

IMMIGRATION AND CHANGING PERCEPTIONS IN BRITAIN

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***Abstract:** Until recently, Britain established its image as an open society promoting culture of inclusion. The narratives of multiculturalism were prevalent in debates spanning across various state functions from granting visas, employment opportunities, granting citizenship status to migrant community, societal attitudes towards marrying foreign spouses, inter-religious harmony, cravings for great potpourri of world-wide cuisines, and learning diverse languages. Perceptions of society are constructed with everyday experiences, and ideas play important role in this regard. The debate is contextualized in British society that has been experiencing transforming attitudes from being more open to integration of migrants in past to considering immigrants as a source of rising insecurity. The study establishes that the threat discourse related to surge of immigrants cannot be understood without unfolding the concept of security as spanning across societal, criminological, economic, and political gamut on one hand, and nexus between societal perceptions and state policy on the other hand.*

Keywords: Immigration, Britain, perceptions, threat discourse, politics, economy, crime, identity.

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Introduction

Several disciplines within the social sciences have been addressing that why people begin to migrate, who are migrating, and the results of migration on receiving and sending countries. In addition to economists and political scientists, anthropologists and sociologists address issues concerning migration, spanning across themes as the change of location for labor, and shifting the production factor from the spaces of departure to the spaces of arrival. Anthropologists tend to focus more directly on migrants, and their abilities to find the way across the structures, both left and adopted, in which they operate.¹ Anthropologists also engage with theories that focus on an exploitative relationship between developing and developed countries through global capitalism, such as dependency theory and dual labor market theory.² Research in the discipline of Sociology has been concentrating on the interactions of migrants through the migration process, from origin to transit to destination. Sociologists focus particularly on the various structures with which migrants community interact which include institutions, community expectations, and relationships such as social networks that affect migration and also on how migration itself affects the structures in

¹ C. Brettell, *Anthropology and Migration: Essays on Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and Identity* (Rowman Altamira, 2003); Steven Vertovec, "Introduction: New directions in the anthropology of migration and multiculturalism," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 6 (2007): 961–978; Brooke Larson, Olivia Harris, and Enrique Tandeter, eds. *Ethnicity, markets, and migration in the Andes: at the crossroads of history and anthropology*. (Duke University Press, 1995); Michael Kearney, "From the invisible hand to visible feet: anthropological studies of migration and development," *Annual review of anthropology* 15, no. 1 (1986): 331–361; Jon Mitchell, "The politics of multiculturalism in the New Europe: racism, identity and community," (2000): 552–54.

² Brettell, *Anthropology and Migration*; Hein De Haas, "Migration and development: A theoretical perspective," *International migration review* 44, no. 1 (2010): 227–264; Kearney, "From the invisible hand to visible feet."

which migrants negotiate.³ Political scientists are primarily concerned with explaining formulation implementation of state regulations, the mechanism and drivers in that context, with unfolding the debate about politics of migration at state and international level, and debating citizenship in this context.⁴ Economists integrate various theories to explain who chooses to move, why they move, and the economic effect of mobility on sending and receiving countries. One section argues that the international migration is caused by geographic variations in labor supply and demand.⁵ Each discipline

³ Heisler S. Barbara, "The sociology of immigration," in *Migration Theory: Talking across Disciplines*, ed. Caroline Brettell, James Frank Hollifield (New York: 2000): 80–84; Peggy Levitt, "Building bridges: what migration scholarship and cultural sociology have to say to each other," *Poetics* 33, no. 1 (2005): 49–62; Stephen Castles, "Twenty-first-century migration as a challenge to sociology," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33, no. 3 (2007): 351–371; Alejandro Portes, "The hidden abode: Sociology as analysis of the unexpected?," *American Sociological Review* 65, no. 1 (2000): 1.

