



Outline of the problem

Introduction

Asylum claims have fallen sharply but immigration has trebled under the present government; it is now about fifteen times asylum.

The issue is not about existing immigrant communities. Many have contributed greatly.

The question is about scale and pace. How many more immigrants should be admitted to the UK and how rapidly can they be integrated?

In a recent opinion poll 76% said that they favoured an annual limit on immigration. Only 10% were opposed.

Scale

Immigration is now on an **unprecedented scale**. The Asians from East Africa who arrived in the mid 1970s amounted to 27,000. We are now taking more than 10 times that number every year. Indeed, net foreign immigration reached **292,000** in 2005 (of which just 11,000 was accounted for by the net rise in asylum claimants).

Much of the recent debate has concerned immigration from Eastern Europe. From 1st May 2004 when eight East European countries joined the EU 510,000 applicants have registered under the Workers Registration Scheme, 63% from Poland. (Workers from Eastern Europe can only claim full welfare benefits after they have worked here for 12 months.) However, the self employed are not required to register. A Home Office Minister (Mr Mc Nulty) has estimated the total over two years at 600,000. It is not known how many have since returned home. About half of those registered say that their employment is temporary. If they have all returned, net immigration from Eastern Europe would be about 150,000 a year (compared to the government's prediction of a maximum of 13,000). The ONS estimate that net migration from the new EU members in 2005 was 65,000. This was based on the data collected from the International Passenger Survey. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that this estimate is too low. Migration from the new EU countries is, of course, in addition to immigration from the rest of the world .

According to Government projections, immigration will result in **an increase in the population of the UK of 6 million in the 27 years from 2004** that is 6 times the population of Birmingham. Immigration (immigrants and their descendants) will now account for 83% of future population growth in the UK. The population projections took account of increased migration resulting from the expansion of the EU but they assumed that total migration flows would rapidly decrease from 255,000 in 2004-5 to just 145,000 in 2007-8. So far there has been no sign of a decrease in immigration from the new EU countries and the accession of Bulgaria and Romania (and possibly other East and Southern European countries) will add to immigration pressures.

Even this number does **not include illegal immigrants**. About 50,000 illegal entrants are detected every year but nobody knows how many succeed in entering undetected.

Legal immigration at the present projected rate will lead to a requirement of about **1.5 million houses in the period 2003 – 2026**.

England is now nearly twice as crowded as Germany, four times France and twelve times the US.

Meanwhile, asylum has been allowed to become a back door to Britain. In recent years over 60% have been refused permission to stay here but only 1 in 4 of those who fail are ever removed.

At present there is no reason why immigration should come to an end.

The pressure on our borders continues. **Demand for visas** has risen by 33% in 5 years and **is now 2.5 million per year**. In 2003 one in five visa issuing posts was consistently unable to cope with the daily demand for visas, despite the time allocated to each case being reduced to only eleven minutes. **No one is recorded** as they enter or leave the country.

Economic Benefit?

The economic benefit from this inflow is very limited. Government arguments are fallacious. Immigration is **not essential** to our economic growth. It adds to economic growth but also adds nearly proportionately to our population so that **the benefit to the host community is small**. (A result found also in the US, Canada and Holland). In the UK some results show a negative impact on GDP per head – others show a small positive impact equivalent to about 4p per head per week.

Immigrants will have **little impact** on our ability to pay **pensions** in future. The Turner Commission dismissed this argument for the simple reason that immigrants too will age and require pensions. Their financial input to the Exchequer is, despite government claims, approximately neutral.

Immigration is welcome to many employers because it holds down pay levels, especially for the unskilled, and contributes to lower interest rates. It can also be a source of cheap skilled labour with no training costs. But it is the tax payer who picks up all the costs of the extra infrastructure required.

To the extent that **immigration holds down wages** it makes it more difficult for the government to achieve their stated aim of moving from welfare to work the 1.7 million unemployed and the 2.7 million on Incapacity Benefit. There are now 1.25 million young people under 25 in Britain who are not in work, in full-time education or training.

Are immigrants doing jobs the British will no longer do? No. In large parts of Britain where there are few, if any, immigrants. British people are doing all these jobs. The fundamental problem is the benefits trap. Wages are held down to a level where for some there is little benefit in working rather than collecting benefits. Wages should be allowed to rise to make lower paid jobs worthwhile and to encourage productivity. Increasing productivity is the only way that a nation can become richer.

Where is this leading?

There is growing resentment among the native population of whom 70-80% wish to see a tougher immigration policy. They feel that their **concerns are being ignored**, or dismissed; only 10% feel that the government is listening to public opinion on immigration. The ethnic population is also concerned about the direction of events. A majority of them (55%) also wish to see tighter immigration control. **A majority** of the population (69%) **feel that Britain is losing its own culture**.

The natural tendency of some immigrants to join their own communities, and to choose spouses from their countries of origins, is leading to the **formation of parallel communities** with little contact, or identification, with mainstream British culture. Indeed, in some cases the younger generation is growing up hostile to British culture.

There are also **frictions between different communities**, sometimes encouraged by satellite television from their home areas. E.g. Pakistani/Indian. Caribbean/Somali. Pakistani/Kurd.

The performance of different ethnic communities varies greatly. Some are very successful, such as the Chinese and Indians. Other communities are being left behind in the educational and employment stakes, notably Caribbeans, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Migrants are nearly twice as likely to be unemployed as the native population.

The impact is very substantial. Over the next **twenty years, one in three new households will be down to immigration**. Since brownfield sites provide two thirds of new homes, net immigration is the main reason for greenfield development. The extra population also adds to the pressure on transport and water supplies, both of which are already facing serious difficulties.

Furthermore, there are significant movements within Britain. In the last ten years, 600,000 Londoners have left the city to be replaced by 700,000 immigrants. This is **changing the whole nature of London** and other major cities. This outflow of people is higher from boroughs with a high percentage of ethnic minorities.

The Chairman of the CRE has pointed out that whites will soon be in a minority in Leicester, Birmingham, Bradford and Oldham perhaps by 2016. He has also warned that we are sleepwalking towards segregation.

What should be done?

We should be clear about the facts, frank about the problems, and constructive about the solutions.

A major step must be to **limit the scale and pace of further immigration** as clearly implied by the Governments own cohesion panel. They reported that the pace of change (for a variety of reasons) is simply too great in some areas at present.

An annual limit is essential to restore public confidence in the system.

The introduction of such a limit would be a considerable task and would take some years to be made affective.

The ideal would be to achieve a position where the **numbers of people entering Britain was similar to the number emigrating.**

Thereafter we should encourage **more explicit nation building** so as to integrate the minorities we have. This should involve language teaching, skills training and assistance in finding employment.

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