

Public perception of A8 migrants: the discourse of the media and its impacts

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1. Introduction

On 01 May 2004, eight countries from the former 'Eastern Bloc' joined the European Union (EU) in what was the single largest enlargement of the political and economic union in its history. These countries – Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - have been grouped together into the 'Accession Eight' or 'A8'. Among the most debated issues relating to the enlargement was the issue of labour mobility. Free movement of people around the EU is among the most important rights provided by the Community to its population and one seen as hugely important by many in the A8 countries. However, as with previous EU accessions, there have been some extra conditions placed on the new Member States, in particular regarding access to job markets in most of the old Member States. The major concerns for receiving countries included a potentially negative impact on wages and employment of the native population and the increased use of social security systems. Twelve out of the fifteen old Member States, excluding Sweden, Ireland and the United Kingdom, therefore, opted for short-term extension of restrictions limiting access of A8 workers to their respective job markets. Although the free movement of persons is one of the fundamental rights guaranteed to EU citizens, and includes the right to work and live in another Member State, it was not only during the 2004 (and later the 2007) accession when old Member States used the transition period restrictions. In both the 1981 Greek accession and the 1986 Spanish/Portuguese accession, a seven-year transition period was imposed before workers from the new member countries could work throughout the EU. With the UK being one of the few old Member States welcoming A8 nationals into its job market, large numbers of them unsurprisingly chose to migrate there. "This migration is likely to prove to be one of the most concentrated voluntary migrations in the world today. A large number of people have moved on their own volition over a relatively short period." (Pollard et al 2008, p.54) It has been estimated that over half a million A8 nationals have come to the UK since the 2004 accession which undoubtedly makes it one of the "most important social phenomena in recent years." (Pollard et al. 2008, p.54)

The enlargement and the consequent migration have received extensive mass media coverage throughout the world. Media in the old Member States, and especially in the UK, have been focusing on the numbers of people arriving from the A8 countries and the potential impact this movement might have on the host society. Coverage has been ranging from first, welcoming the migrants as a needed workforce balancing the indigenous ageing population and enriching the cultural heritage of the host community to second, fearing the 'floods' of cheap labour taking jobs away from the indigenous population and infesting the host community with criminality. The substantial scale and variety of the media coverage that these issues have received raises an important question regarding the extent to which the media influence their audiences and consequently, how these audiences then perceive and interact with the newly arrived A8 migrant community in their native community. Scotland provides a unique opportunity as it is a relatively small region of the UK, with a lot of political power devolved to its own Government and Parliament and with a population that is ageing and decreasing. Scotland has also been drawing relatively large numbers of A8 migrants because of a large variety of employment opportunities in low-skilled positions throughout the country and through the Scottish Government's proactive approach in attracting migrant workers. This paper therefore, looks at how much influence do certain types of mass media in Scotland have on their audiences when it comes to the portrayal of the A8 migrant community in the country. By doing so, it aims to identify the connection between processes of public perception and social inclusion.

This dissertation was created as part of the newly established Collaborative Masters Dissertations project that allows organisations such as NGOs, honorary consuls, or local governments to put forward a piece of research which they would like to have done and Masters students to gain 'real life' work experience and to conduct research which has immediate relevance to the world beyond academia. The project has two phases; first, the students produce a dissertation on the topic chosen by their partner organisation and second, spend a month working directly with the organisation translating the research findings into material appropriate for the organisation's needs. This

particular study was submitted by the Glasgow-based the Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland (BEMIS). It is an ethnic minorities-led umbrella organisation which aims to empower the diverse ethnic minority third sector. They are committed to promoting inclusion, democratic active citizenship, recognition of diversity, human rights education, and wider representation. BEMIS chose to participate in the Collaborative Masters Dissertation project to see how media representation of the A8 migrants affect public opinions and attitudes and how new directions could be highlighted to influence the media portrayal of affected communities.

The dissertation is split into six main sections:

Section 2 reviews academic literature that has been produced around the topics of media effects and impact of the ethnic coverage in mass media.

Section 3 has two main parts; an analytical evaluation of social research methods and an explanatory section describing research designs employed for the purposes of this dissertation.

Section 4 is a library-based analysis of both theoretical literature on mass media, the role they play in contemporary society and their impact, and of research reports carried out in relation to the A8 migration into the UK. It establishes a middle-range theory about the effects media have through their portrayals of minorities that is guided the empirical research in Sections 5 and 6.

Section 5 describes the first stage of the carried empirical research – newspaper analysis. Content of five different newspapers available to readers in Scotland was analysed looking at patterns in their A8 migrant-related coverage and the stance they employ in their reporting on the issue.

Section 6 looks at the results obtained through a series of focus groups and individual interviews carried out among the indigenous Scottish population to examine their media usage link it to their perceptions of the A8 migrant community in Scotland.

Section 7 concludes the research findings, points out the empirical and conceptual contributions of this paper and offers a number of recommendations through an inductive commentary designed as a self-reflective exercise designed to look back at the collected data, its analysis and its relation to the theory that had been constructed and then scrutinised by empirical research.

2. Literature Review

It has been argued that the migration of A8 nationals into the UK “has been one of the most important social phenomena in recent years” which brought over half a million people to Britain since 2004 and among others, resulted in the Polish minority becoming the largest ethnic minority in the country. (Pollard et al. 2008, p.54) Despite the huge economic and societal change that this vast movement of people has brought, relatively little academic research has been carried out with regards to some of the issues linked to the phenomenon. Several studies have been carried out regarding some of the economic and social impacts of the migration on both the indigenous Scottish population and the newly arrived A8 migrants (Rolfe and Metcalf 2009 and Glasgow City Council 2007, among others). It has also been analysed how the media portray minorities and migrants in their coverage (Equal Opportunities Committee 2010) and how the A8 minority individuals find their new lives in the UK and in Scotland in particular (Glasgow City Council 2007). However, no research seems to have been done on linking the changes coming out of the seven-year period since the eight central and east European countries joined the European Union and the perceptions of these changes and of the people who came to the UK by the indigenous Scottish population. The viewpoint of the local population has not been academically addressed so far and it is an area which this paper aims to explore.

2.1 Concepts of Reality Definition

The question that this section is trying to answer is: *How can the literature on recent media research debates help us understand how the Scottish population perceives the A8 migrant community?* Interpreting and updating McCombs and Shaw’s (1969, p.185) argument about the media and politics, it could be argued that ‘few people have extensive direct experience of and knowledge about the A8 minority’ and therefore “the information flowing in interpersonal channels is primarily relayed from, and based upon, mass media news coverage.” For many people, perhaps even the majority, mass media provide the best – and only – easily accessible approximation of ever-changing

political, economic and social realities. Reality itself is a debatable concept when it comes to media reporting; academics argue that “a newspaper account, far from simply reflecting the reality of a news event, is actually working to construct a codified definition of what should count as the reality of the event.” (Allan 2010, p.98) The idea that mass media tend to create their own versions of reality is not a new one, Curran and Seaton (2003, p.344) argued that “the media do not merely ‘reflect’ social reality: they increasingly help to make it.” Even before them, Croteau and Hoynes (1997, p.171) suggested that “media images do not simply reflect the world, they re-present it; instead of reproducing the reality of the world out there, the media engage in practices that define reality.” This is an extremely important point for two reasons; first, the media are omnipresent in our everyday lives and it is difficult to overestimate the importance of them in our contemporary society. They shape the ways in which we interact socially and how we learn about the world around us. Second, they provide topical knowledge that their audiences often do not have. “Not only do the majority of audience members lack detailed knowledge or strong opinions; sometimes there are no old attitudes to defend. That clears the path for significant media influence.” (Entman 1989, p.351) By providing only partial information about personalities, issues or events, the media can, to an extent, control what their audiences know about them and how they think about them.

2.2 Active Audiences

Generally, academics tend to agree that mass media do not influence what people think but how they think or what they think about. Entman (1989, p.349) argued that “the way to control attitudes is to provide a partial selection of information for a person to think about, or process. The only way to influence what people think is precisely to shape what they think about.” More recent media research confirms this position, suggesting that “for many of us, our sense of what is happening in the society around us, what we should know and care about from one day to the next, is largely derived from the news stories [journalists] tell.” (Allan 2010, p.94) However, the extent to which the media have a direct influence over the audience’s processing of the presented news stories has been

challenged by the 'active audience' theory which claims that the media are merely "a tool or resource which people can use, to varying degrees, to help them make sense of current events." (Croteau and Hoynes 1997, p.211) While accepting that the media does have a potential influence over the audience's reception of the provided information, this approach balances this power with the creative agency of readers. Audiences are active because they can interpret media messages in their own way; they do not simply receive a media text but instead develop independent interpretations of what that text means. These interpretations can be influenced by a number of social factors, including class and education; people constantly draw upon collective resources and experiences to create an individual understanding of media messages. This relationship between mass media and its audiences helps illuminate "the various levels at which mass media images, whose meanings are neither fixed nor arbitrary, influence but do not determine our understanding of the world." (Croteau and Hoynes 1997, p.24)

2.3 Portrayal of Migrants

It is argued that "the media distract public attention from real problems by manufacturing events and inflating trivial issues." (Curran and Seaton 2003, p.339) When it comes to the portrayal of minorities, another argument could be added, stating that the media tend to focus "inordinate attention on the more bizarre and unusual elements of minority communities, such as youth gangs, illegal immigration, or interracial violence." (Croteau and Hoynes 1997, p.143) According to one study, "there is no doubt that in some parts of the media there is a negative campaign almost to scare people sometimes about the impact of migration." (Equal Opportunities Committee 2010) As is shown in Section 5 below, it has been the case that the press tends to use a large part of its coverage on crime-related issues. Van Dijk (1991, p.116) argues that "events that are seen as most problematic or threatening to the interests of the white majority tend to be most prominent [in ethnic coverage]." One of the aims of this dissertation is to see to what extent is Van Dijk's claim true and whether "ethnic coverage in the press rather closely reproduces, confirms, and legitimates

prevailing ethnic ideologies as well as the power relations based on them.” (1991, p.116) Tsuda (2003, p.292) suggests that the media “tend to be a conservative force because they rely heavily on consensual understandings, prevailing cultural norms, and socially acceptable attitudes to make coverage readily comprehensible to the general public.” When it comes to the Scottish media, the Equal Opportunities Committee (2010) notes that “the media tend to fixate on perceived difficulties experienced in the South East of England where population density is higher [...] and in Scotland, there is not enough focus on the essential contribution that migrants make to our ageing, declining population.” Philo and Beattie (1999, pp.174-175) consider the Scottish situation and stress that “evidence suggests that there may be a growing need for migration to tackle an increase in Europe’s elderly population with their welfare needs, health services and pension demands.” They see migration as an obvious and logical part of the problem’s solution and yet, as they (1999, p.180) point out, “the dominant perspective on migrants and migration in popular media is much more likely to present them in the context of threats and fearful warnings.” It could be concluded that the literature on media research and ethnic coverage shows us that migrants tend to be portrayed as a threat to the indigenous population. However, the direct influence the mass media have on its audiences is a subject of an academic debate which most recently, tends to agree that the direct influence is very limited and instead the media can only provide partial information to their audiences which they will then interpret through a variety of social processes.

3. Methodology

A deductive approach seems to be the most widely accepted understanding of the relationship between theory and research. It attempts to demonstrate that a conclusion unavoidably follows from a set of premises or hypotheses. Bryman (2004, p.8) argues that “the social scientist must both skilfully deduce a hypothesis and then translate it into operational terms. This means that the social scientist needs to specify how data can be collected in relation to the concepts that make up the hypothesis.” However, it is important to describe the alternative position, inductive theory, which is to view theory as something that happens only after the compilation and examination of some or all of the data associated with a project. This is done in the concluding section of this paper as a self-reflective exercise designed to look back at the collected data, its analysis and its relation to the theory that had been constructed and then scrutinised by empirical research. In Bryman’s (2004, p.9) terms, “the findings are fed back into the stock of theory and the research findings associated with a certain domain of enquiry.”

3.1 Research Strategy and Design

Major epistemological considerations are the considerations of research strategy. To a large extent, “these revolve around the desirability of employing a natural science model (and in particular positivism) versus interpretivism.” (Bryman 2004, p.24) Unlike positivism which places major importance on imitating the natural sciences and promotes application of research methods of natural sciences, interpretivism looks for “culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world. It asserts that natural reality and social reality are different and therefore require different kinds of methods.” (Gray 2004, p.20) It is interpretivism’s “respect for the differences between people” (Bryman 2004, p.11) that guides this study and its research design. The research framework of data collection and analysis for this project was chosen to be a basic ‘case study’. Thomas suggests the following definition of a case study: “Case studies are analyses of

persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame — an object — within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates.” (Thomas 2011, p.2) Gray (2004, p.123) argues that “case studies can prove invaluable in adding to understanding, extending experience and increasing conviction about a subject.” In contrast to other research methods, case studies often try to “attribute casual relationships and are not just describing a situation. The approach is particularly useful when the researcher is trying to uncover a relationship between a phenomenon and the context in which it is occurring.” (Gray 2004, p.123) Both Gray (2004, p.125) and Bryman (2004, p.52) point out one of the standard criticisms of the case study approach in his analysis, namely the argument that findings from it cannot be generalised. However, both argue that generalisation is not necessarily always the desired outcome of social research as case study researchers tend to “aim to generate an intensive examination of a single case, in relation to which they engage in a theoretical analysis”(Bryman 2004, p.52) and as social studies “have to be replicated by multiple examples of the experiment.”(Gray 2004, p.125) The main issue should therefore, not be how well the study can be generalised but how well can one produce theory out of the study’s findings.

