

CHAPTER 10

Framing the Deportation of Zimbabwean Immigrants: A Comparative Analysis of South African and British Online Press

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Abstract

Evidence suggests that news framing of immigrants is among the most critical factors contributing to their stigmatisation and disdain by local citizens. The existing body of research on immigrants' news framing suggests that the news media often negatively portray immigrants. No study has been published that examines how the British and South African media framed the deportation of Zimbabwean immigrants from Britain and South Africa between 2020 and 2021. In June 2021, the British government announced that it had reached a landmark agreement with the Zimbabwean government to repatriate dozens of Zimbabweans who have committed crimes and served their sentences. On the other hand, South Africa has always deported Zimbabweans regularly. In this study, the authors investigated how different national news media frame the deportation of Zimbabwean migrants through a cross-national comparison. A qualitative case study approach was used to analyse how the South African media (*Eyewitness*, *OperaNews*, *eNCA Online*, *The Citizen*, *The Herald*, *News24*, *BusinessTech*, *AfricaNews*) and the United Kingdom (UK) media (*The Guardian*, *The Mirror*, *BBC*, *TimesLive*) framed the deportation of Zimbabwean immigrants from Britain and South Africa respectively. Two empirical

questions were asked: What frames were used to report the deported migrants? (ii) In what ways were the deported immigrants represented in the news articles? The research data for this chapter were drawn from twelve online press sources. A purposive sampling technique collected news articles (n=212) from the online news archives. A critical discourse analysis approach was applied for data analysis. Findings suggest a significant difference between the frames used by the newspapers. Furthermore, reports differed on whether the move to deport the ex-convict immigrants was safe. Our findings suggest that the media presented immigrants negatively and endorsed the stereotypes stigmatising immigrants. The authors of this chapter recommend a better representation of minorities in the news by focusing on the positive aspects that the foreign national brings to the host country.

Keywords: Britain, deportation, framing, migration, migrants, news, South Africa, Zimbabwe.

1 Introduction and Background

Available evidence shows that immigration has been a perpetual characteristic in communities and societies from the formation and commencement of history (Sion 2014; Moore, Gross & Threadgold 2012). Immigration has recurrently resulted in significant contributions from the cultural and economic perspective (Lancee 2021; Lirola 2014; Valentino *et al.* 2019). The migratory movements from one country to another and from continent to continent have become part of the political, social, economic, and cultural reality. To illustrate, the migration of Zimbabweans to South Africa and Britain is often perceived as a significant part of the cultural, political, and economic reality, thanks to the media's controversial role in constructing the migration discourse and reality (Kariithi 2017). In the last three decades, Zimbabwe has moved from receiving immigrants (from South Africa, Zambia, Malawi, and Mozambique) to having the highest emigration numbers in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region (Monjane 2021). For example, recent evidence shows that almost two million Zimbabweans live outside Zimbabwe (Mhlanga & Ndhlovu 2021). The highest number of Zimbabwean emigrants is found in South Africa (850 000 – 1 020 000), followed by the UK (600 000) and Australia, estimated at 65,000 (Mhlanga & Ndhlovu 2021). Drawing on these figures, it is, therefore, sensible to situate the study in the context of South Africa and

Britain because they have the largest Zimbabwean Diaspora populations.

The news media is essential in communicating the positives of migrants to the host countries. Lirola (2014:484) argues that ‘the press could contribute to this sense by publishing positive news related to immigrants because it plays an important role in the social construction of reality in modern societies’. Despite this imperative role that the press could play, the news media generally considers immigrants the ‘other(s)’ who are unlike us and will never be like us. Lirola (2014) found that the dichotomy of ‘we-they’ is often accentuated when the coverage involves migrants in the press. Moreover, a study by Eberl *et al.* (2018) found that the media tends to represent the bad side of immigration, so immigrants are represented in two main ways.

On the one hand, they provoke fear and are a threat, as they are the people who invade ‘our’ country. On the other hand, they are represented as poor people experiencing difficulties, which provokes pity. Furthermore, the media in both South Africa and Britain is guilty of focusing excessively and disproportionately on the economic effect of migration, migrants’ use of social services, ethno-racial considerations, multiculturalism, and in other instances, migrants as security threats. Lirola (2014) argued that many news articles related to immigration that appear in the African and Western media exhibit negative characteristics. The media framing of migration and migrants has a knock-on effect on how the public perceives immigrants. Evidence from previous studies suggests that media framing of migration and migrants affects public opinion, encourages numerous explanations of the immigration system (being too lenient vs not accommodating enough), or cues specific considerations, including legitimacy, ‘need’, and security (Eberl *et al.* 2018; Robinson 2020).

2 Current Research and Gaps

Recently, researchers have shown an increased interest in the media framing of immigrants (Farris & Mohamed 2018; Moyo & Chiumbu 2020; Viladrich 2019). For instance, Viladrich (2019) explores the media framing of undocumented immigrants in the context of Health Deservingness in the United States of America (USA). His findings concluded that the press focuses on a ‘selective inclusion’ frame that emphasises health services to a certain category of immigrants (Viladrich 2019). Similarly, Ogan, Pennington, Venger, and Metz (2018) examined the ways mainstream national and regional press covered this issue from the Republican National Convention through Election

Day and established that ‘although about half of the stories were neutral or balanced in tone, negative stories were sponsored either by the Trump team or other actors’ (Ogan *et al.* 2018:375). However, much of the research on the media framing of immigrants is limited. Surprisingly, the media framing of deported immigrants has not been closely examined, particularly Zimbabweans’ British and South African media framing. Consequently, little is known about how the British and South African online press framed the deportation of Zimbabwean immigrants from the two countries. Furthermore, the factors that led to the types of frames used to frame the phenomenon are unclear.

