

THE CENTRE FOR ENTERPRISE, MARKETS AND ETHICS

ENTERPRISE AND VALUES SERIES

THE CHALLENGES OF MIGRATION

ANDREI ROGOBETE

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INTRODUCTION

International migration is set to become one of the defining global issues of the twenty-first century:

- Over one million migrants from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and other Middle Eastern and North African countries reached European shores in 2015 alone,¹ most of them refugees fleeing conflict in their home countries, others attracted by the lure of a more prosperous future on the European continent.
- The US Department for Homeland Security estimates that there are over 11 million illegal immigrants currently living in the USA, the majority of whom are from Mexico and South America.² Donald Trump promised early on in his electoral campaign that he would build a great wall between Mexico and the USA and make ‘Mexico pay for it’.³ Radical as it may sound, it proved to be one of the defining statements that earned him the presidential nomination of one of America’s two main political parties and, subsequently, the Presidency itself.
- On 23 June 2016 the United Kingdom voted in a national referendum to leave the European Union (EU), the ‘Leave’ side winning 51.8% of the vote. Some consider European immigration and, more specifically, the EU’s ‘free movement of people’ to be a key contributing factor to the ‘Brexit’ result.⁴ There is data suggesting that one-third of voters backed Brexit because they believed it ‘offered the best chance for the UK to regain control over immigration and its own borders’.⁵

These are just a few recent examples that drive the topic of international migration to becoming one of the defining issues of our time. The Independent Commission on Multilateralism (ICM) believes that issues of global migration now ‘top the foreign policy agenda of leading nations’.⁶

How should the nation state and the international community as a whole respond to this vastly complex issue? What are the political, economic, social and religious implications?

This publication seeks to narrow down the debate and focus specifically on immigration to the UK, within the context of the European Union as well as globally. While not engaging in primary research, it aims to conduct an intra-disciplinary synthesis of the work that has already been made available to the public.

There is no doubt that a plethora of research on the topic of UK immigration has been produced over the last decade. However, the analysis and research produced has often been in isolation: too much academic work remains within academic circles, too many economists only debate their ideas with other economists, and the Church often responds in a limited fashion. Even think tanks, more often than not, are confined by their own political agendas.

As a result, politicians and policy-makers are left with highly topical information that fails to give the whole picture – not to mention the day-to-day, immediate political pressures that invariably force many in public office to rely more on their political gut feeling than specialised political or economic studies. The problem is that too many studies discuss economic predictions but omit the political and social implications. This leads to weak and in some cases inadequate policy development. Moral and religious argument is often conducted in isolation.

Undoubtedly, discussion on immigration can rapidly become a perilous road. More than any other topic of public concern, the debate around immigration strikes a powerful emotional chord. It often forces participants to re-evaluate their own identity, their loyalties and, most importantly, to test their willingness to accept the foreigner, the ‘other’. Immigration strikes at the core of public life. It both influences and moulds the very fabric of society.

Therefore there is a great need for intra-disciplinary work – and not just targeted at policy-makers or politicians, but for the general public as a whole. It is vital that a society as well developed as that of the UK has an overall view of the benefits and consequences of migration to and from the country.

This publication will be a first step in that direction. It will attempt to bring together the economic, social, political and religious implications of migration⁷ to the UK. It will also explore some of the lessons that can be learnt from the past and what a sensible approach to managing migration for the future may look like.

Chapter 1 will begin by presenting a historical account of migration to the UK from 1945 to the present day. Here the main focus will be on the dynamics between international pressures and events, and the political responses of the British government at the time. The analysis will also consider the social and cultural implications of migration, and will look at the failure of multiculturalism in the UK and why there is need for greater social cohesion and integration.

Chapter 2 will consider Britain's legislative history on immigration and its relationship with the European Union. It will seek to understand how Britain moved from an open-door policy with the Commonwealth that ended with the seminal Immigration Act 1971, to membership of the European Communities (now the European Union) in the 1975 referendum.

