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Thieves, Gypsies, criminals and
spongers: Anti-immigration rhetoric and
Fear of Crime among Eastern European
Migrants. The “UKIP effect”?

MSc by research in Criminology

Benjamin Michael Watson

University of Huddersfield

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Abstract

A great deal of research has been conducted on fear of crime (FoC) over last six decades. Most of this inquiry has, however, focused on the study of FoC among the general public, as such, much less is known about the nature and impact of this fear upon immigrants. For decades in the UK, the subject of immigration has continually divided public opinion, a fact that the tabloid media and the political-right have sought to capitalize upon through the use of sensationalist anti-immigration rhetoric. Based upon the accounts of twelve A2 and A8 European migrants, this study assesses the effect that anti-immigration media and political rhetoric has on Eastern-European migrants' fear of crime and the factors that aggravate and mitigate its impact.

A key finding of the study was that the majority of participants were not fearful of crime at all and did not believe that a risk of harm is exacerbated by hostile media or political rhetoric. For those who were fearful of crime, however, it was the experience of previous victimization that was most related to their fears. For these participants, hostile rhetoric was more threatening though not the main basis of their fears. For the majority of the participants, there were a number of mitigating (or protective) factors in their FoC, such as, their own understanding of their ethnicity, their English proficiency, the demographic of their local area, and their detachment from the groups that they saw as the target of the rhetoric. The study concludes that the rhetoric-FoC nexus is not linear and is subject to a multitude of individual and environmental factors that inform migrants' perceptions of vulnerability, experience of FoC and the perceived aggravating role of rhetoric.

1. Introduction

For decades, public opinion in the UK about the scale and nature of immigration has been characterized by caution and concern (O’Nions, 2009; McLaren, 2013). In 2004, when the UK opened its borders to migrant workers from the newly ascended A8 EU member states, very few could have predicted what would follow. Original predictions of 5000 – 13,000 migrants workers would turn out to be inaccurate, as over 1 million A8 migrant workers headed for the UK (Light and Young, 2009; Fox, Morosanu & Sziloso, 2012). It did not take long for the tabloid media and political right to capitalize upon the scale of UK bound A8 migration, which was quickly framed within the adversarial frameworks of ‘threat, competition and economic burden (Light & Young, 2009, Fox, Morosanu & Sziloso, 2012; Lesinka, 2014). In 2007, the EU continued its eastward expansion by incorporating the A2 states; Romania and Bulgaria, however, due to anxieties over the scale of previous A8 migration, A2 migrants were subject to a number of labour market restrictions (Sommerville, 2007; Fox, Morosanu & Sziloso, 2012). As with the A8 migration, it was not long before the tabloids were awash with scare stories designed to inflame public opinion by problematizing and demonizing prospective migrants from the A2 states. It was here that the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) began to rise to the forefront of British politics with their brand of anti-EU and anti-immigration rhetoric that appeared to synthesize perfectly with the concerns of the tabloids and the ‘left behind’ white working class public (Ford & Goodwin, 2014).

According to Frost (2007) and O’Nions (2009), the inflammatory nature of these kinds of rhetoric (media and political), which demonized and highlighted the presence of migrant groups, are problematic as they serve to stir up resentment towards and even legitimize aggressive racism against migrant and minority groups from within sections of the ‘white working classes’. In some cases, the propagation of these ‘threat’ narratives have even been linked to the incitement and occurrence of targeted harassment and violence against members of the groups they vilify (Refugee action, 2002; Frost, 2007; O’Nions, 2009; Baker, Madoc-Jones, Parry, Warren, Perry Roscoe & Mottershead, 2012). In others, the disparaging

rhetoric contained in media and political narratives has been linked to increased perceptions of vulnerability among members of targeted groups (ICAR, 2004). After their unanticipated success at the 2014 EU election, UKIP set about their 2015 General Election campaign with the aim of galvanizing latent public support in the hope of cementing their position within British politics. This campaign was largely characterized by UKIP's weighty criticism of the European Union and the UK's position within it. In particular, this campaign focused largely upon the vivid problematization and demonization of UK-bound migrants from the A8 and A2 EU member states, with particular emphasis on broadly portraying these groups through the lenses of endemic criminality, state burden and unwanted competition for jobs and resources for the struggling British working classes. Thus, it is then entirely possible that, due to nature and prevalence of this rhetoric and the apparent growing base of public support for UKIP and their narratives, A2 and A8 migrants might experience fears and concerns about their safety and position within the UK during the build-up to the May 2015 election.

It is against this backdrop of xenophobic rhetoric, and that of an eastward expanding EU, that the purpose of this study is formed; this study will seek to assess and explore the potential impact that mounting anti-migrant rhetoric from within mainstream media and political discourse has on members of targeted migrant groups' perceptions of fear of crime (FoC).

The structure of this study is as follows:

Chapter 2 - Literature review; will contain a review and discussion of the theoretical and contextual components of the study, such as, fear of crime and fear of crime among migrant and minority groups, as well as literature concerning the role that the media and politicians have in shaping public discourse and attitudes concerning immigration.

Chapter 3 – Methodology will contain; will detail the methodological considerations taken during the undertaking of this study, including the theoretical approach, sampling method, method of data analysis and limitation of this approach.

Chapter 4 – Findings and data analysis will contain; an analysis of the data collected from participants and present the main findings derived from the analysis process.

Chapter 5 - Discussion of findings will contain; A discussion of the factors that interact with, mitigate and aggravate participants' experiences of fear of crime, how these factors interlink with media and political rhetoric and how these factors might be understood through and relate to the existing body of literature.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion will contain; a concluding discussion of the main findings of this study, a discussion of the limitations of the current study, and possibilities for future research in this field.

2. Literature review

This chapter will consider a variety of literature relevant to this study's primary objective; concerning FoC, how disparaging contemporary political and media discourse regarding Eastern European immigration affects the lives of migrants from those countries living in the UK. This chapter will consist of literature concerned with: fear of crime (FoC), FoC among minority groups, discrimination and hate crime, the role of the media, and the problematisation of migrants in the arena of contemporary politics.

2.1 Fear of crime

Ever since research into "fear of crime" began in the 1960s, FoC has commanded a considerable deal of attention in politics and academia, becoming one of the most researched and politically charged topics in international criminology of the 20th century (Jackson, 2006; Lee, 2007; Semmens, 2007; Sutton, Robinson & Farrall, 2011; Abdullah, Salleh & Sakip, 2012). FoC is a form of indirect victimization which can cause victims to display and experience a variety of psychological disorders which can have a substantive effect on their quality of life such as; intense feelings of discomfort and diminished faith in society and the rule of law which can lead to the perception of reduced opportunities for free movement, recreation and sociability (Moeller, 1989). These symptoms represent a manifestation of the victim's perceived vulnerability to potential victimisation from external threat (Abdullah et al, 2012). FoC can cause victims to hyper inflate the perceived importance of self-preservation which can lead to precautious behaviour such as carrying weapons, joining and/or commuting in gangs, and increasing spending on home security such as CCTV; all of which further reduce the quality of life of the victim/s and those who live within the immediate area (Abdullah, et al, 2012; Baron, 2011).

The effects and implications of FoC are far reaching and numerous, often extending beyond the personal anxiety experienced by the primary victim (Box, Hale & Andrews, 1988). In some instances FoC has been implicated as a contributory mechanism for a number of wider social issues such as, the erosion of neighbourhood and community cohesion (Bannister & Fyfe, 2001; Jackson, 2006), the outward migration of prosperous individuals from the community (Hale, 1996, Skogan, 1986), and increased public support for more retributive forms of punishment for offenders; a kneejerk reaction which often largely ignores the importance of addressing the underlying causes of crime (Langworthy & Whitehead, 1985; Jackson, 2006).

2.2 Measuring fear of crime

According to commentators, the study of FoC has long been mired by a number of methodological, conceptual and operational inadequacies and inconsistencies (Farrall, Bannister, Ditton & Gilchrist, 1997; Warr, 2000; Jackson, 2004; Semmens, 2007; Hinkle & Weisburg, 2008; Alper & Chappell, 2012).

Like many other social phenomena, the study of FoC has for years been inundated with quantitative studies, largely composed of surveys and questionnaires, which seek to quantify social phenomena into a measurable data set (Hale, 1996). Quantitative research, as noted by David and Sutton (2004), assumes that social phenomena are objective in nature, ergo these social interactions have a fixed value regardless of the actor's interpretation. In this regard, quantitative research dismisses the significance of social interactions to the individual and attempts to uncover the "big picture" (David & Sutton, 2004). However, as we will see, in the study of FoC this "big picture" has been distorted by a number of conceptual and operationalization issues.

The application of quantitative methods and instruments in the study of FoC present an issue of contention for some, who question their usefulness for interpreting and giving meaning complex and data rich social phenomena (Semmens, 2007; Farrall and Gadd, 2004; Bryman, 2012), whilst questions about the value of reducing the deep and rich latent meanings of subjective social phenomena to a set of quantifiable data also arise (Bryman, 1984). As Farrall and Gadd (2004) note, the wide spread use of quantitative research instruments in this field of study has prompted some commentators to simultaneously question the validity of such methods, the data they produce and their subsequent findings. Subsequently Farrall and Gadd (2004) concluded that previous quantitative survey based studies have both largely exaggerated the prevalence and intensity of FoC among the general population, as well as having under-evaluated the efficacy of fear reduction interventions.

As Semmens (2007) notes, before embarking upon research into the phenomena of FoC it is important to recognise that our contemporary understanding of this phenomena is laced with conceptual inadequacies and imperfections. In particular a number of academics have noted the ambiguity of the FoC as a concept which has led to the emergence of conceptual and methodological inconsistencies across a number of studies which have seen emotional “FoC” regularly conflated with other related yet distinct concepts such as perceived risk, safety and vulnerability (Farrall, Bannister, Ditton & Gilchrist, 1997; Warr, 2000; Semmens, 2007; Hinkle, 2014). Hinkle (2014) suggests that such a conflation of concepts has a tendency to yield biased and inaccurate results regarding the frequency and scale of what is presented as FoC but is in actual fact something else entirely. This, Hinkle (2014) claims, could explain the disparities and inconsistencies that are found within the existing body of FoC literature. Similarly Warr (2000) also suggests that the inability of academics and researchers to universally identify and dichotomise these intrinsically distinct concepts has contributed significantly to conceptual issues of understanding and measuring “fear”. Further, Semmens (2007) argues that, despite its contemporary political and academic significance, the phenomena of FoC is underdeveloped at a conceptual level, pointing to a poor academic comprehension of fear as an emotional state and the use of flawed and inappropriate quantitative instruments, among others. Rader (2004) has even gone as far as

to suggest the complete reconceptualization of FoC in order to maintain the integrity of further study of this phenomena.

Hinkle and Weisburd (2008) have expressed similar views regarding the importance of separating emotional fear from the concepts of perceived likelihood of victimisation and perceived risk when measuring FoC due to the pervasive nature of these concepts and the subjectivity of the responses they induce from one individual to the next. For example, some people may perceive a high risk of crime in their everyday routines but continue to their lives as normal, however someone else living in the same area may be incapacitated by feelings of fear which are induced by the same perceived risk. Meithe and Lee (1984) suggest that a considerable number of studies have failed to operationalize fear in relation to how it manifests itself in response to varied crime cues among different respondents. Such failings, according to Meithe and Lee (1984), can and have undermined the integrity of such studies in that they overlook and fail to recognise the value of crime specific fears.

In light of the many criticisms levelled at FoC literature, Farrall, Bannister, Ditton and Gilchrist (1997) conducted a methodological study of FoC in which they utilized both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews in order to identify and control for the shortcomings of the former approach. Their results identified a number of weaknesses in quantitative FoC literature; firstly, feelings of anger were found to be a much more common response to the hypothetical prospect of victimisation and that such responses were not traced by survey instruments. Secondly the study revealed a number of mismatches between participants' responses at the qualitative and quantitative level which, according to Farrall, Bannister, Ditton and Gilchrist (1997), further highlights a number of methodological and conceptual issues which are linked to the use survey measures of FoC. Additionally, a great deal of criticism has been aimed at the wording and design of survey questions and the predetermined answers they often elicit, however, the scope of this review prevents a thorough account of such criticisms (Farrall, Bannister, Ditton & Gilchrist, 1997; Semmens, 2007; Farrall & Gadd, 2004; Warr, 2000; Gray, Jackson & Farrall, 2008).

As briefly evidenced above, the study of FoC is one that has become mired by a myriad of methodological, conceptual and operationalization issues and shortcomings that some scholars (as above) would argue undermine the validity of established knowledge in this field. However, the literature also argues that the majority of these shortcomings are confined and related to quantitative research studies which seek to quantify social phenomena into a measurable data set.

For the purpose of this study, FoC is defined as a response, which may be psychological or behavioural, which is produced by the perceived threat of crime, verbal or physical, which impairs the affected individuals' capacity to function as they normally would within their daily lives.

2.3 Explanatory models for fear of crime

Because of its pervasive nature and potential for political manipulation, interest in FoC has fuelled a substantial body of research in this field. From this body of research a variety of explanatory models on the factors related to FoC have emerged, a number of which are considered in the section below, starting with the vulnerability model.

The Vulnerability model

This model stipulates that FoC will be most acute among the most vulnerable groups of society; those most at risk, least capable of defending themselves or recovering from a potential attack, such as women, the elderly and the poor (Hale, 1996; Pantazis, 2000; Alper and Chappell, 2012). However, paradoxically, research suggests that the group statistically most likely to be victimised, adolescent males, actually experience the least FoC (Box, Hale, Andrews, 1988; Weinrather & Gartell, 1996; Scarborough, Like-Haislip, Novak, Lucas & Alarid, 2010; Backson, 2006; Snedker, 2012; Hinkle 2014). One theory for such a paradox points to the salience of potential risk factors (Scarborough et al, 2010). For example, the

serious and long lasting implications of rape are likely to contribute to elevated FoC among women, whilst a sense of hyper masculinity may play a role in male underreporting of FoC (Hale, 1996; Stanko & Hobdell, 1993; Sutton, Robinson and Farrall, 2011).

The Victimisation model

The victimisation model maintains that direct or indirect experiences of crime are directly linked to FoC (Hale, 1996). As such, this theory is underpinned by the assumption that those who experience crime in some form will also experience heightened FoC. However, evidence for this effect is inconsistent and inconclusive (Hale, 1996; Weinrath and Gartell, 1996; Evans and Fletcher, 2000; Banister and Fyfe, 2001). Similarly, some evidence also suggests that indirect victimisation, conveyed through second-hand sources such as gossip and the media, is more influential than direct victimisation (Box, Hale and Andrews, 1988; Roccato, Russo and Vieno, 2011). For example, the media plays a primary role in the conveying of second-hand accounts and information about crime to its viewers/consumers. However, given the importance of media values, such as that of sensationalism being a key driver in sales, these media sources have something of a vested interest in the over-reporting, exaggeration and even fabrication of the nature and prevalence of crime, thus contributing to FoC that is generally disproportionate to the actual threat (Hale, 1996, Chadee, 2001; Callanan, 2012; Jewkes, 2008). Considering the paradox of heightened public FoC, despite the number of police reported crime rates falling year on year, the importance of the media and sensationalist reporting in this regard seems quite logical, however, evidence for such a link has yielded mixed results (Callanan, 2012; Chedee & Ditton, 2005).

The Environmental model

This model proposes that environmental factors, both social and physical, contribute towards FoC (Hale, 1996; Brown, Brown and Perkins, 2004; Foster, Giles-Corti & Knuiman, 2010; Austin, Furr and Spine, 2002). There are three key components to this model; urbanism, community and incivilities however the scope of this review prevents a detailed discussion. Central to this model are the concepts of community cohesion and social order,

in short, the homogeneity of the population (DeLone, 2008). Evidence suggests that persons living in heavily urbanised areas, where it is theorized that homogeneity is reduced due to transient populations, experience FoC to a higher degree than those who live in rural areas which feature more permanent and homogenous populations (Hale, 1996; Brown, Brown and Perkins, 2008; Brunton-Smith and Strugis; DeLone, 2008). Further, evidence suggests that FoC is higher in areas that experience high levels of incivilities such as graffiti, public drug use and gangs of young people (Brunton-Smith & Strugis, 2001; Hinkle & Weisburd, 2008; Brown, Brown & Perkins, 2004).

The Psychological model

This model is concerned with the psychological processes that are associated with general feelings of fear and vulnerability and how these relate to FoC (Hale, 1996; Jackson, 2009; Cops, Pleysier & Put, 2011; Chadee and Ying, 2013). It has been suggested by this model that feelings of general fear, which may come as a result of low self-confidence or psychological illness such as anxiety, are often mistaken for and recorded as FoC; a theory that might explain the disproportionality between FoC and levels of actual crime (Jackson, 2009; Cops, Pleysier and Put, 2011; Chadee and Ying, 2013). Further, Gabriel and Grieve (2003) note the ambiguity of fear triggers and how they may affect different people in different manners; some cues may allay fear in certain individuals whilst triggering dormant fears in others depending on the mind-set of the individual in question. In this regard Chadee and Ying (2013) found that general fear was a significant predictor of FoC across a number of variables, thus indicating the salience of subjective non-crime related fears and anxieties to the study of FOC.

2.4 Fear of crime among migrant and minority groups

Pervasive in nature and therefore not exclusive to any particular demographic of society, FoC and research concerning this phenomena has had a tendency to focus on its prevalence and causes within the context of the public in general, rather than particular ethnic or social

groups. As such, the scope of FoC research among minority and migrant groups is quite limited (Ackah, 2000; Wu and Wen, 2014). Further, the scope of research concerning FoC among the particular demographics with which this study is concerned is narrow. However, the current study sought to supplement this limited body of research with existing literature regarding FoC among other minority groups whose circumstances may be comparable. The following section will consider a body of literature related to FoC among migrant and minority groups, followed by a review of two other studies which relate to FoC among migrant populations (Furr, Austin, Cribbs and Smogger, 2006; Lee and Ulmer, 2006; Sundeen, 1984; Ackah, 2000; Eitle & Taylor, 2008; Mason, 2010; Wu and Wen, 2014).

