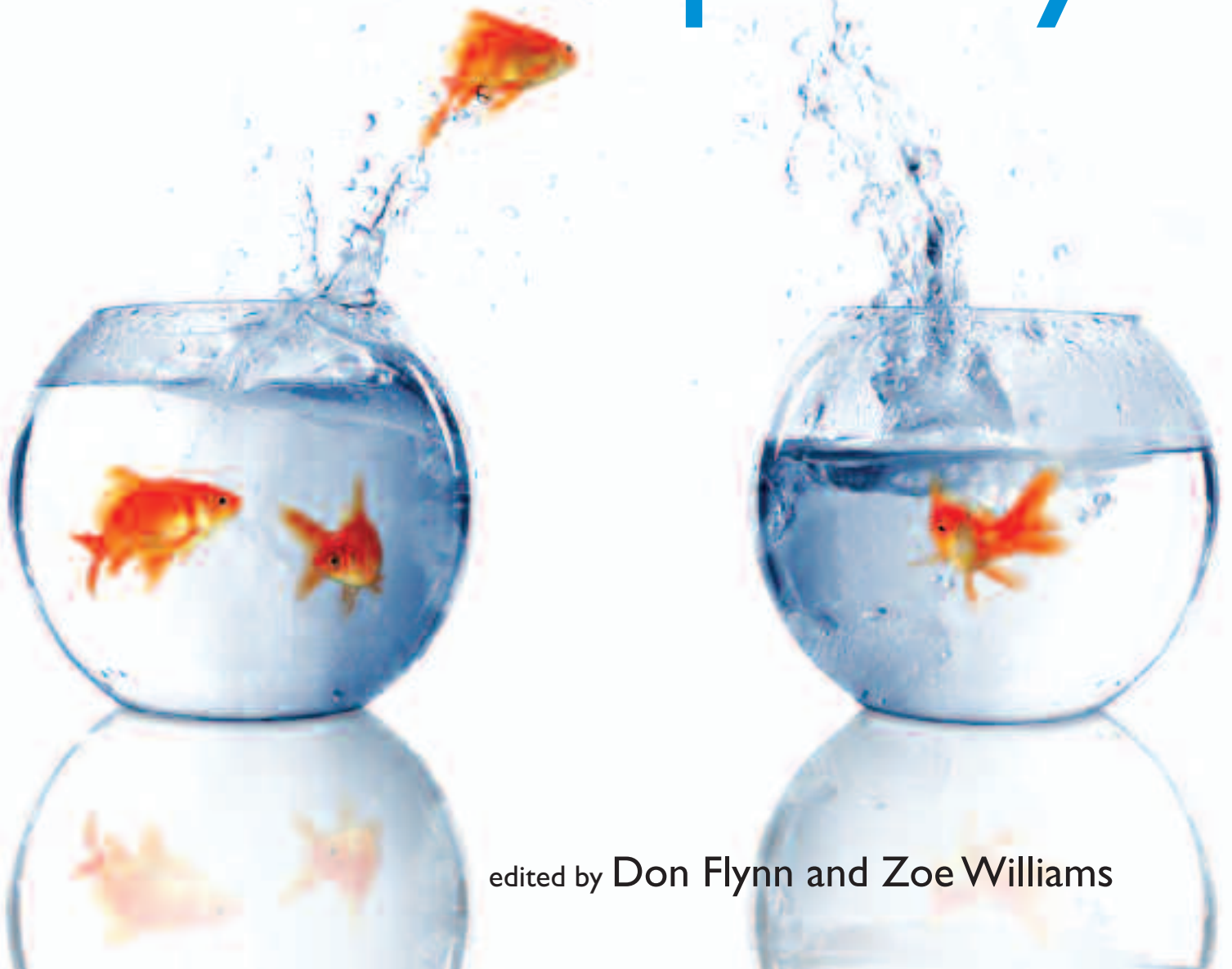


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BISS CENTRE FOR
THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT

mrn Migrants Rights Network

BARROW CADBURY
TRUST

towards a
**progressive
immigration
policy**



edited by Don Flynn and Zoe Williams

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TRUST**

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contexts



Progressivism and its immigration dilemma

Don Flynn explains why progressive politics needs to get a better grip on immigration than it has to date, and reviews the arguments set out in this publication.

In recent years the previously vague political current of progressivism has begun to define itself as a sharper set of propositions. Once merely a short-hand way of expressing a preference for innovation and change – as opposed to conservation and tradition – in one’s political choices, it has now emerged as a commitment to a particular brand of policy options, advocating an ethos of community cohesion and egalitarianism, allied to the driving forces of market-driven modernisation, as the touchstone of a new politics.¹

Public hostility

Under New Labour the progressive script has been read out across the entire range of social policy, from education and health through to the criminal justice system. It alighted on the vexed area of immigration policy sometime around 2000 when government ministers began to come to terms with the fact that the deregulated labour markets and an expanding low pay employment sectors were exhibiting massive appetites for the types of labour typically provided by migrant workers.²

Yet despite a widely acknowledged role in promoting economic growth the evidence gained from opinion polls and focus groups suggested there was widespread public hostility to the scale of the new migration. What was available within the canon of progressivism that would allow this predicament to be addressed?

