mass media.

Media and audiences

The relationship between mass-media and the public sphere raises questions about how the media content is received (Dalhgren, 2006; Livingstone, 2005) and how media frame different political, social, economic issues (Schlachter, 2009).

To understand today's mediated public sphere, Dahlgren (1995) considers that there are four dimensions one should take into consideration: media institutions, media representation, general social structure, and face-to-face interaction. Furthermore, "the public sphere does not begin and end when media content reaches an audience; this is but one step in larger communication and cultural chains that include how the media output is received, made sense of and utilized by citizens" (Dahlgren, 2006, p. 274). Nevertheless, the press often plays a watchdog role, watching over the state institutions and shaping the public opinion. Schlachter (2009) reinforces this argument and suggests that „the media has often stood as a watchdog for the public interest, being called the ‘fourth estate’, which dates back to the 19th century and refers to the media’s ability to frame issues in society: traditionally, as an institution, it has significant impact and influence on what citizens deem to be important” (Schlachter, 2009, p. 91).

Livingstone (2005) remarks that media select, prioritize and shape information in accordance with the institutions, technologies and discursive conventions of the media industry. Therefore, the media contribute to the renegotiation of several versions of the ‘public’ and ‘private’ boundaries, redefining the public sphere. Moreover, "the forms of mediation are themselves changing, with the public being mediated by ever more diversified, pervasive and subtle forms or mass and, recently, interactive communication" (Livingstone, 2005, p. 9). She also discusses about the way in which media mobilizes citizens to be part of the public debate, proposing the concept of *active viewer*. In her opinion, the understandings, values and identities of the public are mediated technologically, materially, and discursively (Livingstone, 2005, p. 10). Media address audiences as citizens, employing *strategies of involvement* to transform them into a public. Thus, the distinction between audiences and publics raises the question of how are publics mediated or whether audiences participate as a public. The public is perceived as active, oriented to collective and consensual action, while the audience is seen as passive and individualized. From a media perspective, the audience is „a collectivity which is formed either in response to media (channels and content) or out of independently existing social forces” (McQuail, 1987, p. 215). Put simply, the audience is formed by the readers, listeners, and viewers for different media.

The relationship between media and audiences is often conceptualized as media effects. Thus, the *agenda setting* (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) and *spiral of silence* (Noelle-Neumann, 1974) theories imply a relatively passive viewer, because the effect of the media is conceptualized as telling the audience what to think about. However, the *uses and gratification* approach (McCombs & Weaver, 1985) implies a more active viewer, because it is focused on what people do with media. Therefore, this approach has led to the development of the notion of the ‘active viewer’ (Livingstone, [1990]/ 1998) of television programmes. According to Livingstone, „when interpreting a program, viewers use not only the information in the programme, but also their social experiences with the phenomena portrayed (e.g. institutions, relationships, myths, explanations” (1998, p. 21). Consequently, the *active viewer* interprets media based on his knowledge and experience.

The debate on the similarities and differences between the ‘public’ and the ‘audience’ has led to proposing a mediating concept, positioned between them. Hence, ‘civic culture’ is

understood as mediating between the public and the private spheres, pointing to "those features of the socio-cultural world – dispositions, practices, processes – that constitute preconditions for people's actual participation in the public sphere, in civil and political society" (Dahlgren, 2003, p. 154).

The framing process

Framing is the process of selecting "some aspects of a perceived reality and made them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). From a sociological perspective, frames represent cognitive structures and form an important element of public discourse. In Entman's opinion, (1993) framing is a research paradigm which could be applied to the study of public opinion and voting behavior in the political sciences.

The concept of "frames" was introduced by Goffman (1974), who related it with the organization and interpretation of life experiences, in order to make sense of them. Frames, also defined as the "schemata of interpretation" enable individuals "to locate, perceive, identify and label" (Goffman, 1974, p. 21) occurrences of information. Considering Goffman's contribution to the framing theory, the literature defines frames as patterns of interpretation rooted in culture and articulated by the individual (Entman, 1993; Gamson et al., 1992; Pan & Kosicki, 2003; Reese, 2007; Van Gorp, 2007).