3.2 Research Stages

Research for this project was carried out in three different stages - library based analysis of academic discourses regarding the media’s impact on social inclusion and integration, library based content analysis of newspapers and a case-study involving focus groups and interviews. This structure was decided on to create a sound theoretical framework of the role media plays in forming public opinion which could then be scrutinised by empirical evidence gathered from focus groups and interviews. At each stage of the research, the use of various methods was analysed to choose the one seen as the most effective for the purpose of this study. Gray (2004, p.3) points out that “all methods have their strengths and weaknesses. So not only does the use of multiple methods assist

in date triangulation, it helps to balance out any of the potential weaknesses in each data collection method.”

3.2.1 Media Literature

The first stage of the research involved a library-based content analysis of academic literature. This was carried out to formulate a middle-range theory regarding the influence of the media (print press) portrayal of the A8 migration on social perceptions. As this study is looking at a social issue limited in scope, it seemed more valuable to work on the middle-range theory level rather than to use grand theories because these often function at a more abstract and general stage. Bryman (2004, pp.5-6) points out that “grand theories are of limited use in connection with social research. By and large, it is not grand theory that typically guides social research. Middle-range theories are much more likely to be the focus of empirical study as they represent attempts to understand and explain a limited aspect of social life.” To create a solid academic basis for progressing into the empirical stage of analysing the media coverage itself, it was necessary to look at several academic discourses regarding the media. Firstly, a brief analysis was done about how the media functions and who or what influences their everyday operations. Secondly, literature about the effects the media can have on its audiences was investigated. This was a broad-based analysis of various types of media, not only the print press, although it should be highlighted that the main media analysis carried out for this dissertation is focused on the print press. Lastly, an analysis of literature dealing with the media portrayal of racial and ethnic issues was carried out. These three separate studies were then worked into theoretical considerations that could pose relevant questions to the collection and analysis of the data gathered during the empirical stage of the research.

3.2.2 Newspaper Analysis

The second stage focused on gathering data from a selection of five newspapers for the period 2004 to 2011. More specifically this period reflected the time from the A8 countries’ accession to the

European Union on 1 May 2004 until the last restrictions regarding job markets and labour mobility were lifted throughout the old Member States seven years later on 30 April 2011. It was deemed desirable to include a varied selection of newspapers in the research and therefore, the following were studied: Scottish tabloid - *Daily Record*, Scottish edition of a free newspaper - *Metro*, Scottish broadsheet newspaper – *The Herald*, national broadsheet newspaper – *the Guardian* and Scottish edition of a national tabloid - the *Scottish Sun*. These newspapers were chosen because they represent the largest readership numbers by newspaper type in Scotland.¹ Looking only at a selection of newspapers and not on other types of media, such as television, radio or the Internet, was decided due to the time and scope limits of a Masters dissertation. Therefore, newspapers with a large readership and consequently presumably the widest reach were chosen to partly compensate for the research limits and to cover as much relevant data as possible.

There are several reasons for choosing to do a media research based on newspaper analysis. First, it is the availability of digital archives that make keyword search readily available and simple. Second, it is the geographic irregularity of Scotland within the UK context. In terms of both market reach and political clout the most important press outlets across Britain as a whole are the national daily and Sunday newspapers. However, “Scotland is home to the mass circulation *Daily Record* and quality broadsheets such as *The Herald*, *The Scotsman* and *Scotland on Sunday*, which cover [Scottish agenda] from a predominantly Scottish (though by no means necessarily nationalist) perspective.” (Kuhn 2007, p.4) Third, although the overall circulation of British newspapers has been in a steady decline since the arrival of television in the 1950s, it is still the case that “in comparison with several other EU Member States, newspaper circulation figures per capita in Britain remain high.” (Kuhn 2007, p.9) Fourth, the press in the UK is characterised by the following features. There is some evidence of blurring of the boundaries between the different strata (quality press, tabloids, and black tops) in recent years, in terms of both content and format. The newspaper industry has

¹ Allmedia Scotland Press Release (2010) – daily newspaper sales figures: *Daily Record* 300.892, *Scottish Sun* 340.237, *The Herald* 55.619, *The Guardian* 14.160, *Metro* 127.440

been enjoying a considerable degree of stability over the past half century in the total number of individual titles in the national daily and Sunday newspaper markets. And, compare to the broadcasting sector, it is under a minimal level of state influence. (Kuhn 2007, pp.2-4) This last point is perhaps the most important reason for newspaper analysis; “unlike newspapers, broadcasters are under a regulatory obligation to present news with due impartiality.”(Kuhn 2007, p.161) This is a legacy of the distinctively British public service tradition and perhaps also an acknowledgement of the power that the broadcast media have as an information provider in contemporary society. “The dominant value in the press emphasised the importance of a largely self-regulating competitive market. As a result, attempts at intervention by the state had to overcome the strong ideological hold of the principle of a free press.”(Kuhn 2007, p.55)

3.2.3 Focus Groups and Interviews

Focus groups and structured interviews were carried out to gather data on public perception of A8 migrants in Scotland and scrutinise the theory devised during the first stage regarding the media’s influence on social realities. Arksey and Knight argue that “choosing to interview might mean choosing not to use other research techniques, and that is a decision that needs to be justified.”(Arksey and Knight 1999, p.1) It was felt that discussion-based focus groups and interviews were the best available source of relevant data for this project. As Gray (2004, p.214) argues, “if the objective of the research, for example, is largely exploratory, involving, say, the examination of feelings or attitudes, then interviews may be the best approach.” Interviews also offer the chance to effectively ask questions that are open-ended or too complex for other methods, such as questionnaires, or where it is difficult to pre-judge the direction the answers might take. “As people, we share understandings with others and also bring something distinctively personal to them. Different interviewing approaches are best suited to investigating shared and more individualistic understandings.”(Arksey and Knight 1999, p.18) That is why the focus groups method was chosen; to allow a large sample to be interviewed. Proposed sample for focus groups was 15-24 (split into

groups of 5-8) and for interviews up to 10 individuals. The sample was to be recruited mainly with assistance from BEMIS as they have a wide-ranging network of contacts around Scotland. Due to time limitations and the potential participants' unavailability, the sample had to be reduced to only seven focus group participants (2 and 5) and seventeen individual interviews which nevertheless, brought the total of interviewed people to the planned 24. Long-term residency of at least 10 years in Scotland was the only choosing criterion that had to be met by all participants. Focus groups centred on the participants' general awareness of the A8 countries and nationals, preferences of newspapers, reasons behind their choices and the way the newspapers influence their perception of A8 migrants in Scotland.

4. Media Impact

4.1 The Role of Media

To understand the influence that the media have on us and our society, it is important to understand what the media are and what role they play in the society. As Hiebert and Reuss (1984, p.5) put it, “the mass media are too essential to be ignored. And the issues raised by mass media will no doubt continue to grow in importance in the foreseeable future.” The word media itself comes from the Latin word ‘medius’ which means ‘middle’. To put it into a context, “the communication media are the different technological processes that facilitate communication between the sender of a message and the receiver of that message.” (Croteau and Hoynes 1997, p.7) This is a particularly important point; using media is a two-sided process and, many scholars would argue that it is of huge significance not only how we send a media message but also how we receive that message. Croteau and Hoynes (1997, p.23) point out that “mass media messages do not allow for the intimate interaction of sender and receiver that characterises personal communication.” Mass media have become omnipresent in our everyday lives; it is nearly impossible to imagine our day without newspapers, television, radio or the Internet and very difficult to overestimate the important roles these play in our contemporary society. Carved and written communication, such as various bulletins served as an important source of information ever since antiquity but it was only with the development of the printing press in 17th century Europe and the emergence of the new media branch of newspapers that media became the main source of information about political, economic and societal issues for a large part of the society. Newspapers’ role as the most important medium started to diminish with the arrival of the, truly mass-oriented, radio broadcast in the early 1920s and indeed the mass spread of television sets after World War II. The Internet has been the newest addition to mass media, following its rapid expansion in the 1990s and early 21st century. In contemporary society, it is the collection of all these various types of mass media “that most often act as the bridge between people’s private lives and their relation to the public world.” (Croteau and

Hoynes 1997, p.18) In other words, it is through the mass media that we learn about our place in contemporary society.

“Journalists are among the pre-eminent story-tellers of modern society. Their news accounts shape in decisive ways our perceptions of the ‘world out there’ beyond our own immediate experience.” (Allan 2010, p.94) As citizens, we rely on the mass media for informative and accurate accounts of what is happening in the world around us because we cannot experience first-hand all goings in public life. Mass media have a considerable role in forming public perceptions on a range of important issues via the information that is distributed through them. They also play a large role in shaping modern culture, by selecting and portraying a particular set of beliefs, values, and traditions, as reality. That is, by portraying a certain interpretation of reality, they shape reality to be more in line with that interpretation. Croteau and Hoynes (1997, p.15) argue that because the audience “learn and internalise some of the values, beliefs and norms presented in media products, the media serve as a powerful socialising agent in contemporary society.” Because media are such an integral part of our lives, they generate a great deal of popular interest and debate. “Media products provide a diversion, a source of conflict, or a unifying force. They are connected to the ways we interact with other people on a daily basis.” (Croteau and Hoynes 1997, p.17) McQuail (1979, p.20) supports this view, suggesting that “the mass media are both a force for integration and for dispersion and individuation of society.”

4.2 The Media Impact Debate

Although the evidence about the extent to which the mass media influence us is far from conclusive due to the immense diversity of the media as well as the audience, general trends can be seen and a wide collection of literature has been created dealing with the media impact. Early researchers of the impact of mass media considered the most influential element of this impact to be in the repetitiveness of media messages. “Media texts were seen as repetitive and persuasive, carrying deeply encoded messages in support of, or deviant from, the established order.” (Downing 2004, p.4)

This view encouraged the idea that the audience were simply passive receivers who absorbed media messages through their constant presence without much further analysis and need for further confirmation from other sources. The turning point came in the early 1970s as a result of “among other things, an investigation of the role of the media during an election campaign in the USA. It was shown that the media did not so much determine *what* people were thinking but they had a definite influence on what people were thinking *about*.”² (Gripsrud 2002, p.43)

Still, the literature on media studies is inconclusive about the media’s influence on the public. Some scholars argue that “the media reinforce the status quo, support and spread dominant ideologies, and even act as a servant of the state” (Tsuda 2003, p.290) or the elites in general, political as well as economic. Other scholars on the other hand have emphasised the media’s role as “a watchdog that provides independent acting as an agent for cultural, political and institutional change.” (Tsuda 2003, p.291) Both sides however, tend to agree that no matter how the media influences us, it does influence us and “media messages matter. They are not somehow separate from our ‘real’ lives; picked up for fun and discarded when we turn to the important things. On the contrary, media messages are central to our everyday lives.” (Croteau and Hoynes 1997, p.229) Media influence our understanding of the world around us because media content can spread basic messages about the nature of reality. It can supply types of norms, values and behaviours. “The media give us pictures of social interaction and social institutions that, by their sheer repetition on a daily basis, can play important roles in shaping broad social definitions.” (Croteau and Hoynes 1997, p.166)

4.3 Active Audiences

In the late 1980s, the research on media effects has mainly moved away from the notions that the audience is a passive receiver of repetitive messages. This trend has continued since and has arguably become the prevailing attitude among scholars researching media effects today. Entman (1989, p.347) summarised the then new development: “The more popular recent view is that media

² italics copied from the source

influence is significant, but only in shaping the problems the public considers most important – their agendas.” This was a significant move forward in media research as the notion of an active audience came to be included in the academic research of the time and has since established itself firmly in the sphere. Entman (1989, p.347) added that “some research approaches share a core assumption that audiences enjoy substantial autonomy in developing their [...] preferences.”

However, no man is an island, and readers, viewers and listeners do not form and maintain the ways they use information completely on their own. It has been argued that these arise from a socialisation in a culture “transmitted, reinforced, and constantly altered by parents, teachers, leaders, friends, and colleagues – most of whom use the media.” (Entman 1989, p.366) There are therefore, many external influences that guide us in our perception of the media and that manipulate how we use them and what we use out of them. According to Gripsrud (2002, p36), “one must take into consideration the total media output and consumption, as well as a long list of social cultural and psychological conditions.” Ideas like this have increasingly come to exemplify research on media audiences and the media’s effect on them. Croteau and Hoynes (1997, p.7), for instance, refuse to use the terms ‘audience’ or ‘receiver’ and deliberately use the term ‘reader’ instead because they “want to highlight the active role of audiences in interpreting the messages they receive. Reading implies actively interpreting media messages.” By that logic, the same media message can have very different meanings to different people. The media therefore, have to focus on how they distribute their messages so that the audience would interpret them in the most desired way. “The only way to influence what people think is precisely to shape what they think about.” (Entman 1989, p.349) It has also been suggested that the media “may not persuade the public directly; nevertheless they affect what people know, and what they think is important.” (Curran and Seaton 2003, p.335)

4.4 Guidance for Empirical Research

Although the research on media impact has been far from conclusive, it has created a rich background of theories that can be used and analysed further. What is clear from the recent research is that the media do have an influence on what their audiences think about. Whether the distributed information concerns an event, a personality or a political, economic or social issue, the media creates a social debate. Its influence in how the debate shapes further is however, limited by the fact that the audience are a mass of hugely different individuals with varied background, levels of topical knowledge and awareness and varied social circles that all have a major impact on the individuals' perceptions of the media-distributed information. As Gripsrud (2002, p.36) argues, "[the media's] influence on each of us, on groups and society as a whole, is determined by social and cultural conditions that to a large extent are outside the realm of the media."