⁴ Gary P. Freeman, "Political science and comparative immigration politics," *International migration research: Constructions, omissions and the promises of interdisciplinarity* (2005): 111–28; James F. Hollifield, "The emerging migration state," *International migration review* 38, no. 3 (2004): 885-912; Linda Bosniak, "Persons and citizens in constitutional thought," *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 8, no. 1 (2010): 9–29; Kenneth L. Karst, *Belonging to America: Equal citizenship and the constitution*, (Yale University Press, 1989); Kymlicka, Will, and Wayne Norman, "Return of the citizen: A survey of recent work on citizenship theory," *Ethics* 104, no. 2 (1994): 352–381; David Miller, "Citizenship and national identity," *Democracy: A Reader* (2016): 447; Gershon Shafir, *The citizenship debates: A reader*, (Choice Publishing Co., Ltd., 1998); Charles Tilly, "Citizenship, identity and social history," *International review of social history* 40, no. S3 (1995): 1-17.

⁵ Miranda Lewis, *Asylum: Understanding public attitudes*, (Institute for Public Policy Research, 2005); Ernst Georg Ravenstein, "The

within social sciences adds an important piece to the puzzle of understanding migration processes. While today's migration flows are relatively well understood; issues such as why migration patterns exist, what alters these patterns, and how changes occur are less likely to be holistically incorporated into analysis and policy considerations without bridging the gap between these disciplines – the scope of present research.

The paper seeks to explore migration related perceptions in British society in the recent years and to unfold entwinement of society, perceptions, and political choices on issue of migration in the UK. The paper highlights the drivers of change in perceptions related to migration in the UK while engaging with the questions focusing on the sources of change in British society's culture of in-ward looking nationalism in recent years, how the societal perceptions related to immigrants are shaped and presented in the UK, and how they are embodied in insecurity paradigm.

laws of migration," *Journal of the statistical society of London* 48, no. 2 (1885): 167-235; Michael P. Todaro, "A model of labor migration and urban unemployment in less developed countries," *The American economic review* 59, no. 1 (1969): 138-148; Everett S. Lee, "A theory of migration," *Demography* 3, no. 1 (1966): 47-57; Larry A. Sjaastad, "The costs and returns of human migration," *Journal of political Economy* 70, no. 5, Part 2 (1962): 80-93; Oded Stark and Bloom E. David, "The new economics of labor migration," *The American Economic review* 75, no. 2 (1985): 173-178; Edward J. Taylor, "The new economics of labour migration and the role of remittances in the migration process," *International migration* 37, no. 1 (1999): 63-88; Douglas S. Massey et al., "Theories of international migration: A review and appraisal," *Population and development review* (1993): 431-466.

Research Methodology

The present research follows the qualitative method having interpretive research design. Historical evidences consisting of primary historical data are used to scrutinize the various points of view related to research topic because historical research enables solutions to contemporary problems to be sought in the past, and it also highlights the present and future trends in certain issues. For this, both primary and secondary data sources are used. Various primary data sources and different national survey reports like British Crime Survey, British Social Attitudes Survey, and National Centre for Social Research are used to measure and map the changing trends in social attitudes towards Immigrants. To get the statistical and numerical data on Immigration, publications from Office for National Statistics (UK) and Migration Watch (UK) are used.

To trace the corresponding changes in political parties discourses related to immigration, the manifestos of mainstream political parties are incorporated. For that purpose, Conservative Party, Labour Party, United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), and British National Party's (BNP) manifestos are given due consideration to build theoretical argument with help of these primary empirical sources. To enrich primary empirical data, the media reports in British National newspapers are used. To balance the argument right and centre-right, news sites like BBC, and conservative newspapers like The Daily Telegraph and more left wing oriented and progressive news agencies like Guardian and the Observer are used as sources to effectively generate an unbiased and value free critical evaluation of the phenomenon. News agencies like The Times and Daily Herald are also among news reporting agencies consulted for the current study. All these primary sources along with secondary sources helped interpret data and to reach a logical and realistic conclusion.

This study incorporates method of Documentary Analysis. Document analysis is a systematic procedure that helps researcher in unfolding hidden meanings of text consulted and proves to be a

necessary tool in interpretive paradigm⁶. The study used policies documents related to the immigration policies. While analyzing the documents, thematic document analysis technique has been used.

Immigration and Britain

The securitization and anti-immigration hostilities is largely missing in the existing literature while several authors talk about how immigrants related negative perceptions are off-shoot of different factors such as economic, cultural, and increasing crime rate etc.