Framing has been frequently discussed with concepts such as agenda setting or priming. As a matter of fact, McCombs, Shaw and Weaver (1997) considered that not only are agenda setting and framing effects related, but framing is, actually, an extension of agenda setting. Continuing this idea, Gamson and Modigliani (1987) defined media frames as "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events" (p. 143). Furthermore, Pan and Kosicki (1993) believe that frames and framing analysis go beyond the agenda setting literature and "examine the diversity and fluidity in how issues are conceptualized and consequently allow for more fruitful analysis of the conceptual evolution of policy issues" (p. 70).

Furthermore, the research on framing focuses on two types of frames: issue-specific frames and general frames. The first concept refers to certain frames that are persistent only to specific topics or events, while the second one can be identified in relation with different topics, some even over time and in different cultural contexts (de Vreese, 2002). Twombsbury and Scheufele (2009) identify processes of frame building and frame setting. The frame building involves looking at how frames get established in the public discourse and then are completed for being adopted by elites and journalists. Moreover, frame setting determines and evaluates the framing effects on the audience.

In this article, frame analysis used is based on Entman's (1993) function frames. In his perspective, a frame in the news can be examined and identified by the "presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Furthermore, frames have at least four locations in the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver and the culture. In Entman's opinion, frames diagnose, evaluate, and prescribe issues discussed in the media. He identifies four functions of frames:

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

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

Inductive and deductive approaches on frames analysis

A frame is an abstract variable that is hard to identify and hard to code in content analysis. Therefore, many scholars have raised questions about the reliability and validity of media frames in content analysis (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Fagley & Miller, 1997; Scheufele, 1999; Tankard, 2001; Van Gorp, 2005).

There are many different approaches to derive a set of frames given a particular issue, and most of them are inductive. Content analysis of media frames ranges from completely qualitative interpretive or hermeneutic-qualitative approaches to automated device-oriented methods, such as semantic network analyses (Scheufele & Scheufele, 2010).

Linguistic approaches involve the identification of a frame derived from dimensions such as syntax, script, theme, and rhetoric (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). An advantage of these methods is that close reading of texts can reveal important frame-elements that can be completely missed by other quantitative approaches, because they do not occur frequently. Furthermore, the analysis is based on a small sample of text, heavily interpreted and deeply investigated. Therefore, intensive readings of text cannot be applied to large samples because they demand some form of quantification.

Conversely, there are some deductive approaches that theoretically derive frames from the literature and code them in standard content analysis (de Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). For example, Semetko and Valkenburg use a deductive method, predefining certain frames as content analytic variables to verify the extent to which these frames occur in the news. They have investigated the presence of five news frames in press and television: conflict, human interest, economic consequences, morality, and attribution of responsibility. The conflict frame is defined as the “conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions as a means of capturing the audience interest” (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 95). The human interest frame is based on the use of emotional angle to dramatize the news. Thirdly, the economic consequences frame reports an issue in terms of economic benefits or threats on individuals or institutions. As for the morality frame, it puts an emphasis on the religious tenets or moral prescriptions. Finally, the responsibility frame attributes responsibility to the issue or problem presented to the government or an individual or group.

Semetko and Valkenburg’s (2000) model is used in many research studies on press and television. They managed to compare the use of frames in television news and the press and to determine whether there are important differences between and within media. Thus, a crucial limitation of using a deductive approach is the fact that frames are known beforehand. In this way, the researcher could miss newly emerging frames by concentrating on already established ones.

Matthes and Kohring (2008) tested an inductive method for frame analysis, starting with a specific operationalization of the four elements identified in Entman’s definition (1993): prob-

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

Following Matthes and Kohring’s (2008) approach, this paper uses inductive reasoning to content analyze frames and function frames, following Entman’s definition. Thus, cluster analysis is not used in order to determine occurrences. After identifying the frames from a close reading of sample of texts, each frame is coded using Entman’s framing functions. The dependent variables employed in the content analysis are: define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies.