For prospective migrants, the process of moving and settling into a new country can be a problematic and stressful experience (Ritzner and Ponizovsky, 1999; Furr, Austin, Cribbs and Smoger, 2006; Fandrem, Strohmeier and Jonsdottir, 2012). Factors such as language barriers, lack of social support, diminished employment prospects and absence of family and friends can further exacerbate feelings of anxiety and discomfort which might already be manifested by the moving process (Lee and Ulmer, 2000; Wu and Wen, 2014). As a broad demographic, migrants may also find themselves exposed to a number of victimization risk factors including, having lower levels of education, a younger average age, lower rates of home ownership, an enhanced likelihood of living in high disorder neighbourhoods and lack of private transport (Babacan, Pyke, Bhathal, Gill, Grossman & Bertone, 2010; Wu & Aleheimer, 2013). Some evidence even suggests that the process of migration itself is even linked to mental health problems in some individuals (Ritzner & Ponizovsky, 1999). These factors considered, it is almost unsurprising that research suggests that, for a variety of reasons, migrant and minority groups are more likely to experience more pronounced FoC than their indigenous counterparts and the general population as a whole (Akah, 2000; Eitle & Taylor, 2008; Mears and Stewart, 2010; Pain, 2001; O’Nions, 2010). Respective studies in the US concerning Ghanaian, South Korean and Hispanic migrant populations illustrate how concerns regarding FoC and victimization are more prevalent among these groups compared to the general population (Akah, 2000; Brown & Benedict, 2004; Lee & Ulmer, 2006).

Hypotheses concerning migrant levels of acculturation have been considered, whereby the more fluent and familiar newcomers are with the language and customs of their adoptive country, the less they will fear victimization (Wu & Wen, 2014). However, evidence to support such a hypothesis has been mixed; some in favour (Sundeen, 1984; Lee & Ulmer, 2006; Wu & Wen, 2014), some against (Yu, Kercher & Swindell, 2010). Migrants' length of stay in their adoptive country is another key acculturation factor. Research concerning this factor and its predictability of migrants' FoC have yielded a similar cohort of mixed evidence for (Sundeen, 1984; Lee & Ulmer, 2000) and against (Akah, 2000; Yun, Kercher & Swindell, 2010).

One study of Chinese students in Melbourne found that first and second-hand experiences of victimization and harassment were significant factors in participants' experience of FoC and perceived vulnerability (Babacan et al, 2010). Here, a number of heightened risk exposure factors were identified, such as participants' residence in high disorder neighbourhoods, use of public transport at night and lack of local knowledge. Furthermore, participants' south Asian ethnicity was also identified as significant risk factor due to the recurrent racial component of the victimization being experienced. Due to the prevalence and nature of this victimization, Babcan et al (2010) found that victimized and non-victimized participants alike reported altering their routines, reclusiveness at night, avoidance of alcohol consumption areas and widely held perceptions of racist attitudes among many Anglo-Australians. As a result, the majority of participants believed Melbourne to be a far more dangerous place than when they had first arrived, with some victims even leaving the country out of fear or due to the seriousness of the psychological and physical trauma they had experienced.

Alternatively, research from the USA found that paradoxically, whilst reporting lower levels of neighbourhood satisfaction, refugees from the former USSR reported higher perceptions of safety and security than their indigenous American counterparts (Furr, Austin, Cribbs and Smogger; 2006). These findings were unexpected and contradicted the previously established theoretical framework on which the authors had formed their hypothesis. In this

regard, they had predicted that refugee participants would report markedly lower perceptions of safety due to being unfamiliar with their new neighbourhood, local norms and routines, and the likelihood of being treated as outsiders by the indigenous population. In light of these findings, the authors hypothesised that, unlike other migrant groups, the former USSR participants in this study had benefitted from their refugee status, in that they were afforded state sponsored housing assistance which ensured they were not housed in typically high crime “ethnic inner-city enclaves”. Furthermore, the fact that many of the refugee participants had emigrated in family-units was also hypothesised to have an anaesthetic effect on the transitional difficulties which have been cited in previous studies. Furr et al (2006) also suggested that their unexpected findings might be explained by refugee participants’ comparison of safety in the USA compared to the former USSR, due to the inferior living conditions and more restrictive state conditions in the USSR and better law enforcement in the USA.

In all, evidence in this field suggests that FoC is likely to be felt more strongly by minority ethnic and migrant communities. Previous research has suggested and explored a range of factors that are thought to contribute to this phenomenon such as, adopted language proficiency, length of stay in adopted country, area of residency, perceptions of crime and familiarity with the criminal justice system in migrants’ countries of origin. However, the body of evidence here is somewhat incomplete and inconclusive, and there is little existing research about the relationship between the vilified status of particular migrant groups within popular culture and members of said groups’ perceptions of FoC. Drawing upon the body of existent literature, it is the researcher’s expectation that participants in this study will express a pronounced experience of FoC.

2.5 Hate crime and the “other”

A vast body of literature exists regarding the nature, scale and impact of hate crime upon minority groups within society, however, due to this scale, a thorough appraisal of this literature is beyond the scope of this review. As such, the following review of hate crime literature will be summary.

Hate crime has been ever present throughout human history, however, due to contrasting and ever changing global social, cultural, political and religious norms, the establishment of a universal consensus on this issue has been problematic (Boeckmann & Turpin-Petrosino, 2002; Gertsenfeld, 2004; Hall, 2005; Chakraboti & Garland, 2009; Hall, 2013). Broadly speaking, the central component of hate crime is the hatred or bigotry of the offender towards the group to which their victim belongs (McDevitt, Levin, Bennett, 2002; Gerstenfeld, 2004; Chongatera, 2013). Petrosino (2004, pg10) offers a more extensive definition of hate crime, identifying three core characteristics that distinguish this type of crime from others:

“The victim’s groups’ affiliation (racial, cultural, or religious), the group in questions’ lesser political and economic standing, and the manner in which the victim and their affiliated group represent a threat to the perpetrators’ quality of life”.

This kind of crime is distinct in that it has a clear symbolic function intended to convey a message of hate to the victim’s entire group (Craig, 2002; Gerstenfeld, 2004). Furthermore, hate crimes also serve an instrumental function, in that members of victims’ affiliated group may be inclined to change and adapt their normal routines in order to avoid becoming a victim themselves (Craig, 2002; Chongatera, 2013). It is argued by some that victims of this type of crime can suffer from more pronounced physical, psychological and emotional trauma than the victims of similar, non-hate related offenses (Levin & McDevitt, 1992; Craig, 2002; Harek, Cogan & Gillis, 2002; Gertsenfeld, 2004; Perry, 2010).

Official figures concerning the prevalence of these hate crimes in England and Wales are imprecise (Hall, 2013), with Official Home Office figures (42,236) and those of the British Crime Survey (278,000) for hate crime offences varying considerably for the period of 2012/13 (ONS, 2013; Home Office, 2014). In both sets of figures are consistent in identifying the victim's race as the primary motivation for the offence. For the most part, previous literature has identified race and ethnicity as being central determinants of the hate crime experience, with persons of African heritage having the most pronounced experience and fear of experiencing hate crime, even when compared to other visible ethnic minorities (Benia, Janhevich & Hastings, 2008; Chongatera; 2013). Evidence also indicates that first-hand experience of hate crime is directly linked to heightened perceptions of vulnerability to and fear of hate crime (Herek, Gillis & Cogan, 1999; Benia, Janhevich & Hastings, 2013). Recent evidence from the UK, however, indicates that hate crime is becoming a more common experience for non-visible minorities (O'Nions, 2010), whereby recorded hate motivated violence against Eastern-European migrants are not uncommon (Mason, 2005; Human Rights First, 2008; Baker et al, 2012; Belfast Interface Project, 2013). Qualitative data her indicates that the animosity experienced by Eastern-European migrants may be due to the stigma that has been attached to these groups within the media and wider public discourse (Baker et al, 2012).

Fundamentally, these findings indicate something of a paradigm widening that not only incorporates 'traditional' victims of hate crime, but also ethnically homogenous groups that are perceived to represent competition for resources, criminality or economic threat (Frost, 2007; Human Rights First, 2008; O'Nions, 2010; Baker et al, 2012). The reason for this, according to Sivanandan (2001) may be due to the deterrence based immigration and asylum policies of previous UK governments and the messages of external threat and burden that were communicated to the wider public through these policies. As such, the criteria for this 'xeno-racism' is not ethnicity but rather the perceived relative economic standing of newcomers. Here, Sivanandan (2001) equates poverty to being the modern equivalent of 'blackness' as a source of demonization, discrimination and social exclusion. In considering the nature and reason for this paradigm shift, a number of commentators have underlined the possible significance of historical and contemporary political and media

discourse as a source perceived tension between the white working/underclasses and prospective newcomers (Frost, 2007; McLaren & Johnson, 2007; Human Rights First, 2008; O’Nions, 2008; Lesinka, 2014).

To summarise, hate crime represents an assertion of dominance of one group in society over another, whereby marginal groups are deemed to threaten the position of the dominant group. Evidence suggests that those who feel most threatened by migrant inflows are typically from the working and underclasses. It is possible that, due to their already limited power and social standing, these groups are also most likely to resort to crude retaliation, such as hate crimes, in order to maintain and reassert their position. Race has been identified as major determinants of experiencing hate crime, however recent evidence indicates that white European migrants are now also experiencing hate crime in the UK. This shift, according to commentators and victims alike, may be attributable to the problematizing way in which these groups are portrayed to the wider public within political and media discourse.

2.6 The role of the media and fear of crime

As a mode of communication, the media has the potential to greatly shape and influence its audiences’ perceptions of local or world events, questions of causations and attribution of blame (Miller & Phillo, 1999). For example, Moore (2014) highlights the way in which the US public support for the Iraq war was influenced by the media and its noncritical adoption and proliferation of the US government’s narrative which linked Saddam Hussain and Iraq to 9/11 and al-Qaeda. The attitude of the UK mainstream media towards migrants and asylum seekers is one typified by outward hostility and problematization (O’Nions, 2010; Frost, 2007; Human Rights First, 2008; Lesinka, 2014; Mawby and Gisby, 2009). Here, the distinction between asylum seekers, legitimate and illegitimate migrants has become lost in the midst of the media’s demonization of anyone who fits the mould of the “other”, a discourse that fits the template of a moral panic (O’Nions, 2010; Mawby and Gisby, 2009;

Philo, Briant & Donald, 2013). In particular, the actions of the tabloid press have been highlighted for intensifying public concerns about immigration by framing the issue as one of foreign invasion, economic burden, employment competition and criminality, often exaggerating actual events and figures in order to gain artificial validity (EUMC, 2002; Frost, 2007; Mawby and Gisby, 2009; O’Nions, 2010; Allen & Blinder, 2013). A theme that has become typical of such narratives is that of migrants’ criminal predisposition, a conflation that represents the merging of two divisive issues, crime and immigration, both of which are the source of considerable public concern (MORI, 2007; McLaren and Johnson, 2007; Banks, 2008; Allen & Vicol, 2014). Furthermore, the media application of such a narrow thematic spectrum has been particularly evident in their narrative regarding the lifting of restrictions on Romanian and Bulgarian citizens’ right to work in the UK and other EU countries. Here Allen and Vicol (2014) found that the overwhelming majority of tabloid media coverage around the imminent lifting of work restrictions focused on Romanian and Bulgarian citizens’ apparent propensity for criminal gang culture, anti-social behaviour, as well as theft and begging behaviour, among other forms of dishonesty. In this regard, Mawby and Gisby (2009) argue that the manner in which some sections of the media construct and report the anticipated arrival of migrant newcomers fits the framework of a moral panic.

Moral Panics

According to Cohen (2002) a typical moral panic consists of five distinct elements; 1) concern about a potential or imagined threat; 2) opposition and moral outrage toward those who embody the perceived threat (Folk devils) and the authorities responsible for dealing with them; 3) general consensus of the existence of a threat and the need to address it; 4) disproportionate exaggeration of the scale of the perceived problem, its severity and its dormant potential to cause harm; and 5) an unanticipated sudden eruption of panic and outrage that quickly dissipates. Here, some contend that the ascension of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union fits the criteria of a modern moral panic, whereby Bulgarians and Romanians are portrayed as an imminent threat to the social values, stretched resources and opportunities of the indigenous populations of more affluent Western European nations (Mawby and Gisby, 2009). As such, these migrants are essentially constructed as folk devils by the media; an external “other” onto whom

sweeping generalizations and labels can be broadly applied (Cohen, 2002; Mawby & Gisby, 2009). In this case, the moral concern stems from the generalized depiction of Bulgaria and Romania as being poverty stricken countries, where organised criminality is a way of life. These concerns and stereotypes are then reciprocated and confirmed by “experts” and moral entrepreneurs, such as opportunistic politicians and experts whose views fit the media narrative, which further perpetuates public concern and its demands for appropriate action. Appropriate action in this case came in the form of the UK government announcing that it would be restricting migration from Romania and Bulgaria through the implementation of a screening process as opposed to the usual free movement afforded to citizens of EU member states. Here, Mawby and Gisby (2009) underline the role of the media as being the central mechanism in the propagation of this particular moral panic. Cohen (2002), however, argues that the discourse surrounding immigration and asylum issues does not constitute moral panic status, due to the consistency and longevity with which these concerns have remained embedded throughout past and current discourse and the extent to which these issues are global. Mawby and Gisby (2009) similarly argue that this particular episode of panic is but one such event in a series of many long standing panics, regarding the enlargement of the European Union and waves of migration from around the globe.

Miller and Philo (1999) acknowledge the huge capacity of the media to raise awareness about issues, however, they also note that this is not necessarily done through an honest representation of these often complicated issues. This analysis appears to correspond with O’Nions (2010) and Mawby and Gisby’s (2009) assessment of the media/immigration nexus; distinctions between specific groups, issues and the facts surrounding them are often neglected, leaving a simplified, often unbalanced narrative of the issues at hand. It is in this context that Hall (1981) considers the relationship between public receptors and the media, and the influence that each has on the other. He notes the pervasiveness of “commonsensical” passive racism with in some walks of hegemonic white society and that this “common sense” racism has become the preserve of the media; a sort of bipolar relationship between the two whereby one maintains and perpetuates the other and vice versa. Here, Philo (1999) claims that the media reflects and promotes the political agendas

of the day and highlights the importance of government policies and discussion regarding immigration as potential media narrative setters. In this regard, a connection between media trends and political narrative is inferred.

In considering the mechanisms of the media and how these influence public attitudes towards “others”, Finney and Peach (2004) acknowledge a number of factors that are believed to be important in determining attitudinal responses to media representations of “others”, such as the perceived prestige of the media source in question, the attitude of the reader and bias toward the information being disseminated. Hall (1980) also hypothesises that the process through which media messages are transferred to and digested by audiences is one characterised by the encoding and decoding of information when it is communicated and received. Here, Hall (1980) claims that media messages are best received, understood and accepted by the receptor when that message is coded within a prevailing or favoured code. Such a hypothesis draws parallels with the previously discussed analysis of the media/immigration nexus, whereby commonsensical racism represents a prevailing/favoured “code” within certain sections of society. These codes are both reciprocated and repeated from sections of the media, confirming and reinforcing existing perceptions and completing a self-perpetuating cycle. However, according to Kitzinger (1999) the reception of media discourses does not always follow the aforementioned cycle, whereby “audience resistance” tools, such as logic, distrust of the media and personal experience are potential buffers to this cycle. Kitzinger (1999) also cautions that these “resistance” factors do not always prevent audiences from accepting media messages because their personal experiences and logic may be called into question when challenged by prevailing narratives that are presented as being based on factual data and expertise.

As a tool of mass communication, the media possesses a certain degree of agenda setting potential which, according to some, becomes greatly enhanced during times of social and economic hardship, such as those that followed the recent economic crisis of 2007 (Cohen, 2002). It is within the environment of uncertainty and austerity which followed that the tabloid anti-immigration agenda has become more thoroughly entrenched within the wider

public consciousness (Zick, Pettigrew & Wagner, 2008; Philo, Briant & Donald, 2013). Here, evidence appears to suggest that public perceptions and impressions of immigration and related issues draw a number of parallels with hostile narratives which are peddled by certain sections of the tabloid media (ICAR, 2005; Philo, Briant & Donald, 2013; Wortley, 2009; Simon & Sikich, 2007; Sohoni & Sohoni, 2014).

The relationship between media consumption and consumers' FoC has been a topic of almost constant investigation for over 40 years, resulting in over 100 studies being conducted (Ditton, 2008; Callanan, 2012). Despite this abundance of research literature, the general link between media consumption and FoC remains unclear, with some of studies indicating a link and others not (Surette, 1998; Weitzner and Kubris, 2004; Ditton, 2008; Moore, 2014; Jewkes, 2015). Within this body of literature, a number of frameworks have been developed to explain how the media affects consumers' perceptions of FoC (Surette, 1998; Smolej and Kivivuori, 2006; Callanan, 2012; Kohm, Waid-Lindberg, Weinrath, Shelley and Dobbs, 2012; Callanan and Rosenberger, 2015):

- Substitution: Persons lacking alternative sources of knowledge substitute media information, which raises fear. (Women, elderly, whites and non-victims)
- Resonance: Persons with victim experience focus on media information, which compounds pre-existing fear. (Urban, high-crime neighbourhood residents, males, young, ethnic minorities)
- Vulnerability: Persons less able to prevent victimization are made more fearful by media information. (Women and elderly)
- Affinity: Persons who demographically resemble media victims are made more fearful by media information. (Women, Older women, ethnic minority women, victims)
- Ceiling effects: Persons who already have high levels of fear are therefore beyond the media's influence. (Women, Ethnic minorities)

Fundamentally, these various frameworks propose a range of contradictory media effects on various audience groups and individuals in different social situations (Surette, 1998).