This chapter draws on the framing theory¹ and the case study of the deportation of Zimbabwean immigrants to examine South African and British online press framing of the deportation and the expatriated immigrants. In this study, the authors endeavour to answer two key questions:

- i) What frames were used to report the deported migrants?
- ii) How were the deported immigrants framed in the news articles?

To answer these two questions, the researchers consider the importance of language and phrases to broaden the analysis of the news articles into a discursive study of the representation of Zimbabwean migrants in the British and South African press. Consequently, the key frames, the relationship that underlies them and the society in which they are constructed and framed are examined.

The purpose of studying the framing of Zimbabwean migrants’ deportation is for the researchers to observe the various frames and how they were used in reporting on the said group of immigrants to ensure that this group does not belong to the main group, which is not allowed to be in Britain. When analysing the coverage of Zimbabweans in South African and British media, it is evident that the issue of illegality and crime is evoked, which suggests an apparent similarity with the South African and British populations, respectively. This study adds to the literature emphasising the ‘we - they’ social-political dichotomy about race and nationality. Furthermore, this study’s analysis looks

¹ In essence, framing theory proposes that how something is presented to an audience (referred to as ‘the frame’) influences the decisions people make about how to process that information. Frames are abstractions that help to organise or structure message meaning.

at how the Zimbabwean migrants are framed as the ‘other’, those outside the position of power and those who are different from the main group (Lirola 2014). To that end, the central focus of this chapter is to explore the role of discourse in the structure of social relations (Lirola 2014; Fairclough 1989; van Dijk 2009). The authors of this chapter investigate the degree to which the use of language by the press reproduces and preserves unequal social relations among diverse groups in societies (Lirola 2014; van Dijk 2009).

3 Migration Trends in the UK

As of September 2021, approximately 21 million individuals travelled to the UK, including visitors and UK residents returning to the country. Comparatively, this number records a 69% (46.3 million) decrease compared to the previous year, 2020 (National Statistics UK 2021). The Covid-19 pandemic-induced restriction on travel exacerbated this decrease. In 2021 alone, Britain granted 1 115 155 visas. This number is 19% smaller than the amount granted in 2020. National Statistics UK (2021:1) revealed that ‘of the visas granted in this last 12 months, 39% were for study, 23% were to visit, 18% were to work, 4% were for family, and 15% for other reasons’.

The search for better job opportunities is among the main reasons the UK experiences high volumes of migrants. An estimated 205 528 individuals migrated to the UK for work-related activities in 2021 (National Statistics UK 2021). It was a 55% increase in the year ending 2020. National Statistics UK (2021:4) revealed that ‘skilled work, which accounts for 61% of work-related visas granted, saw the largest increase in visa numbers, up 45 866 or 57%’. In 2021 only, the UK witnessed an increase in high-value, skilled workers, temporary workers and other work visas. Moreover, seasonal workers comprised over half (53%) of all temporary work grants and saw a large increase, from 6451 in the previous year to 24 661 (+282%). In the year ending September 2021, there were 428 428 sponsored study visas granted (including dependants), 143% (252 327) more than the previous year and 55% (152 077) higher than the year ending September 2019.

According to UK Immigration, in the year ending September 2021, a staggering 21 365 people entered detention and were returned to their home countries. As of 30 September 2021, the UK recorded 1 410 in immigration detention. Furthermore, in June 2021, enforced returns from the UK were recorded at 2910. National Statistics UK (2021) stresses that most of the

enforced returns in 2021 were foreign national offenders. It is under this cohort that the Zimbabwean migrants were returned to Zimbabwe.

4 Britain Deports Zimbabwean Migrants

In July 2021, the Zimbabwean and British governments reached a landmark decision that would see the deportation of a dozen of Zimbabweans from Britain (Nyathi 2021). For almost two decades, the Zimbabwean government has resisted accepting Zimbabwean citizens who were forcibly returned from the UK (Madzimore 2021). Therefore, this would mean that Zimbabweans who sought asylum in Britain were left there to start families and have children. This radical stance by the Zimbabwean government was abandoned and ushered in a new opportunity for Britain and Zimbabwe to come up with new ways of dealing with the issue of Zimbabweans in Britain (Madzimore 2021). A new deal between the countries was agreed upon on 23 June 2021. The Zimbabwean government agreed to take the citizens and reintegrate them into society. About 50 Zimbabweans were deported; most were murderers, rapists and criminals who had been released from detention after completing their jail terms.

5 Migration Trends in South Africa

In South Africa, immigration is regulated by the Immigration Act 13 of 2002. The Act regulates the admission of persons to, their residence in, and their departure from South Africa and matters connected with the immigration and emigration of persons. Therefore, the Department of Home Affairs monitors and enforces issues related to such matters. Comparatively, South Africa has the largest number of immigrants on the African continent (Umejei 2021). Reliefweb (2021:1) cited factors such as ‘middle-income status, stable democratic institutions, and comparatively industrialised economy’ as reasons why the country has witnessed the highest number of immigrants over the years. According to official estimates published by Statistics South Africa, the country has a resident population of about 2.9 million immigrants (Statistics South Africa 2021). This number accounts for more than 5% of the 60 million people in South Africa. However, various scholars have refuted these estimates, arguing that the number of immigrants surpasses the official figures by far due to the unaccounted-for illegal immigrants, particularly those coming from its

neighbouring country (Pillay, Duncan & de Vries 2021; Plaatjie & Mogashoa 2021; Umejei 2021).