Without going into too much detail, this chapter will also look at the development of the EU and its four 'fundamental freedoms' – particularly in light of globalisation and neoclassical economic thought.

Chapter 3 will focus on the economics of net immigration to the UK. It will seek to discover the main financial benefits and costs that immigration has on the British economy within a globalisation framework. With the aim of building a less 'biased' approach, economic studies from across the political spectrum will be considered. More importantly, an attempt will be made to distinguish between pure 'political' rhetoric and the hard facts. Placed within a framework of globalisation theory, the chapter will ultimately seek to answer questions such as:

'Immigration strikes a powerful emotional chord'

- For what purposes do migrants come to the UK?
- What impact does the scale of net immigration have on the UK economy?
- Does immigration have an impact on UK wages/employment/housing? If so, how?
- What are the demographics of the migrants themselves (age, nationality etc.)?
- What sort of qualifications do migrants hold on arrival in the UK?
- How well are migrants economically integrating in British society?

Chapter 4 will look at the Church's response to the issue of immigration. Here, both national as well as international migration issues – such as the European refugee crisis – will be considered. The aim of this chapter is to understand the Christian perspective on the topic of immigration to the UK and the position of the Church. While the predominant focus will be on the Church of England, cross-denominational Christian teaching will be used. Rather than providing a critique, this chapter will seek to better understand Christian teaching and attitudes towards migration.

Finally, Chapter 5 will seek to draw some conclusions based on bridging the gap between the mostly isolated political, economic and social spheres of research.

NOTES

¹ European Commission, 'Forced Displacement: Refugees, Asylum-Seekers and Internally Displaced People (IDPs)'; http://ec.europa.eu/echo/refugee-crisis_en.

² Amy Sherman, 'Donald Trump wrongly says the Number of Illegal Immigrants is 30 million or Higher', *Politifact Florida*, 28 July 2015; www.politifact.com/florida/statements/2015/jul/28/donald-trump/donald-trump-says-number-illegal-immigrants-30-mil.

³ *BBC News*, 'Donald Trump: Mexico will Pay for Wall, 100%', 1 September 2016; www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-us-2016-37241284.

⁴ Asa Bennett, 'Did Britain really vote Brexit to cut Immigration?', 29 June 2016; www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/29/did-britain-really-vote-brexit-to-cut-immigration.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Independent Commission on Multilateralism, 'Migration is a Defining Issue of Our Time: Q&A with William Lacy Swing'; www.icm2016.org/migration-is-a-defining-issue-of-our-time-q-a-with-william-lacy-swing.

⁷ The terms 'migration' and 'immigration' will be used interchangeably.

CHAPTER 1

POST-WAR BRITAIN AND CULTURAL INTEGRATION

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The history of European migration is crucial to understanding the history of the British Isles. Archaeological evidence suggests that the earliest human presence was in Ireland and dates back as far as 10,500 BC.¹ Yet the exact date remains a point of controversy due to the lack of written records. Reliable historical manuscripts only exist from around 55 BC, when Julius Caesar led the first Roman invasion of Great Britain.² The pre-Roman Celts, the Anglo-Saxons, the Norse and the French – over a longer period – are the main ancestral contributors to what we would now define as the ‘British’ people. The various fractions have battled across the British Isles from Roman times to the end of the Angevin Empire in the thirteenth century.³

The ‘Age of the Explorers’ marks a critical shift in British history because it enabled a truly global reach, the exchange of goods and services as well as setting the foundations for what would become the British Empire. Throughout the Elizabethan era, prominent explorers such as John Cabot, Francis Drake and John Hawkins brought the English into contact with the rest of the world. Starting from the early sixteenth century, the British imperial expansion created a vast number of crucial trading routes that facilitated the Empire’s growth, power and global influence. At its peak in the mid-nineteenth century it had established itself as the largest empire in history and the foremost global power of its time.⁴ Yet around a century and two world wars later, the British Empire would follow in the footsteps of every other imperial power in history and come to an end by the late 1900s. Rhodesia⁵ – now Zimbabwe – declared independence in 1980 as Britain’s last African colony,⁶ and as of 2012, former imperial territories that have not chosen independence or have voted to retain British allegiance are known as ‘British Overseas Territories’. In these cases local governments maintain national autonomy but matters of defence and foreign affairs are managed by the UK.⁷ Most countries formerly under the British Empire are now part of the Commonwealth – an intergovernmental organisation of 52 member states that cooperate in the advancement of democracy and development.⁸