However, the central hypothesis here is that second-hand information, not first-hand experience of crime, increases consumer fears and perceptions of vulnerability (Kohm, Waid-Lindberg, Weinrath, Shelley & Dobbs, 2012). Evidence to support these frameworks has however, been rather varied (Ditton, Chadee, Farrall, Gilchrist and Bannister, 2002; Kohm et al, 2012). However, as Ditton et al (2004) note, it would be premature to dismiss the role of the media in shaping their audiences views about crime. Further research in this field has sought to identify and explore complex patterns rather than simple effects. The composition of these complex patterns are thus (Ditton et al, 2004); characteristics of the message, whereby sensational, random and local crimes are thought to be more fear-inducing; characteristics of the audience, those with no prior experience of crime are thought to be more susceptible to media influence, and the type of dependant measure, whereby measuring fear of particular crimes, such as urban violence or rape being more likely to elicit media induced fear.

For all the literature investigating the media-FoC connection, to the researcher's best knowledge there is only one study that as sought to ascertain a link between disparaging media representations of a minority groups and members' perceptions of vulnerability and FoC. Here, the ICAR study (2004) sought to investigate the impact of media and, to a lesser extent, political images of asylum seekers and refugees within the confines of London boroughs. Here, evidence was found to support the hypothesis that the publication of inaccurate and inflammatory images of refugees and asylum seekers can influence misinformed and hostile views and attitudes among members of the general public. Furthermore, evidence also suggested that such images and the attitudes they promote can and do create environments in which members of targeted minority groups are more fearful of racially motivated attacks (ICAR, 2004). These findings appear to indicate a link between disparaging media narratives and FoC among targeted minority groups that fits the explanatory framework of affinity.

The manner in which the tabloid media dehumanize migrants draws certain comparisons to the way in which Jews and Roma gypsies were portrayed by the Nazis in the build up to and during the Holocaust (Sigona & Trehan, 2011). Here, Frost (2007) suggests that the actions

of certain sections of the media, combined with an observant and implicit government, serves to actively facilitate such racism within certain sections of the “white working class”. This assessment resonates with some accounts reported in Gadd et al’s (2005) study in North Staffordshire which cross examined the attitudes of hate crime offenders and “ordinary people” towards migrants and ethnic minorities. They found that participants expressed a number of grievances that mirrored those of the tabloid media; interviewees did not distinguish between migrant classifications, they expressed an “us” versus “them” distinction when referring to those who “belonged” and “alien” migrants. Further, accusations of institutional favouritism by service providers such as the NHS, the Police, the benefits system and the political elite were also notable themes that emerged, as was the conceptual assessment of migrants’ contempt for indigenous cultural values. These findings would appear to indicate a link between the objections contained within anti-immigration rhetoric and those expressed among the wider public to justify anti-immigration sentiments. Although no direct link can be drawn between the media and hate crime, the contempt directed toward migrants in such rhetoric can and has in the past been used by some as a crude justification for perpetration of hate crimes towards targeted groups (Frost, 2007; O’Nions, 2010; Sigona and Trehan, 2011; Banks, 2008).

In summary, it is evident that the media is a tool for communicating information on a vast scale which has the potential to inform and shape the opinions of the general public. Although audiences are by no means uncritical receptors, those narratives that appeal to or appear to confirm already existing biases are most readily accepted. These narratives can become embedded within popular discourse and can become commonly accepted among wider audiences. With regards to anti-immigration rhetoric, it is evident that the aforementioned cycle is a key mechanism in the dissemination of exaggerated media stereotypes which generally portray migrants and asylum seekers as a threat to the audiences’ wellbeing. Evidence also indicates that the suggestive power of the media can become amplified during times of turmoil and economic hardship. Given the recent economic climate and the narrow thematic framework in which the media portray migrants, recent migrants from Romania and Bulgaria are likely to find themselves caught up in a cycle

of reciprocal defamation. In the midst of this cycle, such migrants may find themselves in an environment where they are exposed to shaming, discrimination and even violence.

2.7 Political rhetoric and immigration

In the years preceding the Second World War, the typical stance of the British government toward immigration and ethnic relations was one that promoted the acceptance and tolerance of multiculturalism. However, during more recent times political discourse in this regard has begun to take an unexpected tilt toward the Powellian right of the political spectrum (Malik, 1996; Ivarsflaten, 2005; McGhee, 2005; O’Nions, 2010; Lesinska, 2014; Ford, Jennings & Sommerville, 2015).

Previously an issue of little public importance, immigration concerns have become something of an opportunity for political parties to garner easy votes through the promise of tougher immigration controls (Ivarsflaten, 2005; O’Nions, 2010; Ford, 2011; Geddes, 2014; Ford, Jennings & Sommerville, 2015). Immigration has become a toxic agenda, as public opinion across Western Europe continues to sway in favour of more restrictive immigration and asylum policies; a trend that appears to be increasing and paving the way for opportunistic right-wing parties across the continent (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Ford, 2011; Ford, Jennings & Sommerville, 2015). Here, evidence suggests that growing support for tougher immigration policies are not fuelled by perceived economic threat or competition, but rather by the threat that large inflows of regionally distinct migrants are believed to pose to the cultural hegemony of the indigenous population; as such certain migrants are preferable to others (Citrin, Green, Muste & Wong, 1997; Ivarsflaten, 2005; Brinkman, 2010; Ford, 2011). Popular public opinion is thought to be, to some extent, a by-product of the influences of current policy restrictions and the rhetoric that often accompanies them (Ford, Jennings & Sommerville, 2015). In light of these concerns, current and prospective policy makers are faced with something of a dilemma: do they respond in kind to growing public demands for more restrictive policies, or do they continue to provide for the needs of the

globally integrated economy? As such, policy makers are, for the time being, searching desperately for their silver bullet; policies that can subdue growing public concern whilst simultaneously maintaining EU free movement obligations and catering for the demands of private interest groups (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Ford, Jennings & Sommerville, 2015). It is within the midst of this dilemma that the UK Independence Party (UKIP) has gradually emerged at the forefront of British politics. A single issue party that is vehemently opposed to British membership of the EU, UKIP have been able to market themselves to disillusioned working class Conservative and Labour voters alike (Ford & Goodwin, 2014; Geddes, 2014). As such, UKIP have been able to increase their appeal to the wider public by complementing their foundation of euroscepticism with appeals to rising public immigration concerns, and it is within this context that UKIP began to broadly emulate the media's immigration narrative regarding immigration from Romania and Bulgaria (Ford & Goodwin, 2014).

Immigration has become something of a dirty word within contemporary British politics and is often discussed in a manner that broadly reflects the narrative of the tabloid media (O'Nions, 2010; Lesinska, 2014; Bianchi, Pinotti and Buonnano, 2012). Here, it is O'Nion's (2010) view that, in the midst of the economic crisis, asylum seekers, refugees and even genuine migrants have been used as scapegoats by the political elite to deflect away from their own failings and incompetence. Some commentators have also pointed toward the role of the British and other European Political establishments as being primary sources and facilitators of this apparent growth of xenophobic discourse within contemporary western discourse (Fekete, 2001; Sivanandan, 2001; McGhee, 2005; O'Nions, 2010; Ford, Jennings & Sommerville, 2015).

With regards to the policy/media nexus, it is McGhee's (2005) contention that narratives concerning immigration and ethnic relations are simply a manifestation of former and current governments toughening of asylum policy whilst simultaneously liberalising immigration policy (McGhee, 2005; Ford, Jennings & Sommerville, 2014). When the Labour party came to office in 1997, public concerns around immigration were at their lowest in decades, thus in light of a steady liberalisation of immigration restrictions due to pressure

from private interest groups there was little public opposition (Ford, Jennings & Sommerville, 2014). Simultaneously, the Labour administration shifted towards more stringent restrictions on asylum policy in their attempts to deter prospective “asylum shoppers” (a response to the perception of Britain being viewed as a soft touch welfare state that invites external abuse); restrictions that some believe have contributed towards a state indorsed culture of outward suspicion and alienation towards asylum seekers and migrants alike, which is reciprocated by sections of the mainstream media and the public (Fekete, 2001; McGhee, 2005).

Such attempts to appear tough on problematic “asylum shoppers” through the implementation of restrictive policies and initiatives, such as replacing refugee financial support with vouchers and the systematic use of asylum detention centres have, to some extent served to validate and legitimise the widespread use of themes such as phoney and criminal asylum seekers, which have become endemic within contemporary discourse (Fekete, 2001; O’Nions, 2010). In this regard, Government policy towards asylum seekers could almost be construed as punitive in nature, whereby the common practice of withholding rights and the use of detention centres serve to criminalise prospective refugees, asylum seekers, and, through some arbitrary common association of “otherness”, legitimate migrants (O’Nions, 2010; Hudson, 2008). In many cases it is actually the implementation of these stringent immigration controls themselves that create situations, whereby migrants and asylum seekers who do not meet the legal criteria to gain access are left with no choice but to turn to alternative, often illegal, avenues in order to reach their destination (Fekete, 2001). In this regard, it is the problematization of migrants through the use and implementation of inflammatory rhetoric and repressive policies that further perpetuates these groups vulnerability to criminality, both as victims and perpetrators (Fekete, 2001; Hudson, 2008). Unsurprisingly, such a cycle only serves to perpetuate the narratives that stem from Government and media sources, which further contribute toward the shaping of popular discourse around the of issue immigration and the consequences it has on the indigenous population, particularly the working and underclasses.

Fundamentally, this kind of discourse is discriminatory in nature. However, its central components are not anchored in the same thematic spectrum as classic discrimination, which is focused on racial and cultural differences, but rather on the competition for resources and economic burden which can accompany large scale immigration (Sivanandan, 2001). Essentially, what is key here is that this modern discourse, referred to as “xenoracism”, represents a struggle against modernism whereby the indigenous population seek to preserve their way of life, their standard of living and cultural identity against the monumental tide of globalization (Sivanandan, 2001). The primary criteria of this contemporary phenomena is therefore economic, and by implication, social standing rather than skin colour, nationality or cultural identity (Sirriyeh, 2015; Sivanandan, 2001; Fekete, 2001; McGhee, 2005). According to Kaufmann (2014) this kind of discourse forms the bedrock of UKIP’s opposition to EU membership and the free movement of peoples that it entails. This is, in part, due to the strength and potency of liberal opposition to the very notion of anti-immigration and the kind of isolationist and nationalist rhetoric that typifies it (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Kaufmann, 2014).

As such, any attempts for rational discussions regarding immigration have been stifled and derailed by the moral sensibilities of the liberal elite, for whom the very notion of public anxiety about immigration is regarded as atavistic nationalism reminiscent of German Nazism. However, despite the best efforts of the liberal elite to nullify the issue, opposition to large scale immigration retains a considerable amount of public support, not just in the UK, but across Europe (Ivarsflaten, 2005; Brinkman, 2010). Yet it is this self-appointed position of moral monopoly held by the left and its attempts to dictate its self-superior worldview on the masses, in spite of public opposition, that has been the catalyst for the emergence of opportunistic nationalist parties like UKIP across much of Western Europe (Ivarsflaten, 2005; McLaren, 2011; Kaufmann, 2014). Thus, the rising support for UKIP, a single agenda, anti-immigration party, is the result of the political elites disregard for public concerns around the issue of immigration and the manner in which this has translated into distrust of the mainstream parties (Ivarsflaten, 2005; McLaren, 2011; Kaufmann, 2014). The importance of tough immigration policy as a potential vote winner appears to have had a profound effect on popular political discourse, whereby parties attempt to outdo one and

other by proposing tougher measures in order to appease public concerns (Lesinka, 2014; O’Nions, 2010; Geddes, 2014; Ford, Jennings & Sommerville, 2014). Here, the limited thematic spectrum of political discourse communicates to the public the generalized image of the parasitic, criminally inclined migrant, which is broadly applied to prospective migrants before they have even entered the country.

There is also limited evidence that indicates a link between populist anti-immigration narratives and the perpetration of hate crimes and discrimination against migrants and minority groups (Gad et al, 2005). Gadd et al (2005) found that when they asked their sample of convicted hate offenders to rationalize their actions, many of them expressed “mitigating” reasons that reflected the grievances contained in anti-immigration rhetoric. Similarly, the background of those who made up Gadd et al’s (2005) sample was typical of those disillusioned ‘left behind’ demographics most likely to sympathise with right wing nationalist parties such as UKIP: uneducated, unemployed, poor and feeling threatened economically by the presence of foreign competition (Ford and Goodwin, 2014; Geddes, 2014). Thus, although not exclusively at fault, like the media, the rhetoric emanating from opportunistic anti-immigration parties may certainly contribute towards an environment of suspicion and hostility toward migrants by portraying these groups as a serious threat to the already disadvantaged classes of society (Statham and Geddes, 2006; McLaren & Johnson, 2007).

To summarize, throughout Western Europe there has been growing public concern regarding high levels of immigration which is perceived to be the product of laissez faire immigration policies. Despite these growing concerns, successive national governments have failed to appease public concerns due to the external policy constraints of EU free movement directives. The inability of successive governments to act on these concerns has facilitated a climate of distrust in the main political parties, in turn paving the way for former fringe parties, such as UKIP, to come to the forefront of the political landscape. In doing so, UKIP have been able to galvanise their anti-EU agenda by underlining the inability of sovereign states to control their own borders whilst they remain members of the EU.

Simultaneously, UKIP have been able to utilize growing underlying distrust of mainstream parties, in particular Labour, who are seen by many in the working class to have abandoned them in favour of multiculturalist policies. As such, the costs of immigration from other EU member states has become a focal point of UKIP's agenda which continues to appeal to the insecurities of the working and underclasses through the propagation of crude stereotypes and class division; similar to the tactics employed by certain sections of the tabloid media press.

2.8 Conclusion

To summarise, the literature considered in this review indicates that the experience of FoC is generally more pronounced among migrant and minority communities. A number of fear aggravating factors are considered, including the anxiety of moving country, language and cultural barriers, loss of family support networks and diminished employment prospects. Victimization risks are also considered, such as lower education, lower average age, lack of private transport and likelihood of living in high disorder areas. The literature also indicates that although race is a significant determinant of hate crime experience and fear, various sources in the UK indicate that such crimes are becoming a more common experience for Caucasian Eastern-European migrants and that this might be linked to and motivated by the stigma that has become attached to these groups through sensationalist media coverage that seeks to problematize these groups. Limited literature here suggests a link between the motivation of hate crime offenders and the circulation of sensationalist anti-immigration rhetoric. Furthermore, literature concerning the role of the media suggests that it does have the power to shape and influence the worldview of its audiences through the way it frames particular issues and events. Here, the literature indicates that the manner in which various tabloid sources frame Eastern-European migrants, in particular Poles, Romanians and Bulgarians, fits the template of a moral panic, within which prospective migrants are heavily labelled and demonized to the public, which in turn serves to promote fear, bigotry and hostility towards newcomers. Limited research also indicates that the propagation of such narratives may factor into some minority groups' FoC and perceptions of vulnerability, as

well as motivation for the actions of some hate crime offenders. Literature also indicates that Government policies toward and scapegoating of migrants may also influence growing public immigration concerns and resentment towards migrants. Literature also indicates that the ambivalence of successive governments towards public immigration concerns have been key in the emergence of UKIP, a Eurosceptic party that is strongly opposed to EU immigration, which appears to be gaining growing support from the voting public. Much like the tabloid media, UKIP's publicity campaigns are heavily focused on the problematization of and vehement opposition to migration to the UK from A8 and A2 EU states.

Broadly speaking, the literature indicates that, for a variety of reasons, migrant and minority groups are likely to experience more pronounced FoC than the general population as whole. However, there is limited evidence to indicate just what impact sensationalist and problematizing media and political rhetoric have upon the groups they specifically target. Whilst a limited body of research (Refugee Actions, 2002; ICAR, 2004) does suggest that critical and sensationalist portrayals of refugees and asylum seekers can exacerbate members of these groups' perceptions of FoC and perceived vulnerability, it is still unclear exactly why this is the case, or whether and how such fearful responses are influenced by other FoC aggravating and mitigating factors. It is also unclear whether this phenomena is confined to particularly vulnerable groups or members of such groups as both studies concerned refugees and asylum seekers, both of which could be regarded as highly vulnerable groups. Furthermore, it is also unclear whether such fearful reactions are also experienced by other popularly demonized and problematized migrant groups. Similarly there is little evidence to indicate whether disparaging media and political rhetoric produce similar fearful responses from members of targeted non-vulnerable groups, if any. Furthermore, it is unclear what role ethnicity plays in the emergence of FoC or perceptions of vulnerability among physically non-distinct migrant or minority groups. It is also unclear whether migrants whose FoC is linked to rhetoric perceive a specific threat from specific groups within British society (white working/underclasses).

Research objective and questions

The primary research objective of this study is:

- Objective: To assess and explore the potential impact that mounting media and political anti-immigration rhetoric has on members of targeted migrant groups' experience of FoC.
- RQ1: Do first or second-hand experiences of discrimination or victimization effect individual's perceptions of the aggravating influence of anti-immigration rhetoric?
- RQ2: What factors influence members of problematized migrant groups' fears and concerns of being victims of discrimination or hate crime?
- RQ3: Do migrants feel marginalized or more likely to experience discrimination or violence because of prevalent anti-immigration rhetoric?
- RQ4: Do members of groups targeted by rhetoric perceived a specific threat of racially motivated crime from indigenous working/underclasses?

If, as Cohen (2002) argues, these hostile and problematized reactions to contemporary immigration concerns are but one in a continuum of many reactions to new waves of immigration, then the necessity of developing a better understanding of the impact of such reactions on their targets is quite clear. Within the context of an eastward expanding European Union which might, if current trends continue, one day include countries such as Ukraine, the former Yugoslav republics and even Turkey, it is likely that the hostile reactionary narratives investigated within this study will re-emerge in tandem with new ideal target "others". It is clear that this phenomenon is not a new one and will likely recur again in the future. So long as economic growth remains at the top of the political agenda and immigration is seen as a quick means of achieving this end, immigration and the outpour of concern that so often accompanies it will continue to make the headlines and continue to be seized upon by opportunistic reactionary parties that seeks to exploit public fears for political gain. As such, the development of a more robust understanding of the impact that this directed hostile rhetoric, which so often accompanies these concerns, has upon members of targeted groups is a matter of current and future concern for both members of targeted groups and the future of multicultural Britain.

3. Research methodology

The primary purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of if and how negative political and media portrayals of recent EU immigrants affect these individuals' FoC whilst living within the UK.

