

scapegoat (n):

a person who is blamed for something that someone else has done

When things don't go well, people always look for a scapegoat.

MARYAM: MIGRANTS AS SCAPEGOATS

Before you watch

1

Maryam talks about feeling that she and her family have been made scapegoats in the UK.

What kinds of people can often be made scapegoats in society? For what reason and by whom? Discuss in pairs.

Maryam



While you watch

2

Discuss if any of your ideas in 1 coincide with what Maryam says about her situation?

3

Match the verbs (1-6) with the nouns (a-f) to form collocations that Maryam uses in the interview.

1 care for

a opportunities

1 _____

2 seek

b society

2 _____

3 turn against

c the elderly

3 _____

4 contribute to

d poverty

4 _____

5 steal

e refuge

5 _____

6 live in

f immigrants

6 _____

4

Which of the two expressions in exercise 3 are positive?

Who do they refer to?

5

Maryam says this:

"After COVID, the economy took a really big hit, we call it the cost-of-living crisis, and this new [political] party has been able to **weaponize** that and turn the people against immigrants."

What do you think "weaponize" means in this context?

6

Watch the video again and check your answers to 3, 4 and 5.

7

Test your memory about what Maryam says. Choose the correct option.

- a ☐ Maryam was born in England.
☐ Maryam was born in another country.
- b ☐ People assume that she is an illegal citizen.
☐ People assume she can't speak English.
- c ☐ Many people don't know many immigrants themselves.
☐ Many people don't know enough about immigrants.
- d ☐ Some politicians take advantage of people's prejudices to attack others.
☐ Some politicians take advantage of economic crises to attack others.
- e ☐ Maryam is really affected emotionally by the situation.
☐ Maryam realizes there is nothing she can do about the situation.
- f ☐ She says her family are loving people who help others.
☐ She says her family are people who are used to suffering discrimination.

8

Read this summary of Maryam's interview. What do you think is her strongest message? Why?

16-year-old Maryam from England talks about how anti-immigrant views affect her life. Although she was born in the UK, people sometimes assume she is in the country illegally because her family are immigrants. She finds it unfair and upsetting that immigrants are blamed for economic problems like the cost-of-living crisis. Maryam believes politicians are using this to turn people against immigrants. She explains that her family works hard and contributes to society. Her mother, for example, has done multiple jobs. Maryam wants people to understand that being an immigrant doesn't make someone bad or undeserving. She is determined that people treat her, her family and other immigrants fairly and without prejudice.

After you watch

9

Choose ONE of the questions to discuss in pairs or small groups.

- a **Is the situation that Maryam describes in the UK similar to that found in your country?**

If similar, which groups tend to be scapegoated?

Are any situations weaponized in the way that Maryam describes?

Why do you think this happens? Do politicians play a role in this? If so, what is it?

I think the situation is better here than what Maryam describes, politicians don't scapegoat immigrants in the same way.

- b **Have you or anyone you know ever suffered scapegoating in the way that Maryam describes?**

Or another form of discrimination? How did this manifest itself?

A friend of mine was turned down for a job and he believes it was because of his immigrant status.

- c **Discuss these questions on the topic of immigration:**

Concerning the treatment of immigrants where you live, would you say that the situation is better now than it was a decade ago?

If so, consider what positive steps have been taken in recent years. In what way has society improved?

If not, consider what needs to be done to improve the situation.

Here there are many people who defend the rights of immigrants but many more who attack them unfairly. This has to stop!