The immigrants related negative perceptions are largely attributed to economic factors.⁷ It is pointed out that although the restricted working class that faces the jobs going out of their hands dilemma but the group psyche and crowd behavior results into making immigrants largely a threat for British while citizens.⁸

The link of perceptions towards immigrants and the growing crime rate has been the scope of a few studies where scholars have tried to develop the theoretical basis on the topic.⁹ The scholarship related to criminal law is focused on measuring the utilization of

⁶ Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, "*Basics of qualitative research: Procedures and techniques for developing grounded theory*," (1998); Glenn A. Bowen, "Document analysis as a qualitative research method," *Qualitative research journal* 9, no. 2 (2009): 27–40.

⁷ Frances Webber, "Extending immigration policing and exclusion in the UK," *Race & Class* 55, no. 3 (2014): 86-92; Lauren McLaren and Mark Johnson, "Resources, group conflict and symbols: explaining anti-immigration hostility in Britain," *Political Studies* 55, no. 4 (2007): 709–732.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ana Aliverti, "Making people criminal: The role of the criminal law in immigration enforcement," *Theoretical Criminology* 16, no. 4 (2012): 417–434; Paul Bagguley and Yasmin Hussain, *Riotous citizens: ethnic conflict in multicultural Britain* (Routledge, 2016).

criminal law in administration of immigration. For this purpose, the criminal law has symbolic role to play. The author makes a case for the use of criminal law to earn appreciation from a body of voters. The target group for appeasement purposes might be media and the canaille opposing immigration¹⁰.

The symbolic threats to cultural identity and Britishness are also given due space in existing pool of scholarly literature.¹¹ Many studies while highlighting different factors claim that this is end of multiculturalism.¹² While putting forward the claims, some studies are of the view that it never existed and was more like a political rhetoric to advance neo-colonial structures just to soothe British nostalgia for its imperial past.¹³

Migration and Threat Discourse: A Retrospection of Change

Various national statistical surveys represent that perceptions of people on the issue of influx of immigrants is getting more severe and disturbed. The British society needed migrants in post-war period to satisfy its imperial legacy, to address challenges of ageing population, to feed its workforce vacuum and although by 1960s, the government stance was getting restrictive, migrants were not

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Will Kymlicka, "Immigration, citizenship, multiculturalism: exploring the links," *The Political Quarterly* 74, no. 1 (2003): 195–208; Ian Cook, Philip Crang and Mark Thorpe, "Eating into Britishness: multicultural imaginaries and the identity politics of food," in *Practising identities*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999): 223–248; Timothy J. Hatton and Massimiliano Tani, "Immigration and Inter-Regional Mobility in the UK, 1982–2000" *The Economic Journal* 115, no. 507 (2005).

¹² Jon Mitchell, *The politics of multiculturalism*, 552–554; Hatton and Tani, Immigration and Inter-Regional Mobility in the UK; Ziauddin Sardar, *Balti Britain: A journey through the British Asian experience* (UK: Granta, 2008).

¹³ Ibid.

considered to pose security threat to Britain and British-ness until recently.

Until recently, the nature of coexistence and multiculturalism seen in the UK had been remarkably different from assimilation. The immigrants have contributed to British society in every sector spanning across economy to culture and languages. The expansion of British textile industry owes much to the contribution from Asian immigrants. The food is one of such examples too. British cuisine is heavily influenced by aromatic additions from across globe and that has become part of the "British-ness." Interestingly, British national dish is considered to be none other but "curry." The music legacy holds tunes and melodies linking their origin to Caribbean. Reggae is classical example of British society with legacy of being thriving on norms and values of multiculturalism along multiple societal axes. Although, the attitudes and perceptions started transforming amid 1960s racial riots related problems. Yet, it was not until recently when perceptions got overwhelmingly negative about the influx of immigrants. The evidence is change of policy towards immigration in 1990s. The Labour government was with more liberal stance towards immigrants and won the elections. Entry into European Union was also an important driver causing the influx of migrants.

