

Language about Migration and State Policymaking: Learning from the UK's "Net Migration" Target

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Abstract: How does language about migration relate to state policymaking? By comparing the dynamics of a key UK government policy since 2010—lowering "net migration" to the "tens of thousands"—in press and Home Office rhetoric, I aim to illustrate the limits of the government to insert its desired language into the press. In fact, routine press interactions with the nonpolitical Office for National Statistics enabled coverage that diverged from politicians' preferred lines. This raises questions about the conditions in which press-state relations on a host of political issues might change.