Van Dijk (1991, p.7) suggests that research on media coverage of ethnic minority groups "conveys public knowledge, as well as expressed or implicit opinions, about social groups and events most majority group members have little direct knowledge about. It is this notion that guided the next stages of this research, looking at how much the Scottish audience knows about the A8 migrant community around them and how it reflects the media coverage of the group in the main daily newspapers.

5. Newspaper Analysis

5.1 Analysis Methodology

First stage of the empirical research intended for this dissertation was a library-based analysis of five different newspapers circulated in Scotland. Together, they have a daily circulation of over 800.000 copies, which makes them control a majority of the daily newspapers market in Scotland. (Allmedia 2010) It could therefore, be argued that this makes them the most influential printed mass media in Scotland. The analysis of *The Herald*, the *Daily Record* and the *Guardian* was carried out through the *Newsbank* online newspaper database using keywords to search through the last seven years of their editions (01 May 2004 to 30 April 2011). The *Scottish Sun* is not listed in the *Newsbank* database and does not have a dedicated search engine on its website and therefore, the *Newsbank* database of the UK-wide edition was used to analyse the newspaper. Using the same search criteria, the analysis of the *Metro* was done through its website's search engine because the *Metro*'s only digital database is the one on its website. List of the keywords can be found in Appendix 2. Only articles relating to the labour migration following the 2004 EU enlargement were considered for the analysis. Articles relating to sport and stories from the respective A8 countries with no connection to the UK were discarded from the final selection. The articles were judged as positive, negative or neutral towards the A8 migrant community in Scotland and in the UK as a whole. Positive articles were those where the portrayal of benefits from the A8 migration prevailed, negative those critical of the phenomenon and neutral those that were either too descriptive to show a bias or mentioned nationalities for no obvious purpose other than the provision of additional information.

5.2 Daily Record

For a long time, the *Daily Record* had been among the most widely circulated newspapers in the world, in the 1980s, it was the second largest newspaper in the world, according to market saturation. Its circulation has however, since fallen to less than half (294,250 in 2010) and it has also

lost its leading position in Scotland to its main rival, the *Scottish Sun*, which in September 2010 had a circulation 339,586 copies daily. (Tryhorn 2008; Allmedia 2010) As a left-leaning tabloid newspaper, it has traditionally supported the Labour Party and it strongly opposes Scottish independence and therefore, the Scottish National Party.

Overall, 464 articles matched the selection criteria during the selected time period; out of these, a vast majority (344) was referring to Polish migrants, however, out of these 120 were relating to the 2006 murder of a Polish student Angelika Kluk who was a seasonal worker in Glasgow. Arguably, Angelika's nationality was not relevant to the news itself. However, throughout the reporting of the murder story, from the finding of her body to the trial with her murderer, the newspaper offered a positive stance towards the Polish migrant community (and the A8 migrants overall) describing them as coming to Scotland to look for better life opportunities. This coverage arguably, helped spread a positive message about the A8 migrant community and portraying Angelika as a victim to a horrible crime may have caused a wave of compassion towards the community as a whole. However, this image was most probably destroyed or at least severely damaged by two murder stories linked to A8 migrants that, together, received similar scale of coverage two years later. First, it is the story of a Slovak migrant for sexually assaulting and killing a Scottish businesswoman Moira Jones (60 articles), and second, two Lithuanian men brutally murdering a Lithuanian woman, Jolanta Bledaite (43 articles). Both stories tended to follow the line of describing the killers as monstrous and without sense of humanity. Their nationality was always mentioned in the articles and often the tone of the articles became negative towards the A8 migrant community, calling for increased security background checks on who can come to the UK and even for quotas on migrants coming from Eastern Europe.

Despite the large attention those three stories received by the newspaper, the portrayal of the A8 migrant communities in the *Daily Record* over the past seven years has arguably been overwhelmingly positive. Excluding the three murder stories mentioned above (leaving the total of

223 articles), 113 articles showed a positive stance towards the A8 minority and 71 articles had a neutral stance, reporting the A8-related news without any particular bias. Only 39 articles were negative and critical in tone. Most articles were relating to the A8 migrants as workers, these articles mostly portrayed them as hard-working and taking jobs that either no-one else is willing to do or where there is a lack of indigenous Scottish workforce. Only a small minority of articles used a critical tone accusing the A8 migrants of taking jobs away from Scots. A perhaps surprisingly small number of articles (4) referred to the A8 migrants' use of the British welfare system with only one article claiming the A8 migrants abuse the system on purpose. Sensational rhetoric was also hardly ever used, only seven articles referred to the A8 immigration as 'flood' or 'influx'. Although thirty seven articles mentioned crimes committed by A8 nationals, twenty eight articles also mentioned crime and abuse caused to the A8 nationals by Scots, creating a balance in crime reporting. Sixteen articles referred to A8 nationals' drink-driving in Scotland. Although the Daily Record is a tabloid where one would expect sensational and controversial headlines and perhaps a pro-White-British bias, it could be argued that when it comes to the A8 migrant community in Scotland, it has not tried to stigmatise the group and has been reporting on the migration issues in a responsible manner. Arguably, the occasional articles about drunk driving, stealing and violent A8 nationals have been balanced out by articles about the benefits that the A8 workers have brought to Scotland.

5.3 The Herald

The Herald has a long tradition as the main Glasgow-based quality newspaper and has been switching places as the most circulated Scottish broadsheet with the Edinburgh-based *Scotsman*. Its current daily circulation of over 47 thousand copies makes it the most read quality newspaper in Scotland. (Allmedia 2010) It has traditionally been a centre-left orientated newspaper and a vocal supporter of the Scottish devolution. Although it was traditionally a supporter of the Labour Party, it switched its preferences toward Alex Salmond and the Scottish National Party prior to the 2007 Scottish Parliamentary elections. (Herald Staff 2007)

The Herald published 292 relevant articles about the A8 migrant community in Scotland within the researched period. Although this is much less than the Daily Record, it spent far less coverage on following the three murder stories referred to above. The murder of Angelika Kluk was mentioned in only thirty three articles and the two 2008 murders were only mentioned eight and ten times, respectively, which means that 241 articles referred to the A8 migrants in Scotland. Therefore, The Herald's coverage of the issue was marginally higher than in the Daily Record (241 to 223). Unlike the tabloids, most of The Herald's A8 coverage tried to be analytical about the recent migration trends and the potential contributions and losses linked to the process. Although it was overwhelmingly positive towards the migrants (168 articles), it also offered several very critical pieces relating to the number of migrants coming to Scotland and the quality of work they sometimes carry out. However, with only thirty six articles being negative about the A8 minority, it could be argued that the portrayal of the minority overall could not have a lasting damaging effect on its readers perceptions of the group.

A large percentage of all articles looked at how the numbers of A8 migrants coming to Scotland impact on Scotland and the Scottish society. Fourteen articles looked at the population growth fuelled by the immigration, all having a positive stance towards the inflow of A8 national, citing benefits they bring as Scotland grows. Thirty six articles looked at the numbers of migrants coming to Scotland and the UK as a whole. Again, mostly these were either positive or neutral articles and only two of them saw the A8 immigration as a threat and a negative thing for Scotland. Twelve articles looked at the UK's migration policy and the political and economic arguments evolve around it. A relatively large number of articles (28) also looked at how Scotland and its population are responding to the inflow of large numbers of migrants, including its police forces, welfare agencies, health care establishments, schools and employers. Although the articles sometimes cited potential complications and costs linked to the steep rise in population in various locations, there was never an openly negative stance in these articles. The evidence that *The Herald* was not seeking sensational headlines is further shown by the fact that not a single article mentioned a drunk driver

from an A8 country, only two articles mentioned an A8 national committing a crime and no articles called the A8 migration patterns a 'flood' or any similar terms. Unlike its tabloid counterparts, *The Herald* seemed to put extra effort into a critical analysis of the issues related to the A8 migrant community in Scotland, looking at both benefits and losses the migrants might bring to the country. A typical example is the issue of the Wick local authority and NHS board bringing in 32 dentists straight from Poland as a solution to staff shortages. Whereas the *Daily Record's* articles showed a negative stance towards the decision but offered no alternatives, *The Herald* analysed it as a short-term solution throughout a number of articles tried to find alternatives and questioned the potential decisions to be made. It could be argued that *The Herald* could be called a pro-migrant newspaper aware of the benefits but also of complications that the migration from the new Member States from Central and East Europe have brought. It offers a critical analytical viewpoint and portrays the A8 migrant community as a hard-working group which does not cause any more negative issues than any other group in Scotland, including the indigenous one.

5.4 The Guardian

The *Guardian* identifies with centre-left liberalism and its readership is generally on the mainstream left of British political opinion. Although it has traditionally been a Labour-backing broadsheet, in the run-up to the 2010 general election, the *Guardian* declared its support for the Liberal Democrats. The *Guardian* has been the most circulated UK broadsheet without a Scottish edition in Scotland (Allmedia 2010), partly because of the fact that the Scottish population has traditionally been more left-orientated politically than the UK as a whole and the newspaper therefore, appeals to it. In addition, the fact that it used to be published in Manchester, gives it a more 'northern feel' and despite being published in London nowadays, it has arguably retained some of its regional character that would also appeal to the relatively small Scottish population.

Out of the five newspapers analysed, the *Guardian* arguably has by far the biggest reputation for being a liberal newspaper with a constructive and critical viewpoint in its coverage. This was proven

by the analysis of the seven-year period at the start of which the A8 countries became members of the European Union. Overall, 383 articles matched the search criteria, and excluding the three aforementioned murder stories, it was still left with 372 articles. Clearly not looking for tabloid-like sensationalism, it only spent six, two and three articles on the coverage of the three notorious murders, respectively. It also had no articles mentioning drunk drivers from the A8 countries, only ten articles mentioning an A8 national committing a crime in the UK (none of these offered a negative perception of the criminal's nationality) and the ten articles mentioning a 'flood' of A8 migrants into the UK all used the term to criticise the position of those labelling the immigration as such. Out of the 372 articles, over a half (198) perceived the A8 nationals coming to the UK positively and over a third (138) had a neutral stance, mostly because of the descriptive or analytical nature of the articles. The thirty six articles that showed some negative feelings towards the A8 migrant community in the UK appeared mostly in the comments section and were not seen as reflecting the editorial's position. The newspaper also often offered a view on the response throughout the UK to the migrant inflows, analysing how the government services have been coping with the increased population. Unlike the Scotland-based newspapers, it did not spend much coverage on the issues of skills and population gaps as they tend to be a Scottish issue rather than a UK-wide one, and therefore irrelevant to the majority of its readership. The majority of its A8-related articles mentioned (as all the other papers) the labour contributions of the A8 minority (147 articles) mostly looking at the benefits the additional young and skilled workforce has brought to Britain. Forty six articles also dealt with the fluctuation of the numbers of A8 nationals coming to the UK between 2004 and 2011.

5.5 The Sun

The *Sun* is a daily national tabloid newspaper published in London and has the tenth-largest circulation of any newspaper in the world and the largest circulation of any daily newspaper in the United Kingdom. (Mondo Times 2009) Although the newspaper traditionally supported the

Conservatives, it switched its support to Tony Blair's New Labour prior to the 1997 General Election before moving back in 2009 when Gordon Brown was already the Prime Minister. The Scottish edition of the newspaper launched in 1987, known as the *Scottish Sun*. Based in Glasgow, it duplicates much of the content of the England and Wales edition but with additional coverage of Scottish news and sport. The *Scottish Sun* has never supported the Conservatives but instead was one of the first Scottish newspapers to openly back the Scottish National Party except a brief period 2007-2011 when it backed Labour. Despite the fact, that it is a subsidiary of the UK-wide edition, the *Scottish Sun* has managed to keep a degree of its own editorial independence in terms of reflecting the political situation and preferences in Scotland.

The *Sun* was by far the most anti-immigrant of the five newspapers analysed in this study. Its rhetoric, choice of themes associated with migrants and search for sensationalism meant that its coverage included 1156 relevant articles in addition to 356 articles relating to the three murder stories. That means that its coverage of the A8 migrant community was almost four times as large as that of the *Guardian* and almost six times than that in the three respective Scotland-based newspapers. For the *Sun*, the A8 migration was an immensely important issue to cover and created an opportunity to produce a large number of controversial claims that one might expect from an aggressive tabloid. Over 40 per cent of the articles had a negative stance towards the A8 migrant community (478) and another 40 per cent remained neutral (436), leaving only around 21 per cent of the articles a positive attitude towards the group. Unlike the other newspapers where the main A8-related topics were about labour and the numbers of A8 migrants, the one theme dominating the *Sun*'s coverage was crime. Over half of all articles was focusing on crimes committed by the A8 nationals in the UK (267), crimes and abuse committed against the A8 nationals in the UK (273), slave trade originating in eastern Europe (23), A8 nationals drink-driving (15) and the three murder stories together included more articles (356) than the whole A8 related coverage in *The Herald* (292) and similar to that of the *Guardian* (383). The overwhelmingly negative perception was also very visible from the coverage the migration itself received; 162 articles portrayed the inflows of migrants

in negative terms as ‘floods’ and ‘influxes’ compared to only 120 pieces where some benefits were mentioned coming out of the immigration (most notably with links to the Scottish depopulation problem) and the migrants were called ‘workers’. Together with 25 articles portraying the A8 migrants as ‘benefits tourists’, the newspaper was clearly sending an anti-immigrant message to its readers.