Societal and political discourses and policies related to immigration have changed considerably in the recent years in Britain. Changes in societal discourses also reflect more favorable circumstances with respect to a particular policy choice. The current political response to concern about immigration and the rise of UKIP specifically, more restrictive rhetoric and policies across parties, seems set to continue. The following graphs will present the trends in migration and changing perception in UK.

Figure 1: Immigration to the UK by citizenship, 2006 to 2018 (year ending Spetember 2016)

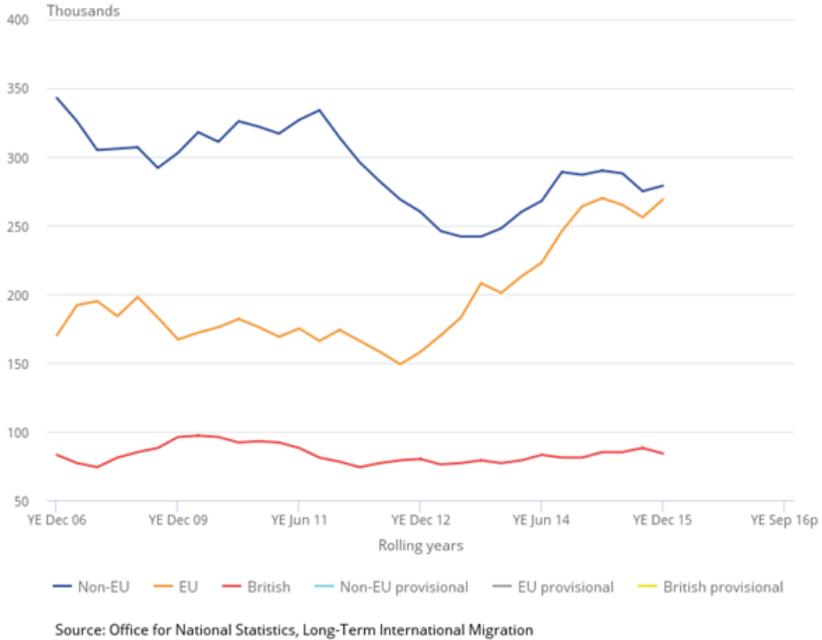


Figure 2: Net Long-Term International Migration by citizenship, UK, 1975 to 2016 (year ending September 2016)

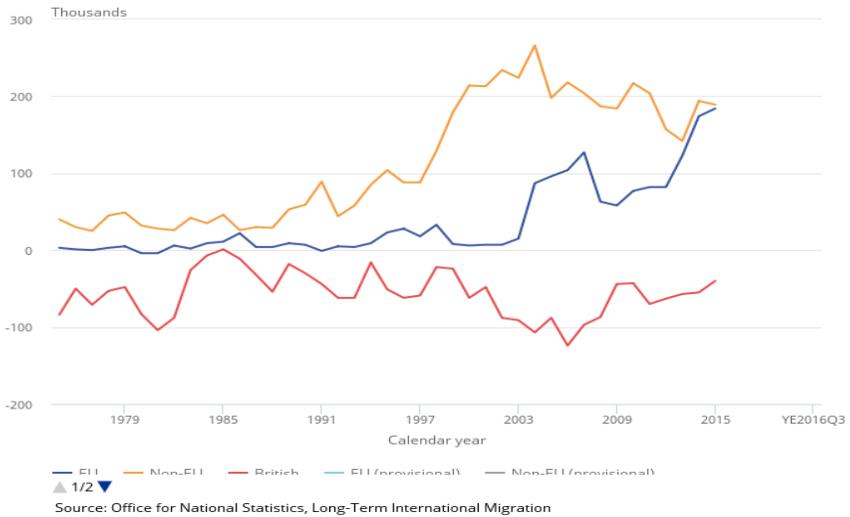


Figure 3: Percentage the population of England and Wales that was foreign born, 1851-2011