This chapter will explain the methodology of the study. The first section will consider and justify the methodological and epistemological approaches utilized in this study. The second section will describe the design of this study including data collection, sampling and analysis. The final section will provide a discussion of the limitations of this study from a methodological perspective.

3.1 Epistemology

In keeping with its primary aims, this study subscribes to an interpretivist epistemological position and argues that the social world and the interactions between social actors that reside within it are subjective in nature and that in order to best develop an understanding of this world, phenomena and social actors, research must seek to view this world through the eyes, and by implication the subjective interpretations, of those subjects that reside within it (Bryman, 2012; Henn, Matthews & Ross, 2010; Weinstein & Foard, 2006). As Farrall, Bannister, Ditton & Gilchrist (1997) note, previous FoC studies have drawn considerable criticism for their adherence to a positivist epistemological position, which some argue means that such studies fail to fully appreciate and reflect the full value of research participants' experiences and feelings (Bryman, 1984; Bowling, 1993). Further, Farrall et al (1997) assert that quantitative methods which adhere to a positivist epistemological position are inadequate for studying FoC because they measure participants' feelings on a very broad and general scale which leads to inconsistent and over-estimations of participants' emotional responses to crime. As such, this study rejects

the epistemological position of positivism (that is, that social phenomena are objective in nature and that these phenomena can be studied and explained in the same way as the natural sciences), and employs a qualitative methodological approach that accommodates an interpretivist epistemological position.

3.2 Methodology

A qualitative methodology was used in the current study because it enabled the study to use an interpretivist epistemological position which has been identified as the most appropriate for investigating FoC. This study is primarily concerned with the development, rather than testing, of a theoretical understanding of the relationship between hostile media and political rhetoric of recent EU immigrants, perceptions of FoC among migrant student participants already living within the UK and the relationship between these issues.

The utilization of a qualitative methodological approach affords the researcher the ability to be able to immerse themselves within these subjective and often highly complex interpretations of phenomena from the perspective of the research participant. Such subjective and in depth perspectives are afforded to the researcher through the utilization of a qualitative approach because it puts particular emphasis on the importance of the individual and the respective interpretations and meanings that they give to particular social phenomena within the world around them. Within the qualitative tradition, data pertaining to such perspectives are typically acquired through the utilization of in-depth interviews that consist of open-ended questions. These kinds of interviews allow both participants and researchers a great deal of manoeuvrability in their answers, follow up questions and the subsequent theoretical understandings of the relationship between actors and phenomena that the resultant data generates. Such approaches are specifically designed and utilized in order to extract relevant and rich data that pertains to the subjective understandings of respective participants. Due to sheer volume of data that methods stemming from a qualitative tradition are inclined to generate, the data samples employed in such studies tend to be much smaller than those typically employed in quantitative studies, permitting a

far more intimate understanding of specific phenomena from the perspective of the individual. A qualitative methodology therefore allows the researcher to study particular phenomena in detail “from the inside” perspective of the social actors they affect (Punch, 2005; David & Sutton, 2010; Bryman, 2012).

3.3 Data collection method

In keeping with the qualitative nature of the study’s research design, audio-recorded semi-structured interviews were the method of data collection. All interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis with participants and lasted between 45 – 60 minutes. This data collection instrument was selected because of its flexible design which provides the researcher with a malleable platform from which they can reasonably adapt their line of enquiry to best suit and explore the subjective interpretations and experiences of the research participant (Bryman, 2012; Robson, 2011). Although such an approach is quite time consuming in terms of interview and transcription efforts, it allows the interviewee a great deal of freedom when it comes to answering questions which, although pre-planned, are open in nature and thus allow for the communication of their subjective interpretations and feelings, which would not be possible had qualitative surveys been instead employed (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

With regards to FoC, reviews of past studies have revealed that research results vary quite considerably depending upon whether open or closed questions were employed (Farrall et al, 1997). Here, findings indicate that studies which used closed-ended questions produced inflated results indicating the prevalence and severity of FoC when compared to studies which utilized open ended questions. This, according to Farrall et al (1997) indicates that closed question surveys ignore the subjective meanings of events for respondents and neglect that FoC is a multifaceted phenomenon which requires a less restricted approach to fully appreciate.

Further, semi-structured interviews, unlike unstructured interviews, allow the interviewer to direct their line of enquiry toward specific, pre-prepared topics of interests whilst also allowing the interviewer to identify and alter their line of enquiry towards key topics that might unexpectedly emerge during the interview process (Bryman, 2012; Robson, 2011; Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Interviews were guided by an interview schedule which consisted of five core topics for discussion which emerged from a review of existing literature in this field: impressions of the media and political rhetoric, views on increased popularity of right wing political parties, impressions and experiences of discrimination and FoC. Each of these topic sections featured a number of pre-prepared questions, however the specific ordering and wording of these questions were open to alteration dependent on the respondent's responses. In keeping with the nature of semi-structured interviews, responses were probed for further clarifications and meaningful interpretations.

3.4 Sample

At the start of research, the study intended to use a purposive sample in order to include a broad demographic of respondents from Eastern Europe (Bryman, 2012, Robson, 2011; David & Sutton, 2011; Matthews & Ross, 2010). Such being the case, other sampling methods, such as theoretical sampling, were considered less appropriate instruments for getting the required sample for reasons such as time constraints, limited flexibility and methodological complexity (Bryman, 2012; Matthews & Ross, 2010).

With the research purpose in mind, the study sought to utilize the internationally diverse student profile of the University. This setting was chosen for a number of reasons; firstly, the University campus represents a central hub of activity for migrant students, making participants more readily accessible; secondly, given that the University requires international students to attain a certain level of English proficiency prior to their application acceptance, international student participants from within the University were

expected to be able to better express and articulate their views during interviews than non-student migrants who might have lower levels of English proficiency.

In order to enhance the validity and consistency of the study, the study limited the sample to students from those countries which are most widely problematized within contemporary media and political discussion. Thus, Romanian, Bulgarian and Polish students were identified as best fitting the specific criteria of the research sample. For accessibility and consistency purposes the study sample was confined to current students at the University who, it was originally presumed, would be easily accessible through contacting international student societies.

However, this was not the case as despite numerous attempts, the researcher was only able to make contact with the Presidents of the Bulgarian and Romanian societies. Of the two it was only the Romanian society, via their President, that co-operated with the researcher and advertised the study to its members. Whilst this provided the researcher with access to a desirable sample, this did not yield the participant numbers required for the intended sample size of 12 – 15. In light of these issues, the sampling approach and criteria were slightly revised towards a snowball sample that would also include recent graduates (Robson, 2011; Bryman, 2012; David & Sutton, 2011). In hindsight, for the purpose of this study and the exclusivity of the sample required and the seemingly “hard-to-reach” nature of target sample population, a snowball sample may have actually been a more suitable sampling technique from the start (Noy, 2008; Matthews & Ross, 2010; Bryman, 2012). Although not as successful as initially expected, the purposive sample originally employed in this study did provide access, albeit limited, to a desired demographic from which to then snowball from. As such, the final sample for this study was acquired through the utilization of purposive and snowball sampling methods. It is also worth noting that there was also an element of opportunistic sampling. This being the case, the final sample primarily consisted of Romanian students and as such it could be argued that the findings of this study better reflect the experiences of this particular demographic than of Eastern European migrants as a wider group. The final sample consisted of 10 Romanians, 1 Pole and 1 Bulgarian, the

latter two of which were referred to the researcher by participants that emerged from the original purposive sample.

3.5 Data analysis

The data set consisted of around 12 hours of audio-recordings which were transcribed by the researcher. In order to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of research participants, pseudonyms were used for participants in the transcriptions and within the thesis. Transcribed data was then analysed through thematic analysis, from which emergent recurring themes were used to form and guide the theoretical discussion and the conclusions which emerged from the data. Thematic analysis is a method of data analysis which is widely employed throughout the social sciences, however, despite its wide scale implementation, thematic analysis is largely undervalued and under-credited as an instrument for data analysis (Bryman, 2012, Braun & Clarke, 2006). Unlike some other data analysis systems, thematic analysis has been praised by some for its flexible design, making it a versatile data analysis instrument which can be successfully applied to a wide array of qualitative studies (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A thematic approach to data analysis requires the researcher to remain immersed in their data throughout the analytical process, however, such an approach allows the researcher to work closely with and process this data, visual and/or verbal, whilst maintaining and retaining the original contextual substance of data in its rawest form (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Further, although somewhat less refined than critical discourse analysis and less structured than content analysis, thematic analysis ability to identify and analyse themes that emerge from raw data make it a more practical approach for analysing larger volumes of qualitative data, albeit providing a relatively less detailed examination.

Although flexible in design, thorough thematic analysis still requires the researcher to conduct his/her analysis within certain structural confines (Matthews & Ross, 2010, Bryman, 2012). In this regard, the researcher must first immerse him/herself in the raw data set,

comparing and contrasting it between individual cases/interviews in order to identify emerging patterns (themes) of interest that relate to the research topic (Bryman, 2012; Matthews & Ross, 2010; Braun & Clarke, 2006). As such, a theme captures an aspect of understanding of social phenomena which is relevant to the research topic and as such can be used to further understanding of that particular phenomena through the inference of theoretical relevance from within the contextual framework within which the data and themes emerged (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Here, the repetition of topics, use of metaphors and/or analogies, the natural metamorphosis of topical discussion and reference to theoretically related material can signal or constitute the emergence of a thematic framework (Bryman, 2012). However, the prevalence of said themes across the data set is, in some regards, the essence of what constitutes the strength of an emerging themes relevance and theoretical weight (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In terms of practical application, thematic analysis is, according to Braun and Clarke (2006; 2013) a much less complex and intimidating approach to qualitative data analysis than some of the more established approaches, such as discourse analysis or interpretive phenomenology analysis.

3.6 Ethics

This research has adhered to the standards of the British Society of Criminology's code of ethical practice (BSC, 2006). In addition, this study was subject to ethical scrutiny from the School of Human and Health Sciences ethics board prior to receiving ethical approval to proceed. Central to this study are the ethical principles of confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent and potential harms to participants stemming from involvement in the study.

Prior to their agreed participation, all prospective participants were informed of; the study purpose, the dissemination of resultant findings, their rights to anonymity and confidentiality, their right to withdraw their data from the study prior to the write-up period and provided with provisions detailing access to local psychological support that were in place, should they need to access them.

All research participants were made aware of the ethical principles which governed this study prior to their involvement. Participants' identities were anonymised within the transcription and write-up phases of the study through the use of pseudonym aliases. Further, all identifying documents; signed consent forms and audio recorded data, were stored in safe and secure locations; the researcher's home and password locked personal computer. As such, data and documents were only accessible to the researcher and, should they wish to access them, the research project supervisors.

Because of the exclusive demographic and topical nature of this study; hostile media, political and by implication, public references to Eastern European migrants and how these affect said migrants' perceptions of personal safety and well-being, it was foreseen that participants could potentially experience some forms of psychological distress prior to participation in the study. Such being the case, precautions were taken to ensure that participants were made aware of and given access to relevant psychological support networks. As such, the researcher made preliminary contact with the University of Huddersfield's Wellbeing and Disability services, who, once properly informed of the researchers concerns, provided a complement of information leaflets for their psychological support services. These leaflets were provided to all research participants prior to their participation in the interview process.

3.7 Limitations of method

No research project is without methodological limitations. This study employed a qualitative methodology as opposed to quantitative or mixed methods approach. A qualitative approach was deemed to be the most suited toward meeting the primary purpose of this study; to develop an understanding of if and how negative political and media portrayals of recent EU immigrants affect these individuals' perceptions of FoC, whilst residing within the UK. Of course, by employing such an approach the researcher has subsequently introduced this study to a number of methodological limitations and criticisms. The most obvious of

these limitations is the generalizability of any findings deduced from this study. Owing to the typically small sampling sizes of qualitative research, the findings of this study cannot be applied and generalized as being representative of the experiences and views of the entire population of Eastern European migrants living in the UK. Of course, the findings of this study were never intended to be generalized and applied to the wider population, neither does it or the discipline of qualitative research claim to do so (Creswell, 2014). Rather, it was hoped this study's findings would provide a foundation of theoretical insight, where there has been little before, into the subjective experiences and impressions of Eastern European migrants living in the UK.

This leads on to another criticism often levelled at qualitative research; that qualitative research, by its very nature, is simply too subjective (Bryman, 2011; Henn, Weinstein & Foard, 2006). This criticism primarily stems from the position of the researcher in qualitative research and the way in which the researchers' decisions govern the key factors that influence the research such as the setting, selection of research participants and interpretations given to the data (Henn, Weinstein & Foard, 2006). In the case of this study, the researcher has tried to reasonably justify their rationale for making these decisions.

Another key criticism of qualitative research, which is certainly applicable to this study, is the reactivity of the research participants and how this can compromise the internal validity of the research findings. Reactivity refers to the way in which people conduct themselves when they know they are being researched and whether or not the behaviour, actions and accounts produced by research under these circumstances is a true reflection of the subject being researched (Henn, Weinstein & Foard, 2006).

A further limitation of this study, realized in hindsight, stems from the selection of the sample population; students from Eastern Europe. The experiences and views of this group of migrants, given their position of relative privilege as receivers of higher education, the role and liberal atmosphere of the University institution and the highly visible presence of

an ethnically and nationally diverse student demographic at the university are factors that could potentially distort the external validity of the research outcomes. Furthermore, the final sample of this study could also be construed as being only narrowly representative of the views and experiences of a small fragment of the Eastern European student population in the UK, given the apparent lack of interest from the wider target sample demographic.

4. Findings and analysis

The primary aim of this study is to investigate whether and how anti-immigration rhetoric affects levels of fear of crime for members of targeted migrant groups. The recent surge in anti-immigration rhetoric has been primarily focused on and stimulated by the ascension of former Soviet bloc nations into the EU and the potential problems entail for the UK. Supporters of this rhetoric have sought to emphasize the issues that large scale immigration from these countries, as part of the EU free movement initiative, will have on the UK (e.g. on employment, health care, housing, other resources, and British “culture”). As part of this rhetoric, supporters make sweeping stereotypes and generalizations that frame the discussion in the context of crime, burden and threat to the indigenous population of the UK. The current study conducted a number of interviews with University students from those nations which have been construed as the most problematic in this discourse; Poland, Bulgaria and Romania, in order to ascertain the impact that such narratives have on perceptions of FoC.

Evidence from existing literature on FoC among migrant groups has consistently suggested that, for a variety of reasons, migrants have higher FoC in their newly adopted countries than non-migrants. As such, this study hypothesised that the prevalence of anti-immigration rhetoric would bring about a heightened sense of FoC among participants belonging to those targeted groups. In all, however, the findings from the data challenged this hypothesis.

During the interviews, participants were asked about their impressions of popular anti-immigration rhetoric, which broadly problematizes their nationality, and its impact on their own safety and wellbeing whilst living in the UK. The findings are presented in two groups: 1) for participants who were fearful of crime, the reasons why and the impact, if any, of media and political narrative, and 2) participants who were not fearful, the reasons why and impact of media and political narrative.

The findings of this study suggest that the primary factor in FoC among participants was not targeted political or media rhetoric, as hypothesised, but rather direct lived experiences of aggression and harassment that were somehow related to their nationality. The findings also indicate, however, that those participants who had experienced harassment were also far more concerned about media and political rhetoric than those who had not had such experiences. These findings challenged the original hypothesis (that the majority of participants would be fearful of crime because of anti-immigration rhetoric), but found that participants who had been previous victimised were more mindful of its existence.

4.1 The “fearful” group

Although the findings and results of the current study were largely contradictory to those in previous literature, it should be noted that this was not entirely the case throughout and that some participants’ accounts did reflect those presented in previous studies. These accounts were shaped by having personally experienced incidents of harassment and discrimination, the main substance of which had led them to believe that these incidents were linked to media and political rhetoric. These experiences were the key factors in FoC among these participants, rather than media or political rhetoric. However, that data would also suggest that those participants who had experienced harassment were far more concerned about the potential implications that political and media rhetoric might have for their safety than those participants who had not experienced such incidents.

4.2 Experience of harassment and discrimination

For some participants the prospect of being harassed or of experiencing discrimination related to their nationality had been a very real one and not just a hypothetical prospect as it had been for the majority of other participants. These incidents varied in severity, from covert to overt discrimination, as did the fearful responses of these participants.

Unsurprisingly, the most pronounced instances of harassment and discrimination had clearly taken an emotional toll on their victims, who were clearly fearful of experiencing similar incidents again.

IV6: "I had a situation on the street where somebody asked me for money: "hey love, you got any spare change", he heard my accent and became aggressive: "Oh you fucking Polish, coming over here, stealing our jobs, stealing our benefits. Look at me, I'm on the streets begging for money, you should share it with me!" People look at you at the bus stop but you don't want to say anything because you don't want any problems, but nobody else is saying anything and you're left thinking "what are they thinking, will they support me, will they take his side?", because I don't know, it's his country and his opinion. Now I just avoid public conversations all together and I think "yes, it has changed a lot" You don't feel as confident as you did before or in your own country where you can just start a conversation with anyone. Everywhere I go now I'm just scared of conversation because somebody might start blaming you for coming and living in this country."

IV12: People notice I am not English all the time, they always ask where I am from when they hear my accent. It's become a bit of an issue for me now because I am torn about whether to disclose my nationality or not for fear of going through that kind of thing again [harassment & covert discrimination]. I just avoid looking and peoples' faces now and saying where I am from. It makes me feel awful. For me to be scared or embarrassed about being Romanian is to be embarrassed of my whole being. It's awful."

These participants had experienced varying degrees of discrimination and harassment, which they believed had been prompted by the discovery or assumption of their nationality by strangers in public settings, such as public transport or city centres. The data suggests that, regardless of severity, such experiences prompted these participants to genuinely consider the link between the hostility they had experienced and the similar nature of hostile media and, to a lesser extent, political rhetoric:

IV6: "It is now [media rhetoric creating stigmatized image], many people do believe that we are coming here to steal their jobs, steal their benefits, and just steal money from this country. I think that is thanks to the media that we are seen this way"

IV12: "They wouldn't have these bad opinions about us if they didn't know something about us. I mean, if I don't know anything about a place and I meet someone from there I will just treat them as they come. Do you know what I mean? But if you already have this seed in your mind from these sources that Romanians or Bulgarians are really bad and that we come here only to steal and claim benefits then you will treat them like garbage."