Although the UK-wide edition of the *Sun* is clearly biased against A8 migrants coming to Britain, it could be argued that its Glasgow-based Scottish edition, the *Scottish Sun* offers a relatively more balanced account of the phenomenon. A report prepared by the Scottish Government’s Equal Opportunities Committee (2010, section 145) suggested in evidence that “the Scottish press was more responsible in its reporting than the UK press; there is a sense that the issues are better reported in Scotland.” It (2010, section 139) also suggested that the media tended to “fixate on perceived difficulties experienced in the South East of England where population density is higher and there is more pressure on services both from migrants and from long established communities.” It could therefore, be argued that the Scottish edition will look more at the migration issues relevant to Scotland which are primarily the skills gap in its indigenous population and the ageing and decreasing population. It is also clear from the UK-wide edition coverage that most benefits suggested as associated with the A8 migration to the UK were linked to these issues. In addition, the Scottish Government has been actively seeking to attract migrants into Scotland to deal with its demographic and labour problems and as a supporter of the governing Scottish National Party and given the edition’s relative editorial independence from its London parent company, the *Scottish Sun* could, arguably, be more pro-migrant than its UK-wide counterpart analysed above.

5.6 Metro

Metro is a free daily newspaper that is distributed around public transport stations in cities around the UK. The paper was launched in London in 1999, and can now be found in 14 UK cities. What makes the *Metro* different from a majority of other daily newspapers is the fact that it was designed

to be read in 20 minutes which tends to be an average commuting time in cities. It is designed to highlight major news stories of the day with the addition of a mix of articles on travel, homes, style, and health, as well as extensive arts coverage and entertainment listings for each respective city. It is ranked among the most read newspaper in the UK; overall, all its fourteen editions have a readership of over 1 million daily readers, making it the UK's fourth largest daily newspaper, after the *Sun*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror*. It now prints approximately 1.3m copies daily, and officially has some 3.5m readers, as of March 2010. (Allmedia 2010)

The *Metro* was the only newspaper out of the five analysed that does not feature in the *Newsbank* online database and therefore, in addition to the keywords used for the other papers, 'Scotland' and names of large Scottish cities were added to find articles relevant to Scotland and limit pieces that are linked either only to the UK as a whole or to one of the non-Scottish cities where the newspaper is published. Together with the small number of articles per edition, this has resulted in the *Metro* having the smallest number of relevant articles out of the five analysed newspapers (163). Although it could be argued that some relevant articles were lost through the additional search criteria, it could also be said the pieces that were eventually found were the ones most relevant to the Scottish readership and therefore, have the potential highest impact on their perceptions of the A8 migrant community around them.

The *Metro* was perhaps the most neutral towards the A8 migrants out of all the newspapers looked at. Just over half of its articles were either positive or negative (48 and 47, respectively) and the remaining sixty eight articles offered a neutral stance towards the community. Major difference between the *Metro* and the two tabloids was in the way it portrayed crime in its coverage. Although it was its main theme among the A8-related articles, unlike the tabloids, it used the criminals' nationality in a neutral way, not showing any particular bias towards their national backgrounds or generalisation about the A8 minority and its criminal records. Most of the twenty three 'crime' articles had a neutral and descriptive nature and the six 'drink-driving' pieces, despite using

stereotypes of eastern European drivers, put no blame on the migrants as a group. Being a small-size newspaper, it perhaps unsurprisingly spent a lot of its coverage on the three murder notorious stories; overall forty two articles were published. Some sensationalism could be found in the newspaper with twelve articles mentioning the 'flood' of A8 migrants coming to Scotland however; a large number of articles (34) praised the hard-working A8 migrant community bringing benefits to the Scottish society.

5.7 Common Traits

According to Van Dijk (1991, p.20), the press "has indeed been a main foe of black other minorities. As a representative of the white power structure, it has consistently limited the access, both as to hiring, promotion or points of view, of ethnic minority groups." It is true that none of the five newspapers offered a viewpoint of the A8 minority other than very few articles describing the lives of several A8 nationals in the UK. Moreover, no A8-related cultural events or issues were reported on. The coverage itself could therefore, not be called balanced however, four out of the five researched newspapers showed a relatively positive stance towards the A8 migrant community despite being very different types of newspapers with different target audiences. Only the *Sun* was openly negative about the migration phenomena and although the research analysed its London-based edition, given the conservative bias of Rupert Murdoch's media empire, it is hard to imagine the *Scottish Sun* being drastically different from its parent edition. Although crime featured prominently in the coverage of all five newspapers, it often had a balanced viewpoint in the general crime coverage. However, the two brutal murders in 2008 by A8 national did receive extensive attention and arguably could have caused the audience to perceive the minority in negative terms as a community with high risk of criminal activity.

Second largest issue covered was that of jobs and employment. The three Scotland-based newspapers had a lot of positive coverage showing the A8 migrants as hard-working people who are in the country for its own benefit doing jobs the indigenous population does not want to do. Several

economic and social benefits were mentioned in relation to the A8 community in Scotland and although sometimes the articles tended to crave sensationalism, the coverage overall was managed in an arguably responsible manner. The same could be said about the *Guardian* but most certainly not of the *Sun* which offered a negative portrayal of ‘floods of migrants taking British jobs and abusing British welfare while raising the crime and prostitution figures’. With the newspaper analysis finished the next empirical research part of the study aimed at looking how the Scottish audience views the A8 migrant community and to what extent their perceptions are based on their use of the press.

6. Interviews and Focus Groups

The second stage of the empirical research carried out for this dissertation used focus groups and structured interviews to gather data about first, public use and opinions of media, knowledge and awareness of the A8 community, and, second, to what extent do public attitudes towards this community change in relation to media use. It was decided to use interviews and focus groups because it was felt that they offered a better chance to find out about people's attitudes and media influence on them than other research methods, for instance an online survey. Gray (2004, p.214) adds that "there are a number of situations in which the interview is the most logical research technique. If the objective of the research is largely exploratory, involving the examination of feelings or attitudes, then interviews may be the best approach. This approach, then, is concerned with the *meanings* that people ascribe to phenomena."³

6.1 Sample Overview

6.1.1 Age and Gender

When it comes to the main indicators, the group was evenly split to 12 males and 12 females with an average age of 35 with the average male age marginally higher than that of the female participants, at 35.08 and 34.91 respectively. The age distribution among the two samples was also almost equal with both gender groups having seven persons in the 21-30 age group, one in both 31-40 and 41-50 groups and three in the 51+ age group. It could be argued that the older generations are more likely to read newspapers than those in their twenties. However, all participants indicated that they read at least one newspaper on a regular basis; those in their twenties mentioned a variety of reasons to do so, for instance, student discounts at university, availability on public transport, at work or in their parents' homes. Some also indicated that they read newspapers out of habit. Age gap therefore, did not affect to produce any major disproportions within the studied sample.

³ italics copied from the source

6.1.2 Political Preference

All participants were asked to write down their political party preference at the start of each interview and focus group. For statistical purposes, the four political parties mentioned by the participants were identified as follows: Labour as a left-wing party, the Scottish National Party as a centre-left party, the Liberal Democrats as a centre-right party and the Conservatives as a right-wing party. Although SNP's preferences could indeed be attributed to patriotic, nationalist or separatist political feelings among the participants, for the purposes of this research, it is considered as a centre-left political force. Political preferences between male and female participants could be considered on equal terms. Both groups had four persons preferring political parties on the right and eight on the left side of the political spectrum. Overall, there is a left-wing tendency in the sample with two thirds of the participants (16) leaning politically towards the left and only eight towards the right. This could be argued to be an unbalanced situation favouring the left. However, looking at the official results of the elections to the Scottish Parliament, one could argue that it is the right that is over-represented in this study sample. Traditionally, Scotland has been more left-leaning than the UK as a whole. The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats received only one fifth of the votes that Labour and the SNP got (20 and 106 respectively). (Scottish Parliament 2011)

6.1.3 Social Status

Occupation and social status variety is perhaps the biggest shortcoming of the sample studied. All 24 participants have received higher education at universities or colleges (all in the UK) and none could be considered a member of the working class. This lack of variety was caused by the limits of contacts and lack of availability of potential participants at the time. A possible solution to this issue is detailed in the recommendations section below. Although the sample could be argued to be a middle-class one, it is very varied within its limits. Seven participants were students (five postgraduate and two undergraduate) of various disciplines. Five participants work or worked in the education sector both as teachers or civil servants. Five participants work with various communities

around Scotland. Two participants work within the arts community as a Writer and Musician and five participants work within the commercial industry. Five of the participants have some either educational or professional background related to Central and East Europe or its communities. Although this gave them an advantage in the questions about general knowledge of and awareness about the region and its people, their background arguably played a minor role in answering the rest of the questions relating to the media and the A8 migrants presence in Scotland.

6.1.4 General Knowledge Questions

Four questions were designed to see how aware the participants were of the A8 countries and what they knew about them. Responses to Question 1 – *How many countries from Central and East Europe joined the EU in 2004?* – showed that the participants were aware of a relative number of the accession countries; almost half (11) responded correctly and over a third (9) responded with a number higher or lower by 2. The relative success could partly be credited to the fact that all participants had to read the Plain Language Statement prior to the interviews and focus groups. The Statement clearly explains what is meant by the A8. Interestingly, even though all participants had read through the Statement, only a third (9) could name all the A8 countries. The results reveal that, excluding Poland and the Czech Republic, there is a general lack of awareness about the A8 countries. Excluding those who could correctly name all the A8 countries, ten named Poland and nine named the Czech Republic. However, there is a major gap after these two with only four people mentioning Hungary and two remembering Lithuania. This could arguably be due to the newspaper coverage mostly focusing on these three nationalities and not mentioning the rest. Out of the fifteen that did not name all the A8 countries, a third (5) included Romania on the list which could suggest that the former Communist countries are still perceived as a homogenous bloc of states.

This was partly confirmed by responses to Question 3 – *What do you know about them?* – where the most common answer included the countries all being post-Communist with major economic and/or social problems (13 answers). Entman (1989, p.351) raises an interesting point, arguing that “not

only do the majority of audience members lack detailed, expert knowledge or strong opinions; sometimes there are no old attitudes to defend. Many of the most significant political contests are played out over emerging issues or leaders; audiences do not have set attitudes towards them. That clears the path for significant media influence.” Although Entman was relating his comments to the way media influence people’s political beliefs, it could be argued that he raises a valid point when it comes to the issue of A8 migrants in Scotland, too. Even comparing answers to Question 3 with those to Question 11 – *If you remember, what did you know/think about them before their EU accession?* – shows that there has not been much progress. Answers to Question 11 still mostly included references to Communism, economic and social hardships, isolation, tensions and modern history. No reference was made to any concrete examples of the individual countries’ cultures, whether it were the arts, food and drinks or sport. It is important to mention here that other than sports coverage, not a single article in all five researched newspapers mentioned any A8 cultural events in the UK and only two articles by *The Herald* mentioned the Edinburgh-based Polish Society. The Glasgow City Council report on A8 nationals (2009, p.64) in the city voices concerns with a related issue: “The A8 population is diverse, and for service planning purposes close attention should be paid to this diversity. The needs of different groupings within the wider A8 community vary significantly and will require a range of different support mechanisms.” Looking at the interview and focus group results, it seems however, that a majority of the Scottish population has little or no awareness of these differences and tends to treat the community as a homogenous one.

6.2 Media Questions

6.2.1 Sources of Information

In line with the general situation around the world, the broadcasting and digital media were identified as the main sources of information by a majority of the interview and focus group participants responding to Question 4 – *What is your main source of news information?* The *BBC* website was a clear leader with eleven persons identifying it as one of their main sources of news

information followed by the *Guardian* newspaper with nine responses and television with eight. More down the line were *The Herald* with five responses and the tabloids with four (*Daily Record* – 2, *Daily Mail* – 1, *Scottish Sun* – 1). Radio broadcast was mentioned by four participants and the free newspaper *Metro* by three. Several other newspapers and magazines were mentioned by one person each (*Economist*, *Independent*, *New Statesman*, and *Times*).

Similar standings were seen in responses to Question 5 – *What newspapers do you read and how often?* The *Guardian* was a clear leader with fourteen responses (10 daily, 4 occasionally) followed by *The Herald* with seven responses (all daily). *Metro* and the tabloids (*Scottish Sun*, *Daily Record*, *Daily Mail*) got four and five responses respectively and six people mentioned Sunday editions of the *Times*, *Independent* and *Sunday Post*.