Methodology

This paper seeks to analyze the cover of Romanian work migrants by the British written press and television, in the context of the lifting of restrictions on the labor market in the UK. The research questions that guide this study are the following:

RQ1: How does the British press frame the issue of Romanian migrants in Great Britain?

RQ2: How does the British television frame the issue of Romanian migrants in Great Britain?

RQ3: What stereotypes about Romanian people are employed in the British press and television?

In order to answer these questions, a mixed method approach, combining frames analysis (Entman, 1993) with critical discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1993), and dispositif analysis (Charaudeau, 2005) is used. Furthermore, in order to establish the main themes and patterns present in the British press, a frame analysis of three of the most read British newspapers (The Guardian, The Independent, Daily Mail) will be carried out. A sample of 20% of the news items was taken into consideration when identifying frames, using Entman’s (1993) four function frames: define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies. Content analysis was used to measure the variables (frames and function frames) and to determine their frequencies. The unit of analysis was the article. By performing a framing analysis, this article answers to the first two research questions, revealing how the British media frame the issue of Romanian migrants in Great Britain.

In addition to frame analysis, this study uses CDA as theorized by van Dijk (1993), who considers that the core of CDA is “a detailed description, explanation and critique of the ways dominant discourses (indirectly) influence socially shared knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, namely through their role in the manufacture of concrete models” (p. 258). Drawing on this approach of discourse, this article shows how media discourse generates a polarization

between “Us” (Britons) and “Them” (Romanian migrants). The CDA used here is based on a mixed design, combining elements from Wodak et. al (1999) and Van Dijk (1993), in order to determine what stereotypes about Romanian people are used by the British press. Therefore, the elements of the analysis are: the presence of *constructive strategies* (the linguistic procedures which constitute a national ‘we-group’ – in this case, Britons – and marginalizes the ‘other-group’ - Romanian migrants); the presence of *perpetuation and justification strategies* (Romanian immigrants are viewed as a threat to the national security); *the dominance of the power elites* (British press); and forms of *positive self-presentations* (British press) and *negative other-presentation* (Romanian migrants). By employing CDA, the third research question is answered, regarding the stereotypes of Romanians presented in the British press and also how these stereotypes impact the discursive construction of Romania’s nation brand.

The method of *dispositif* analysis (Charaudeau, 2005) will also be applied to see what stereotypes of Romanian people are employed in the British television. In doing so, three film documentaries from BBC (*Panorama – The Romanians are Coming?* – BBC1, *The Truth About Immigration* – BBC2 and *The Great Big Romanian Invasion* – BBC News) will be investigated, considering the themes, formats, the sequences, the addressing modalities and the participants’ roles. Stereotypes are portrayed in different ways in press and television, and this is also because of their media formats. Film documentaries focus on close-up with different Romanian migrants, while the press writes about them and eventually reinforces the arguments by selecting certain pictures. In order to analyze the stereotypes portrayed in television, CDA was not sufficient, because I wanted to emphasize the importance of the sequences and the camera perspective in filming Romanians. Each film documentary has a specific discourse which reflects the strategic vision of the BBC channel about the topic of Romanian immigration. Therefore, they are relevant because they define practices, values and representations of the British society. The *dispositif* is understood as a “concept that structures the discursive situations, organizing the situations by considering the participants’ position in the interaction process, the nature of their identity and the relations between them depending on certain finality (...). Dispositif also depends on the material conditions that structure the discursive interactions” (Charaudeau, 2005, p. 41, my translation).

Data and coding

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

Three film documentaries about Romanian immigration were included in the corpus. They were broadcasted on the BBC channel during the interval mentioned above: *Panorama – The*

Romanians are Coming? – BBC1, *The Truth About Immigration* – BBC2 and *The Great Big Romanian invasion* – BBC World News.

A total of 271 news items were content analyzed (The Guardian, N= 76; The Independent, N=65; and Daily Mail, N=130), along with 3 BBC documentaries. For the written press, the unit of analysis was the article, whereas for the documentaries, the unit of analysis was each change of speaker within story.