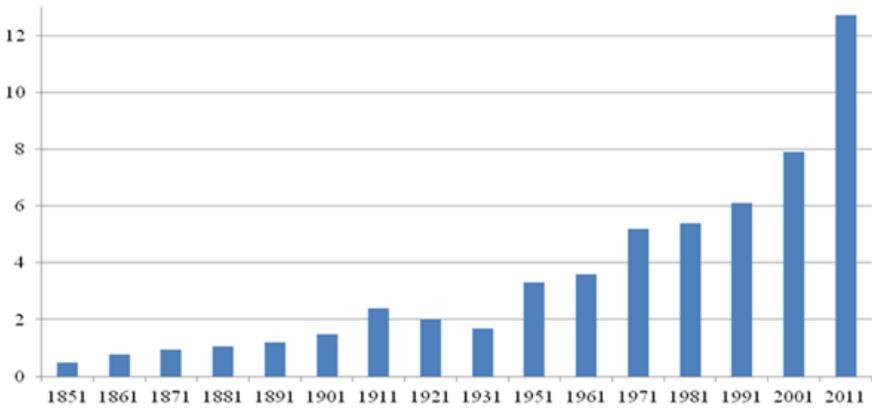
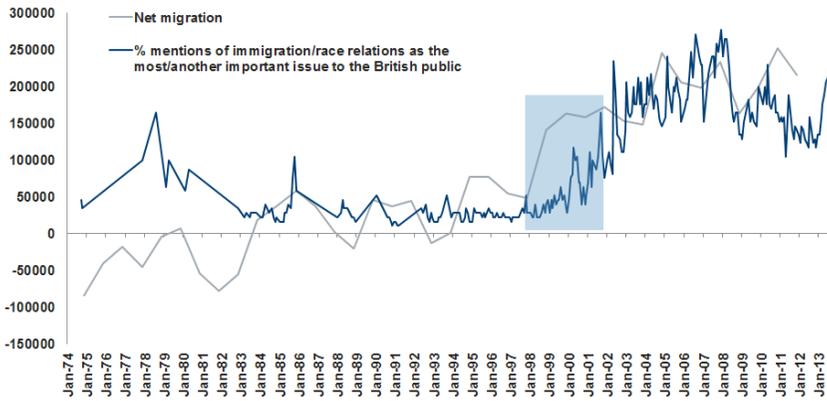


Figure No. 4

Immigration/race relations as an important issue facing country by UK net migration, 1974 - 2013



Sources: Office for National Statistics; Ipsos MORI Issues Index

Ipsos MORI
Social Research Institute
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Source: Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute

The above graph represents a clear picture that how seriously public think immigration problem in Britain can be. The upwards trend after 2001 is indicator of rise in public resentment against state accommodating too many immigrants. The events and phenomena

like London Bombing (2005) and Financial Crisis (2008–10) accelerated such perceptions. Before focusing on how perceptions and everyday experiences reciprocate each other and with an in-depth analysis of phenomenon, the coming section explores theoretical basis of the current study.

Theorizing Anti-immigration Drift: Interweaving Individual Perceptions, Interests of States and State Identities

The traditional and western connotations of International Relations' discipline overwhelmingly engage with security paradigms centered on state survival. Immigration by default gets expunged from traditional state security debates in the field as it does not put a direct threat to survival of the state. For understanding immigration with reference to insecurity paradigm, this research capitalizes on Copenhagen School of thought.

The work of Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver refer to state identity determining nature of perceptions about threats to state security in context of influx of immigrants.¹⁴ The authors hold that the immigration as debated across insecurity paradigm is equated with threat to identity, culture, norms, and values of a particular society. The societal perceptions while associating threat to immigrants create a strong demarcation between "us" and "them." This societal identity nexus is one of the different dimensions of security as perceived by the state.

The second important gamut is criminological connotation of threat discourse linked with immigrants. The immigrants are associated with the rise of crime. This phenomenon is ostensibly debated especially after 9/11. The debate about differences between "us" and "them" is also relevant when it comes to natives versus immigrants. The surge of immigrants is believed to enable newly arriving individuals to access and misuse resources from their homelands, and eventually adding to the crimes committed in host countries. Therefore, when foreigners commit or are involved in

¹⁴ Ole Weaver et al., *Identity migration and the new security agenda in Europe* (1993).

some criminal or terrorist activity, they are highly hyped in both print and electronic media.