In response to Question 6 – *Why do you read the particular newspaper?* – most participants pointed out that they agree with the respective newspapers' stance and consider them informative. This was true in particular with readers of the *Guardian* and *Independent*. Participant 19 described the *Guardian* as "fair, investigative and less prone to stereotypes" with Participant 10 adding that it is "refreshing that sometimes there are two opposing views within the same issue." However, some *Guardian* readers were also critical of the newspaper, noting that it is not completely without bias and that "it is informing of opinions of my peer group and telling them what debates to have." (Participant 11) The *Telegraph* and *Sunday Times*, in particular, were praised for their comprehensive international coverage whereas *The Herald* contrastingly was read mostly due to its local news information. Kuhn talks about the importance of Sunday newspapers in his book and also mentions that "British readers tend to use local and regional papers as a supplement to – rather than a substitute for – reading a national title." (Kuhn 2007, p.3) This was reflected in the interview answers with six respondents saying that they read a local newspaper (*Evening Times*, *Shetland Times*) as well as a national title. All tabloid readers agreed that they mostly look for catchy articles in them and do not necessarily trust all the information published in the *Daily Mail*, *Daily Record* and *Scottish Sun*.

Participant 2 noted that he does not “want to go through the whole newspaper so I am looking for catchy and controversial headlines.” Participant 3 mentioned in her focus group that while reading a tabloid newspaper, “sometimes the headline is quite outrageous and I read the article just to see if it really is like that.”

6.2.2 Sharing News Stories

A vast majority of the interviewed participants said that they discuss current news stories with others in response to Question 7 – *Do you discuss news stories with others? How often?* Only two persons replied that they hardly ever do so. Participant 11 explained his resentment to discuss current issues with others by saying that there is “lack of originality in people’s arguments; they often revisit already printed thoughts.” In contrast, the 22 remaining participants all get involved in debates about current themes with friends, family, or colleagues on a regular basis. Croteau and Hoynes (1997, p.13) offer an explanation why this number is so high; they argue that “because media are such an integral part of our lives, they generate a great deal of popular interest and debate.” There seemed to be no major age, gender or occupational divide between the respondents. Fifteen discuss news stories regularly with their family, thirteen with friends and thirteen with colleagues or fellow students. Most of discussions would be held daily or almost daily (10 and 6 respectively). Answers to Question 7 support a specific part of Croteau and Hoynes’ (1997, p.231) theory of active audiences, in particular their argument that audiences do not act as individuals but process media information through various social processes. “Audiences are active in the sense that they interpret media messages *socially*. That is, audiences do not simply watch, read or listen to a media text, develop independent interpretations of what it means, and stick to them. On the contrary, media are part of our social lives, and we engage with media in social settings.”⁴

⁴ italics copied from the source

6.3.3 Importance of Headlines

“Headlines are not arbitrary parts or labels of news reports. On the contrary, they formulate the most crucial words of such reports. Their position, semantic role, and cognitive consequences are such that they literally cannot be overlooked. They express the major topic of the report, as the newspaper sees it, and thereby at the same time summarize and evaluate a news event. In other words, they essentially define the situation.” (Van Dijk 1991, p.69) They work to make readers interested in the article and, consequently, in the newspaper itself. Allan (2010, p.100) explains this, pointing out that “of primary importance when distinguishing the newspaper’s mode of address is its ‘professional sense of the newsworthy’, an aspect of its ‘social personality’ conditioned by various organizational, technical and commercial constraints, as well as by its conception of the likely opinions of its readers (its ‘target audience’).”

Answering Question 8 – *How important is the headline and its tone for your decision to read a newspaper article?* – a majority the 24 participants considered headlines to be of great importance when they go through a newspaper. Only five respondents considered headlines unimportant when choosing to read a newspaper article. Nineteen respondents judged it as either important (7) or very important (12). However, there was a major divide among these participants. Seven participants said that they judge headlines by their content to see what articles might interest them. Participant 24 explained that “I generally will only read an article if the headline suggests it might be of interest to me.” Seven participants, however, were actively looking for ‘catchy’ headlines, regardless of whether the topic itself would of interest to them without the attention-grabbing headline. Participant 1 added: “It has to be punchy and grab my attention. It also depends on what I read. In the *Metro* I would mostly look for attention-grabbing headlines.” Some participants were also analytical about headlines, with Participant 15 noting that “headlines are very important but I have to be aware the headline and the article are often two different things.” In contrast with the fourteen participants mentioned above, the remaining five considered headlines important for a

very different reason. As Participant 9 explains, “sometimes the too dramatic or overly sensationalised tone will put me off reading an article.” Curran and Seaton (2003, p.339) argue that “the media [...] distract public attention from real problems by manufacturing events and inflating trivial issues.” Kuhn (2007, p.2) explores the UK press and tracks its history in detail looking at what characterises it; he concludes that, among other things, “the press in Britain is characterised by some evidence of the blurring of the boundaries between the different strata (quality press, tabloids, black tops) in recent years, in terms of both content and format.” It could partly explain why these five participants resenting alarmist headlines agreed that they can often find them even in the broadsheets they read and trust. These included the *Guardian*, the *Independent* and *The Herald*, none of which is considered an alarmist newspaper and all of which have a fairly liberal reputation.

6.2.4 Bias of the Press

It could be argued that there is no such thing as an objective news report and that all newspaper stories are biased. Kuhn (2007, p.174) explains that “news is not a value-free reflection of the world, nor a neutral summary of key events. Rather, it is a result of a process of selection and construction: first, by sources; second, by journalists working in news organisations; and, finally, by audiences.” Most respondents felt that the press does not offer a balanced view of the A8 minority in Scotland when responding to Question 9 – *Do you think the press offers a balanced view in its ethnic news coverage?* Twenty one participants said the coverage was not balanced and felt there was mostly a bias favouring the white British population. Participant 4 said that it “depends on who is reporting, but both Daily Mail and the Guardian are biased in their own way.” Participant 12 added that “there is a regular bias towards British nationality when discussing stories of people from other ethnicities whether it’s discussing anything from crime to job opportunities to the benefits system.” Participant 16 was critical of both the tabloids and the liberal broadsheets, stating that “there is a balance but only in the hideously stark opposites. For every *Daily Mail* ‘Poles steal British jobs’ there is an overly liberal *Guardian* article calling for positive discrimination for Polish immigrants.” Van Dijk (1991,

p.116) points out that “events that are seen as most problematic or threatening to the interests of the white majority tend to be most prominent.” This was clearly shown by the newspaper analysis when the two most prominent issues raised in relation with the A8 migration to the UK were employment and criminality. Croteau and Hoynes (1997, p.143) argue that while negative migrant-related issues “are legitimate issues, the near-exclusive emphasis on such negative stories resulted in a stereotype of racial minorities as ‘problem people’, groups either beset by problems or causing them for the larger society.” While this is perhaps true for some other minority groups in the UK, the interviews showed that a majority of participants did not see the A8 nationals in Scotland as ‘problem people’ and instead praised the benefits they are bringing to the Scottish society. This is also seen in the following section describing their personal experience with the A8 migrant community. Linking answers to Question 9 with the newspaper analysis produced an interesting result. Although (excluding the *Sun*) the newspapers tended to have a positive or neutral perception of the A8 migrants, the interviewed participants still saw this coverage as biased against the group. One possible explanation of this is the common linkage of the A8 nationals with crime coverage and also homogenising the group as ‘eastern European migrants’ with all its potential negative stereotypes.

6.3 Personal Experience with A8 Migrants

Despite the lack of general awareness of the region, a vast majority of the interviewed participants said they know one or more A8 migrants around them. Only four respondents provided a negative answer to Question 15 – *Do you know any A8 migrants around you?* Fourteen participants said they had personal contacts with A8 migrants. Seventeen participants had professional contacts with A8 migrants, either as classmates at university, colleagues at work or pupils at school. Only very few participants mentioned they knew many A8 migrants around them, suggesting that the A8 migrant community is not a very visible one, compare to other large minorities in Scotland and the UK as a whole, for instance those from Africa, the Middle East or South-East Asia. This could be explained by

the fact that the A8 migrants are mostly of 'white' background and are therefore, hard to tell apart from the majority 'white British' population. To some respect, they are invisible in the British society despite, as Pollard et al. (2008, p.7) argue, the migration to the UK from the countries that have recently joined the EU being "one of the most important social and economic phenomena shaping the UK today. The movement of people has dramatically changed the scale, composition and characteristics of immigration to the UK."

Looking at personal experience with A8 migrants, there was a stark contrast between positive and negative experiences among the interviewed participants. Twenty two respondents out of twenty four said they had a positive direct experience with A8 migrants whereas only four said they had a negative one. It is clear that among the participants, A8 migrant community is seen in a very positive light. This is visible from some of the positive experiences the participants shared during interviews and focus groups. Participants 1, 4, 10, 14 and 20 mentioned their experiences with hardworking members of the A8 community. This could be a reflection of the generally positive media coverage of A8 workers. Participant 14 said that they are "always pleasant, polite helpful, keen to do well in life – a great example to others." Some mentioned that the A8 migrants they know are pleasant people. Participant 2 said that "they are nice people to mix with despite the language barrier" and Participant 10 agreed, saying that they are "highly intelligent workers and students, very sociable." Participant 7 who said she had both positive and negative experience with A8 migrants explained that "A8 migrants are just like any other people, with some you get on, with some you don't." Only four participants said they had negative experiences with A8 migrants, Participant 16 shared that he had been "a victim of crime and intimidation from groups of A8 migrants."

In response to Question 18 – *Is your personal experience similar to the news coverage of the A8 minority?* – fifteen people said the coverage was more negative than their experience, five people said it was mixed and 4 respondents did not have a definite answer to the question. Participant 2 mentioned that "there isn't much coverage about migrants and if there is, it's negative." This

opinion was voiced by a number of participants; Participant 20 went on to elaborate: “The press scandalises these countries, either aiming their emotional headlines at unemployed people who claim that foreigners get their jobs, or wealthy, largely conservative prejudiced types that are overly exclusive about who they think should be allowed in their country.” An interesting discussion emerged during one of the focus groups when Participant 6 mentioned a news story she had read previously in a tabloid newspaper which claimed that A8 and other migrants get access to free housing, welfare and enjoy preferential treatment in the job market. She then said: “I don’t mind people coming to this country to work but I am also not ready to pay for all of this as a taxpayer. I don’t think Britain can afford to save everyone.” This prompted a reaction from another participant who works as a Migrant Support Advisor (Participant 7). She explained that the information was incorrect and whatever migrants do get for free is very little in real terms and far from ‘saving them’. She noted that “the media coverage is out of proportion.” Participant 6’s answer clearly showed the power that the media have on influencing what audiences think about; she concluded the debate by saying that “that’s what I was led to believe by the media coverage.” Findings of the Equal Opportunities Committee (2010, section 137) are in agreement with some of the claims made by the interviewed participants. “The media tended to portray migrants in a negative way, ignoring the positive contributions they make to Scottish society, culture and the economy.”

6.4 Perceptions of A8 Migrants’ Demographic Profile

Answers to Question 19 – *What do you think is the average age of an A8 migrant in Scotland?* – showed that a majority of the respondents saw the community as a young and mobile group. In connection with answers to Questions 3, 10 and 16, it could be argued that they also see the group not only as young and mobile but as being in Scotland to work hard and contribute their share to the Scottish society. A large majority – nineteen participants – guessed that the average age of an A8 migrant in Scotland is between 20 and 30 years of age and out of these, twelve thought it was between 20 and 25 years of age. This is in contrast to only four participants placing their guesses

between 30 and 35 and only one participant stating the average age is between 35 and 40 years of age. It could be argued that this perception is influenced by both positive and negative coverage of the A8 migrant community in Scotland. The positive coverage tends to focus on the work contribution the migrants bring to Scotland and they are often portrayed as young, most commonly Polish, workers who are in Scotland for a short-term period only. When it comes to the negative news coverage, it often involves crimes committed by the A8 migrant community, including thefts and violent acts by young migrants.

The perception of the interviewed participants is in line with factual data available about the A8 migrant community. Pollard et al. (2008, p.25) provide figures stating that 82 per cent of A8 migrants who registered with the Workers Registration Scheme between 2004 and 2007 were aged between 18 and 34. Almost half of all registered A8 migrants fell into the 18-24 age band.

6.5 Perceptions of A8 Migrants as Workers

The argument that the participants perceive A8 migrants as hard-working and determined to do well in Scotland was supported by their answers to Question 20 – *What do you think is the percentage of working A8 migrants in Scotland?* An overwhelming majority of respondents considered over three quarters of A8 migrants in Scotland to be working, with nine stating 70-80 per cent and eleven claiming 80-90 per cent were working. One person thought this number was even higher and only 3 participants thought it was around half of the A8 population in Scotland. According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), 84 per cent of A8 nationals of working age living in the UK in December 2007 were in work. This figure is higher than the percentage of UK nationals of working age in employment (76 per cent) and is one of the highest levels among all foreign nationals living in the UK. “It illustrates that the large majority of post-enlargement migrants have come to the UK to work, with the proportion of A8 nationals of working age in employment increasing steeply as significant numbers of migrants arrived.” (Pollard et al. 2008, p.30) The Glasgow City Council’s report (2007, p.28) offers a smaller figure for employment – 79 per cent – as their survey was not restricted to

only those registered in the Workers Registration Scheme and includes students, the self-employed and economically inactive people. Despite being lower than the LFS employment figures, it is still higher than the percentage of working UK nationals. “Many employers have stated that migrant workers are taking jobs that they could not have filled otherwise, especially in food processing factories and agriculture where other workers are put off by long hours and long pay.” (Glasgow City Council 2007, p.24) The skill level of migrants from the A8 countries is heavily concentrated in the group with medium educational attainment. Despite this, they tend to be employed mostly in unskilled positions in the UK. Rolfe and Metcalf (2009, p.16) note in their report that “employers report that they employ migrants in largely low paid work. They explain this with reference to a) the type of work available, b) the need for English language in more highly skilled work and c) absence of qualifications recognised in the UK.” The question of why A8 migrants are concentrated in low skilled and low paid job has not been adequately addressed by research. This has been despite the fact numerous studies show that “using people with high skills in low wage occupations is a huge waste of very valuable human capital.” (Rolfe and Metcalf 2009, p.45) Arguably, answers about A8 migrants’ employment are in line with the coverage the group receives in Scotland. The migrants do tend to be portrayed as ‘workers’ and the majority of positive and neutral articles about the group talks about their employment in Scotland and the benefits it brings to the country and its population.