Based on inductive reasoning, following Matthes and Kohring's (2008) approach on identifying news frames, the frames and function frames in a sample of 20% of the corpus were identified. The frames coding was applied to the news items, evaluating with 1 the presence of a certain frame, and with 0 the absence of a frame. The coding was done by two coders and the following variables resulted:

Variables	Description
DP – Economics	Migration is related to economic issues/migration costs
DP – Education	Migrant students from Romania that study in UK
DP – Political System	Political actors' perspectives on the migration issue
DP – Labor market	Romanians and Bulgarians that work in the UK
DP – Migrant population	Number of Romanians and Bulgarians that live in the UK/that will come to the UK/Estimates
DC – Economic development	Migrants from poor countries (like Romania) are tempted to go de developed countries like UK
DC – EU migration policy	Freedom of movement for workers in the EU
DC – Benefit System	EU migrants claiming social benefits – a risk for abuse
MJ – Economic benefit	EU migrants (Romanians) are good for the UK economy
MJ – Economic threat	EU migrants (Romanians) are bad for the UK economy
MJ – Freedom of movement	Free movement of workers - a threat to the UK - mass migration
MJ – Labor	British workers' job are at risk because of EU migrants
MJ – Security threat	Romanians threat the security of UK citizens (crimes, pickpocketing, and begging)
SR – Labor market	Restrictions for Romanians to access the UK's labour market
SR – EU negotiations	Negotiations with the EU on free migration rules
SR – Population growth	Stabilizing population growth by reducing net migration
SR – Benefit System	Reduce the period over which EU migrants can claim benefits
SR – National Security	Removing Romanians from UK for begging and rough sleeping

Results

The main goal of the content analysis is to identify patterns used in the coverage of Romanian migration by the British media. The context in which Romanian migrants were mentioned was linked to the 1st of January 2014, when the restrictions for Romanians and Bulgarians to work in the EU and, therefore the UK as well, were lifted.

The British press is divided into three sectors: ‘quality’ press, ‘middle market’ press and ‘red top’ tabloids (McNair, 2009, p. 87). *The Guardian* and *The Independent* are classified into ‘quality’ press, and the first one has a Berliner format, while the second one has a tabloid format. On the other hand, *Daily Mail* is a ‘red top’ tabloid, with a large circulation in UK (1,780, 565 per month). In the category of ‘quality press’, *The Guardian* has an average circulation of 207,958 per month, while *The Independent* has a circulation of 66,567 per month (Audit Bureau of Circulations, UK, 2014)¹.

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

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

Frames employed by the British press

The results show that there are 7 media frames present in the press. First of all, the economic frame focuses on the migration costs and economic consequences of migration. The educational frame is based on the impact of Romanian students that study in the UK. Furthermore, the political frame is linked with the presence of political actors in the debate over Romanian migrants. The social benefits frame refers to Romanian migrants abusing the social benefits system in Great Britain. The employment frame entails stories of Romanians who work in the UK. The national security frame emphasizes the fact that Romanians are a threat to the security of the UK citizens, because of crimes, begging, and pick pocketing. Finally, the EU policy frame is based on the mentioning of freedom of movement in relation to migration.

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

The political frame is used by both quality and tabloid newspapers, mentioning political actors in order to shape the arguments about Romanian migration. The voices of the politicians are used by the journalists as chiefly expert or elite, recognized sources. In doing so, it construct groups – such as migrants – from a distance, without exploring their beliefs, identities and lives in host societies (Beciu, 2011, p. 166). In fact, the written press may employ expert or elite knowledge to gain a false legitimacy through the use of fallacies. The most quoted official sources in the quality press were the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, the

