

The 'Migrant children schooling crisis': examining the intersection between media framing, neoliberalism and schooling in Leicester

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Overview of the project

The pilot project aims to address tensions identified with the 'migrant school crisis' as it is portrayed in the media and the experiences of staff working within education. Preliminary findings show that the media framing of the issue, which is often negative, is contradicted by the experiences of those who work within education.

Disclaimer: "Migrant School Crisis" is used in this study, but is a term that we aim to problematise, rather than accept at face value.

Defining 'migrant'

- Definitions have their own consequences
- Varied interpretations and fluid generalisations in public domain
- International and internal migration
- Impact on policy and analysis
- Conflicting definitions
- Different datasets- country of birth, nationality..
- Migration often conflated with ethnic and religious minorities and asylum seekers
- Context is important
- Media discourse is even more confusing
- English as second language
- *"any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born, and has acquired some significant social ties to this country. (UNESCO)*

Relevance

Britain's schools need more resources for 'influx' of immigrant children, chief schools inspector warns

Sir Michael Wilshaw says giving schools extra support to deal with foreign-born pupils is a 'big issue' for Government



Sir Michael Wilshaw's comments will raise fresh concerns that high levels of immigration is putting a strain on the education system Photo: GEOFF PUGH FOR THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

Teachers are struggling to cope with 'influx' of migrant children, warns Chief Inspector of Schools Sir Michael Wilshaw

- Mr Wilshaw said schools needed help to deal with foreign-language children
- He said the 'resources aren't there', which is 'a big issue for government'
- Comes after Michael Fallon said communities were 'under siege' by migrants
- Nick Boles also admitted the UK would 'never be able to control' immigration
- Fellow MPs slam spin doctors after both retracted comments afterwards
- Home Secretary also under fire after collapse of sham marriage trials

By [TOM MCTAGUE](#), DEPUTY POLITICAL EDITOR FOR MAILONLINE [Twitter](#) and [DANIEL MARTIN](#) FOR THE DAILY MAIL

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Social Market Foundation's (SMF) Commission on Inequality in Education

PUBLISHED

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Commenting on the research, Emran Mian, director of the Social Market Foundation, said:

"While parental income remains very important, this new research shows that where you live plays a bigger role in determining educational achievement."

"Our new research also shows that the story around ethnic origin and education has become much more complex. Previously, children from all non-white backgrounds did less well. Now, children from some ethnic groups, including Chinese and Indian children, do better than the average, while others – including black Caribbean and poor white children – do worse."

The SMF's new analysis for the commission also looks at other aspects of inequality and how these affect school results, including family income, gender and ethnicity:

Ethnic minority children face specific challenges, including racial and ethnic marginalisation, huge concentrations of minority ethnic groups in deprived areas, language and cultural barriers, poverty, and a lack of general social capital. In spite of this, some groups of ethnic minority children appear to be performing much better than white students.

A compendium of evidence on ethnic minority resilience to the effects of deprivation on attainment Research report June 2015

Myths about migrant birth rates have also underpinned family separation policies

'Myths' of immigrants putting pressure on NHS with health issues and high birth rates debunked in report

'Migrants are healthier and contribute to our economy and the NHS,' UCL-Lancet Commission on Migration and Health chair says

Alex Matthews-King Health Correspondent | Thursday 6 December 2018 00:46 |



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Populist claims that migrants heap pressure on the NHS and swamp schools by having more children have been debunked in a major international review which finds they are actually healthier and reproduce less than non-migrants.

Refugee children face long delays accessing education in UK

Report finds schools unwilling to take refugees over fears their results will be affected



▲ Some refugee and asylum-seeker children have been forced to wait more than a year to get a school place.
Photograph: Alamy Stock Photo

Refugee and asylum-seeking children face long delays accessing education after arriving in the UK, in many cases because schools are reluctant to offer them a place over fears they will lower GCSE results and affect school league tables.

Methodology

Nine interviews were conducted with classroom teachers, head teachers, local authority staff, school governors and community activists.

Framing Analysis of 8 newspapers: *Sun, Mirror, Daily Mail, Express, Guardian, Telegraph, Times* and Leicester Mercury.

Framing Analysis

- Lexis Nexis
- 2009- 2019
- A mixture of tabloid and broadsheet and newspapers from across the political spectrum
- Readership figures from highest to lowest
- Local newspaper for local context
- 10 articles for each, a total of 80 articles
- Search terms included: immigrant school, migrant school crisis, migrant school, immigration school, education immigration, migration school and mother tongue.

Preliminary results from the framing analysis

- As expected, right wing/ anti- immigration newspapers more likely to frame the issue as negative
- Focus on immigration as issue, especially in relation to pressure on schools, not on lack of funding
- Alongside this, fear of the 'overachieving immigrant'

Scarce resources

Schools all full; 570,000 EU kids in UK classes by 2030 Brexit says influx will cost Brits £29bn'. *The Sun* June 22 2016

'38,000 migrant children starting school this year' *The Sun* September 15 2015

- Focus throughout on limited resources/ capacity as justification for anti-immigrant sentiment
- Wider context of austerity not really alluded to
- Often a reference to campaigning groups / think tanks etc. to legitimise (Migration Watch, Balanced Migration, Taxpayers Alliance)
- Very little conversation with school staff.

Birth Rates

rising birthrate'

'Immigrant Influx will put strain on schools' *Daily Mail*, December 16th 2013

'IMMIGRANT BABY BOOM COSTS GBP 1BN; Taxpayers face soaring bill for new school places' *Daily Express* September 7th 2009

- Immigrant population growth framed as as a problem
- Links to nationalist ideology (idea that a child born in Britain is not "British" if they have immigrant parents)
- Can be understood within the context of the hostile environment (Yuval- Davis et al, 2017).
- Othering language

Gap in achievement

EU KIDS BEAT UK; Schools with
migrant pupils trounce white British'
The Sun June 2 2016

'Schools 'lifted by migrants'' *The Sun*
March 19 2017

- Language of competition
- Use of 'white British' racialises immigration
- Is sometimes used as a way to criticise working class students and class becomes racialised.

Interview findings

- Rejection of the idea of a “crisis” almost completely
- Diversity as strength, not just in terms of nationality and ethnicity
- Little engagement with the media, and general distrust of the media, especially in schools that are within immigrant communities
- Specific context of Leicester mentioned

Ideas that need to be developed

- How nationalism is reinforced?
- Political context- austerity
- How is this anti-immigration sentiment linked to ideas of white supremacy/ white 'Britishness'?
- Any comments/ ideas on this would be much appreciated!