Immigration in South Africa has continued to rise since the advent of democracy in 1994 (Mlambo & Mlambo 2021). Recent evidence from Statistics South Africa points to the fact that ‘a net 853 000 people migrated to the country over the 2016-21 period, a slight reduction from the net immigration of 916 300 over the 2011-16 period but a dramatic increase from the 491 700 in the 2001-06 period’ (Reliefweb 2021:1). Further, between the years 2016 and 2021, ‘net immigration was highest among the African (894 400) and Asian (49 900) populations but offset by a net emigration of nearly 91 000 white residents’ (Reliefweb 2021; Statistics South Africa 2021). The highest number of migrants are housed in Gauteng, South Africa’s most productive and richest province, where the commercial capital (Johannesburg) of South Africa is located. Almost three-quarters of South Africa’s immigrants are from Africa (Statistics South Africa 2021). Furthermore, of these African migrants in South Africa, ‘68% originated from elsewhere within the 16-country Southern African Development Community (SADC) region’ (Reliefweb 2021:1). Figures from the 2020 United Nations data show that Zimbabwe was the largest origins country, accounting for more than 24% of all immigrants residing in South Africa. Between 800 000 and one million Zimbabweans reside in South Africa. The exact number of Zimbabweans in South Africa remains uncertain due to a substantial portion of the population lacking proper documentation, as highlighted by Bhebhe and Ngoepe (2021).

South Africa has also witnessed an increased outflow of some of its population since 1994 (Bhebhe & Ngoepe 2021). Available evidence suggests that the white South African population has left South Africa for other countries like the UK, Australia, and the USA. Reliefweb (2021) and Durrheim and Murray (2021) argue that the emigration of the white population from South Africa gained pace after the demise of Apartheid, as many got intimidated by the black government. Reliefweb (2021:1) stresses that ‘white residents accounted for 11% of South Africa’s population in 1996, 9% in 2011, and just 8% as of mid-2021’. Therefore, this unabated decline is credited to the emigration of the white population and lower fertility rates among white communities (Money & van Zyl-Hermann 2021). Besides the white South Africans leaving the country, available evidence shows a steady outflow of black professionals, particularly in the medical and engineering fields (Adeyemi *et al.* 2018; Mlambo & Adetiba 2019; Pratsinakis 2019).

6 South Africa Deports Zimbabweans

In recent years, the South African government has received increased pressure from its citizens, pressure groups and opposition political parties over its stance on foreigners. Issues over the legality of foreigners, their involvement in crime, and other illegal activities have pressured the South African government to take stern action against foreign nationals and implement a sounder immigration policy. In 2021 alone, the South African government announced deporting 202 Zimbabwean migrants (Madzimure 2021). A sizable number of deportees were ex-offenders who had saved their jail term. Another cohort of those forming part of the group are those Zimbabweans who did not have proper documentation or resided in South Africa illegally. Between December 2021 and January 2022, the South African government announced through the Department of Home Affairs that it had deported more than 11 000 Zimbabweans. They were trying to cross the border illegally without proper documentation. On 9 January 2022, *eNCA* reported that more than 89 000 Zimbabweans trying to cross the border into South Africa were arrested and deported (eNCA 2022).

Although support for immigration in Britain and South Africa is relatively strong and consistent, public perception and opinion towards refugees and immigrants is more fluid. For instance, in both countries, many citizens and other pressure groups raise concerns over the legitimacy of refugee claims and the status of the immigration of most foreign migrants within their borders. In South Africa, Britain and elsewhere, the public discourse around refugees centres around issues that link refugees and immigrants to security threats, ‘bogus claims’, and the abuse of social programs (Lawlor & Tolley 2017).

7 Western Media Framing of African Immigrants

Meanwhile, more recent empirical work has brought new perspectives on the framing of African immigrants in the European media. For instance, Lawlor and Tolley (2017) have examined the news media framing of immigrants and refugees in Canada. An automated content analysis of Canadian print media coverage over ten years was conducted to frame the immigrants and refugees in Canada. Lawlor and Tolley (2017) argued that there is a difference in how immigrants and refugees are framed. For these scholars, the difference stems from Canadians’ difference between economic immigrants and those who arrive on humanitarian grounds. Findings from this study revealed that ‘immigrants are framed in economic terms, while more emphasis is placed on the validity of

refugee claims, potential security threats and the degree the refugees take advantage of the social programs' (Lawlor & Tolley 2017:967).

A study which examines the linguistic and visual representation of Sub-Saharan immigrants in a sample of the Spanish press reveals that the presentation of the Sub-Saharan immigrants demonstrates the following characteristics: 'They are represented as vulnerable, lacking autonomy, and as victims' (Lirola 2014:495). Moreover, this study also found that the presentation of Sub-Saharan migrants in the Spanish press described the migrants as 'vulnerable and in need of help and support from the Spanish government'. Additionally, findings from this study also revealed that the press, in its reportage of sub-Sahara migrants, tended to homogenise them. To illustrate, Lirola (2014:495) argues that 'one of the outstanding characteristics of their representation is as being static, which contributes to their representation as passive; this implies that the main group of the population is active compared to them'.

Lirola's (2014) findings are consistent with findings from other studies. For instance, a group of scholars argue that the Western press tends to represent the negative side of immigration so that immigrants are represented in two main ways: on the one hand, they provoke fear (Granados 2002; Luque & Guirado 2003). They are a threat, as they are the people who invade 'our' country. However, on the other hand, they are represented as poor, as people experiencing difficulties, which provokes pity. For instance, in a study that examined the media presentation of migrants in Andalusia, Granados (2002) found that the media systematically ignored the information about 'the socio-historic causes that provoke migrations; moreover, instead of referring to the global dimension of immigration, the information that most frequently appears in the pieces of news is related to personal issues about the immigrants who arrive'.

Similarly, Sepulveda *et al.* (2008) conclude that Sub-Saharan Africa migrants are often represented in a way that is replete with prejudices. Navas *et al.* (2003:41) argue that the African migrant is presented asking for pity, solidarity or compassion. Kiwan (2009) revealed that 'Africans are portrayed as dangerously 'other', and thus their exclusion through racial or cultural discrimination in many areas of French life, such as employment and education, can be exacerbated'.