Although some participants considered these experiences to be fairly innocuous and therefore undeserving of serious concern, others reacted in a much more distinctly fearful manner. Those participants who were most fearful explicitly sought conceal their foreign identity. Here, it was the case that some fearful participants actively sought to avoid revealing their nationality to strangers in public places in order to avoid the "othering" and harassment that their previous experiences had led them to believe would be likely to follow. These participants actively sought to avoid making eye contact or conversation with strangers in public places for fear of revealing their only real distinctly foreign feature, their accents. That these participants actively sought to conceal their foreignness, in order to avoid potential harassment or "othering" by purposefully implementing avoidance techniques, indicates a clear example of these participants' day to day experiences of FoC, which they perceived to be directly linked to their nationality.

For some fearful participants who had experienced instances of discrimination or harassment, the risk of revealing their foreignness appeared to vary depending on the

setting they were in. The rationale for these fluctuations appeared to have been significantly informed by the kind of environment in which their previous encounters of discrimination and harassment had occurred. Here, it was the case that some fearful participants had perception of the kind of settings and places where they were most vulnerable to similar incidents. This environmental awareness also appeared to influence the extent to which these participants felt required to use avoidance techniques, thus indicating an evaluation of external vulnerability in particular settings. These participants also appeared to make pre-emptive assessments of the “type” of people they would encounter in certain public settings which also appeared to influence their fearfulness and the extent to which they used avoidance techniques. This particular assessment, as will be discussed later, was linked to participants’ perceptions of the “types” of people with whom rhetoric would resonate. Thus, the data indicates that this pre-emptive analysis was based upon participants’ pre-determined expectations of how individuals from certain socio-economic groups would likely respond to discovering their foreign identity:

*IV6: “It’s constantly on your mind. I live close to a big council estate, so I avoid talking at all costs. These people, they will say “hi how are you” and be all smiley until they hear your accent and realize you’re Polish and then it’s suddenly all “Oh you f**king Polish come here, so many of you” and so on...”*

Furthermore, these participants were also more reluctant to reveal their foreign identity in public buildings, spaces or transport than they were whilst on the University campus itself. This assessment was influenced by a combination of factors; 1) these participants had not experienced harassment or discrimination in the University setting, 2) the broad demographic of the University itself is one that could be characterized as both international and ethnically diverse, within which participants foreignness is not distinctly obvious, and 3) they believed that the “type” of people that they would encounter on campus were considerably less likely to react to their foreign identity in a hostile manner than might be the case for members of the wider public. As such, fearful participants felt that the revelation of their nationality in the University campus was considerably less risky. This assessment of perceived vulnerability appeared to be linked the anticipated responses that rhetoric would elicit from members of its target audiences. Here, fearful participants felt

that they were most vulnerable in share public spaces because they were more likely to be discovered by rhetoric subscribers who might harass or assault them:

IV3: "So yes, it [discrimination] was quite a bad memory of that trip, to be honest it influenced the whole trip and I think it is the result of the entire media representation of us. I can feel that I am facing those issues recently to be honest. I think that as I am a student I spend most of my time near the University and the University is a very multicultural environment. I don't think I feel the issues because everyone is from different backgrounds and places there."

IV6: "Yes, because I think that those people [less sophisticated], I am lumping and labelling here, there are lots of people who lack education and are not thinking or questioning the things they see and read; The Sun, The Daily Mail and so on.. I think that they are the people who believe in what the media is saying and then they will say it to your face. I have never had these worries or thought when I was at University for example, or at a conference with my degree. I have never felt like that there but you get it with people from less advantaged backgrounds who are exposed to this."

Here, many participants, including those who were not fearful, believed that the propagation of hostile tabloid rhetoric had the potential to be problematic for their safety, due to the "type" of audience that these sources cater for. Here, participants perceived that the tabloid media was primarily aimed at and consumed by a "less sophisticated" audience who would be more inclined to act upon the narratives contained in such rhetoric. This "less sophisticated" audience were broadly believed to belong to elements of the indigenous British working and under-classes. As such, participants believed that such rhetoric would be much more readily accepted by "less sophisticated" media consumers who, in turn, would be more likely to embark upon unprovoked instances of violence, harassment or discrimination against recognizable eastern-European migrants:

IV1: "You know, I think it [influence of rhetoric] depends on what kind of people you are talking about. If you are talking about someone who is less educated, from a less socially privileged background and the only thing they read is the Mirror or the Daily Mail, or some other tabloid, I think they would be more willing to just believe what they read because they do not question it. When you ask someone who is educated, someone with higher education, someone who has learnt about other cultures, I think they would be more inclined to question the media and ask who real it is, rather than just believing what they are told."

IV3: "I think it [influence of rhetoric] depends on the people themselves, you know. Because they, those tabloids, they target mainly people who are... their readers are not very developed. I don't know who else would read something like that to be honest. And yes, it can affect them and it might. I'm not sure, but I think the majority of the population read these [tabloid] papers. Those are the people who do the most harm, not the educated and developed ones. They aren't the ones that will read these things and want to stab you in the street or fight you or anything. I think they can be very easily influenced by the news".

These views were generally held by the majority of participants, however, they appeared to have a great deal more bearing on reality for victimized participants. Generally, this widely held perception appeared to indicate that most participants of this study, even those who had not experienced victimization, had attained a clear, albeit stereotypical, image of those whom they perceived to be likely potential aggressors: white, uneducated, working and under-class Brits. That said, the data suggests that although these perceptions appear to be widely held among participants, they appear to provoke a much more pronounced reaction, in the form of anticipated risk avoidance, from participants who were already fearful. Thus, while many participants do vaguely consider the potential implications of prevailing media narratives, those participants who had actually experienced harassment or discrimination were far more concerned about and fearful of such implications, because they felt that their experiences clearly reflected how such rhetoric can manifest itself in reality. Furthermore, it would also appear that fearful participants also used pre-emptive avoidance techniques in order to minimize risk factors that they believed might directly lead to harassment or discrimination against them. As such, these findings further indicate that the perceived

implications of media rhetoric were largely dependent on the prior experiences of the participants in question; those participants who had experienced pronounced harassment or discrimination appeared to strongly associate their experience with the propagation of rhetoric, whereas those who had not had such experiences considered such narratives to be less important.

4.3 Not experiencing victimization but mindful of rhetoric influence

So far, the data indicates that previous experience of victimization, which was explicitly linked to victims' foreign identity, was the primary factor in fearfulness among participants. These participants believed that the core substance of their experience had been a by-product of anti-immigration rhetoric emanating from sections of the mainstream media. However, this group of fearful participants only account for a small number in the total sample. As such, the findings derived from these accounts serve to explain how hostile media rhetoric had affected the victimized participants in the sample. As such, the impact that prominent rhetoric had upon those participants who had not experienced victimization or whose experiences had been significantly less severe remains unclear and will therefore be further explored in the following section.

Here, it was certainly the case that some none and less severely victimized participants were also concerned about the way in which media rhetoric had broadly demonized them and their compatriots. These participants had either not experienced instances of harassment or overt discrimination or had experienced less pronounced or less regular instances of discrimination, which they believed was linked to the negative image of their nationality. These participants felt that the media narrative surrounding eastern-European migration had primarily served to highlight their presence to the wider public in almost entirely undesirable and problematic contexts. Like their fearful counterparts, these participants also felt that such rhetoric might also serve to endorse resentment and hostility towards identifiable members of targeted groups in the wider public:

IV3: "These things [disparaging media rhetoric] happen everywhere to be honest. I don't know, you have to see there's a lot of people who watch and see these things and you have to be aware and take into consideration that they [we] might face

some problems after you expose them like that. They are just thinking of their own interests rather than thinking of those things that can happen to those people who didn't do anything to harm the; the majority... It [violence] could happen if trends like this continue in the future, with the media representation, the situation can get worse. Basically you think of the worst case scenario”.

IV8: Well first of all it's the perceptions they [media] promote. When they first learn the fact you are from Eastern Europe people already have something in mind about you and I think that for lots of people it is hard to see beyond the opinion they have already learned from somewhere else. So I think this can have an effect on them because they might face us as being their enemies or competition even though we are not.”

The data therefore, indicates that some less severely and non-victimized participants were also concerned about the potential implications that mainstream rhetoric could have for the safety of themselves and their compatriots. Such accounts also indicate that non-victimized participants do consider the prevalence of such media rhetoric to contribute towards increased public awareness of the presence of Eastern-European migrants, albeit in an almost exclusively negative context that might cultivate imagined grievances and tension. Although not explicated, such accounts also suggest that some participants do regard the content and prevalence of such media rhetoric as serving to promote and validate prejudice toward themselves and their compatriots in the wider public domain. Further, some of these participants emphasized the prominent role of the tabloid press in the propagation of such narratives, whilst also speculating the potentially aggravating influence that such narratives might have on the “less sophisticated” audiences, to whom such outlets specifically cater for:

IV1: “You know, I think it [influence of narratives] depends on what kind of people you are talking about. If you are talking about someone who is less educated, from a less socially privileged background, and the only thing they read is the Mirror or some other tabloid, I think they would be more willing to just believe what they read because they do not question it. When you ask someone who is educated, someone with higher education, who has been around and learnt about other cultures, I think

they would be more inclined to question the media and ask just how real it is and not believe everything they are told”.

IV3: “I think it [influence of narratives] depends on the people themselves, you know. Because they, those tabloids, they target mainly people who are... their readers are not very... developed. I don’t know who else would read something like that to be honest. And yes, it can affect them and it might. I’m not sure, but it might be the majority of people, a large percentage of the population that read it. Those are the people who do the most harm, not the educated and developed ones. They aren’t the ones who will read these things and want to stab you in the street or fight you or anything. I think they can very easily be influenced by the news”.

IV6:” I think it [influence of narratives] depends. If I did not question it then I would just believe the newspapers, right. So for example, you read the newspaper and it’s about the bad Polish people coming here and robbing houses at midnight and you believe it, what happens? You start to look at every single person who fits that image and put them in a box. You don’t look at them as individuals; you look at every Polish person as a bad person that comes here to do certain bad things. That’s the problem of the media, lots of people read these things and take it on face value and believe it”.

For some of these participants, the sources and target audiences of this rhetoric was also a cause for reflection and some concern. These participants also appeared to believe that such media rhetoric would be much more widely accepted among members of less advantaged social classes. Here, the majority of participants also believed that the rhetoric contained in media sources, which cater towards “less sophisticated” audiences, was more likely to be readily accepted by their readers than would be the case with a “more sophisticated” audience. Furthermore, in this nexus, participants felt that if un-critically consumed, such narratives might be applied by “less sophisticated” audiences to validate prejudice against persons belonging to, or perceived to belong to, the groups targeted by this rhetoric. Here, these participants were expressing a fear of being “othered” by the populist tabloid press and the potential impact that this could lead to if taken on face value.

Less severely and non-victimized participants also believed that the way in which they and their compatriots were being portrayed had been greatly exaggerated for dramatic effect. These participants also believed that these sources were intentionally producing largely inaccurate representations of their respective nations and of their individual motives for moving to the UK by broadly implying dishonest ulterior motives to their nationality as a whole. Some participants believed that this was largely the result of intentionally biased media reporting which is primarily concerned with spreading populist anti-immigration narratives for political purposes. Here, some participants felt that tabloid rhetoric sources had purposefully adopted an overly critical blanket view of Eastern-European migrants which had unfairly tarnished the reputations of these groups as a whole. These participants felt that such sources disproportionately sought to highlight cases of deviance and criminality among their compatriots in order to give credence to the stereotypical image of the “deviant Eastern-European”. Some of these participants also felt that the suspicion that such narratives would produce could be counter-productive to their own and their compatriots’ settlement and integration into their new communities and, as such, their acceptance into wider society. Although the reasoning for such perceptions was not explicated, one might consider that such issues of integration could be aggravated by the hostile and problematizing nature the narratives contained in such rhetoric. Furthermore, if the hostility and suspicion expressed in narratives that specifically highlight “problematic” groups become reciprocated at a community level then migrants belonging to or perceived to belong to “problematic” groups might become exposed to instances of community based alienation and isolation, harassment, vandalism and even violence:

IV6: “I like to follow this news, yes. I like to read it and criticise... It’s just finger pointing and blaming; “oh it’s them, they are responsible”, I mean us; immigrants from Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, these countries. They try to picture us as people who come to their country trying to take their jobs, take their money, benefits, everything. But the reality is totally different but nobody is looking at it. All they do is blame, blame, blame. It’s the same in politics too.”

IV9: “This is not true. Yes, we as Romanian’s, we want to integrate and study. I know many people from back home who are living, studying and working in the UK. They

want to integrate but the media and the politicians, they don't let us. They are trying to send us back to Romania."

IV10: "Well I was expecting them not to bash our countries for little things. You know, if for example someone British does some crime it's not as big a deal as if some Bulgarian or Romanian did it. It's like they find the exceptions and try to make it into a general rule. You don't do that."

For some of these participants, the experience of tension and marginalization had been very real and not just a hypothetical prospect as it was for most of their counterparts. The data here suggests that those participants who had experienced instances of overt harassment and discrimination did appear to conflate their experiences with the dominance of hostile media rhetoric. The data also indicates that those participants who experienced recurring instances of more innocuous covert discrimination also appeared to conflate the two issues. As such, the data thus far indicates that experiences of varying degrees of harassment and discrimination are the primary factor in participants FoC, not rhetoric. Furthermore, the data also suggests that severely and less severely victimized participants do perceive a link between their experiences and media rhetoric. However, it would seem that it was participants' direct lived experiences of victimization, in conjunction with the prevalence of rhetoric, which informed their fearful responses. The exact configuration of this perceived link still remains unclear. However, the data does clearly indicate a link between these participants' varying experiences of harassment and/or discrimination, FoC and hostile media rhetoric.

4.4 Political rhetoric

When it came to discussing participants' perceptions of UKIP and the perceived significance of their rhetoric, it quickly became apparent that most of these participants, fearful and non-fearful, were largely uninterested in politics. As such, these participants were largely uninformed about UKIP, their apparent growing public support or their rhetoric:

IV9: "No, I'm sorry, I don't really know much about them (UKIP)."

IV12: "I might be the wrong person to ask because I do not follow politics. I don't follow it at all, but I will say that I know this party (UKIP) want out of the EU."

These participants' accounts therefore offered very little in terms shedding light on whether the prevalence of such political rhetoric can affect migrants' perceptions of FoC. However, the fact that these participants are not aware of UKIP and their targeted rhetoric could suggest that this form of rhetoric is not as severe or far-reaching as the researcher originally supposed. Accounts from more politically aware participants appear to suggest a mixed response to political rhetoric and the potential implications it might entail for them. Furthermore, some of these participants' accounts appeared to indicate a lack distinction between political and media rhetoric, in this regard:

IV6: "They try to picture us as people who come to their country to take their jobs, take their money, benefits and everything, but the reality is totally different. Nobody is looking at this. All they do is blame blame blame, and you know, it's very similar to the politics but I am guessing we will talk about that later".

IV9: "This is not true. Yes, we as Romanians, we want to integrate and study. I know many people from back home who are living, studying and working in the UK. They want to integrate but the media and the politicians, they don't let us. They are trying to send us back to Romania."

Such accounts suggest that these participants' view the positions of, and roles played by political and media rhetoric, to be synonymous with one another due to the similar nature of their underlying narrative. Thus, these accounts indicated that, due to the similar tones of these two sources of rhetoric, participants believe that these sources capacity to promote and validate prejudice and hostility among "less sophisticated" audiences is similar:

IV3: "Yeah, I first heard of them, I think it was last year or something, around when they gained more popularity in the EU elections because they were emphasizing the negative impacts of immigration, and, as I said before, it can influence other people who are less educated. I think that this is their main market, where they can gain votes".

Similarly, other participants also perceived a direct link between “less sophisticated” and socially disadvantaged media audiences and those likely to be UKIP supporters, suggesting that they were one and the same. However, these participants stopped short of claiming an exclusive association between “less sophisticated” audiences and rhetoric appeal; citing their awareness of “sophisticated” Euro-critics and UKIP supporters and the pervasive subjectivity of personal political preference. This, however, appears to further suggest that these participants do at least consider the two forms of rhetoric, and the implications they might relate to, to be linked. However, this data does not clearly suggest that these participants consider increased public support for UKIP to be an indicator of an increased likelihood of targeted crime against themselves or causing FoC:

IV6: “People [UKIP voters].. People who are unemployed, people living on the state welfare, people living on the council estates, you know. I think uneducated people who lack essential skills and education. But on the other hand, you have some very intelligent people who really do not see a future for the UK in the European Union. But I think they will mainly get support from people who read the tabloids and believe their stories”.

Other participants appeared to consider UKIP primarily in a political context. Here, it was considered that UKIP’s potential political success in the General Election would have mainly political and institutional implications for them, such as visa and employment difficulties, rather than potentially validating and perpetuating discrimination or targeted harassment against themselves:

IV6: “I don’t think I am scared [about increased support of UKIP]. If they win they can’t just kick me out of the country. I have been here 6 years now, and I have 2 degrees, so anytime I want to do it I can just apply for British citizenship.”

As such, this data suggests that even the most fearful participants did not appear to directly conflate a potential UKIP majority government and the public views this would reflect as

being a cause for FoC, but rather an administrative issue that could be negated through the proper channels. In any case, this account appears to indicate that even in the case of such an event this particular participant would not consider leaving the country out of fearfulness.

Thus far, the data does not indicate a clear relationship between political rhetoric and FoC among participants. On the contrary, it appears to indicate that participants are less concerned about the prevalence of this particular form of rhetoric and its potential implications than that which emanates from the MSM. However, further data indicates that some participants were fearful of the prospect of a successful UKIP election campaign culminating in the formation of a government, rather than the actual rhetoric they espouse:

IV1: " Oh yes, I am afraid of that happening [UKIP Government]. Really afraid. I am worried. I almost start to tell myself that they are going to win. They are so popular and as we were saying before, there seem to be so many people who share their views. It's very scary."