UK Immigration Minister, Mark Harper, The Labor Government, the Home Secretary, Theresa May, The Bulgarian President, Rosen Plevneliev, the Romanian Prime Minister, Victor Ponta, the Romanian Ambassador to the UK, Ion Jinga, UKIP's leader Nigel Farage, and Migration Watch, the pressure group arguing for tighter immigration controls. With regards to the tabloid press, the most quoted official sources were the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, the UK Immigration Minister, Mark Harper, the Home Secretary, Theresa May, Tony Blair, the Labor Government, Tory MPs, the Romanian Prime Minister, Victor Ponta, the Romanian Ambassador to the UK, Ion Jinga, UKIP's leader Nigel Farage, the pressure group arguing for tighter immigration controls, Migration Watch, and Sir Andrew Green, of the Migration Watch. An interesting thing here is that *Daily Mail* employs the political frame more often (Figure 1). Quoting political actors may also function as an argument to sustain a certain position about migration.

Figure 1. Frames in the British press.

A big difference of coverage is to be seen when framing social benefits of Romanian migrants in the UK. The social benefits frame is much more present in the tabloid press, in stories about Romanian people that abuse the benefit system when coming to Britain. As for the employment frame, is used especially in the tabloids, presenting Romanians that work in the UK and threaten the jobs of British people. A significant difference in frame frequencies is found in the news talking about national security issues. Therefore, the tabloid press reveals more frequently the crimes made by Romanian people, presenting them as a threat to the security of the citizens (The Romanian Roma around Marble Arch, a camp of Romanians living near Hendon Football Club, the rate of criminality in London, begging, and pick pocketing). Consequently, the tabloids are more interested in the human interest issues, while the quality press presents news from an expert position.

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

Frames and function frames employed by the British television

Considering the UK television landscape, there are four main public service free-to-air broadcasters: (1) the BBC, (2) Independent Television [ITV], (3) Channel 4 and (4) Channel 5. More than 90 % of UK households have multi-channel television, but the public service broadcasters have been leading the charge into multi-channel services (Bromley, 2010). The BBC attracts about a third of the total TV audience, while ITV, the main commercial public service broadcaster, has a 25 percent share.²

The documentary *BBC Panorama – The Romanians are Coming?* is part of a series of investigative reports on a wide variety of subjects. The reporter Paul Kenyon joins the British police in looking for Romanian people who live on the London streets. He also travels to a Romanian village to see why men have left their families to work on the black markets of London. *BBC Panorama – The Romanians are Coming?* raises the question of whether many Romanians and Bulgarians will really come to Britain and what is at the root of the Britons' fear.

In *The Truth about Immigration*, the political editor Nick Robinson looks at the decisions which led to one of the biggest surge of immigration in modern history and asks whether the politicians can control immigration as much as they claim. The Romanians are portrayed as migrant fruit pickers, who earn six times more compared to what they would earn in their native country for the same job.

The documentary *The Great Big Romanian Invasion* looks behind the panic-inducing headlines about the prospect of millions of Romanians waiting to invade Great Britain on the 1st of January 2014, when the EU border controls were relaxed. The journalist Tim Samuels, himself a descendent of Romanian immigrants, explores the experiences of Romanians who went to Britain to work. The documentary also presents the story of Victor Spirescu, one of the first Romanians to arrive in the UK on the first day of unrestricted access.

Figure 2 shows the evolution of news frames in the three BBC documentaries. The most frequent frame in the *BBC Panorama – Romanians are Coming* documentary is the national security frame, because there are a lot of images with Romanian people rough sleeping on the streets and the British police's perspective reveals that Romanians are a threat to the UK citizens. According to the Metropolitan police, a lot of Romanian people are responsible for pick pocketing or begging. In *The Truth about Immigration* documentary, the most frequent frame was the political one. A lot of political actors were asked to give their opinion about immigration, from the Prime Minister David Cameron, to representatives of the Conservative, Labor or UKIP parties. Furthermore, the third documentary, entitled *The Great Big Romanian Invasion*, focuses on the political, national security, and EU policy frames. The political perspectives about Romanian immigration are presented along with the effects of freedom of movement on the issue of migration. The documentary shows how Romanians had sleep on the streets because they did not find a place to work in Britain.