The devastating infrastructural and social consequences of the Second World War meant that in the immediate post-war years Britain was facing a serious shortage of labour. It was predominantly migrant workers from the Commonwealth who helped fill this workforce deficit. The largest groups arrived from the West Indies in the 1950s and from India and Pakistan in the 1960s. Although Britain experienced migration inflows before the middle of the twentieth century, most of them were, by comparison, small in scale and had negligible impact on the national demographic. For this reason, this chapter will exclusively focus on post-Second World War migration and the interplay between social change, political responses and cultural tension.

Historical legislative records tell us that the ‘official’ start of British Commonwealth migration began with the British Nationality Act 1948, which opened Britain’s doors to all Commonwealth citizens. Migrants did arrive before 1948 but the Act itself formalised the border opening. The complete title of the Act read: ‘An Act to make provision for British nationality and for citizenship of the United Kingdom and Colonies and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid’.⁹

The scars of the Second World War were so pronounced within the UK as well as throughout the European continent, that Britain found itself in dire need of a workforce that could support the post-war reconstruction effort. With most of Europe in ruins, the Commonwealth was not only the logical choice for an immediate workforce, it was also the only realistic option for the Prime Minister, Clement Atlee. Often described by Churchill as ‘a sheep in sheep’s clothing’, Atlee didn’t allow his shy and rather uncharismatic demeanour to stand in the way of achieving widespread domestic reforms – chief among which was the establishment of the National Health Service in 1948 and, in the same year, the British Nationality Act.

CHALLENGES OF RACIAL AND CULTURAL INTEGRATION

The period of free entry lasted 14 years, from 1948 to 1962, when the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of that year began a string of legislation that gradually regulated and restricted Commonwealth immigration – the British Nationality Act 1964, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968,

the Immigration Act 1971 and so on. Nonetheless, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 is often regarded as an important piece of legislation because, for the first time, issues of race and ethnicity played a significant role in shaping British domestic policy. Hugh Gaitskell, who was leader of the Labour opposition at the time, labelled the act as ‘cruel and brutal anti-colour legislation’.¹⁰

The evolution of the newly arrived British communities from the Commonwealth – South Asia in particular – was by no means simple and straightforward. From the early 1950s it presented a complex struggle between issues of integration and separation, coupled with an array of racial and social tensions. This was well illustrated in the public stir that the arrival of the iconic cruise liner *Empire Windrush* created in 1948. Around 500 migrants from the Caribbean arrived on British shores with the hope of building a new life in the ‘Mother Country’. Yet the public response to this event was a rather mixed picture: ‘Welcome Home!’ read the front page of the *London Evening Standard* on that day. Yet despite a ‘relatively warm welcome from the press, racial tension amongst fellow citizens was rife. Unofficial “colour bars” were introduced, and workplace discrimination was commonplace.’¹¹ One official from the Home Office said that:

[Employers] were quite happy to employ coloured people, providing they weren’t visible. In other words, if they worked in the kitchens that was alright, but employers felt that shoppers wouldn’t like to see coloured hands handling food. They thought that ladies wouldn’t be happy to buy their underwear from coloured girls.¹²

The paradox in accepting and integrating the ‘other’ was becoming ever more evident in British society. On the one hand, many were warmly welcoming the ‘children of the Empire’, yet at the same time the former imperial prejudices remained imbedded in the minds of a wide portion of the British public. Commonwealth migrants from around the former Empire arrived in the UK predominantly driven by economic incentives. As

some have observed, ‘wages for labouring jobs in Britain . . . were over thirty times those offered for similar jobs in Pakistan.’¹³