IV3: " They [UKIP] didn't get there by themselves and its quite disappointing when you think that the majority, well, let's not say a majority but lots of people believe in their plan so it might well be scary for the General Election because who knows what will happen... If they were to win, it would be scary for us and we might have to recalculate our future in this country. They might kick us out. Who knows what might happen. But as I say, first of all you think of the worst case scenario. It can't be good from our point of view if they win. "

These accounts indicate that these participants were concerned and even fearful of the prospect of a UKIP government and the potential consequences that this would entail for them as new EU migrants. These participants appeared to perceive that the anti-immigration rhetoric, which forms the foundation of UKIP's election manifesto, might be sufficiently popular among the voting public for them to form a Government capable of implementing policies that would reflect these latent sentiments. Here, the data appears to

suggest that these participants were primarily concerned about the implications that the formation of such a government would have on their ability to stay in the UK, rather than how the dissemination of such rhetoric at an institutional level might lead to targeted victimization. Whether or not these participants believed a UKIP government would entail increased instances of targeted crime or harassment remains quite ambiguous, however, further investigation of these perceptions appeared to reveal something of a cognitive dichotomy:

IV1: "Maybe, it might be [a personal safety concern]. But because we do not really make a distinction from others, I mean, because we are not visible you cannot just spot a Romanian, Bulgarian or Pole from a crowd. There is not a real distinction between us in the same way there is for other groups [Black and Asian]. It's very unlikely we will be bullied or attacked, but I think it is a problem when people find out our nationality. I think it becomes a problem then."

In this regard, the data suggests that although participants do recognize the potentially inflammatory nature of such rhetoric (media and political) and have even experienced marginalization or harassment which they believed was informed by these prevailing messages, they were also aware that, due to their Caucasian appearance, such incidents required a trigger or tell that broadcasted their foreignness to potential aggressors. Thus, the data therefore indicates that, although participants were concerned about the potential formation of a UKIP government and the inflammatory images on which their rhetoric is based, their concern did not appear to simultaneously extend to anticipated instances of targeted crime against them due to the clandestine nature of their foreignness. This would appear to be a key extenuating factor in some participants' apparent lack of fearfulness and will be discussed at further length in the following analysis of non-fearful participants' accounts. Furthermore, the data presented above indicates that although participants were concerned about, and even overstated the extent of public support for UKIP, they did not appear to equate the imagined prevalence of this support with an increased likelihood of being victimized because of their nationality.

Thus, the data would appear to indicate that although fearful participants did seem to conflate their experiences of harassment or discrimination with media rhetoric, the evidence regarding political rhetoric and FoC is much less conclusive due to a number of possible factors: 1) participants may have conflated media and political rhetoric together when discussing the former, thus parallel conclusions could be drawn from the former accounts, 2) participants recognize that their clandestine foreign identity affords them protection from potential aggressors or harassers. As such, the data has led to inconclusive findings that do appear to indicate a relationship between explicit rhetoric and minor concerns about targeted victimization, however, the precise workings of this relationship remains unclear. Furthermore, the data indicates that direct first-hand experience of harassment or discrimination is the key factor in fearful participants FoC.

4.5 The “non-fearful” group

As previously noted, contrary to the researcher’s original hypothesis, the findings of this study suggest that the majority of participants were not affected by anti-Eastern European media and political rhetoric to the extent that it provoked an acute experience of FoC. A number of possible mitigating factors are explored and discussed in order to better understand what influences participants perceptions of FoC in relation to the proliferation of hostile media and political rhetoric that explicitly targets them.

4.6 Not experiencing harassment or discrimination.

As discussed previously, the majority of participants were largely aware of nature and prevalence of media rhetoric. Further, these participants were also aware that such rhetoric was heavily invested in depicting and giving credence to broad undesirable stereotypes of Eastern-European migrants. Despite being aware of the targeted nature of such rhetoric, the majority of participants were not fearful that it might provoke or validate instances of harassment or discrimination against them:

IV3: "It [targeted harassment] might be [a concern], you have to take this into consideration. I have never felt I could face something like this due to my status as an immigrant. Sure it might happen because, I don't know, people are drunk in the streets or on drugs, but that could happen to me or you."

IV4: "It [media narratives] doesn't affect me too much to be honest. I hang out with people who accept me for who I am, they don't generalize. If someone calls me a Gypsy and makes all these stereotypical accusations about me, I just ignore them. They are not worth my time or effort"

IV8: " Mmm, not really [experience narrative manifestation]. It's funny. Whenever I go out and meet new people and they hear my accent and ask where I am from, sometimes I say Romania and most of them talk about Dracula and Transylvania. They only know us because of these things and that's okay. But others might look at me and say "Gypsy". Sometimes I get very pissed off about this"

Contrary to the research hypothesis, the data suggest that, despite being aware of the stigmatized status of their nationality, the majority of participants in this study either did not, or had not been prompted, to seriously consider a direct link between media rhetoric and targeted harassment or hostility. Although participants were very much aware of the stigma that pervaded their nationality, they did not feel that this was to a level sufficient enough to provoke arbitrary instances of targeted victimization. Participants were, however, aware of and had experienced the less severe repercussions that might be linked such narratives, namely unwelcome associations with and accusations of being Roma gypsies, which had tended to occur upon the revelation of their nationality to new acquaintances. Here, the majority of participants appeared to be more concerned about the broad associations between them and ethnic Roma than potential instances of rhetoric inspired harassment or violence.

One possible explanation as to why participants were dismissive of and unconcerned about potential instances of narrative influenced violence could lie in the fact that none of these participants, or anyone they knew, had had the misfortune of experiencing this phenomena first-hand. Although non-fearful participants may have experienced more innocuous incidents related to their nationality, these instances lacked the severity or consistency to illicit a fearful response, rather than a benign annoyance conveyed in their accounts. As such, despite the proliferation of such problematizing rhetoric, the data appears to indicate that participants' real world experiences are key in influencing their perceptions of threat or FoC and how these are linked to prominent rhetoric. Here, non-fearful participants' experiences appear to indicate to them that the potential threat of rhetoric inspired violence or aggression is negligible at best, and therefore unworthy of genuine concern. Having not experienced victimization that could be perceived as being linked to rhetoric hostility, these participants had no reason to be fearful of the prospect of rhetoric driven crime. On the contrary, the data indicates that the majority of participants' experiences had been quite the opposite of those proposed in the hypothesis of the current study.

4.7 Positive experiences alleviating concerns

Here, the data indicates that, despite being aware of the prevalence of such rhetoric, the majority of participants had actually enjoyed mostly positive experiences and interactions with the local and student populations, during their time in the UK:

IV12: "Yes, yes [I felt welcome]. I don't know whether I am lucky or whether it's just the people I know or what. But the people I know in the UK, the English people, they never ever showed any kind of discrimination or concerns about my nationality or that I might behave differently in certain situations. I never felt that from people. I don't think I ever met any discrimination because of my nationality. The only issue I had was not having a national insurance number".

It would appear that these constructive experiences may have served to alleviate any concerns that participants may have had previously concerning rhetoric and targeted hostility or victimization. As such, most participants were content with their overall experiences of the UK and their interactions with its inhabitants, whilst also feeling

reassured that these experiences better reflected the reality of the wider acceptance of Eastern-European migrants into the local community and wider British society than what prevailing narratives would appear to suggest.

It was also the case that some newer student participants, whom were less acculturated than many of their counterparts, had expressed genuine fears about their safety and how they would be received in the UK prior to their actual arrival:

IV8: "I knew there might be some discrimination but I asked some friends who were studying in London and they told me it was bullshit. They said there was no discrimination going on. I felt really good. When I got here it felt like home because there were people that welcomed me and made me not feel lonely or anything, you know. I was afraid at first. It was the first time I moved out from home and it was to a foreign country, one where we were supposed to get discriminated against. I was afraid and I was surprised when it didn't happen. It just felt right."

These concerns were directly related to these participants' awareness of the perceived hostility and intolerance that was being broadly projected towards their nationality in contemporary media and political rhetoric. Here, the data indicates that these fears were alleviated by reassuring second-hand accounts from compatriots already living in the UK, as well as by their own reassuring lived experiences during their stay in the country. Furthermore, the data suggests that the positive experiences of these participants and, to some extent, the conferred positive experiences of their compatriots, serve to mitigate any preconceived concerns about their safety and acceptance.

Consistent with the previous literature, acculturation also emerged as a factor that may have served to alleviate some participants' concerns. Here, the data would appear to indicate that participants who had resided in the UK for the longest periods of time without experiencing harassment or discrimination were also among the least fearful:

IV10: "Well, at first it [disparaging narratives] was upsetting, of course. But after a while, I don't know, I don't identify myself with the people they show on those shows

or in the papers. I'm not like them so.. I would say I was upset at first but I got over it. I wouldn't say it really gets to me because I have been here so long and I have adapted. I feel at home. I have your way of saying and doing things. I don't feel like an outsider. I did for the first few months, it was difficult at times but I am really comfortable now".

In this regard, these participants felt that their extended length of stay and the additional integration it had afforded them had somehow moderated the impact that they had felt from prevailing targeted narratives. The data would therefore appear to suggest that, although these participants may have initially felt "othered" or concerned about their status due to media and political rhetoric, the longer they remained unexposed to explicit indications of the aggravating influence of rhetoric, the more accepted and less fearful they felt. Thus, because these participants felt they had been able to adapt well to their adoptive society, whilst also not experiencing instances of harassment or discrimination, they no longer regarded themselves as external "others" but rather as naturalized.

Whereas fearful participants' experiences of harassment had given them serious cause for concern, regarding the influence of rhetoric upon "less-sophisticated" readers, non-fearful participants were far more assured of the tolerance and tactfulness of the wider British public. As such, non-fearful participants' positive experiences, or absence of negative ones, have given them less cause for concern about the possible inflammatory influence of such rhetoric than had been the case for their fearful counterparts:

IV4: "To be completely honest, I have never met someone who is... I don't know, brutally racist about me or telling me that I am x, y and z. This is probably why I am not affected because so far I have only met genuine people here at University. I worked for 12 months at a UK company with very nice people and I think I realized that British people are quite well educated, so even if they do adopt these views they are more tactful about it. They won't just read something and then freak out about it".

IV8: "Not really, no [concerns about influence of narratives]. I think that people are much more open minded than they seem. Everyone that I met here didn't say

anything. They were just like, "oh Romania, where is that". They didn't have any preconceptions or anything. We even had jokes about it; me and my housemates, we are constantly having jokes about it because they didn't say anything or judge me in the first place, they don't judge anybody."

The views held by these participants also appeared to have been influenced by a range of constructive experiences between them and the wider public. These participants appeared to consider that these experiences were generally representative of the wider public and that they demonstrated just how insignificant these kinds' rhetorical narratives are in shaping individual and public sentiments. As such, these participants were mostly dismissive of the notion that the current climate of hostile rhetoric might serve to provoke hostility or violence towards them simply because of their nationality. Furthermore, of these participants, some believed that even if it were the case that such narratives did cause disparaging or bigoted views among the wider public, these views would be much more likely to present themselves in more covert, rather than overt, forms. The data therefore suggests that, based upon such experiences, these participants consider that the probability of experiencing crime, which is directly related to the stigmatized position of their nationality, is negligible and therefore not of serious concern. These findings further indicate the significance of participants' experience/inexperience of victimization in shaping their perceptions of FoC and the influence of rhetoric.

From the collection of data above it would appear that, despite living in the UK during a period of outward hostility towards them in prevailing political and media narrative, the majority of participants have simply not been exposed to any experiences that would indicate to them that their nationality could be hazardous to their personal safety in the current climate. On the contrary, their accounts appear to indicate that, despite some having preconceived fears of the discrimination, which were influenced by current anti-immigration climate, the lived experiences of these participants were quite the opposite and thus served to alleviate such fears.

4.8 Deflection of rhetoric scope onto worthy 'others' (Roma)

Another factor that arose from the data was that Romanian and Bulgarian participants were very keen to point out that the real primary targets of media and political rhetoric were not them, nor their ethnic counterparts, but rather Roma Gypsies. This was a distinction which many participants were also keen to underline and thus suggests a cognitive disassociation between the two groups. It was posited that, although contemporary narratives did broadly encompass all Romanians and Bulgarians, the real intended targets of these narratives were in fact the Roma, which many added was for good reason. These participants considered the Roma to be an entirely distinct ethnic and cultural group in their respective societies which are largely responsible for a considerable proportion of the deviance and criminality, which according to some sources of rhetoric, is endemic among Eastern-Europeans.

Here, it was the view of a considerable proportion of fearful and non-fearful participants alike that the Roma and their prolific criminal and deviant conduct were simultaneously the actual sources and intended targets of the media and political rhetoric which has come to broadly encompass all Romanians and Bulgarians in contemporary rhetorical discourse:

IV1: "Often when you see the Romanian communities' representation within the media they are referring to gypsies, but they never make that distinction. You know, they don't ever make that distinction between our [Romanian] culture and Gypsy culture. They just put us all in the same pot and I believe this is unfair because they are two very distinct backgrounds, cultures and mentalities."

IV9: "We do not like the Gypsies, generally. Although I have friends who are gypsies, they are normal people, but we do not like them as a group because they go outside of our country and pretend to be Romanians and it is quite shameful the kind of things they do [crime & deviance]. Because of their actions we are all viewed in this way"

IV12: "He [Nigel Farage] went to Bulgaria and filmed only Gypsies and then said that is what we all do. There were no Bulgarians in this film. Yes we are a poor country but you don't need to drag us all through the mud. It's a beautiful country but he only wants to see the Gypsies so he could paint this picture of us".

As such, although these participants did recognize the limited legitimacy of the concerns which are intertwined media and political rhetoric, they did not associate themselves or their self-identified ethnic group with those upon whom such narratives are focused:

IV10: "I just don't identify myself with those people they display on those shows and in the papers and whatever else. I am not like them, so... I would say that I was upset at first but then I get over it. Even though they talk badly about Romanians and stuff, I just don't feel like the target of that. If you were to put me next to one of them [Roma] I would clearly be different in terms of how I look, talk and behave."

The data therefore indicates that, although the distinctions between the Roma and other Eastern European ethnic groups are neglected within these broadly encompassing narratives, the vast majority of participants in the current study do not genuinely consider themselves, or the group they identify with, to be intended primary targets of this rhetoric. Rather, these participants consider themselves to be innocent secondary victims of this rhetoric which, either negligently or purposefully, fails to recognize the distinction between their and the legitimate "others" respective cultural and ethnic identities. As such, the data suggests that these participants are, to varying degrees, able to detach themselves from the habitually deviant and criminal "others" that are portrayed in and objected to in this rhetoric. Furthermore, this might suggest that this detachment also means that these participants are largely unconcerned about the possible harassment or aggression that may be triggered by any vague association that they have with these legitimate "others". As such, one might speculate the significance of this particular factor in explaining the unexpectedly low levels of FoC experienced by the majority of participants in this study despite the climate of mainstream xenophobia that broadly incorporates them by merit of their nationality.

4.9 Hidden ethnicity and demographic diversity.

One possibly significant reason for why most participants are not be experiencing harassment or discrimination related to their maligned nationalities might lie in their physical appearance/ethnicity. In terms of appearance, the vast majority of participants in this study were Caucasian and as such would be almost impossible to identify them as being of foreign origin from their physical appearance alone, let alone their specific country of origin:

IV1: "Maybe, it might be [a personal safety concern]. But because we do not really make a distinctions from others, I mean, because we are not visible, you cannot just spot a Romanian, Bulgarian or Pole from a crowd. There is not a real distinction between us in the same way there is for other groups [Black and Asian]. It's very unlikely we will be bullied or attacked, but I think it is a problem when people find out our nationality. I think it becomes a problem then."

This particular factor represents something of a major stumbling block for those who might be motivated by rhetoric to seek out and target individuals who belong to groups with which such narratives are specifically focused. As such, the only feature that really distinguishes these participants from the wider host demographic are their accents, and even these varied in thickness from one individual to the next. Furthermore, based upon their previous experiences of victimization, fearful participants had identified the recognisability of their foreign accents as a significant risk factor which had been a key trigger factor in the instigation of their past victimization. Here, these participants had explicitly sought to avoid speaking in neutral public settings for fear of prompting similar incidents of targeted hostility. The corroboration of such accounts appear to exemplify just how physically indistinguishable these participants are from the wider population, whilst also highlighting the significance of participants' accents as the only real identifiably foreign feature upon which potential rhetoric motivated aggressors might identify targets from these specific groups.

Further data also indicates that the diverse demographic of the University town might also influence non-fearful participants' cognition of their vulnerability to xenophobic or racist incidents:

IV1: "I think the people who are willing to behave in this way and commit hate crimes against us, they are also going to commit the same crimes against other groups too. I don't think these sort of people discriminate exclusively, they don't target only Romanians or Bulgarians, they will target anyone who they think is different; black people, Muslims, Indians, anyone"

IV3: "You go outside of the University but in this particular area there are a lot of immigrants, to be honest. So I do not think we are discriminated against for being migrants because there is a good mixture of British and migrants here. That's how I see it".

IV9: "Here at University it is not a problem. All the teachers and students, there are so many international students from abroad, it is okay. It's not happening here. "

Here, the data indicates that:

- 1) Participants believed that the diversity of the local population infers a prevailing tolerant attitude toward cultural/ethnic differences and thus serves to alleviate participants' fears of standing out and potentially being marginalized or discriminated against because of their foreign identity.
- 2) Participants also believe that the highly diverse local demographic of the town yields an ample supply of more visible and easily identifiable targets for the very same individuals who might be otherwise inclined to target Eastern-Europeans.

The data also indicates that the former (1) mitigating affect becomes further compounded when considered in the context and confines of the University campus, which is particularly notable for its immensely diverse international student demographic. Here, it was considered by some participants that the university, by virtue of its diverse student

demographic, had somehow insulated them from many of the potential issues that they might have otherwise experienced due to the prevalence of targeted media and political rhetoric. However, some participants also expressed a cautious cynicism concerning the issues which they believed they might encounter once they leave the University to pursue their careers in the wider workforce:

IV2: "I have not had any bad experiences here personally, I think it's because the University here is so international and there are students from all over the world. So me being within this context for the last 4 years gave me... kind of how you say...kept me isolated from any bad experiences. But I am thinking now that after I finish Uni and get into the real world things might change".