Migrants are also considered a source of economic threat. The rising unemployment and sluggish economic growth naturally develops threat discourse related to immigrants. The nexus more effectively establishes when it comes to welfare provisions. The immigrants are considered as resources snatchers from the natives and unfair reliant of readily available funds and services which otherwise are meant to serve the natives first. Hence, as a result the prejudices arise. The negative economic impact of immigrants on host countries is a controversial debate, yet perceptions within society tend to develop negatively relying even on symbolic threats to resources.

The political nexus develops when political parties struggle with responding to the challenge of accommodating inward movement of migrants, and by doing that the support from the electorate is threatened. The growing threat perceptions within society add to the failures of incompetent policy making and immigrants' representation. The following section compartmentalizes the threat discourse linked with immigrants presented along economic, societal, criminological and political axis of British society.

Resource-based Interests and Growing Prejudices

The pursuit of self-interest tends to shape one's attitude and opinion. This substantiates popular hostility about immigrants who are already seemed as a threat to jobs for the locals. It also bears out the fact that individual-level competition for resources serves as an impetus for the animosity towards immigrants. The dispute between ethnic or racial groups can be portrayed with reference to such competition¹⁵. Gibson asserts that the exploitation of resources by

¹⁵ Lawrence Bobo, "Whites' opposition to busing: Symbolic racism or realistic group conflict?." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 45, no. 6 (1983): 1196.

immigrants results in the exiguity of resources for the natives, and this instigates the manifestation of invidious prejudice among them.¹⁶

Research about the US and Europe provides strong evidence that personal interests forge negative perceptions about immigrants, impact their jobs, social mores, and crime rates.¹⁷ It is often argued that the natives have to face the predicament of scarcity of jobs on one hand, and the blight in the form of immigrants on the other hand. Hostility to immigration becomes more vivid, moving from higher levels of education and income to lower levels. Those who are at the lowest socioeconomic status fear competition for jobs, subsistence, education, and other privileges.¹⁸

Immigrants are often discerned as unqualified workers who are inclined to work for lower wages than the locals, portending unemployment for the latter.¹⁹ Burn and Gimpel maintain that the affluent are less prone to the economic pressure of the influx of immigrants. Thus, appertaining to self-interest arguments, those who are less educated and unskilled are more averse to immigration and are more distressed about migrants.²⁰

¹⁶ Rachel K. Gibson, *The growth of anti-immigrant parties in Western Europe* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2002).

¹⁷ Joel S. Fetzer, *Public attitudes toward immigration in the United States, France, and Germany* (Cambridge University Press, 2000); Thomas J. Espenshade and Katherine Hempstead, "Contemporary American attitudes toward US immigration," *International Migration Review* (1996): 535–570; Hendrik P Van Dalen and Kene Henkens, "The rationality behind immigration policy preferences," *De Economist* 153, no. 1 (2005): 67–83.

¹⁸ Rita J. Simon, "Immigration and American attitudes," *Public Opinion* 10, no. 2 (1987): 47–50.

¹⁹ Espenshade and Hempstead. "Contemporary American attitudes toward US immigration."

²⁰ Peter Burns and James G. Gimpel, "Economic insecurity, prejudicial stereotypes, and public opinion on immigration policy," *Political science quarterly* 115, no. 2 (2000): 201–225

Perception Building and Economic Resources for 'In-Group'

Although it is often asserted that self-interest serves as a premise for prevalent stance about social and political policies, a substantial research contends that a plethora of attitudes are based on the consideration of the social effects of the policies.²¹ Realization of social interests together with a modicum of self-interests tends to develop the attitudes regarding government-sponsored social welfare programs.²²

It may be noted that only a scintilla of economic self-interest plays its role while determining the voting behavior which have a tendency to be influenced by the national economic outlook. This endorses the significance of society rather than personal interest.²³

Various researches led to the conclusion that socio-tropic concerns serve as an impetus for anti-immigration enmity.²⁴ The

²¹ David O. Sears and Carolyn L. Funk, *Self-interest in Americans' political opinions*, (1990).