In a study outside migration, Chiluba and Chiluba (2020) investigated the Western media framing of the Nigerian herder-farmers conflict in the Western and local press. The data corpus for this study comprised online reports on the header-farmer conflicts published by the New York Times, the

Washington Post, and other local Nigerian newspapers. Findings from this study show that the construction of the subjects involved in the conflict was more sensational, divisive and dangerous. The foreign papers adopted a more objective approach. They often appeared to minimise the magnitude of the conflict and ‘construct the actions of the main actors from a perspective that would appeal only to foreign audiences’ (Chiluwa & Chiluwa 2020). Using a cross-national comparison, Dzileński (2017) examined how the different national news media frame migration to their audiences. The researchers examined online news publications from the USA, Germany, and Spain. Results from this study show that ‘national news media construct multiple frames of migration, maintain a significant international focus, and often emphasise their discontent with national governments’ handling of migration issues’ (Dzileński 2017:15). Findings from this study revealed that the frames used to report on the migrants were: ‘exclusion, inferiority, dirtiness, danger, crime, and helplessness’. Dzileński (2017) argues that the press framed the migrants in denigrating, hateful terms that portrayed immigrants negatively.

8 African Media Framing of Foreigners

Vanyoro (2021) examined the framing of migrant domestic workers in the context of labour rights in South Africa. From this study, Vanyoro found a dominance of ‘singular frames that conflate the issues around migrant domestic workers and their rights’, reducing them to rigid categories of either ‘international migrants’ or ‘domestic workers’. Moreover, the study also revealed that the framing of domestic migrant workers as international workers and not as workers like any other local domestic workers tends to generate ‘deep-seated xenophobic discourses about migrants in South Africa’s labour market which are compatible with a citizenship-based workers’ rights movement and “national chauvinism”’ (Vanyoro 2021). He concludes that framing migrant domestic workers as external or ‘other’ has allowed ‘trade unions and NGOs to use it to de-exceptionalise international migrants to appeal to a local constituency concerned about the economy being ‘overrun’ by international migrants’ (Vanyoro 2021:663). In a different study, Wahutu (2018) examines the media representation of the conflict in Darfur in the media in South Africa, Kenya, Egypt, and Rwanda. The study analysed 850 newspaper articles that were published between 2003 and 2008. It also included interviews with journalists in Kenya and South Africa. Findings from this study indicate that the press in

four countries used the same ‘ethnic conflict’ frame to report on the violence in Darfur. However, the ‘ethnic conflict’ frame was used differently in African media than in Western media. Wahutu (2018:44) concludes that ‘African journalists used the ethnic frame to domesticate the news and as a part of a specific political project to demarcate which actors should be understood as Other and with which actors’ audiences share an affinity’.

Studies by Danso and McDonald (2001), McDonald and Jacobs (2005), Nyamnjoh (2010) and Smith (2010) have paid attention to the press reportage of migration in some Southern African countries that include Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. These studies illustrate that the media does not reflect what is happening in society but presents itself as an ‘interested’ actor in most cases. Additionally, studies by these scholars have concluded that the press in the Southern African region is generally xenophobic in how it frames and represents immigrants and refugees. Similarly, Moyo and Chiumbu (2020) argue that the press in the southern African region associates immigrants and refugees with ‘illegality, crime, job-stealing and other negative deeds’. To illustrate, Moyo and Chiumbu (2020:8) said, ‘Often these newspapers have used metaphors and visual imagery that frame immigrants in a negative manner, using terms such as “influx”, “illegals” and “swarming”’.

In South Africa, media reporting on immigration tends to be negative, with most news articles representing a negative and anti-immigration stance. Media coverage often falls into two clusters: anti-immigrant and non-analytical articles or pro-immigration and analytical pieces. She argues that ‘coverage tends to embolden negative stereotypes about migrants and contains little evidence of facts having been cross-checked. Instead, government statistics and numbers are regurgitated, be they true or not’ (Freeman 2020).

Freeman’s (2020) study also revealed that the media uses highly emotive language to describe immigration into South Africa. For example, the media was seen to use terms like ‘flooded’ or ‘overrun’ and often talked about ‘aliens’ or ‘illegal immigrants. Moyo and Chiumbu (2020) added weight to the assertion by Freeman (2020) when they revealed that most media reports on foreigners focused on crime and criminal activities by foreigners, presenting non-nationals as perpetrators of such.

9 Theoretical Underpinnings: Framing Theory

Framing theory has its pedigree in the works of Goffman (1974). It is perceived

as a conventional mass communication theory for investigating and understanding communication and communication-related behaviour. According to Goffman (1974:108), ‘People interpret what is going on around their world through their primary framework’. Often, this frame is regarded as primary because people always take it for granted. However, for Goffman (1974), people often use natural and social frameworks². Both these are crucial in influencing how people interpret news text.

Framing theory is a recurring theme in studies examining media reporting on migrants or foreigners worldwide (Dzilenski 2017). Entman (2007) describes framing as an ‘organising device that can assist journalists in presenting information in ways that give salience to some news and events over others’. For Entman (2007), framing as an organising device involves ‘selection and salience – to frame is to select some aspects of reality and make them more salient in a communicating text’. Drawing on Entman’s (2007) conceptualisation of framing, framing suggests that how a reporter or journalist frames issues can directly or indirectly affect the choices their audience or consumers make about processing the packaged information. To illustrate, framing theory examines how journalists and the news media focus on events or topics and place them within a field of meaning (Scheufele 2014:2012). Scholars have debated the relationship between framing theory and agenda-setting.