6.6 Perceived Benefits and Losses

In the latter stage of the focus groups and interviews, participants were asked several questions related to their perception of personal as well as Scotland-wide outcomes of the A8 migration from 2004 onwards. Question 21 asked: *Do you feel that you have personally benefited or lost out due to A8 migrants in Scotland?* Only just under a third (7) of the participants replied that they felt neither of the two outcomes affecting them personally. However, two thirds responded positively, stating that they have benefited from the presence of A8 migrants in Scotland. Seven participants mentioned the benefits of meeting new people and making new friends and nine participants

benefited from raised cultural awareness both of the A8 region as well as Scotland itself. Eight participants replied that the A8 migrants' presence in Scotland after their EU accession meant personal benefits to them because Scotland was better off economically because of them and consequently, they were better off personally.

Pollard et al. (2008, p.54) argue that although it has been difficult to gauge the impacts of the A8 migration for the UK, there is an increasing stack of evidence that the experience of receiving accession migrants "has so far been a positive one, at least in economic terms. A8 migration is thought to have reduced inflation and lowered the natural rate of unemployment, eased bottlenecks in the labour market, increased the flexibility of the labour force, eased inflationary pressure points on the economy and had no discernible negative impact on unemployment in the UK." Rolfe and Metcalf's report (2009, p.14) is in agreement with Pollard et al., stating that "recent increases in net immigration from A8 countries have been found to increase output and employment. There is also evidence that consumers may have benefited through reduced prices."

The report produced for the Glasgow City Council (2007, p.32) states that a large majority (90 per cent) of the A8 migrants are earning an hourly wage of less than £6, compared to only 20 per cent of all employee jobs in Scotland, and are therefore, potentially taking up a large percentage of entry level posts. However, "although Jobcentre Plus recognises that this may pose some threat to Glasgow's indigenous population's access to employment and by default to the city's ability to meet its wordlessness targets, it believes that there remains room in the labour market for both [A8 migrants and indigenous population]." In addition, "many employers have stated that migrant workers are taking jobs that they could not have filled otherwise, especially in food processing factories and agriculture where other workers are put off by long hours and low pay." (Glasgow City Council 2007, p.24) Clearly, the A8 migrants are not therefore, 'stealing British jobs' as the *Sun* likes to point out on a regular basis. No other researched newspaper made such claims and although all at some point over the seven-year period expressed concerns that the large numbers of A8 migrants

might pose a threat to the indigenous workforce, all eventually agreed that overall, the presence of the A8 workers was beneficial.

6.7 Migrants and Scotland

The Scottish Government has been actively trying to attract young and talented workers to live, study, work and do business in Scotland through its Fresh Talent Initiative since February 2004 in response to its native population ageing and decreasing.⁵ (Glasgow City Council 2009, p.12) The scheme has been one of many 'pull-factors' that has influenced A8 migrants to come to Scotland over the past seven years. There is clear evidence that suggests that A8 migrants generally come to the UK actively seeking employment or opportunities to study. The Glasgow City Council's report (2009, p.25) found that half of A8 nationals in Glasgow came to the city for economic gains, 24 per cent to start or continue education, 19 per cent for career opportunities and 6 per cent to set up a business. Many respondents also mentioned improving their English language skills (45%), better quality of life compare to their homeland (42%) or recommendations by friends or family (20%). Responses to Question 22 – *Why do you think A8 migrants come to Scotland?* – showed that the interviewed participants felt similarly about the A8 migrants' reasons to come to Scotland as seventeen respondents mentioned job opportunities or higher pay. Three participants mentioned the Scottish Government's active involvement in looking for migrants to come to Scotland. A third of the participants (8) considered Scotland and its population to be friendly and welcoming and therefore, attractive to migrants while another five participants considered it better than London and England because it is friendlier, less populated and cheaper to live in. Only four respondents mentioned language skills improvement and no-one considered studies as a reason to come to Scotland. Interestingly, only one participant mentioned the welfare system when he suggested that Scotland had a better health care provision than the A8 countries. Pollard et al. (2008, p.54) suggest

⁵ The scheme was subsumed into the UK immigration system on 29th June, 2008 when the UK government brought in a new points based immigration scheme

that according to one survey on A8 migrants, “90 per cent [of them] had not used medical or health services during their stay in Scotland.”

Among the last questions of the focus groups and interviews was Question 23 – *Do you think Scotland needs A8 and other migrants?* Responses to it were overwhelmingly positive; over 80 per cent of respondents (20) said that Scotland does need migrants, three were unsure and only one responded negatively to the question. Many participants were aware of the fact that Scottish population is ageing; Participant 2 noted that “Scotland is ageing; we need to fill the gap.” Participant 10 welcomed migration to Scotland, saying that “all countries need migrants; it’s not a new phenomenon. That’s how cultures learn and grow, how skills are shared and how a balanced society is created”, whereas Participant 1 was more cautious, suggesting that “if they are keen to contribute to Scottish society than we need them but I would be concerned if that meant losses to Scots themselves.”

Rolfe and Metcalf’s research clearly illustrates that Scotland does need migrants to come to the country. They note that “studies which focus on the economic impact of migration into Scotland address concerns at demographic change and the tightening of the labour market which is projected to follow population decline. Research has identified in-migration as the demographic variable with the biggest economic impact. However, to counteract shrinkage of the labour force, it has been estimated that an annual rate of 20,000 new migrants will be needed.” (Rolfe and Metcalf 2009, p.13) Pollard et al. (2008, p.54) add that although the A8 migrants tend to work in low-paid jobs, their contribution to the UK economy is disproportionately large and important. “Given that post-enlargement migrants have overwhelmingly been young, single and in work, their impact on the UK’s public purse is likely to have been positive. Although most earn low wages in per-hour terms, they tend to work long hours and end up making important tax contributions while not making very great use of public services.”

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Academic Discourse

Within the past few decades, the research on mass media and its impact has come a long way. As late as the early 1980s, the majority of academics thought that the way mass media affected their audiences was purely through constant repetition of messages which were simply received and acknowledged by the audiences without any further development. Entman was among the first to point out that the audiences were active in their reception of media messages and that these messages did not influence what people thought but merely what they thought about. Suddenly a whole 'new' process of interpretations of messages was 'discovered' and the notion of active audiences gained prominence in academic circles. It has also been argued that these processes do not only happen individually but form a social structure in which things like education, class, and nationality, and also friends, teachers and families play major roles. Despite the limited direct influence that the media are now argued to have, it is important to stress that they are a hugely important part of contemporary society, omnipresent in our everyday lives and their influence, no matter how large, cannot be ignored or overestimated. Media portrayal of ethnic minorities has been by many characterised tending to spend "inordinate attention on the more bizarre and unusual elements of the minority communities" (Croteau and Hoynes 1997, p.143) and as "a negative campaign almost to scare people about the impacts of migration." (Equal Opportunities Committee 2010)

7.2 Newspaper Coverage

Although traces of such portrayal were found during the empirical stage of the research, it is fair to say that most of the coverage of the five researched newspapers could be described as positive towards the A8 minority in the UK and focusing on a variety of topics related to the community. This conclusion however, does not include the coverage of the *Sun* tabloid newspaper which

continuously strived to stigmatise the group by focusing on themes of crime, welfare abuse, 'floods' of migrants and disadvantaged of migration to the indigenous British population. This search for sensationalism was not shared by the remaining four newspapers, and contrary to some of the previously published documents, especially the Equal Opportunities Committee's 2010 Report, it was found that the A8 minority was mainly portrayed positively as a group of hard-working people who come to Britain to seek better future for themselves taking jobs that the indigenous population does not want to do and using a minimum of the welfare provisions available to them. However, it is true that none of the five newspapers offered a viewpoint of the A8 minority other than very few articles describing the lives of several A8 nationals in the UK. Moreover, no A8-related cultural events or issues were reported on. Despite Kuhn's (2007, p.9) argument that the "upmarket papers provide considerable analysis and commentary in addition to news reportage," the ethnic coverage itself could not be called balanced. Mass media play a significant role in shaping public perceptions on a variety of important issues, both through the information that is dispensed through them, and through the interpretations they place upon this information. "Many critical researchers argue that news accounts encourage us to accept as natural, obvious or common-sensial certain preferred ways of classifying reality, and that these classifications have far-reaching implications for the cultural reproduction of [...] relations across society." (Allan 2010, p.98) It is therefore, of huge significance that the press (together with other mass media) offers a balanced coverage of ethnic minorities to avoid the creation of stereotypes, both negative and positive, that could lead to an erosion of the processes of integration and social inclusion. Kuhn (2007, p.174) argues that "news is not a value-free reflection of the world, nor a neutral summary of key events. Rather, it is a result of a process of selection and construction: first by sources; second, by journalists working in news organisations; and, finally, by audiences." What was confirmed by the newspaper analysis is however, that the 'us and them' mentality of the media is deeply entrenched in the newspapers researched and despite the generally positive coverage, it does not recognise the need for a balanced overview of the community which could ease the social processes of integration and inclusion.

7.3 Perceptions of the Audience

The interviewed participants mostly recognised that the ethnic coverage of the press is not balanced and commented on the bias it has in favour of the stereotypical white Britons. However, there was a major difference in their perception of the press' stance on A8 minorities. Whereas the participants claimed that the press was mostly negative about the group, the newspaper analysis revealed that in fact, this was not the case and a vast majority of articles in the past seven years was either positive or neutral in nature. It is difficult to suggest the extent to which the media have an impact on the Scottish audience in relation to the A8 migrants. It is a generally known fact that Scotland is in need of migrant workers because its population is ageing and its numbers decreasing. However, this information was effectively spread through the mass media and has therefore, created a kind of a baseline for perceptions of migrants coming to the country. And the fact that being members of the European Union, the A8 migrants might not feel as threatening to the Scots as perhaps migrants from further outside of Britain, for instance Africa or Central Asia. Perhaps that's where the limitations of this research are most obvious; in the fact that the A8 minority could be said to be to an extent an invisible minority. It is a group of generally 'white' peoples from within Europe that is not hugely different from the people of Western Europe. It is nearly impossible to spot an A8 migrant in a group of people in the street or at one's workplace without a direct contact, unlike the majority of migrants from Asia and Africa.

7.4 Recommendations

7.4.1 Coverage Comparison

It could arguably be of interest to compare the perceptions people in Scotland have of a variety of ethnic minorities in the country and compare and contrast these with the media portrayals these groups are receiving. Each minority group is different from one another, sometimes only a little but often very much so. It is therefore, vital that future research should not focus on a single group only

but try and compare how mass media portray a variety of ethnic minority groups and how these might impact on the majority's perceptions of these groups. A prime example of another group to include in a media research is the Roma coming from the 10 CEE countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007.

7.4.2 Eastern Bloc Mentality

Both parts of the empirical research sections of this paper highlighted the fact that the A8 countries are still seen as a homogenous bloc of post-communist countries. Both the press and the audience tend to ignore, or be unaware, of the differences between the eight countries and their peoples. This lack of information and knowledge opens up a huge potential for perception influence not only by the media but various political, economic and social groups. What can be done to tackle this trend? Further research could be carried to see how the media could be used to educate their audiences about the specific realities of the A8 countries and their populations. This would arguably lead to an easing of the social integration processes within the Scottish society.

7.4.3 Press Coverage Balance

Although it is the media that most commonly get blamed for the lack of balance in their ethnic news coverage, it should be argued that it is a process in which not only the media take part. Minority groups should be encouraged to work closely with the media and promote their communities and actions they take within the media industry. Although "the media must present news and documentary coverage in a way that fits a society's pre-existing conceptual frameworks and assumptions in order to make the material more acceptable and understandable," (Tsuda 2003, p.295) it is important to note that the contemporary society (not only in the UK) is increasingly becoming multicultural and multinational and therefore, ethnic similarities and differences are parts of everyday lives of the vast majority of the population. Increased coverage about ethnic events,

issues or personalities from the minority's point of view would arguably lead to more balance perceptions of the migrant communities in Scotland.

7.4.4 Expansion of Empirical Research

Because this dissertation only represents the views of 24 interviewed participants from a relatively similar educational and class background, it is recommended that future empirical research is carried out with a larger and more representative sample. This can be achieved either through interviews and focus groups again however; it would arguably also be beneficial to use a questionnaire. This could be distributed in person and filled in under the researchers' supervision or electronically as an online survey. Using this method could majorly expand the representative sample researched and consequently, show a more objective picture of the impact media have on public perceptions.

7.4.5 Media Variety

Newspapers are only one of several different types of mass media and therefore, have a limited potential to influence public perception. If further research is carried out following a similar theme, it is suggested that a variety of mass media is studied, including radio, television and the Internet. This would mean that all major mass media types are covered by the research and therefore, the 'real' effect mass media have on their audiences could arguably be analysed.