²² Carolyn L. Funk, "The dual influence of self-interest and societal interest in public opinion," *Political Research Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (2000): 37–62; John Gelissen, "Popular support for institutionalised solidarity: a comparison between European welfare states," *International Journal of Social Welfare* 9, no. 4 (2000): 285–300

²³ W. Arthur Lewis, "Economic development with unlimited supplies of labour," *The manchester school* 22, no. 2 (1954): 139–191; D. Roderick Kiewiet and Douglas Rivers, "A retrospective on retrospective voting," *Political behavior* 6, no. 4 (1984): 369–393; Donald R. Kinder and D. Roderick Kiewiet, "Economic discontent and political behavior: The role of personal grievances and collective economic judgments in congressional voting," *American Journal of Political Science* (1979): 495–527.

²⁴ Thomas J. Espenshade and Katherine Hempstead, "Contemporary American attitudes toward US immigration," *International Migration Review* (1996): 535–570; Jack Citrin et. al., "Public

attitude of the locals in Britain about immigrants and asylum seekers may similarly be forged by group interest. The enmity against immigrants may be contingent on exiguity of resources of one's in group. The consideration of jobs, housing, subsistence, education, healthcare and other privileges for one's in group may instill enmity in the locals even if they are not personally in threat of the competition. This approach, group conflict theory, hypothesize that the minority exploits the resources that belong to one in group because the immigrants lead to the scarcity of jobs and threaten the socio-economic rights of the native citizens.²⁵

Threat to British-Ness: Symbols, Identity and Race

The immigrants and asylum seekers also pose a symbolic threat concomitant to resources-based threat. It has its origins in the perception about bastardization of social norms and principals of life by the immigrants. In the United States, an inclination towards racial integration and multi-cultural oriented affirmative attitudes depended also on the symbolic aspects rather than self-interest.²⁶ Besides, holding of an official position by the minority candidate may threaten the interests, identities, or status of the majority, and those who feel this sense more profoundly tend to pose more opposition to migration. This "symbolic racism" and not racial threat to one's life account for negative public attitude towards minority candidates. Likewise, symbolic aspects about bastardization of cultural integrity result in other-ing of immigrants in western and central Europe because they tend to threaten cultural distinctiveness rather than posing a threat to economic opportunities for the individuals.²⁷ Identities are vital to individuals even if they have no subtle effect on

opinion toward immigration reform: The role of economic motivations," *The Journal of Politics* 59, no. 3 (1997): 858–881.

²⁵ Herbert Blumer, "Race prejudice as a sense of group position," *Pacific Sociological Review* 1, no. 1 (1958): 3–7.

²⁶ Bobo, "Whites' opposition to busing."

²⁷ Rachel K. Gibson, *The growth of anti-immigrant parties in western Europe* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2002); Fetzer, *Public attitudes toward immigration in the United States, France, and Germany*.

individuals' lives, and no financial advantage is derived from them. This fundamental classification of immigrants as an exclusive group with different social values and norms, and as a potential threat to Britain's cultural integrity and social distinctiveness is based on popular perception of immigrants as a threat to Britain's identity and values. The immigrants have their own distinctive religious faiths and practices which may raise a concern for the majority in Britain whose religious values and traditions differ from those of the immigrants. Majority of the natives are averse to the religion of the immigrants and consider it a threat to Western liberal democracy.

The social mores of the immigrants are incongruent with those of the natives. For instance, arranged marriages are prevalent in the Muslim society, but the concept of arranged marriages is not consistent with western values and is considered anachronistic.²⁸ There is more hostility among the natives against the non-Anglo immigrants. It is quite vivid that the natives were more skeptical towards the immigrants from the non-European descent during the decades following the end of Second World War. For instance, non-white immigrants were perceived as the cause of racial violence, and it was assumed that curbing their immigration would mitigate situation in the United Kingdom.²⁹ Likewise, the officialdom in the 1950s asserted that the workers from immigrant communities had low output and lacked the same sort of work ethic and cultural traits that allowed other western Europeans to progress. It was also contended that they were shirkers and had mercurial temperament which led them to breach of discipline. They were assumed to be more inclined towards violence and aggression which is certainly not required from the employees in Britain.³⁰ It is readily believed that the immigrants act as parasites who exploit the resources meant to be leveraged by the locals. This leads to inequitable distribution of resources and consequently to the drain of wealth.