On the one hand, some argue that framing is an extension of agenda-setting. On the other hand, some scholars contend that framing is independent of agenda setting. Dzilenski (2017:14) made a clear distinction between the two concepts when he argued that ‘although closely tied to agenda-setting theory, which describes the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media, framing theory goes beyond it by claiming that how news is presented creates a ‘frame’ for perceiving that information’.

To illustrate, in the process of news production, broadcasters, journalists, and reporters attach ‘frames’ (for easy interpretation) to the information they dispense to the public. They do this not only to inform the consumers of their text about what to think (agenda setting) but also to guide their audience on how to think about topics. D’Angelo *et al.* (2019) argue that when framing issues, journalism offers an interpretive framework that is embedded in the stories they communicate. These frameworks guide the reader in interpreting the text, the next course of action and the final judgment.

² Social frameworks view events as socially driven occurrences, due to the whims, goals, and manipulations on the part of other social players (people).

In framing research, a researcher must understand how to unpack patterns of frames in the news reports to classify and organise them (Moore 2008). For example, Pan and Kosicki (1993:53) categorised devices in the news into four clusters: ‘syntactical structure, script structure, thematic structure, and rhetorical structure, in which lexical choices are located’. Similarly, Entman (2007) notes that to comprehend the workings of frames, researchers ought to know how to locate and identify frames in text: ‘News frames are constructed from and embodied in keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images emphasised in a news narrative. Frames can be detected by probing for particular words and visual images consistently appearing and conveying thematically consonant meanings across media and time. By repeating and reinforcing some words but not others, frames work to make some ideas more salient than others’ (Entman 2007:89).

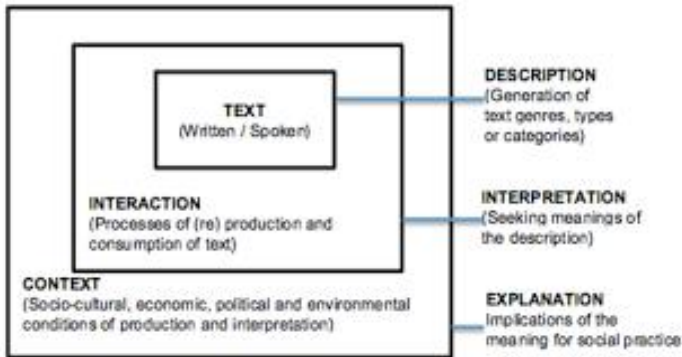
Therefore, framing theory is appropriate for understanding how the press framed messages about the Zimbabwean immigrants in the context of the British deporting the Zimbabweans in July 2021. Furthermore, an enhanced understanding of the framing theory allows the researchers to analyse the news articles in this study. To ensure a rigorous analysis of the news articles, the researchers focused on the framing devices described by Entman (2007:163) – ‘keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images’ – in a historical analysis of articles, editorials, and letters to editors to answer the proposed research questions. After conducting the framing analysis, the researchers perform a critical discourse analysis of the text that has been evoked.

10 Data, Methodology and Framework

Data for this study were retrieved from the electronic news articles of South African and British online press. In total, twelve national online news websites were used. Data from these articles were retrieved using framing analysis and critical discourse analysis simultaneously. When applied as a data collection instrument, framing analysis involves extracting repeated themes and communication text patterns. In this study, the researchers used framing analysis to search and retrieve ‘stereotypes, metaphors, actors, messages’, and other communication elements found in the media text. Moreso, the framing analysis was used to investigate how important these factors are and how and why the journalist chooses them in news production. All news about Zimbabwean migrants’ deportation was gathered and collected from 01 July

2021 to 31 December 2021. A total of 120 news articles were retrieved from the UK press. An additional 92 were analysed from the South African online press.

Figure 1: Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis Model (1989)



It is important to state that the data collection and analysis processes overlapped in this study. While collecting the data using the framing analysis, the researcher also evoked a Critical Discourse Analysis (hereafter referred to as CDA) to analyse the recurring and dominant themes. CDA focuses on the analysis of language in society. It, therefore, pays attention to the discursive representation of social reality, intending to deconstruct messages to observe the presence of power and inequality in the text under analysis. Fairclough's CDA three-dimensional framework (see Figure 1 above) informed the analysis of this study. Fairclough's (1989; 1995; 2013) model for CDA consists of three interrelated processes of analysis tied to three interrelated dimensions of discourse. These three dimensions are:

- The object of analysis (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts);
- The processes through which the object is produced and received (writing/ speaking/ designing and reading/ listening/ viewing) by human subjects; and
- The socio-historical conditions govern these processes.

According to Fairclough (1989; 2013), each of these dimensions requires a different kind of analysis:

- text analysis (description);
- processing analysis (interpretation); and
- social analysis (explanation).

Paying attention to these different kinds of analysis, CDA was useful because it enabled the researchers to focus on the signifiers that structured and made up the text, the specific linguistic selections, their juxtapositioning, the text sequencing, and the text layout (Janks 1997). Furthermore, the researchers must ‘recognise the historical determination of these selections and understand that these choices are tied to the conditions of possibility of that utterance’ (Janks 1997:329). It is another way of saying that texts are instantiations of socially regulated discourses and that the processes of production and reception are socially constrained (Fairclough 1995:98).

11 Findings

The findings in the section below were drawn from 212 news articles the researchers reviewed. Unfortunately, due to the humongous amount of data obtained during this process, the researchers could not include all the extracts from all the news articles. Therefore, only a few were presented in this section for illustration purposes.

11.1 Frames in the British Press Describing the Deportation

In this section, findings that emerged from the British press pertaining to the deportation of Zimbabwean immigrants are presented and analysed.