7.4.6 Two Sides

This dissertation aimed at analysing purely the impact media have on perception of A8 migrants within the Scottish population. However the social processes of integration and inclusion are not only one-sided and it would therefore, be useful in future research to include perceptions of the A8 migrant community as well. This would create a balance of opinions and would show how the minority feels it is being perceived in Scotland. Furthermore, involving the media industry in the

debate itself answer questions related to the portrayal of A8 minorities by the media and the reasons behind it.

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10. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Interview and Focus Groups Participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Occupation	Political preference	FG or Int. ⁶
1	24	M	Surveyor	Conservative	Int.
2	46	M	Chairperson of Community Organisation	SNP	Int.
3	26	F	PhD student	Conservative	FG1
4	28	M	PhD student	Labour	FG1
5	44	F	Police Officer	SNP	FG2
6	54	F	Teacher	Labour	FG2
7	27	F	Migrant Support Advisor	Labour	FG2
8	57	F	Health Improvement Director	Conservative	FG2
9	22	F	UG Student	SNP	FG2
10	34	M	Underwriter	SNP/Labour	Int.
11	53	M	Writer	Socialist/Labour	Int.
12	25	F	Buying Co-ordinator	Labour	Int.
13	24	M	Sales Engineer	Liberal Democrats	Int.
14	56	M	Teacher	SNP/Conservative	Int.
15	24	M	PG Student	Labour	Int.
16	24	M	PG Student	Labour	Int.
17	25	F	PhD student	Labour	Int.
18	23	M	Student sabbatical officer	Liberal Democrats	Int.
19	58	F	Retired Education Officer	Labour	Int.
20	35	F	Brand Manager	Conservative	Int.
21	23	F	Care worker	SNP	Int.
22	24	M	Musician	Liberal Democrats	Int.
23	61	M	Retired Teacher	Labour	Int.
24	23	F	UG Student	Liberal Democrats	Int.

⁶ FG – Focus Group, Int. – Individual Interview

Appendix 2 - Keywords used in the *Newsbank* and *Metro* searches

- Poland
- Polish
- Czech
- Slovakia
- Slovak
- Hungary
- Hungarian
- Slovenia
- Slovene
- Estonia
- Estonian
- Latvia
- Latvian
- Lithuania
- Lithuanian
- A8
- Migrant
- Eastern European
- New Member States

Additional keywords used in the *Metro* search:

Scotland, Scottish, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Inverness, Dundee, Perth, St Andrews, Fort William, Dunfermline, Paisley, Clydebank, Shetland, Orkney, Western Isles, Hamilton, Oban, Dumfries

Appendix 3 – Consent Form



Consent Form

Project Title: Public Perception of A8 migrants: the discourse of the media and its impacts

Name of researcher: Jan Semotam

Please circle relevant answer

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. I confirm that I have read and understood the Plain Language Statement for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions about it. | YES | NO |
| 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. | YES | NO |
| 3. I agree to consent to interviews being audio-taped. | YES | NO |
| 4. I agree to take part in the above study. | YES | NO |
| 5. I agree that all data from the interviews will be anonymised. | YES | NO |
| 6. I understand how the end results of the research will be used. | YES | NO |

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

Signed forms will be scanned as PDF files and stored within a password protected folder only accessible by the Researcher. Paper forms will be securely destroyed immediately after.

Appendix 4 – Plain Language Statement



Plain Language Statement

1. Project Title

Public Perception of A8 migrants: the discourse of the media and its impacts

2. Researcher Details

Jan Semotam is a postgraduate student at the University of Glasgow, studying Russian, Central and East European Studies. Originally from the Czech Republic, he has lived in Scotland for almost 8 years.

3. Invitation Paragraph

“You are being invited to take part in this project. It is important you fully understand why this research is being done and what it involves before you consent to take part. Please take time to read all the information below. If there is anything unclear, please do ask and we will provide you with more information. Take time to decide whether you want to take part. You are free to refuse to take part.

Thank you for reading this.”

4. What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to help understand how the press media’s portrayal of eastern European migration following EU enlargement impacts the public perception of A8 migrants. By A8, we mean the eight countries from Central and Eastern Europe that joined the European Union on 01 May 2004, namely the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. The study focuses specifically at the print press, including, both UK-wide and Scottish only newspapers.

The migration of A8 citizens into Western Europe has been a major political, social and economic theme across the past decade. Scotland’s position within the UK, including its separate print press and the political devolution which allowed for Scotland to encourage immigration make it an ideal geographical, political and social case study.

5. Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because we are looking for views of Scottish long-term residents.

6. Do I have to take part?

No. Participation in the project is completely voluntary and you are free to refuse to take part. But you can help us further understand the researched issue of the media’s influence on public perceptions.

7. What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to participate, you will have to sign a consent form and agree to take part in a 1-hour focus group of 5-8 participants with the lead researcher. You may also be asked to take part in an individual interview at a later stage. You can then decide whether or not you want to participate in the interview. Focus groups and interviews will be done in English.

8. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Yes. All personal information and details will be kept in digital form and stored in a password protected folder only accessible by the lead researcher. Data from the focus groups and interviews will also be kept in a secure digital form and will always be accessible only by the lead researcher. Information may be retained for up to 1 year following the study but will be destroyed thereafter unless you give explicit instruction for it to be kept.

During focus groups, you will only be identified by your first name; all other confidential data will be anonymous to other participants unless you decide to share it. All names in published and unpublished work resulting from this study will be changed to pseudonyms; using only real age, gender and general occupation information.

9. What will happen to the results of this study?

The results will be analysed and used for a Masters dissertation by the lead researcher. Following this, they will be applied in a report for BEMIS – an ethnic minorities led national umbrella organisation for the ethnic minority voluntary sector. This report will be used to highlight new directions and ways to influence the media portrayal of affected communities such as those of A8 migrants.

10. Who is organising the research?

The research is organised and run by Jan Semotam as the lead researcher. It is formulated as part of a postgraduate Masters research dissertation at the University of Glasgow and is supported by BEMIS.

11. Contact and Further Information

Please contact Jan for further details or with any questions you might have:

Email: 0503355s@student.gla.ac.uk or semotam@gmail.com

Phone: 0773 8422 129

Post: Central and East European Studies
University of Glasgow
8-9 Lilybank Gardens
Glasgow G12 8RZ

You can also contact Jan's academic supervisor, Dr Eamonn Butler:

Email: Eamonn.Butler@glasgow.ac.uk

Phone: 0141 330 4094

Appendix 5 – Ethical Approval Form

ETHICS COMMITTEE

FACULTY OF LAW, BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

NOTES:

THIS APPLICATION AND ANY ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS MUST BE SENT ELECTRONICALLY TO L.Stevenson@lbss.gla.ac.uk

THIS APPLICATION FORM SHOULD BE TYPED NOT HAND WRITTEN.

ALL QUESTIONS MUST BE ANSWERED. “NOT APPLICABLE” IS A SATISFACTORY ANSWER WHERE APPROPRIATE.

NO EMPIRICAL RESEARCH SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO ETHICAL APPROVAL BEING GRANTED.

PLEASE NOTE - THAT COPIES OF PROPOSED QUESTIONNAIRES OR A LIST OF QUESTIONS THAT WILL BE INCLUDED IN ANY QUESTIONNAIRE SHOULD ACCOMPANY THIS APPLICATION FORM - THIS IS COMPULSORY.

PLEASE READ PAGE 2 OF THIS FORM CAREFULLY TO DETERMINE WHAT SECTION YOU SHOULD BE COMPLETING - **A OR B.**

**UNIQUE INTERNAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER –
LBSS / 09 / _ _ _ _**

(Issued by the Ethics Committee Secretary)

Project Title:

Public perception of A8 migrants: the discourse of the media and its impacts

Date of Ethics submission (i.e. the date you submit this form for approval etc.):

Name of all person(s) submitting research proposal:

Jan Semotam

Position:

Student or Staff? Student

If Staff: Staff No: _____

If Student: Student No: 0503355 UG or PG: PG

Full Course Name: MSc in Russian, Central and East European Studies

Department/Group/Institute/Centre

CEES

Address for correspondence relating to this submission:

9 Lilybank Gardens, Glasgow, G12 8QQ

SECTION A

ALL QUESTIONS MUST BE ANSWERED.

“NOT APPLICABLE” IS A SATISFACTORY ANSWER WHERE APPROPRIATE.

1. Describe the purposes of the research proposed and the research participants.

This project aims to identify the crucial connection between processes of integration, social inclusion and public perception. It seeks to analyse the media representation of A8 migrants (migrants from the 8 Central and East European countries that joined the European Union on 1 May 2004 – Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia) and how it affects public opinion and attitudes.

The project is part of the “Collaborative Dissertation” venture and its first-year trial. This particular project runs in conjunction with BEMIS – an ethnic minorities led national umbrella organisation for the ethnic minority voluntary sector – who provide additional support during the research stage and a month internship after to transform the dissertation project into a document more useful for their needs, namely for lobbying purposes.

2. Please give a summary of the design and methodology of the project. **Please note** that copies of proposed questionnaires or a list of questions that will be included in any questionnaire should accompany this application form (Compulsory not optional). Please also include in this section details of the proposed sample size, giving indications of the calculations used to determine the required sample size, including any assumptions you may have made. (If in doubt, please obtain statistical advice).

The project involves three different stages of research – library based analysis of academic discourses re media impact on social inclusion and integration, library based content analysis of newspapers and a case-study involving focus groups and interviews.

Stage 1 – Library-based content analysis will be carried out to formulate a middle-range theory regarding the influence of media (print press) portrayal on social perceptions, in particular perceptions of minorities. In Bryman’s terms, this will be a deductive theory exercise – hypothesis will be deducted “on the basis of what is known about in a particular domain and of theoretical considerations in relation to that domain”. (Bryman, 2004)

Stage 2 – Library-based analysis of five newspapers (Scottish tabloid - *Daily Record*, Scottish edition of a free newspaper - *Metro*, Scottish broadsheet newspaper – *The Herald*, national broadsheet newspaper – *the Guardian* and Scottish edition of a national tabloid - the *Scottish Sun*) for the period from the A8 countries accession to the EU – 01 May 2004 – until the last restrictions regarding job markets and labour mobility were lifted throughout the old Member States – 30 April 2011. These newspapers were chosen because they represent the largest readership numbers by newspaper type in Scotland. This analysis will be primarily focused on content (however, some discourse will be covered) and will form, together with Stage 3, part of empirical scrutiny of the middle-range theory devised in Stage 1.

Stage 3 – Focus groups and semi-structured interviews will be carried out to gather data on public perception of A8 migrants in Scotland and scrutinise the theory devised in Stage 1 regarding the media’s influence on social realities. The focus groups method was chosen to allow a large sample to be interviewed, however, core interest will be in the semi-structure interviews that will be designed to gather deep qualitative data. Proposed sample for focus groups is 25-30 (split into groups of 5-8) and for interviews up to 10 individuals. The sample will be recruited mainly with assistance from BEMIS as they have a wide-ranging networks of contacts around Scotland. To allow a more representative sample, choosing criteria will include gender, age and social status. Nationality is not a prime focus, however, long-term residency of at least 10 years in Scotland will be a condition that will have to be met by all participants. Focus groups will centre on the participants’ preference of newspapers, reasons behind their choices and the way the newspapers influence their perception of A8 migrants in Scotland. Sample articles and headlines will be provided and discussed within the groups. Questions during the focus groups will mainly not be prepared in advance but will result from interactions during the discussions. Individual interviews questions will be semi-prepared on the basis of the focus groups results. Focus groups and interviews will take place in the BEMIS offices in Glasgow city centre.

3. What in your opinion are the ethical considerations involved in this proposal? (You may wish for example to comment on issues to do with consent, confidentiality, risk to subjects, etc.)

The project does not propose to analyse people's most personal details and beliefs. However, it will try to gather data on their thoughts and feelings regarding some of the main themes covered regularly by the press, such as A8 minority population in Scotland and its influence on issues such as local and national welfare systems, job markets, health care quality and availability. Therefore, it is important to ensure their anonymity and also complete confidentiality with respect to the data gathered. Data will only be available to the researcher – Jan Semotam – but anonymous versions will be discussed with, and shown to, both the academic supervisor – Dr Eamonn Butler – and the assigned BEMIS representative – Dr Mariangela Palladino. Digital data will be stored in a password protected folder within the University of Glasgow computer server which is only accessible by Jan Semotam. A consent form will have to be signed by all participants prior to both focus groups and interviews. This will be converted into a digital PDF file and the paper copy destroyed. Participants will also at all times have the right to withdraw from the research (including comments and other information they had already made and given).

4. Who are the investigators (including assistants) who will conduct the research and what are their qualifications and experience?

Jan Semotam is the researcher - student, MA in Central and East European Studies and Russian Language (First Class), dissertation looked at public perceptions of the Roma community in the Czech Republic. Experience includes a year-long international student research about effective learning (2004-05) with the Learning School project supervised by the Shetland Islands Council and Professor John Macbeath from the University of Cambridge and funded partly by the British Council. This project involved a group of six high-school graduates from four countries and two UK university graduates designing and distributing a questionnaire and carrying out focus groups and individual interviews with students and teachers at high schools in the Czech Republic, Shetland Islands, Sweden, Germany, Australia and South Africa, analysing the gathered data and producing reports and presentations.