Figure 2. The evolution of news frames in 3 BBC documentaries.

When comparing the frequencies of frames found in the British written press and television (Figure 3), one can see that the British written press employs the seven frames more often. The use of economic, political, and employment frames in the British newspapers contrast with the use of economic, political, and national security frame in the case of British television. This shows a trend of emphasizing human interest issues (poverty, rough sleeping, crimes, and begging) on television.

Figure 3. Frames frequencies in the British press and television.

Stereotypes of Romanians in the British media

Stereotypes are often linked with the representations of certain groups in some specific contexts. National stereotypes can shape the way a nation is seen on the global stage. Lippman (1922) has used the notion of “stereotype” in relation to the fact that people act based on mental representations, which are built on “abusive generalizations”. Furthermore, national stereotypes are the first step in developing the nation brand (Widler, 2007; Jansen, 2008). Considering these facts, every culture can be defined through the opposition “Us” – “Them”, so the collective identity of a nation is based on comparison with other states or on assimilation and differentiation processes. For example, the nation branding campaigns appeal to stereotypes in order to differentiate themselves on the competitive market. Stereotype content is defined as to maximize perceived intra-group similarity and inter-group difference.

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

Stereotypical representations of Romanian migrants in the British quality press

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The first quote mentions a Romanian who considers that nationality is not very important: “As far as I was always concerned I am not really Romanian or European or really any nationality because to me that just doesn’t matter”. One can notice the presence of *perpetuation and justification strategies*, because the argument implied is that being part of a certain nationality (in this case Romanian) may be harmful. Even if the source uses the personal pronoun “I”, it does not imply a national identity discourse. Paradoxically, the person identifies itself more with British people than with Romanian people: *I would have very much liked to*

be born in a country where everyone seems to suffer of post-colonial pride, in a nice middle-class family in London or anywhere in Britain, in an old Victorian house with a nice garden. The second example, on the other hand, is built on *constructive strategies*, using the personal pronoun “we” as a linguistic procedure to constitute the Romanians national group (*We got used to being told that we aren't that great*). One can identify forms of *positive other-presentation* of Great Britain, because the source argues Romanians should align to “Western” standards, seeing it as a positive model to be considered for the country development.

Stereotypical representations of Romanian migrants in the British tabloid press

In the tabloid press, Romanians and Bulgarians are also referred as “EU migrants” or “EU nationals”, and it is mentioned that large numbers of migrants from Romania and Bulgaria would come to UK. The economic argument is that wages are up to five times higher than in their native countries.

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

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

The British journalists also identify themselves with the British nationals, using the plural form of the first person pronoun “our”:

Needless to say, I have nothing whatsoever against Romania and Bulgaria, and remember with fondness a brief visit I paid to both countries as a 13-year-old. But after a decade of uncontrolled immigration under Labour, and with the economy wheezing and spluttering, the last thing we want is another surge of migrants.

And, believe it or not, there is absolutely nothing we can do about it. Under EU law there is a maximum transition period of seven years after the accession of a new member state, which will lapse at the end of this year in the case of Romania and Bulgaria. We would like to protect our own borders but are unable to do so. (Stephen Glover, 16 January 2013, Daily Mail)

If you're sitting in a crumbling, concrete, Soviet-era slum in Sofia, what's not to like about Britain? Put yourself in their knock-off Nike trainers. Would you rather beg in the streets of Bucharest or sell the Big Issue in Bristol, while living rent-free in a modern council house and receiving an exciting range of welfare payments for your extended family? (Richard Littlejohn, 28 January 2013, Daily Mail)

In the first case, the *constructive strategies* of the discourse are present because of the “we-group”, which appeals to the national solidarity and union of British citizens: *the last thing we want is another surge of migrants; we would like to protect our own borders but are unable to do so*. Here, the journalist has also a civic role, he involves the citizens to act and protect their country. The *strategies of positive self-presentation* (British people) and *negative other-presentation* (Romanian and Bulgaria migrants) generate a polarization between the two entities. The argument implied is that Romanians and Bulgarians are a threat to the UK borders, which involves the presence of *perpetuation and justification strategies*.