11.1.1 The ‘Exclusion’ Frames

The ‘exclusion’ frame conceptualised the notion that the Zimbabwean deportees did not deserve British citizenship. Accordingly, it was emphasised in the press that these Zimbabweans must be sent back and deported to their country. The common words and phrases that were identified in support of the ‘exclusion’ frame are ‘removing’, ‘excluded’, ‘sent back to the home country’, ‘immigrants

must be deported', 'return to the home country', and 'forced to return home'. Moreover, to support the idea that the press emphasised that the Zimbabwean migrants did not deserve to be in Britain, the following excerpts retrieved from the press are highlighted:

We make no apology for seeking to protect the public by removing serious, violent, and persistent foreign national offenders. We have removed more than 700 criminals this year, with a combined sentence of more than 1,500 years in prison (The Guardian 2021).

The first batch of dozens of Zimbabweans deported from the UK landed in the southern African country. Some had been in the UK for decades and were forced to leave their families behind to begin an uncertain future in their country of origin (The Guardian 2021).

Those affected are involuntary returnees who have exhausted the administrative and legal procedures and have lost the legal right to remain in that country (TRTWorld 2021).

Based on the above, it can be concluded that much of the reports centred around the theme of 'exclusion'. The term exclusion was mentioned in some press that stated that 'Zimbabwean migrants face exclusion from the UK'. In addition, the press highlighted the idea that the Zimbabwean migrants had lost and exhausted all legal options to remain in Britain. As such, they must be excluded from the UK.

11.1.2 The 'Criminality' Frame

The use of the 'criminality' frame is important to note, particularly when it comes to issues of migration and immigration. The British press emphasised the term 'criminals'. The deported Zimbabweans were described as criminals who had served their jail terms. A British online press (TRT WORLD 2021) had a headline that said, 'Zimbabweans committed murder, rape and other despicable crimes'. In some press, the increased crime in Britain was blamed on Zimbabweans. Across the newspapers, we identified various descriptions that implied crime, such as 'criminal offence, rapist, murderous' – all this implied guilt on the part of the immigrants. The issues of guilt were emphasised in

almost all press. It was clear that these deportees ‘were guilty’ of various offences. Below are some examples to support the point presented above.

Zimbabweans committed murder, rape and other despicable crimes (TRTWORLD 2021).

One man has convictions for fraud and driving offences and has been in the UK since 2005 (The Guardian 2021).

We make no apology for seeking to protect the public by removing serious, violent and persistent foreign national offenders. We have removed more than 700 criminals this year, with a combined sentence of more than 1,500 years in prison (The Guardian, 2021)

The UK Home Secretary Priti Patel believes the Zimbabweans committed murder, rape and other despicable crimes (The Citizen 2021).

Those deported and those awaiting deportation were convicted of committing crimes in Britain. They argue that the UK has a right to deport foreigners who commit crimes after they serve their sentences (TRTWORLD 2021).

The evidence above suggests that the press was unrelenting in framing Zimbabwean migrants as criminals. This type of framing was seen in how the media used various descriptors suggestive of criminality.

11.1.3 ‘Helplessness’ Frame

The ‘helpless’ frame was prominent in many British sampled articles. At face value, the articles that carried this theme seemed concerned with the deported Zimbabweans’ welfare when they arrived in Zimbabwe. However, the press provided positive coverage by highlighting efforts made by certain rights groups and authorities to prevent deportations. These reports revealed that some British lawmakers expressed concern for the welfare of the deported migrants. Below are some examples of how the press carried on presenting concerns about the welfare of the migrants.

Framing the Deportation of Zimbabwean Immigrants

Many migrants will struggle when they arrive in Zimbabwe owing to the deteriorating political and economic situation in the country (The Citizen 2021).

Several Zimbabwean detainees at Colnbrook immigration removal centre near Heathrow said they were terrified of being forcibly returned to their home country (The Guardian 2021).

Seventy-five British politicians have written to home secretary Priti Patel asking her to stop the deportations of the Zimbabwean nationals citing the deteriorating political and humanitarian situation in the southern African country (The Citizen 2021).

Dad-of-two locked up and set for deportation after nearly 20 years in Britain. A family is desperate to stop a beloved father-of-two from being kicked out of the UK. But hope is fading for Kuranga, who has lived in Leeds for 18 years and faces being sent to Zimbabwe (The Mirror 2021).

However, on the other hand, a careful analysis of articles that ran the ‘helplessness’ theme suggests that instead of being concerned with the welfare of the migrants, the press instead presented the deported migrants as ‘helpless’ people whose situation is unknown when they arrive in Zimbabwe. To illustrate, in most stories that did not sound derogatory, the impression that was presented about the Zimbabwean migrants is that they were ‘helpless’, ‘pitiful’, ‘terrified of being forcibly returned to their home country’, ‘alone’, ‘exposed’, ‘desperate’ and ‘suffer’. For instance, a story about *The Guardian* (2021) exemplified all these descriptors.

The Guardian reported on 18 July 2021 on the people that were being deported as people who were ‘helpless’. It said:

Plans for the UK Home Office’s first mass deportation flight to Zimbabwe have been criticised as ‘a grubby operation’ that risks ‘delivering democracy activists to political persecution’ (The Guardian 2021).

Although the above statement seems neutral and suggests that the press was em-

pathetic with the plight of those activists who were to be deported, the phrase ‘*risks delivering democracy activists to political persecution*’ (The Guardian 2021) suggests that the activists who were part of the people to be deported were helpless individuals who needed to be pardoned. From the same reports, other extracts that support the idea that the Zimbabweans were presented as helpless are listed below:

Those affected are involuntary returnees who have exhausted the administrative and legal procedures and have lost the legal right to remain in that country (The Guardian 2021).

One client who came to the UK feeling political persecution told us they fear for their life if deported (The Guardian 2021).