²⁸ Lewis, *Asylum: Understanding public attitudes*.

²⁹ Ian RG Spencer, *British immigration policy since 1939: The making of multi-racial Britain*, (Routledge, 2002).

³⁰ Paul and Hussain, *Riotous citizens*.

Criminological Connections and Insecurity Paradigm

Concomitant with the perception of immigrants as a symbolic threat, there is a view that immigrants and minorities perpetrate criminal activities that lead to the breach of peace and social upheaval. Symbolically speaking, immigrants are often perceived to be guilty of flouting a law. This perception serves as an impetus for increased concerns regarding falling victim to a crime.

Researches show that the British people are more distressed about the criminological connections to immigration than they should be. In this era of post-truth politics, the means by which information reach the general public also tends to shape the public opinion about immigrants and minorities. After the September 11 attacks and with the incipient War on Terror, the public perception about the immigrants began to change. According to the report of British Crime Survey (BCS) for 2002–3, seventy three percent of people thought that the situation has aggravated because of the inflated rate of crimes, despite of a steady decrease in the crime rate since 1995.

Threat Discourse and Its Representations at Political Stage

The containment of immigration was discussed while dealing with the internal affairs by most political parties in 2005 eliciting the fact that immigration had to be restrained to some extent. Immigration was shortlisted with other matters of crime and public security that had to be dealt with by the Labour Party in 2005. According to Labour Party's stance on immigration, immigrants prompt economic growth and prosperity in the region but rampant immigration should be restricted so as to avoid inequitable distribution of resources and economic drain. To implement this manifesto, secure borders were impertinent.

In 2005, the Conservative Party's stance on immigration was also based on two sharply contrasting approaches. It was discussed with other matters like healthcare, infection and diseases, crime and security, and the fear instigated by immigrants in the locals. Health examination was made mandatory for immigrants upon arrival in the country by Conservative Party. The immigration system was termed to be in great turmoil and a major reason of terrorist threats with no

checks on immigrants. However, a subtle indication was made towards the economic and social benefits of immigrants that led to multiculturalism and soaring economy.

The UKIP, being a smaller party, has to cater for a narrow range of voters with a common view and has a more vivid stance on the system of immigration than the two main parties. The UKIP's stance on immigration is stern and unrelenting demanding immediate steps to restrain immigrants along with rigorous deportation procedure. The BNP is even more stringent about the matter and consider immigration blight not only for the economic resources but also for the social values and harmony.

During the recent years, both the Labour and Conservative parties have made it arduous for non-European immigrant workers to get hired by implementing various policies. But still many natives are skeptical of government's capability to limit immigrants and asylum seekers. The UKIP's victory in the local elections threatens the political hegemony of the Labour Party more than that of Conservative Party. In contrast to Labour Party's manifesto, the UKIP's manifesto tends to deal with the obstacles drawn up by the immigration along with renouncing multiculturalism. But the Labour Party is rather elusive and vague on the issue because of its capitalization on progressivism as opposed to conservatism. In the wake of reduced economic resources and threatened job opportunities, the blue-collar workers offer a strong support for the UKIP and not the Labour Party. In the May local elections, the victory of the UKIP reflects a great support for the party based on its stern stance regarding immigration. This also highlights the fact that the major political parties in UK are wanting in this regard by eluding the issue of immigration and not coping with it.

Conclusion

The recent change in state policies towards receiving immigrants, one of the significant drivers of Brexit, is discussed to establish a holistic understanding of the phenomenon. The Migrant community is perceived to be a threat on political, social, religious and cultural levels by British society. The generation of threat

discourses along these lines and perceptions eventually getting presented in the British society had major repercussions for alternative policy measures on part of state while tackling the issue of immigrants.

The paper concludes that national identities of states are fluid. In line with Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver's conceptual framework, the paper holds that national identities develop as boundaries between state and society intermingle with each other making distinctions between the both blurred. Migration and patterns of change in UK both at state and at societal level are an important case to test how identities of states transform culminating into transformed debates related to how national interest as a representation of individual interests is presented and eventually helps generate and change state policies.