Furthermore, the second quote contains a role changing: the British citizen is invited to put himself in the role of a Romanian or Bulgarian. This way, the journalist intensifies the polarization between “Us” (the British people who live well) and “Them” (poor Romanian and Bulgaria migrants): *Would you rather beg in the streets of Bucharest or sell the Big Issue in Bristol, while living rent-free in a modern council house and receiving an exciting range of welfare payments for your extended family?* Of course, the *positive self-presentation* is obvious, when stating that migrants would live rent-free in a modern house and receive welfare payments for the family. In fact, Britain is portrayed as a salvation for the “poor” Romanians and Bulgarians searching for a better life.

Stereotypes of Romanians in the BBC documentaries

In order to see what stereotypes about Romanian people are presented in the British television, the method of *dispositif analysis* has been used. Stereotypes are portrayed in different ways in the press and television. For example, film documentaries insist on close-up with different Romanian migrants, while the press writes about them and eventually reinforce the arguments by selecting certain pictures. The sequences and the camera perspective are also elements that contribute to the framing of Romanian migrants in the UK. Each film documentary has a specific discourse which reflects the strategic vision of the BBC channel on the topic of Romanian immigration. The frame analysis presented above is completed by a *dispositif analysis*, revealing the way in which the camera films the migrants and the way in which participants are introduced in the scene. Therefore, the elements of analysis are the themes, the participants' roles, the visual formats, and the journalists' positioning.

In the *BBC Panorama – Romanians Are Coming?*, the main theme discussed is whether the Romanian migrants are a threat to the national security of UK citizens, while in *The Truth about Immigration* the focus is on political issues. In the third documentary, a special attention is given to the political, national security and EU policy themes.

As for the participants' roles, images with Roma families camping at Marble Arch, homeless Romanians who sleep on the street, Romanians that pick fruits to improve their life qual-

ity, or the camp of Romanians from the Hendon Football Club, evicted by the police show a lower class of Romanian people. The journalists also present the perspective of middle class Romanians about working in the UK, but the main focus is on the lower class.

The visual format of the three BBC documentaries insists on close-up frames, which display the details and show the emotions. The documentary *BBC Panorama – Romanians are Coming?* presents images with homeless Romanians rough sleeping while the police raided the camp. Furthermore, images from a Transylvanian Roma village are displayed, following a close-up with a pauper home of a Romanian who used to live in a Hendon stadium camp. Alexandru Subtirel is presented as a Romanian from Apata that is prepared to join a green camp in London, so that he can provide enough money for his family. Another story revealed in the documentary is the story of Alex Parvu, who was from a small Roma village, Augustin, and came to London to find work. The close-up on his face intensifies the drama, revealing his emotions when the reporter shows him images of his family. As Livingstone (1998, p. 5) argues, “recency signifies importance, a close-up shot signifies intimacy, fast-cutting signifies high drama”.

Tuchman (1978, pp. 116-121) has identified six ways in which journalists frame subjects on film. The camera may be held at intimate, close personal, far personal, close social, far social or public distance. Each framing convention carries connotations about the social role of the subject or significance of the event.

Two framing devices are often used in television news. At “intimate distance”, the subject’s face fills the screen, so that the viewer is looking into the subject’s eyes. At “close personal distance”, the subject’s neck and shoulders are visible. Tuchman (1978, p. 119) suggests that the use of these techniques may indicate a breach in journalistic neutrality.

In the BBC documentaries, the camera is held at intimate and close personal level, when the subject is the Romanian migrants in Great Britain, and at far personal distance level when the reporter is filmed addressing questions. For example, when the journalist asks a Romanian fruit picker how much better is the money here compared to the money back home, the camera is held at close personal level to see the interviewer’s reactions. The journalist is filmed only from the back, with a close-up to the Romanian migrant. As news workers, television reporters must be shown as nonparticipants whose role is to comment and describe neutrally (Tuchman, 1978, p. 119).