Words and descriptors suggesting helplessness were also rampant in other press, like ‘*uncertain future*’ and ‘*Britain rejected many Zimbabweans whose bids for asylum also face deportation*’ (TRTWorld 2021). In *The Mirror*, it was said:

A family is in a desperate last bid to stop the eviction of a father (The Mirror 2021).

The BBC News (2021) reports:

Zimbabwean with football dreams to be kicked out of UK.

All these demonstrate that the press framed the deported migrants as people in a state of helplessness.

11.2 South African Media Framing of Zimbabwean Migrants

11.2.1 The ‘Inferiority’ Frame

Just like the British media presented Zimbabweans as ‘inferior’, similar themes that suggest that Zimbabweans are inferior were also evident in most news articles in South Africa. For instance, the sampled press was replete with phrases that referred to Zimbabweans as ‘border jumpers’, ‘domestic workers’, ‘smuggled’, and undocumented’. Using such terms and descriptors when

reporting on the Zimbabweans, the press reduced the said individuals to an inferior position. To illustrate, ‘border jumper’ is a term that describes a person who is a non-citizen and does not fit in the social strata of the host country – additionally, telling most Zimbabweans as ‘domestic workers’ places them at an inferior level. To illustrate, migrant ‘domestic workers’ are some of the least paid in South Africa and occupy the lowest rank in the South African labour force. Some of the examples drawn from the news articles are listed below:

Zimbabweans are found across South Africa, working particularly in the hospitality, retail and service sectors and as domestic workers (Eyewitness 2021).

The South African Department of Home Affairs, SAPS and SADF have purportedly set up an enormous barrier between Hammanskraal and Kranshop in anticipation of the mass deportation of undocumented Zimbabweans (Opera News 2022).

89,000 border jumpers arrested, deported (eNCA 2022).

Using terms like ‘border jumpers’, ‘undocumented’, and ‘illegal’ to describe these persons is nothing less than a means of belittling them. It strips them away from their humanity and relegates them to animals who do not respect boundaries but instead prefer to ‘jump’ the borders. It is important to note that some people are constantly referred to in derogatory terms. For example, the people who migrate from Zimbabwe to neighbouring countries comprise professionals and educated people. Therefore, it is an unjust representation of all Zimbabweans as illegal criminals, as seen in the data. This assertion is supported by evidence from Moyo and Chiumbu (2020), who argue that many Zimbabwean migrants are professionals in their own right. Moreover, various factors, such as unstable political and economic conditions, trigger their movement to neighbouring countries.

11.2.2 The ‘Criminality’ Frame

The ‘criminal’ frame is crisscrossed with articles about immigrant ‘border jumpers’ as a common practice Zimbabwean undocumented do when they want to cross the borders into South Africa. The phrase ‘border jumpers’ carries the

connotation of unlawfulness, and the press uses this derogatory term to portray migrants as objects rather than persons. ‘Border jumpers’ and ‘undocumented migrants’ also present migrants as victims of the immigration process and business. Moreover, in the sampled articles from South Africa, there was repeated use of terms that point to the fact that the deported immigrants were ‘criminals’, ‘illegal’, and undeserving of remaining in South Africa because they have committed various crimes. To illustrate, phrases, words and descriptors that were dominant in the articles were: ‘undocumented’, ‘ex-convicts’, ‘murderers’, ‘rapist’, and ‘criminals’. Using such terms points to the fact that the deported Zimbabwean migrants were nothing short of criminals who should be deported by all means possible. Some extracts from the news articles sampled from South Africa are listed below:

The majority [of Zimbabweans] are undocumented and do not hold a permit (BusinessTech 2021).

Seven ex-convicts who completed sentences in South African jails were deported yesterday via Beitbridge along with 213 other people who had been arrested for violating Pretoria’s immigration laws (Eyewitness 2021).

A record 220 individuals – comprising several criminals, overstayers and undocumented individuals – were dispatched from the Lindela Detention Centre in Johannesburg (Times Live 2021).

11.2.3 The ‘Exclusion’ Frames

Often, in the immigration discourse, the theme of exclusion refers to the notion that the local citizens feel that the immigrants do not belong and, therefore, must be excluded and sent back to their country. The ‘exclusion’ also means that the immigrants do not deserve resources in the host country. These meanings were identified in the sampled articles. For instance, the press’s dominant ideas under this theme were that the Zimbabwean migrants do not belong and must be sent back home. This attitude was reflected in descriptors and phrases like ‘back home’, ‘home country’, ‘taking jobs’, and ‘fleeing their country’. Put together, these descriptors suggest that the migrant Zimbabweans who ‘flee their homes’ are here to ‘take our jobs’ that they do not deserve and must be ‘sent back’ to

their ‘home country’. In a *BusinessTech* report (2021), the reporters accused the Zimbabweans of flocking to South Africa and taking away the jobs that belonged to South Africans. Under the exclusion theme, another central idea in the press is that the host countries have every right to deport Zimbabwean immigrants.

Similarly, *The Herald* reported that ‘any country in the world has a right to deport any foreigner from its country’ (*The Herald* 2021). The fact that the host country has a right to expel a person, as recorded here, also brings to light the idea that the host country can exclude certain migrants when they wish to. Some of the examples to illustrate the two points made above are listed below:

Zimbabweans continue to trek to the neighbouring country in search of jobs as the economic problems back home continue to intensify while others run away from political persecution (The Citizen 2021).

South Africa jettisoned a plan that would have forced about 200,000 Zimbabweans to return home (BusinessTech 2021).

South Africa has been plagued by recurrent bouts of xenophobic violence since at least 2008, with foreigners often accused of taking jobs in a country where a third of the workforce is unemployed (BusinessTech 2021).

Since the turn of the century, Zimbabweans have fled their country as economic and political refugees destined for SA and Botswana (BusinessTech 2021).