It is no surprise, then, that as the number of Commonwealth migrants grew, so did the racial tensions. Peter Griffiths won his seat as an MP in the 1964 general election by running his campaign catch-line, ‘If you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote Labour!’¹⁴ While controversial, Griffiths won the constituency of Smethwick with a 7.2% swing for the Tories, defeating Patrick Gordon Walker, who was Labour’s Shadow Foreign Secretary at the time. When questioned by the press, Griffiths refused to disown his slogan: ‘I would not condemn any man who said that . . . I regard it as a manifestation of popular feeling.’¹⁵

Only a few years after Griffiths’ campaign, Enoch Powell appeared to seize this ‘popular feeling’ against Commonwealth migrants in his famous ‘Rivers of Blood’ speech in Birmingham in 1968. Here he vociferously argued against the past, present and future inflow of Commonwealth migrants:

a decent, ordinary fellow Englishman . . . says to me . . . that his country will not be worth living in for his children . . . What he is saying, thousands and hundreds of thousands are saying and thinking – not throughout Great Britain, perhaps, but in the areas that are already undergoing the total transformation to which there is no parallel in a thousand years of English history . . . We must be mad, literally mad, as a nation to be permitting the annual inflow of some 50,000 dependants, who are for the most part the material of the future growth of the immigrant-descended population. It is like watching a nation busily engaged in heaping up its own funeral pyre.¹⁶

Whether Powell’s remarks have their roots in ethnic racism, or he opportunistically voiced a public concern, remains an issue of debate. It is certain, however, that the speech caused much controversy in British politics – so much so that Edward Heath, then Conservative Party leader, dismissed Powell from his shadow cabinet position. Yet according to some analysts it was Powell’s stance on immigration that played a major role in the Conservatives winning the 1970 general election.¹⁷

At this stage it is worth asking two questions:

- Can ‘racism’ be defined?
- What exactly is ‘racism’?

Racism is a complex and amorphous concept that can be interpreted in a variety of ways. From matters of colour, culture, ethnicity or religion, racism can be present in numerous situations and circumstances. The online Oxford dictionary describes the root definition of racism as ‘the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races’.¹⁸ While that places an emphasis on skin colour and ethnicity, the United Nations offers a broader definition of ‘racial discrimination’ as being:

any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.¹⁹

Ever since their arrival in the 1950s and 1960s, the British Commonwealth migrants faced changing forms and degrees of racism – from conflicts of colour to cultural and religious issues.

Tariq Modood, Professor of Sociology at the University of Bristol, argues, for instance, that racism against British Muslim communities has gone through two rather distinct stages: colour racism from the 1960s until the 1980s, and cultural racism from the early 1990s up to present day.²⁰

Colour racism did not target only British South Asian Muslims, but the larger non-white migrant community as a whole. ‘Black as a political colour’,

a concept scrutinised by Anandi Ramamurthy, Reader in Post-Colonial Cultures at Sheffield Hallam University, who argues how all Commonwealth migrants of colour united in the common struggle against colour racism, regardless of religion or ethnic background.²¹

They did not see black simply as a skin colour but as a political position . . . the term ‘black’ enabled a collective identity and solidarity to develop in the struggle against both the racism of the street and the institutional racism of immigration laws . . . As Anwar Qadir, a member of Bradford Asian Youth Movement (AYM) put it: ‘I am and will always be a Kashmiri but, when you have a common enemy at the door, then people have to unite to deal with the beast.’²²

According to Modood, colour racism would eventually evolve into a form of cultural racism. During the 1980s, seminal events such as the Honeyford affair in 1985 and the Rushdie affair in 1989 heavily contributed to this shift.²³ The main reason for this divide along cultural and more specifically religious lines was the fact that the Honeyford and Rushdie affairs involved almost entirely an Islamic–secularist conflict. Thus the British South Asian Muslim community clashed with the wider secular British society. A point to be made here is that both ethnic and religious tensions represent key factors that have shaped the integration and character of Commonwealth minorities in the UK.