The data here appears to indicate something of an inverse relationship between the homogeneity of an area's local demographic and participants' fearfulness of narrative linked harassment, whereby the more that participants feel that they stand out from the wider homogenous population, the more conscious they are of being singled out and targeted or "othered". Thus, despite their presence being highlighted and problematized by prominent media and political rhetorical narratives, the visibly diverse local demographic of the town and its Universities' student body serve to alleviate participants' fear of being singled out and possibly targeted because of their foreignness. In the context of FoC, the data indicates that participants feel less threatened by potential homogenous aggressors because they live in a highly cosmopolitan area, in which their foreignness is much more subtle when compared to other more physically visible groups in the area. As such, it seems that non-fearful participants' assessment of vulnerability/fearfulness hinged upon the extent to which they perceived themselves to stand out from the local demographic. In the case of the current study, the data indicates that participants did not regard themselves as being highly distinguishable due to a combination of their Caucasian ethnicity and the abundance of ethnically distinct groups in their local area who's greater distinguishability essentially serves to further camouflage participants of the current studies foreignness.

4.10 UKIP: Political not criminal implications.

It was anticipated that the growing mainstream popularity enjoyed by UKIP at the time of the current study would be cited by participants as a factor of significance in their increased experience of FoC. To the researcher's surprise, this was simply not the case. On the contrary, that data indicates that participants simply did not conflate the perceived prominence of UKIP, the rhetoric utilized in their election campaign, or the apparent increased public sympathy for their rhetorical views and anti-immigration policies as being indicative of an elevated level of risk to their personal safety.

Similar to the accounts of their fearful and moderately concerned counterparts, a considerable proportion of non-fearful participants' accounts indicated that they were largely unaware and uninformed of UKIP, their apparent public popularity, their political views or the sort of aggravating influence that their rhetoric might have:

IV2: "So I do not know much about politics in general, even Romanian politics. But what I know about UKIP is that they are a party that focuses on like, non-immigrants? I don't know if that is entirely true, but that is what I heard about them. They just try to.. erm, yeah, as part of their.. You know, each party has their beliefs and how they think society would be better, but I think that they are focusing on reducing immigration but I am not 100% sure. "

IV8: "I know that they want to get out of the EU. To be honest I have not done much research on the election or anything. Sorry."

IV10: "I know the minimum. I know that Nigel Farage said he wouldn't want to live next to a Romanian neighbourhood and stuff like that. I am not up to date really. At the beginning I was really angry about the whole Romanian hate thing, it really pissed me off. But now I am just over it."

IV12: "I don't know much. The only thing I know is that UKIP aim to get out of the EU. Am I right?"

These participants were largely unaware of the nature and apparent scale of UKIP support, as well as the potential legitimacy that such a rhetoric driven campaign might lend to those who might advocate the harassment and discrimination of “problematic” eastern-European migrants. For the most part, these participants were clearly unconcerned about these potential implications and how they might affect them. Thus, the data indicates that many of these participants were simply not informed or aware of this particular topic to a sufficient level that might warrant an assessment of its fundamental components and the implications these may or may not have for their personal safety, which then may or may not lead to rationalized FoC in this context. This would appear to constitute one explanation as for why these participants did not appear to elicit FoC in this regard.

Notwithstanding this, even when further informed of the finer details and pushed for an answer in this context, these participants did not appear to conflate UKIP and their apparent rise in popularity among the public as being indicative of increased personal safety fears:

IV7: “I don’t think so [worries about implications of UKIP popularity]. I am here, they can’t just move me back and I don’t think that in the long run they will get any results with this because they will find out that they need immigrants for some jobs.”

Other accounts suggested that participants did not equate the rising popularity of UKIP with an increase in potentially dangerous anti-immigrant sentiments among the general public, but rather that their increased popularity could be accounted for as part of wider public protests against the established political status quo:

IV4: “Yes, they did well [in the EU elections] but I do not think this will be the case in the general election. I am interested in politics and I am always reading about it. I hope for the sake of your country that this is a one-time thing. I see this as a way for British people to penalize the other parties like the Conservatives and Labour because they feel they have no other choice but UKIP. I don’t think they will win though, no way. They might come 4th or something, behind the main parties”.

Here, the data indicates that the majority of participants did not consider the apparently growing popularity of UKIP to be linked with any actual increased risk to their personal safety. Rather, the data indicates that those participants who were and were not well informed on the subject mainly considered UKIP in a more benign political context. As such, it was considered that UKIP's potential political success in the General Election would have mainly political and institutional implications, such as visa and employment difficulties, rather than potentially validating and perpetuating discrimination or targeted incidents of harassment against themselves and their compatriots. As such, these participants concerns were primarily focused on potential difficulties in gaining citizenship, work permits and the economic impact that Brexit might have on the UK and the wider European Union:

IV5: "They [UKIP] would probably try and impose certain rules and regulations in order to stop the number of migrants coming across. But I am not entirely sure how that would work because the people who are here already will not be so easy to get rid of and I imagine it's not just Europeans who are coming over, there are other nationalities too."

IV8: "If it [UKIP support] grows and they get what they want; out of the EU, then I think it is bad for both parties. Both sides, the UK and the EU because if you are not in the EU anymore then all the students and workers from the EU will have the same rights of internationals, so none. They will probably want to get people out of here, but they have to think about the fact that if we leave here, we do contribute to the economy because there are so many EU workers here. If they are forced to leave then the country will suffer."

IV10: "Oh yes, I remember [EU elections], because I was really worried they were going to win and I was going to get in trouble. Well, not in trouble, but I would have had difficulties getting citizenship and working here in the future."

Thus, the data therefore indicates that even those non-fearful participants who were sufficiently knowledgeable of UKIP and their rhetoric did not consider this issue in the context of criminality or personal safety. These participants were not fearful of the potential implications that growing public popularity for such a party might entail. Further, informed

non-fearful participants were dismissive of the party's chances of performing well in the General election, possibly indicating that these participants did not consider public support for UKIP to be at a level that would merit serious concern at a political or personal safety level.

As such, the data therefore indicates that for non-fearful participants, the majority of whom had not experienced instances of harassment, the prospect of UKIP gaining mainstream success in the general election was negligible at best and therefore not worthy of serious concern. Furthermore, it would also appear that although these participants were scornful of UKIP and their rhetoric driven campaign, their accounts indicate that they did not equate their apparent rise in publicity and popularity with an increased risk or likelihood of being targeted because of their nationality. Rather, they understood the potential threat that UKIP posed towards them in a primarily political and administrative context, referring to potential visa and immigration difficulties, rather than fearing for the safety of themselves or their compatriots. As such, the data regarding the role of political rhetoric in participants FoC appears to indicate that non-fearful participants, whether sufficiently or insufficiently informed about British politics, UKIP or the nature of their rhetoric, did not consider UKIP and their rhetoric in the context of elevated risk to personal safety or FoC. Thus, the data indicates that these participants were not fearful of UKIP or the broadly anti-immigration, and more specifically anti-eastern-European, rhetoric that features heavily in their election campaign. These findings would therefore appear to dismiss the proposed link between the prominence of a political party such as UKIP, their rhetoric and FoC among the groups targeted in their rhetoric.

4.11 Summary of findings

The primary aim of this study is to investigate whether, and if, how prevalent anti-immigration rhetoric emanating from prominent sections of mainstream media and political establishment affects migrants who belong to targeted groups perceptions of FoC.

The data presented throughout this chapter indicates that there is no clear answer to this question. The data strongly indicates that the primary factor of fearful participants FoC in this context was direct experience of harassment or discrimination that was linked to or prompted by respective participants' nationality and the position it holds in popular discourse. The data indicates that these experiences prompted these participants to reconsider how such rhetoric and the messages they purvey might affect them in terms of their personal safety. This affect appeared to manifest itself in various forms and to different degrees, such as; 1) general concerns regarding the potential influence that such rhetoric may have in promoting and validating similar incidents, 2) and the tactical implementation of avoidance techniques intended to avoid prompting similar incidents from occurring by concealing their only identifiably foreign feature, their accents. As such, the data indicates that personal experience of such incidents, rather than media or political rhetoric itself, was the primary influencing factor in participants FoC and that the content of these experiences was what had formed their perceived link to prevailing rhetoric.

The data also indicates mixed responses to UKIP, their rhetoric and their apparent rise in popularity. Most fearful participants viewed UKIP's anti-immigration rhetoric as being almost synonymous with the similar rhetoric of the media and therefore linked to the FoC they had experienced as a result of their victimization. However, some participants viewed UKIP primarily in administrative and bureaucratic contexts that were quite detached from inspiring hatred or crime.

Contrary to these findings, those participants who had not had such experiences appeared to be far less concerned about the influence of targeted rhetoric and therefore not fearful. Rather, these participants, whilst scornful of the targeted nature of such rhetoric, did not appear to be concerned about or seriously consider that the prevalence of such rhetoric could have an inflammatory influence. These assessments appeared to be influenced by non-fearful participant's predominantly positive experiences of living in the UK during a period of such prominent rhetoric, whereby they did not experience harassment or

discrimination related to their nationality. This could be due, in part at least, to the broadly Caucasian physical appearances of these participants and the highly visible ethnic diversity of the local population representing a form camouflage from prospective aggressors. Unlike their fearful counterparts, the non-threatening experiences of these participants had evidently shaped their perceptions of the more benign influence that such rhetoric has on its audience. Thus, these participants did not perceive the influence this rhetoric to be of serious consequence to their personal safety. The data also indicate that non-fearful participants' assessments of such rhetoric were also influenced by the sense of inclusion that they had come to feel as a result of their constructive experiences. Furthermore, although some non-fearful participants had previously harboured fears concerning how they would be accepted in the UK, these fears appeared to have been greatly alleviated by positive first and second-hand experiences that served to dispel their sense of "otherness". The data also indicates that both fearful and non-fearful participants sought to attribute the majority of "blame" for the material on which disparaging narratives were based on "deserving others". Here, the primary "deserving other" was the Roma community whom many participants believed were largely responsible for their countries much maligned image. Here, the majority of participants believed that the Roma's established reputation for criminality and deviance was the primary target of prevailing media and political rhetoric.

5. Discussion of findings

The primary purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of whether and how negative political and media portrayals of recent EU migrants affect these individuals' FoC. This research concentrated primarily on Eastern European participants' perceptions of hostile anti-immigrant rhetoric (media and political) and how these related to their experiences of FoC.

Drawing upon the previous literature on FoC among migrant and minority groups, the researcher had hypothesized that migrant participants would express a heightened

experience of FoC due to a number of aggravating risk factors that are generally associated with these groups. The findings of this study appear to challenge this hypothesis by indicating that the majority of participants' were not fearful at all. This appeared to be due to a number of perceived risk mitigating factors. The researcher also hypothesized that the additional prevalence of hostile and specifically directed rhetoric would serve as an additional aggravating risk factor that would further intensify participants' experiences of FoC. The findings appear to both support and challenge this research hypothesis by indicating an existing, albeit complex and infrequent, link between participants' heightened experience of FoC and hostile rhetoric (media and political). The implications of these findings on the existing FoC literature will be discussed further in this chapter.

A number of key findings emerged from this study regarding the fear aggravating and mitigating influences of numerous factors, such as English proficiency and acculturation, experience of identity based victimization and in/visible ethnicity. The importance of these findings is that they support, further contribute toward and expand upon the existing body of literature on migrants' and other minorities' of experiences of FoC. In particular, these findings expand upon the existing body of literature by exploring the role that anti-immigration rhetoric plays in migrants' experiences of FoC from the perspectives of students from various eastern-European countries studying in the UK.

5.1 Rhetoric, victimization, vulnerability and fear of crime

First, as anticipated the accounts of fearful participants do indicate a link between hostile rhetoric and the FoC they experienced. This link was directly governed by the strength of participants' belief that the prevalence of such rhetoric could promote and prompt targeted harassment and even violence against identifiably foreign targets, such as themselves. These findings are similar to those of the ICAR study (2004) and provide further support for the hypothesis that unbalanced and disconcerting media reports of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, can lead to some members of these groups experiencing related FoC.

However, these findings also indicate that although most participants were both aware and cautious of the influence of such rhetoric, the vast majority of participants were not fearful. This finding might indicate that the fear inducing influence of such rhetoric alone may not be as severe or pervasive as previously thought (ICAR, 2004; Frost, 2007; O’Nions, 2010).

Further, as previously noted, the findings of this study also indicate that the rhetoric-FoC nexus is one which consists of and is influenced by a range of mitigating and aggravating factors. The findings here indicate that, even within an environment where such rhetoric is prevalent, the most significant fear aggravating factor in this nexus was the first-hand experience of certain kinds of victimization which was perceived by victims to be directly linked to their foreign identity and the disparaged position it holds within some sections of public discourse. This finding reflects those of previous studies which have also found that criminal victimization experience, both violent and verbal, appears to increase FoC among affected migrant participants (Yun, Kercher & Swindell, 2010). As such, the findings of this study appear to simultaneously support the explanatory validity of both the victimization and vulnerability models for FoC (Box, Hale and Andrews, 1988; Hale, 1996; Yun, Kercher & Swindell, 2010) by indicating that experiences of specific forms of victimization informed the victims’ perceptions of their vulnerability to similar incidents which in turn informed their experiences of FoC and subsequent self-preservation responses.

Furthermore, the findings of this study also add to those of the ICAR study (2004) by providing a more nuanced and in-depth appreciation of the factors that can mitigate and aggravate rhetoric linked FoC among members of targeted migrant groups. Here, rather than being a linear process of cause and effect, the findings indicate that experience of rhetoric linked FoC is primarily governed by participants’ lived experiences of victimization which contained certain reference cues that clearly reflected the disparaging content of media and political rhetoric. This serves to communicate to the victim that it is their foreignness and the position it holds within wider public discourse that is the primary aggravating factor in their victimization. This suggests that participants’ FoC was not a direct response to rhetoric alone but rather an evasive response to direct experiences of

victimization, the content of which they believed confirmed the aggravating influence that rhetoric can have its audiences and how this influence can present itself as a genuine threat throughout their day-to-day lives. This finding also appears to underline the fear inducing power of first-hand victimization and how such experiences can also inform victims' perceptions of vulnerability to specific threats (Box, Hale and Andrews, 1988; Hale, 1996; Pantazis, 2000; Alper and Chappell, 2012). This also provides an interesting insight into how the specific content of victims' experiences can also inform the way in which they process and rationalize their perceived vulnerability to such crimes, as well as the level of risk that they associate with their foreignness in the wider context of rhetoric. Thus, these findings therefore appear to support the position that hostile and unbalanced reporting of immigration can both cause members of targeted groups to experience FoC (ICAR, 2004), facilitate racism against members of targeted groups and influence the tone that such incidents can take (Frost, 2007; O'Nions, 2010), which can further shape the way in which victims interpret and rationalize their perceived vulnerability and subsequent FoC.

Another key finding was that some victimized participants' experiences had led them to actively hide their foreign identity in certain public settings. These measures included avoiding speaking in public and avoiding disclosing their nationality to strangers. These participants felt that within the current climate that indicators of their foreign identity, in particular their accents, could very possibly trigger repeat victimization if recognized by active rhetoric subscribers. This might be interpreted as supporting the position of some (Levin & McDevitt, 1992; Craig, 2002; Gerstenfeld, 2004; Perry, 2010; Harek, Cogan & Gillis, 2002) that victims of hate motivated crimes suffer from greater psychological trauma than victims of non-hate related crime because the victimization experienced by these individuals are fundamentally attacks upon a central component of their identity. As a result, some of these victimized participants felt compelled to hide indicators of their foreign identity in public out of fear of triggering repeat incidents of aggression, harassment or violence. This, however, was not the case for all participants, most of whom were not fearful and had not experienced victimization that could be interpreted as being linked to rhetoric and their foreign identity. These contrasting findings might be interpreted as an indication of just how significant a factor the Caucasian ethnicity of these participants was in protecting the

majority of them from more prevalent and pronounced instances of discrimination and harassment, as well as the subsequent impact that such instances might have on participants' perceptions of vulnerability and FoC. As such, the findings of previous research (Benia, Janchevic & Hastigs, 2008; Chongatera, 2013), which indicates that visible ethnicity is the most significant factor in the experience of and subsequent fear of hate crimes may offer some explanation as to; 1) why so few participants had been victimized because of their foreign identity, 2) why the majority of participants were not fearful and 3) why only participants with experience of victimization were fearful despite the prevalence of media and political rhetoric.

5.2 Inexperience of victimization, fear of crime and hidden ethnic identity.

Secondly, while the findings indicate that although rhetoric is linked to some participants' FoC, the majority of participants in this study were not fearful of rhetoric related crime or crime in general. A number of mitigating factors are discussed here; in particular, these participants' inexperience of rhetoric linked victimization. This finding appears to further support the mutual explanatory validity of the victimisation and vulnerability models of FoC by indicating a link between experiences of victimization and perceived vulnerability to rhetoric linked crime. As with the ICAR (2004) study, the majority of participants were aware of the prevalence and hostile nature of rhetoric, with many even acknowledging its potential to aggravate discriminatory views toward targeted migrant groups from some the sections of the wider public. However, the findings indicate that it was these participants inexperience of rhetoric linked inferential victimization that is the primary mitigating factor in their non-fearfulness. This finding, compounded by the fact that the majority of participants had not experienced such incidents and were not fearful of rhetoric linked crime, might be explained and interpreted in a number of ways.

Firstly, this might indicate that that both the inflammatory and fear inducing influence of anti-immigration rhetoric is not as pervasive in nature or as influential in the emergence of hostile attitudes as some might suggest (ICAR, 2004; Frost, 2007; O'Nions, 2010). This may

go some way to explaining why, despite the prevalence of such targeted rhetoric, the majority of participants had never experienced victimization that could provoke genuine fears regarding the inflammatory influence of rhetoric and the perceived risk of similar victimization in the future.