12 Description and Implications of Theory

This research examined the British and South African media framing of Zimbabwean immigrants in the deportation of 50 Zimbabwean immigrants from Britain in July 2021. Our findings suggest a huge similarity in how the British and South African press participate in the immigrant discourse. The similarity in the analysed articles between the frames and words and descriptors supports this assertion. Furthermore, most of the frames evoked negative sentiments about immigrants that are seen elsewhere around the globe. A

possible explanation of the similarity of the frames and descriptors used to describe Zimbabwean immigrants is that the press's discursive processes are directly or indirectly influenced by the dominant discourse in the sphere of their construction (Chambwera 2016; Muringa 2019). For instance, Fairclough (2013) argues that text producers and interpreters draw on the socially available resources that constitute the order of discourse. Our findings, when interpreted considering Fairclough's (1992; 1989; 2013) assertion above, tempt one to conclude that the frames used by the press were dependent, constituted by the discursive events obtained in both Britain and South Africa and heavily influenced them.

Furthermore, the above assertion adds weight to the conclusions made by Wahutu (2018). In examining the African media framing of the Darfur conflict, Wahutu revealed that the African press used the same frame when covering the Darfur conflict. To illustrate, the study shows how journalists and their media organisations internalise narratives that are used to talk about events such as the atrocities in Darfur. The dominance of these frames is logical within the context of the limited framing repertoires faced by journalists, as illustrated by Savelsberg and King (2005). They posit that narrative genres and frames are often restricted, constricting how much journalists can be innovative in their coverage of atrocities.

The framing patterns relevant in the news articles were those of omission and repetition. It was evident that the journalist emphasised and placed salience on those negative aspects of the topic while omitting certain aspects that may lead to a positive interpretation of the news by its audience (Entman 2007; Goffman 1974). These patterns were crucial in framing Zimbabwean migrants in that they reflected patterns of 'nativism because these frames foster anti-immigrant, xenophobic, racist ideology, the core concepts of nativism' (Moore 2008:113). The themes that emerged from this study's analysis are consistent with themes found in a study by Moore (2008). For instance, Moore's (2008) study found that the press reinforced nativism sentiments by framing immigrants in a negative light.

Our findings contribute to the literature in several ways. First, our findings that the media framed Zimbabwean migrants as 'criminals' who 'must be deported' by all means possible are supported by studies conducted elsewhere. For instance, Moore (2008) found that the USA, German and Spanish press was unapologetic in portraying immigrants as 'criminals'. The immigrants were presented as the most criminally minded in the media for this scholar. The

common descriptors used to describe immigrants in the above-stated press included ‘suspect’, ‘suspicious’, ‘escaped’, ‘sneaky’, ‘underhanded’, ‘fugitive’, and ‘on the loose’. Furthermore, in another study, Jancsics (2021:26) supports the argument that the press in host countries often portrays immigrants in a negative light when they argue that ‘most papers associated the immigrants with the drug dealing and illegal dealings’.

The findings that the media frame the Zimbabweans as ‘inferior’ is discussed elsewhere in other studies. For instance, Moore’s (2008) study in the USA, Spain and Germany revealed that the ‘inferiority’ frame was evident in describing all ethnic groups, including Asians, Russian Jews, Italians, and Mexicans. To illustrate, the press used metaphors such as ‘scourge’ and ‘swarm’ to portray Russian-Jewish groups as inferior. Additionally, Moore’s study found that ‘Asians and Mexican immigrants were viewed as nothing more than cheap labourers for USA business, and the terms for Asians were particularly hateful’ (Moore 2008:82). Moore’s findings, conducted outside the scope of our study, support our findings that the immigrants are often framed as inferior by media in the host countries.

Our study also revealed that the immigrants were treated as the ‘other’. The press emphasised that the migrants should be returned to their home countries. For instance, in the British press, there was an emphasis on the fact that immigrants do not have any right to be in Britain. That is, they do not belong. On the other hand, in the South African context, the emphasis was on the idea that the immigrants were ‘taking jobs’ belonging to local South Africans. The issues of ‘othering’ immigrants were also evident in the South African presses when they repeated the idea that ‘immigrants must be sent back home’ or ‘are fleeing their home countries’.

The discussion above points to the fact that both the British and South African press evoke the discourse of ‘others’ and ‘we-they’ in their reporting of Zimbabwean migrants. These findings are consistent with findings from other studies. For instance, Arcimaviciene and Baglama (2018) found that the US and European Union media ‘narratives both delegitimise and stigmatise the status of a migrant by deeper entrenching the ‘outsider’ stereotype and, therefore, create the general feeling of instability and intolerance within the EU’. This research shows that ‘othering’ was rampant in South African and Britain news articles. The othering is an established construct in the rhetorical narrative surrounding hate speech, and the ‘we-they’ dichotomy has long been identified in racist discourse.

13 Conclusion

This investigation aimed to assess British and South African online press framing on the deportation of Zimbabwean immigrants between July 2021 and January 2022. It has shown that the British and South African press applied similar frames in reporting the deportation of Zimbabwean immigrants from South Africa and Britain. Our findings also revealed that the press uses frames that were embedded in negativity to dehumanise and paint a bad picture of the deported immigrants. Among the frames evoked by the press are ‘exclusion’, ‘criminality’, and ‘helplessness’. These findings suggest that the media framing of immigrants is generally negative and consistent with historical and current prevailing discourse during news production. This chapter has provided a deeper insight into the uniformity among news producers regarding immigration discourse. However, this research was limited by the absence of quantitative data and interviews with the journalists who were the key participants in producing the frames used to describe the Zimbabwean immigrants. Notwithstanding these limitations, the study suggests that the press is a key participant in the ‘othering’ of migrants, which is often evident in most news articles. More broadly, research is needed to determine possible solutions to address immigrants’ ever-increasing ‘othering’ in the African and Western press.

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