MULTICULTURALISM AND INTEGRATION

Britain is faced with a pertinent question: how can communities that hold fundamentally different cultural values be successfully integrated within British society?

An initial first step was the adoption and promotion of state ‘multiculturalism’; that is, the broad idea that ethnically and culturally diverse groups can live together without relinquishing or diminishing their ancestral heritage. Terry Wotherspoon and Paul Jungbluth refer to multiculturalism as ‘the

recognition of a social reality in which diverse cultures coexist within a given nation or territory'.²⁴ Although elements of multiculturalism existed in the 1970s and 1980s, it was not until 'New Labour' and Tony Blair's election as Prime Minister in 1997 that it officially became government policy.²⁵ At the time the ideological premise of multiculturalism was compelling. It promised to establish a modern, tolerant and open society, one in which cultural and religious differences were not just protected but championed, diversity adding richness to society and encouraging its citizens to celebrate and respect the 'other'. Professor Lord Bhikhu Parekh of the University of Westminster claims that multiculturalism is 'about intercultural fusion in which a culture borrows bits of others and creatively transforms both itself and them'.²⁶ Tariq Modood says it is 'integration which recognises group identities and heritage'.²⁷

So how have things played out? Did an 'intercultural fusion' actually take place? Can there be both 'integration' and the recognition of 'group identities'? Events like the 9/11 attacks, the 7/7 London bombings, the 2007 Glasgow Airport attack and more recently the Westminster Bridge attack and Manchester Arena bombings point to a deeply divided society. They suggest that the side effect of multiculturalism has been segregation and alienation; British society has become far more akin to a salad bowl than a melting pot. Multiculturalism's concept of unity in diversity may sound great in theory, but in practice, diversity has come at the expense of unity.

A wide array of high-level European politicians have recognised the failure of multiculturalism. Angela Merkel said in a speech in 2010 that multiculturalism has 'utterly failed'.²⁸ In 2011 David Cameron said that state multiculturalism has 'failed' and that the 'UK needs to promote a stronger national identity'.²⁹ He argued in favour of restricting any state funding to any Islamic group that fails to recognise women's rights and that fosters extremist ideology.³⁰ Theresa May said in 2015 that 'When immigration is too high, when the pace of change is too fast, it's impossible to build a cohesive society'.³¹ In a more recent speech on terrorism she has also said that there 'has been far too much tolerance of extremism in the UK . . . [Britain] needs to become far more robust in identifying and stomping it out across the public sector and society'.³²

So what should future immigration policy look like? We will touch more on this question at a later stage but the overarching principle is this: future immigration policy must work towards promoting cohesion and preserving the fabric of society. Since Britain benefits from over half a century of immigration policy-making experience, it would be irresponsible to repeat the mistakes of the past. Far greater emphasis must be placed on the integration of migrant communities rather than, for instance, the numbers of migrants coming in. Asking 'Who?' is just as important as asking 'How many?' Migration policy must be driven by the historical record of successful – and unsuccessful – migrant integration in the UK. Decision-makers must ask themselves: 'How likely is it that 10, 20 or even 30 years down the line, migrants from country X or Y will integrate into British society?'

Indeed, some will ask 'Why should they integrate?' or 'To what extent?' Both are valid questions. Yet again, looking back at the failures of state multiculturalism, one cannot help but conclude that there needs to be a stronger sense of unity and cohesion in society, primarily to prevent the disasters caused by segregation and unfettered alienation – home-grown terrorism perhaps being the most pertinent example. Ofsted lists the five 'fundamental British values' as: democracy; the rule of law; individual liberty; mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths; and beliefs.³³ It is crucial to understand that migration policy is far more than just a numbers game – the social and cultural implications carry just as much weight.

NOTES

¹ Richard Bradley, *The Prehistory of Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 8.

² Cassius Dio, *The Roman History*; http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius_Dio/39*.html#50.

³ Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Angevin Empire'; www.britannica.com/place/Angevin-empire.

⁴ Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 1.