5. In cases where subjects will be identified from information held by another party (for example, a housing association) describe the arrangements you intend to make to gain access to this information.

N/A

6. Will payment or any other incentive, such as a gift or free services, be made to any research subject? If so, please specify and state the level of payment to be made and/or the source of the funds/gift/free service to be used. Please explain the justification for offering payment or other incentive.

No payment will be made to research subjects. Free refreshments will be provided during focus groups and interviews.

7. Please give details of how consent is to be obtained. A copy of the proposed consent form, along with a separate information sheet, written in simple, non-technical language MUST ACCOMPANY THIS PROPOSAL FORM.

Consent form will be distributed prior to all focus groups and interviews. Participants will also at all times have the right to withdraw from the research (including comments and other information they had already made and given).

8. Please state who will have access to the data and what measures which will be adopted to maintain the confidentiality of the research subject and to comply with data protection requirements e.g. will the data be anonymised?. Will the intended group of research subjects, to your knowledge, be involved in other research? If so, please justify.

Only Jan Semotam will have access to personal/confidential data. Academic supervisor, Dr Eamonn Butler and BEMIS representative, Dr Mariangela Palladino will have access to anonymised data. All data will be anonymised after interviews and focus groups and personal/confidential details will be destroyed (electronic and paper versions) when the planned internship with BEMIS finishes in October 2011. All names in published and unpublished work resulting from this study will be changed to pseudonyms; using only real age, gender and general occupation information.

9. Will the intended group of research subjects, to your knowledge, be involved in other research? If so, please justify.

N/A

10. Date on which the project will begin and end.

Library-based research has already started; focus groups and interviews will start to be carried out once an ethics approval is gained. Project end is 09 September 2011

11. Please state location(s) where the project will be carried out.

University of Glasgow, BEMIS premises on Queen Street, Glasgow

Name Jan Semotam
(Proposer of research)

Date 20/05/2011

Where the proposal is from a student, the Supervisor is asked to certify the accuracy of the above account.

Name _____ Date _____
(Supervisor of student)

COMMENTS FROM HEAD OF DEPARTMENT/GROUP/INSTITUTE/CENTRE

Name _____ Date _____
(Head of Department/Group/Institute/Centre)

Appendix 6 – Questions for Focus Groups and Interviews

First name:

Age:

Occupation:

Political party preference:

Q1. How many countries from Central and East Europe joined the EU in 2004 and 2007?

Q2. Can you name them?

Q3. What do you know about them?

Q4. What is your main source of news information?

Q5. What newspapers do you read and how regularly?

Q6. Why do you read the particular newspapers?

Q7. Do you discuss news stories with others? Where and how often?

Q8. How important is the headline and its tone for your decision to read a newspaper article?

Q9. Do you think the Press offers a balanced view in its ethnic news coverage? Is there a bias?

Q10. What is the last news story you can remember about A8 migrants? Was it positive or negative?

Q11. If you remember, what did you know/think about the A8 countries/people before their EU accession?

Q12. What restrictions did the UK/EU as a whole apply on EU labour migration post-2004?

Q13. What is your opinion on restricting labour migration within the EU?

Q14. Do you think Scotland has benefited or lost out from the A8 migrants who came after 2004?

Q15. Do you know any A8 migrants around you?

Q16. Do you have any positive experience with A8 migrants?

Q17. Do you have any negative experience with A8 migrants?

Q18. Is your personal experience similar to the news coverage of the A8 minority?

Q19. What do you think is the average age of an A8 migrant in Scotland?

Q20. What do you think is the percentage of working A8 migrants in Scotland?

Q21. Do you feel that you have personally benefited lost out due to A8 migrants in Scotland?

Q22. Why do you think A8 migrants come to Scotland?

Q23. Do you think Scotland needs A8 and other migrants?

Q24. In the 1970s an English newspaper printed the following advertisement by an English local authority.
What do you think about it?

"Asian immigrants from East Africa please do not settle in the Leicester area, we do not have any facilities for you people."

How would you react if it was printed in 2011 by the Glasgow City Council regarding the A8 migrant minority?

Appendix 7 – Focus Groups Invitation Email

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Jan Semotam and I am a Masters student at the University of Glasgow. I would like to invite you to participate in a focus group which forms a part a collaborative study with BEMIS, an ethnic minorities led national umbrella organisation for the ethnic minority voluntary sector. We are looking at the effects that the media have on public perception of migrants from the newest EU Member States in Scotland.

This study is a result of a collaboration between the University of Glasgow and other organisations, including BEMIS, that aims to give students the opportunity to gain 'real life' work experience and to conduct research which has immediate relevance to the world beyond academia and to address the fact that many organisations in the public and third sectors with an interest in Central and Eastern Europe are in need of good quality research.

The purpose of this particular project is to help understand how the press media's portrayal of eastern European migration following EU enlargement impacts the public perception of A8 migrants. By A8, we mean the eight countries from Central and Eastern Europe that joined the European Union on 01 May 2004, namely the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia.

If you agree to participate, you will take part in a 1-hour focus group of 5-8 participants designed as an informal discussion led by myself. You may also be asked to take part in an individual interview at a later stage. You can then decide whether or not you want to participate in the interview.

We are proposing the following dates for the focus groups to take place. Individual interviews would then be scheduled separately.

Tuesday 16 August 09:00-10:00

Tuesday 16 August 16:00-17:00

Thursday 18 August 09:00-10:00

Thursday 18 August 16:00-17:00

Friday 19 August 09:00-10:00

If you agree to take part, can you please send your replies to jan.semotam@bemis.org.uk with the following information:

Date(s) you're available to take part

Your age, gender and occupation

The only criterion for participation is that you have to have been a resident in Scotland for the last 10 years.

For more information about the project and about issues of confidentiality, please see the attached Statement.

Thank you for taking time to read this invite and I hope to see you at one of the focus groups.



Research Title: Public perception of A8 migrants: the discourse of the media and its impacts.

Background

BEMIS (Black and Ethnic Minorities Infrastructure in Scotland) is the Ethnic Minorities led national umbrella organisation for the Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector & the communities that this sector represents. As a strategic national infrastructure organisation, BEMIS aims to empower the diverse Ethnic Minority third sector. We are committed to promoting inclusion, democratic active citizenship, recognition of diversity, human rights education, and wider representation. Our vision is of a Scotland that is Equal, Inclusive, and Responsive: A society where people from the diverse communities are valued, treated with dignity and respect, have equal citizenship, opportunities and quality of life, and who actively participate in civic society. (www.bemis.org.uk)

Aims:

- This project aims to identify the crucial connection between processes of integration, social inclusion and public perception.
- It seeks to analyse the media representation of A8 migrants and how it affects public opinions and attitudes.
- The project endeavours to highlight new directions and ways to influence the media portrayals of affected communities.

Research process

The research will entail several phases. The first one would be library and web based research to realize a mapping of media representations of A8 migrants in Scotland. This includes newspapers articles, online news feeds, television news reports, etc. collating the researched material will provide a first insight into 'patterns' of representation.

The second step of the research will entail semi-structured interviews with members of the A8 migrant community in Scotland. The interviews will seek to collect experiences of A8

migrants; these might be some points to explore: how do they feel about media representations; what is their experience of public perception of A8 migrants; how do they engage with the other migrant communities and the settled community; what, for them, might be the impacts of media influence; what are their experiences of integration.

The third step of the research entails conducting focus groups, facilitated by BEMIS, which bring together a diverse range of individuals from the civic society. The focus groups aim to explore public perception of A8 migrants in Scotland and the role of the media.

Support

BEMIS will be able to assist the student by facilitating access to potential research participants from the A8 migrant communities. BEMIS premises might be used for conducting focus groups and interviews if desired.

The student will be supported by Mariangela Palladino, Bemis Policy and Equality Officer, mariangela.palladino@bemis.org.uk

Outcomes

The final stage of the research would entail a one month internship at BEMIS during which the candidate would compile a report of the research findings in a format which is functional for the Third Sector. BEMIS will assist the student in identifying priorities and in 'translating' the research findings in ways and modes suitable for the sector. An additional outcome could be to provide a toolkit which assists the Third Sector in campaigning and lobbying the media against negative portrayal.

Appendix 9 – Jan Semotam’s Application for the Collaborative Dissertations Project

29 January 2011

Professor Rebecca Kay,
University of Glasgow
9 Lilybank Gardens
Glasgow, G12 8RZ

Dear Professor Kay,

Public Perception of A8 Migrants: The Discourse of the Media and its Impacts

Further to the advertisement, I should like to apply for the Collaborative Dissertation opportunity offered by the University of Glasgow and BEMIS.

As requested, I have enclosed my curriculum vitae including contact details for academic references, if required. In addition to these documents, I should like to take this opportunity to provide some further information in support of my application.

Research background:

I chose to do an Honours Degree in Central and East European Studies (CEES) because I felt it would be both an interesting and exciting challenge and an opportunity to learn about my native region from a very different (and possibly a more objective) perspective. Courses offered allowed me to explore and develop my interests in the region. These include: nationalism and growing xenophobia towards minority communities, environmental policies and economic transitions following the collapse of Communism and in particular, socio-political developments of the region, following the 2004 European Union enlargement. These are some of the areas that have caught my interest and I have been able to explore these further with the benefit of the MSc programme in Russian, Central and East European Studies this year. I graduated with a First Class honours degree from the University of Glasgow in June 2010 and was awarded a scholarship for the MSc programme by the University of Glasgow-based Centre for Russian, Central and East European Studies.

My undergraduate dissertation looked at the popular perceptions of the Roma community in the Czech Republic and I therefore, have experience in analysing the portrayal of a minority group by mainstream mass media. Since my dissertation work involved only a library-based type of research, I see this project as a great opportunity to develop my skills in carrying out research interviews and focus groups. I have previous experience with these as they formed a major part of a research project on effective learning that I carried out in prior to my university studies.

Research stages and methodology:

Building on the basic framework included in the project’s overview, I believe some of the steps need to be updated and there are several others that need to be taken to effectively implement the research. Firstly, it is of high importance to carry out a library-based analysis of the theoretical frameworks of the influence of mass media over individuals and societies. This is to create a solid academic basis for progressing into the practical stage of analysing the media coverage itself.

While gathering information from mass media, it will be of importance to analyse the different types of media and also its sub-categories. These include tabloids, economics-based, social politics-based etc. Mass media cannot be considered as a homogenous entity and needs to be mapped accordingly to fully understand its influence on different groups in society.

Presumably, the mass media analysis will highlight few general ‘themes’ that tend to be discussed more than others. These usually tend to be areas connected to the welfare system, health and safety issues, education and cultural differences. If this is indeed the case, I would suggest looking at these areas and developing respective frameworks for each of these and having these ‘themes’ as the basis for the next two steps of the research – interviews and focus groups.

In my experience, first few interviews and focus groups usually highlight several points that could be useful for the research itself but cannot be properly used because of the time delay. I would therefore suggest a small number of 'trial' interviews to allow the research becoming aware of issues that might not necessarily come to prominence in the library-based part of the project. Then, this data can be analysed and help develop the final strategy for interviews and focus groups.

Regarding the focus groups, I suggest creating two types of these, ones based on nationality/language/ethnicity and others based on social/economic/work/professional backgrounds. Individuals that share the same native (or preferential) language should presumably feel more comfortable within the group and be encouraged to share more ideas and elaborate further on these. Similarly, people from similar social backgrounds might elaborate on problems and issues they share among themselves.

In addition to the structure proposed by BEMIS, I think it is important to speak to people behind the media portrayal and I would suggest gathering qualitative data from journalists and possibly media managers. This could provide more background as to why A8 migrants are portrayed by the media in the way they are.

Ethical concerns:

I do not anticipate any serious ethical concerns although some problems could arise due to the highly personal nature of areas covered by the research. However, since the project is supervised both by professionals from a minority-orientated organisation and academics with extensive primary research experience, I believe any problems can be avoided even before the research reaches the interview/focus groups stage.

Literature:

Literature should be consulted regarding theoretical frameworks of media's influence on individuals and the society, ways of portrayal of minority groups in mass media and also on research and methodology. These would be supplemented by websites of various British and European organisations and institutions. Key readings include:

Allan, Stuart (2004), *News Culture*
Curran, J. & Seaton, J. (1988), *Power without Responsibility*
Curran, J. & Gurevitch, M. (eds) (1991), *Mass Media and Society*
Davis, Aeron, *Public relations democracy: public relations, politics and the mass media in Britain*
Durham, M. & Kellner, D. (2001), *Media and Cultural Studies*
Gauntlett, David (2005), *Moving Experiences - Second Edition: Media Effects and Beyond*
Gorman Lyn, McLean, David (2009) *Media and society into the 21st century: a historical introduction*
Mander, Jerry, "The Tyranny of Television", in *Resurgence*
Nesbitt-Larking, Paul Wingfield (2007) *Politics, society and the media*
Stokes, Jane and Reading, Anna (eds) (1999) *The media in Britain: current debates and developments*

Throughout my life I have seen and experienced a number of changes and challenges, dealt with them in a 'can-do' manner and learned a great deal from them. I see the BEMIS research project as a valuable opportunity and an exciting new challenge in my life. I offer international experience and an objective viewpoint, the ability to deliver innovative and creative work to a high standard and an enthusiastic approach to new challenges. Should my application be successful, this is the level of energy and commitment that I would be able to put into my work.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to consider my application and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,