Secondly, this might also be indicative of significant differences between the student migrant status of participants in the current study and the refugee/asylum participants in the ICAR study (2004). Fundamentally, the participants in this study were students who had knowingly chosen the UK as a place to live, study and potentially pursue future career paths, whereas those surveyed in the ICAR study (2004) were refugees and asylum seekers who are typically forced to flee their countries of origin from various forms of political, ethnic and religious persecution. The contrasting past experiences of these two significantly different groups of participants could indicate that, as members of particularly vulnerable groups, refugees and asylum seekers are more sensitive to the targeted nature of media and political rhetoric because they are likely to have already experienced the kinds of discrimination and persecution that the narratives contained in such rhetoric might be perceived as being indicative of. As such, these factors might go some way in explaining the contrasting perceptions of participants in these two studies and could form the focus of future research into varying perceptions of FoC among groups of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

Thirdly, previous research has also indicated that ethnicity is a key indicator of social, educational and discriminatory disadvantage factors which can contribute toward minority groups' experiences of victimization and their subsequent perception of vulnerability and risk (Pager and Shepherd, 2008; Wu and Altheimer, 2013). As such, findings of this study may also be indicative of the importance of the visible ethnic identity of groups that are the targets of rhetoric, how this particular factor might serve to regulate the actual occurrence and perceived likelihood of victimization, as well as how these factors influence the development of FoC. All participants in this study were Caucasian Eastern-Europeans who were living within an ethnically diverse area of the UK. Here, some of these participants

believed that the covert nature of their ethnicity, in conjunction with the ethnic diversity of the local area, may have served to shield them from more overt forms of racially motivated hostility and victimization, whilst fearful victimized participants felt that their only discernibly foreign feature, their accents, had been the primary trigger for their experiences of racially or rhetoric motivated victimization. These findings appear to indicate the perceived risk significance that migrants and other minority groups may attribute to their identifiably foreign features such as their ethnicity, foreign accent or even signs of religious affiliation. Such findings and the proposed explanation also appear to be consistent with those of previous studies in which visible ethnicity was found to be a significant factor in both experience of and fear of hate crimes (Benia, Janhevich & Hastings, 2008; Chongatera, 2013). Furthermore, within such an ethnically diverse environment, the distinguishable foreignness of white European migrants is likely to be far less apparent than that of other visible ethnic groups that reside within the same area. Here, some participants believed that although rhetoric had been heavily focused upon new EU migrants (Romanians, Bulgarians and Poles), the more visibly distinct targets of previous hostile rhetoric, such as Muslims and African refugees and asylum seekers, were far more likely to be targeted than themselves due of the protection that their Caucasian ethnicity afforded them. Thus, the findings indicate that the main reason why most participants in the current study were not fearful of rhetoric linked victimization is likely due to the absence of a number of factors that are governed and mitigated by the concealed nature of their foreignness and the protection that this affords them in various regards. As such, an optimistic reading of these findings appears to underline the significance of race and ethnicity as both mitigating and aggravating factors in the experience of identity related targeted victimization, perceived attribution of risk to identifiably foreign features and the effect that these factors may have upon experiences of FoC among distinct and indistinct ethnic minorities and migrants.

Previous literature (Furr, Austin, Cribbs & Smogger, 2010) has also suggested that the family moving process and residence of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees may serve to mitigate risk factors that are typically associated with migration and migrants' subsequent experiences of FoC. Although the participants of this study had not migrated or lived in family units per se, as students they are likely to be living in shared accommodation with

groups of friends. Such student living arrangements might serve to duplicate the fear mitigating influence that is proposed by Furr et al (2006) to explain unexpected high safety assessments reported by their former USSR refugee participants. However, in Babacan et al's (2010) study of Chinese students in Melbourne, participants not only reported high perceptions of FoC, but also high levels of victimization, with many perceiving overt racism as a being a key factor in their experiences. As such, these findings, in combination with those of the current study and Furr et al's (2006) appear to further indicate the significance of visible ethnicity as an aggravating factor in the perceived allocation of risk to identity factors, experiences of victimization and subsequent experience of FoC and fear of hate crime among members of distinct ethnic minority groups within predominantly white societies.

5.3 Identity: Detachment from and deflection of rhetoric

Another finding was that a considerable number of Romanian participants' accounts appeared to indicate that they were, to some extent, able to detach themselves from the rhetoric based stigma that had come to broadly represent their nationality. Here, some participants, whilst accepting the limited legitimacy of such claims, sought to transfer the unfavourable scope of rhetoric away from their self-identified group, ethnic Romanians, onto the Roma ethnic minority with whom they are often broadly associated. This finding both reflects and further supports the findings of previous research concerning strategies used by Romanians to cope with their stigmatized status (Morosanu and Fox, 2013). Here participants in both studies sought to draw a clear distinction between their group, ethnic Romanians, and the Roma, by pointing out a number of significant cultural, behavioural and ethnic differences in order to clearly exemplify this distinction. A number of participants in both studies had also personally experienced numerous unwelcome connotations between themselves, as Romanian nationals, and the Roma during and throughout their interactions with indigenous individuals who were unaware of the distinction between the two groups.

These findings further indicate the possible significance of visibly distinct ethnicity and the status void that still exists between “whiteness” and “blackness” within predominantly white European societies and may also indicate the significance of class. Here, it could be possible that these factors may serve to mitigate the perceived vulnerability of Caucasian Romanian participants because of the position of relative privilege that their whiteness is consciously or subconsciously perceived to afford them. This, in conjunction with way in which their Caucasian ethnicity conceals their physical foreignness, may go some way to explaining, A) unexpectedly low FoC among participants, B) the low level of significance that participants associated with sensationalist rhetoric, and C) the majority of participants’ inexperience of identity linked victimization.

5.4 Adaptability mitigating rhetoric-fear link

The findings of the current study also appear to support the hypothesis that those with better adopted language skills are less likely to experience FoC due to the increase acculturation this affords them (Sundeen, 1984; Ackah, 2000; Brown & Benedict, 2004; Lee & Ulmer, 2000; Wu & Wen, 2014). Here, the accounts of some non-fearful participants indicated that their ability to quickly adapt to the culture, customs and language of the UK had been a major mitigating factors in how they were affected by disparaging rhetoric and their subsequent perceptions of vulnerability and FoC within this context. These factors may also go some way to explaining the unexpected findings of the current study. Firstly, adopted language proficiency has been suggested by some (Wu & Wen, 2014) to be one of the most significant factors in migrant acculturation, whereby migrants who are proficient in the language of their adoptive country are able to more easily interact within and adapt to the culture and customs of their adoptive society, than those who are less proficient. As EU students studying degrees that are taught in English, the participants of the current study were all required to attain and demonstrate a certain level of English proficiency before they were accepted onto their respective degrees. Thus, it is therefore possible that the participants of the current study had generally attained a level of English proficiency that exceeds that of other migrants whose residence is not dependent on their attainment and

demonstration of adoptive language proficiency. As such, it might be the case that the higher English proficiency levels of participants in the current study may afford them a greater degree of acculturation compared to non-student migrants, which may go some way to explaining participants unexpectedly low FoC. One, therefore, might speculate that the subsequently greater acculturation of student participants in the current study exceed those of the average economic migrant, refugee or asylum seeker, whose residency is not subject to their language attainment and who have been found to be both more fearful of rhetoric linked crime (ICAR, 2004) and crime in general (Akah, 2000; Eitle & Taylor, 2008; Mears and Stewart, 2010; Pain, 2001; O’Nions, 2010).

5.5 Summary of discussion

This chapter has discussed the main findings of this study in relation to the existing body of relevant literature concerning FoC and FoC among migrant and minority groups. Firstly, the findings of this study both support and challenge the hypothesis that anti-immigration rhetoric (media and political) is linked to the experience of FoC and heightened perceptions of vulnerability among members of the migrant groups they target. Here, the supporting findings indicate that in some cases rhetoric was linked to some participants FoC, however, this link is not linear and appears to be subject to specific trigger factors, which came in the form of various types of victimization, that communicate this link to the victim. As such, the findings here appear to highlight the significance of first-hand victimization as a key cause of FoC and as a means of communicating perceptions of the aggravating influence of rhetoric sources. Furthermore, the accounts of victimized and fearful participants do appear to indicate a perceived link between their fear and ‘less sophisticated or privileged’ groups of society.

The findings of this study also appear to indicate the significance of various protective and mitigating factors that might explain the majority of participants’ inexperience of victimization and non-fearfulness. Here, the findings indicate the potential significance of

Eastern-European participants' Caucasian ethnicity as a protective factor from identity based victimization and the proposed fear inducing and rhetoric inferring implications of such incidents. The findings also suggest the importance of factors that relate to the specific status of newcomers (migrant, refugee, asylum seeker) and how the current (living arrangements) and past circumstances (experience of persecution) of members of these groups might serve to mitigate or aggravate perceptions of the crime aggravating influence of rhetoric sources and subsequent experience of linked FoC. Furthermore, the findings here also indicate that acculturation factors, such as higher English proficiency and increased integration, might serve to mitigate migrants' rhetoric linked fears and perceptions of vulnerability. Finally, the findings also indicate the way in which participants perceived themselves in relation to the scope of anti-immigration rhetoric may also serve to mitigate its impact. Here, the findings indicate that many participants were able to detach themselves from the broadly problematizing scope of rhetoric and even in some cases deflect it onto legitimate others, the Roma. This finding also appears to further indicate the significance of ethnicity and possibly even class as key elements in the rhetoric-FoC nexus.

6. Conclusion

This study set out to assess and explore the potential impact that mounting anti-migrant rhetoric, from within mainstream media and political discourse, has on members of targeted migrant groups' perceptions of FoC. The current study consisted of twelve in-depth, semi-structured interviews with eastern-European student participants. The data from these interviews was then examined through employing thematic analysis of commonly recurring and significant themes that emerged from participants' accounts in order to provide a framework for understanding whether and how anti-immigrant rhetoric interacts with and informs members of targeted migrant groups FoC. The findings derived from this process indicate a variety of consistencies and inconsistencies with the previous literature that has investigated FoC and perceptions of vulnerability among other migrant and minority groups.

Previous literature has consistently found that migrant and minority groups experience FoC to a greater extent than the general population in which they live. Based upon these findings, in combination with the apparent significance of anti-immigration rhetoric, the researcher has predicted that participants would report experiencing high levels of FoC. However, contrary to the existent literature, this study found that the majority of participants were not experiencing FoC and were not fearful of the inflammatory nature and potential influence of rhetoric. The findings indicate that the most significant factor in these participants FoC was that the majority had no experience of harassment or victimization that was motivated by or perceived to be linked to their foreign identity. Here, a number of mitigating factors associated with these participants' risk of identity based crime emerged. Consistent with the findings of previous hate crime studies, the Caucasian ethnicity of the majority of participants was identified as being a key to concealing these participants' foreign identity from potential rhetoric or identity motivated assailants. Furthermore, it is also considered that within the context of the local ethnically diverse demographic, these participants indistinct foreignness is further concealed and normalized. Also consistent with previous migrant FoC literature, the elevated English proficiency of this studies' participants is also hypothesized to mitigate a range of factors, which are typically associated with migrants FoC, by affording them a greater capability to better interact and integrate into the culture and customs of their adoptive society. This study also found that participants' ability to detach themselves from the scope of anti-immigration rhetoric by asserting their prestige compared to the genuine undesirable and habitually deviant "others" (Roma) whom were perceived to be the intended targets of such disparagement.

Although the majority of participants were not fearful, a small minority of participants were. In most of these cases, the fear experienced by these participants had been prompted by their experiences of victimization or harassment, which had been triggered by the discovery of participants' foreign identity by their accents. As such, these participants explicitly sought to conceal their foreignness by hiding their accents in public. Here, the findings indicate that it is the specific content and locations of these experiences were instrumental in shaping fearful participants perceptions of the genuine inflammatory influence of rhetoric,

archetypes of likely perpetrators of rhetoric motivated crime or harassment and where the risks of such experiences are most pronounced. The inference and perceived confirmation of these risk factors appear to be significant in the development and experience of these participants FoC. As such, the findings of the current study indicate that link between these participants FoC and anti-immigration rhetoric was secondary and therefore not directly linked to the circulation of anti-immigration rhetoric.

To conclude, although previous studies and literature have presented the sensationalist rhetoric and anti-immigration narratives (media and political) as a genuine source of FoC, the findings of this study challenge the linearity of this proposed connection. Rather than been simple case of cause and effect, the findings of this study indicate the significance of individuals' lived experiences of identity motivated victimization and adoptive cultural integration in FoC-rhetoric nexus. Furthermore, the findings of this study also indicate the importance of factors such as individuals' visible ethnicity and the ethnic diversity of the local area, as factors that might serve to aggravate or mitigate the risk of experiencing identity based victimization. The findings also support that migrants' English proficiency and subsequent acculturation levels can also serve to mitigate a range of FoC factors.

6.1 Limitations of the study

As with other studies, the current study has a number of limitations that are anchored in its methodological approach. Firstly, using a small, purposive sample significantly limits the generalizability of the results and findings of the current study. Further, the student status of the participants of the current study is also likely to further limit the generalizability of these findings. This might be due to differences in social, financial and adaptive factors of student and non-student migrants and how these factors might influence experiences of victimization, perceived vulnerability and FoC. However, although most existing research into FoC among migrant and minority groups have been quantitative and therefore relied on much larger scale samples, the methodological structure of these studies mean they are

more limited to testing the validity of theory and significance of factors rather than exploring and generating new understandings of complex social phenomena, as has been attempted by the current study. This notwithstanding, the final sample of the current study (ten Romanian, one Polish and one Bulgarian participant) means that the findings of this study are, 1) more representative of the experiences of Romanian migrants than Eastern European migrants in general and 2) possibly unrepresentative of non-student migrants due to the likely differences in the social, educational and discriminatory factors that shape and influence the experiences and perceptions of student and non-student migrants alike.

Second, the qualitative nature of the current study entails a number of limitations in itself. The nature of qualitative enquiry being what it is, the risk of researcher error and bias is increased and can be hard to avoid given the intimate position of the researcher in relation to the interview process, data analysis, discussion and interpretation of findings. Further, given that the data analysis and interpretation processes of qualitative research are heavily dependent of the interpretation of the researcher, the findings of the current study might be viewed as being too subjective. Thus, it is entirely possible that the findings of this study may not be entirely valid due to researcher interference, despite the researchers' best efforts.

6.2 Possibilities for future research

A number of possibilities for future research might also be derived from the findings and inconsistencies with previous literature that are presented within the current study. First, elevated English proficiency is proposed to serve to increase acculturation levels and reduce FoC among migrants. It is suggested that because the student migrant participants of the current study had already attained higher levels of English proficiency than might be the case for non-student migrants, these participants are likely to also have higher acculturation rates than their non-student counterparts, which may explain lower than expected experiences of FoC in relation to rhetoric and crime in general. Here, future studies might

benefit from further testing the fear mitigating significance of English proficiency and subsequent acculturation levels among a sample of non-student eastern-European migrants or even conducting comparative studies between student and non-student migrants.

Second, based upon the accounts of participants, the subsequent findings and their contrast with previous literature, the current study suggests that ethnicity could also be a significant factor in mitigating both general FoC and rhetoric linked FoC among migrants. Previous research has also shown that ethnicity is linked to various social, economic, discriminatory and victimization factors that can have the power to shape life experiences and perceptions of crime. Here, it might be the case that these factors serve to mitigate white Eastern Europeans' experiences of victimization and their subsequent perceptions of FoC. As such, future research might benefit from further exploring whether ethnically distinct migrants experience greater general FoC and rhetoric linked FoC than migrants who are more ethnically indistinguishable from the indigenous population.

Third, contrary to the limited body of literature on effects of media representation and refugee/asylum seekers perceptions of safety, the findings of the current study indicate that hostile media and political rhetoric were not significant in most student migrant participants FoC or perceptions of vulnerability. These contrasting findings might be explained by the contrasting nature, experiences and circumstances of migrant student participants in the current study and refugee/asylum seeker participants in the ICAR study (2004). Future research might benefit from exploring whether vulnerability factors which are more commonly associated with or prevalent amongst vulnerable minority groups, such as refugees and asylum seekers, influence the significance that these groups attribute to hostile political and media rhetoric, and how these factors influence their FoC.

Fourth, specific forms of victimization and harassment were found to be the primary trigger of participants FoC that was linked to media and political rhetoric. Only when such incidents had occurred did participants appear to seriously consider the potential of such rhetoric to

incite xeno-motivated crime. The current study proposes that this indicates that experience of hate crime is significant in FoC and how victims attribute vulnerability factors, such as their accents, to likelihood of future victimization. Here, future research might benefit from further investigating this hypothesis and appraising its validity by conducting rhetoric based FoC research among a sample of previous hate crime victims.

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8. Appendices

Interview guide for Semi-structured interviews

How do media and political anti-immigration rhetoric affect recent EU migrants' experiences of FoC?

Impressions of the media

- 1) First of all, I would like to ask you about your impressions of the media in this country?
- 2) Now I would like us to discuss the manner in which some prominent media sources depict migrants, such as yourself?
 - A) How do you feel when you see/hear about these stories?
 - B) Why do you think they do this?
 - C) What kind of effect do you think these kinds of stories will have on their readers?

Views on political rhetoric

- 1) Here, I would like us to talk about UKIP and their place in UK politics.
 - A) What are your impressions of UKIP?
 - B) What are your thoughts on UKIP's unanticipated success at the EU parliamentary elections?
 - C) UKIP appear to be a growing force in UK politics, this might suggest that their views are shared by a growing number of the population, what are your thoughts on this?
 - D) Could you give me your views on the kinds of people who you believe UKIP are most likely to appeal to and why?

Impressions and experiences of discrimination

- 1) Before you moved to the UK, did you have any worries/fears about experiencing discrimination here?
 - B) And after spending some time here, how do you feel you have been received by people? (If you had any fears, do you think they were realized?)
- 2) If you have/were treated in a discriminatory manner (verbally or physically) how would/did you deal with this?

3) Do you worry about discrimination more/less in different places, if so where and why?