The documentary *The Great Big Romanian Invasion* introduces the story of Victor Spirescu, one of the first Romanian migrants to come to the UK on the 1st of January 2014. Victor is filmed usually from a close perspective, especially when he talks about his job and his future plans in Great Britain. After becoming a media sensation, Victor is considered the symbol of Romanian migrants that will come to Britain after the restrictions are lifted: “I was the only one who came on 1st of January to invade the...the Big Invader. I am only one. It’s a funny thing, you know”. In the tabloid press, Victor Spirescu was presented as a potential threat to the citizens of the UK: he had quit his job after the first day, he was a drug user, and beat up his former girlfriend. Conversely, the BBC documentary presented him as a Romanian who came to Britain to work, switched jobs because of the media attention and brought his girlfriend to London.

By framing the Romanian migrants mostly in connection to images showing Roma people who camp in Marble Arch, rough sleep, or struggle to find work and send money back to their families, the British journalists employ stereotypes about the Romanian people. The images selected present pauper places where Romanians live, mentioning the economic and so-

cial advantages from the UK. Thus, the national security of the British citizens is in danger, because of the crimes committed by Romanian migrants (thievery).

As far as the journalists' positioning is concerned, they are citizen-oriented when using the personal pronoun "our". For example, the reporter Paul Kenyon affirms that: "Still, of all arrest were made in London last year, Romanians are counted for 49%, and for pick pocketing it was 34% (Metropolitan Police, 2012). Figures like that have helped shape our opinions". Furthermore, the journalist Tim Samuels ends the documentary entitled *The Great Big Romanian Invasion* by stating that "it seems than the language and non-hysteria about the Romanian invasion, well, ultimately, it might say more about us than them". The using of "us" also suggests a citizen-oriented position, because the reporter identifies himself with the British community.

Thus, the documentary *The Truth About Immigration* often includes a shot of the reporter standing in front of the Big Ben, which is an architectural symbol of mainstream political institutions and power. This frame is used to reinforce the journalist's role as a watchdog in the debate about immigration.

Conclusion

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

To see how the British media frames the issue of Romanian migration, this article presents a comparative analysis of frames used by the British written press and television, respectively. The results show that the use of economic, political, and employment frames in the British newspapers contrast with the use of economic, political, and national security frame in the case of British television. The tabloids (*Daily Mail*) and the documentaries (BBC) are more interested in emphasizing human interest issues, such as poverty, rough sleeping, crimes, and begging, while the quality press (*The Guardian*, *The Independent*) focuses more on the economic consequences of migration, when discussing about threats and benefits of Romanian migrants coming to work in the UK.

A limit of this research is to be found in the content analysis, where only one coder analyzed a sample of 20% of the British newspapers, in order to identify the frames. This way, reliability and validity were not determined, but they are subject for future research.

The critical discourse analysis and dispositive analysis performed revealed the stereotypical representations of Romanians in the British media. In conclusion, the stereotypes about Romanian people spread in British newspapers such as *The Guardian*, *The Independent* or *Daily Mail* („beggars”, „murderers”, „criminals”, „fraudsters”, „corrupt”) or in the BBC documentaries are linked to the construction of the Romania's nation brand. As a matter of fact, the British journalist legitimates his/ her position by framing the Romanian migrants in terms of economy, politics, social benefits, employment, national security and EU policy.

The frames used by the British journalist in the coverage of Romanian immigration may redefine the public sphere, by introducing private issues in public contexts. When portraying Victor Spirescu, one of the first Romanian migrants who came to Britain at the beginning of

2014, the tabloids presented his personal life as a threat to the British citizens, mentioning that he was a drug user and he beat his former girlfriend. In this way, the private details of his life interfere with the public issue of Romanian migrants, creating a hysteria around the latter. The question that emerges here is if and how journalists reconfigure the public sphere when framing a public interest subject. This may be an interesting starting point for future studies.

Notes

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

² http://ejc.net/media_landscapes/united-kingdom, accessed on 29 August 2014.

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