The general thrust of the government’s position has been to assert, in often very aggressive terms, its commitment to dealing with the anxieties of the general public by insistence on a ‘making migration work for Britain’ agenda. The approach was described by the then Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, in the foreword of the

‘five year strategy’ paper published in February 2005³ as one which would operate robust procedures ‘showing who we admit to the UK temporarily and who we allow to stay permanently and why we do so’. The key objective was to ensure there was ‘effective control to prevent those who do not meet our criteria from getting here and ensuring people leave when they are no longer entitled to be in the UK’.

The hallmark of policies during subsequent years has been one of ruthless attention to control measures which, according to its critics, has further weakened the position of migrants, even as their position in UK labour markets has become more central to the task of bolstering the profits of British businesses.⁴

To date advocates of progressive politics have shared the priority concerns of the government in producing managed migration policies which can be defended against the charge of public anxieties being raised and the social trust needed to maintain social cohesion being reduced.⁵ Yet despite the fact that this approach has been pursued with relentless commitment since the period of David Blunkett’s tenure at the Home Office, which commenced back in the summer of 2001, there is little evidence that the broad expression of public anxiety about migration has been assuaged.

The extremely problematic nature of ‘responsive legislation’ as a driving force for policy in complex areas of social life is well accounted for in the academic literature on risk analysis and management. Will Jennings has argued that immigration is an area of life where the concept of ‘risk’ is inevitably ill-defined because of the multiple range of dimensions of perceived and actual risk associated with population flows.⁶ On this point the experts caution against the formulation of policy based on perceptions of the state of public opinion where there is clear evidence that this is poorly informed and unclear on basic facts.

Inevitable damage?

It is this version of progressive politics which is challenged in the contributions to this publication. The starting point here is an evaluation of the reasons why migration has increased in recent years, and the forces which are driving it. At that point we consider the implications of the

1. For a presentation of new progressive politics, see Pearce, N and Julia Margo (eds), *Politics of a New Generation: the progressive moment*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

2. For a discussion of the developments which have made migrant labour central to the low paid employment in recent years, see Anderson, B. Martin Ruhs, Ben Rogaly and Sarah Spencer, *Fair enough? Central and East European migrants in low-wage employment in the UK*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2006.

3. Home Office, *Controlling our Borders: making migration work for Britain*, Home Office, Cm 6472, February 2005.

4. For a discussion of the vulnerable position of migrants see Ryan, B. (ed.), *Labour Migration and Employment Rights*, Institute for Employment Rights, 2005.

5. The charge that migration reduces social cohesion has been most publicly associated with the work of David Goodhart, who has drawn on the academic research of prominent scholars, mainly commenting on the US context of race relations. Goodhart’s work is criticised in several contributions to this publication. Among other work that associates progressive politics with a firm immigration control agenda is the collection of essays published by the Policy Network, *Rethinking Immigration and Integration: a new centre-left agenda*, 2007.

6. Jennings, W. ‘Responsive risk regulation? Immigration and asylum’, in *Risk & Regulation*, summer 2005, www.lse.ac.uk/resources/iris/kAndRegulationMagazine/magazine/summer2005/pdf/magazineNo9.pdf

movement of people for key areas of social policy which are central to the concerns of a politics of equality and social justice. Is it inevitable that the arrival of new migrants must inevitably be damaging for our hopes for workplace rights, housing, education and health?

Beyond this assessment of social policy impacts is the question of the resources present in society which have the potential for being mobilised in the cause of progressive politics. The ‘habits of solidarity’ – the responses which take place in neighbourhoods, towns and across regions to the challenges of modern life and which allow adjustment to take place in accordance with intuitive concepts of fairness and justice – are embedded within the local cultures of the communities which public opinion surveys suggest should be least amenable to sympathy with newly arrived immigrants. The future of progressive politics in the area of immigration, and elsewhere, will depend on what happens at this level of life, rather than the superficial snapshots made available through focus groups.

Neal Lawson comes at the issue from an overtly political standpoint, dissecting Goodhartian claims for a progressive dilemma arising from the erosion of the social cohesion needed to sustain generous welfare promoting societies. The reinvigoration of the public spheres of politics and community is an essential task which, if taken on by progressives, will transform pessimistic, anxiety-laden attitudes to immigration.

In a review of the globalised forces producing migration, **Stephen Castles** sets out the case for new institutions of international governance which would be capable of overcoming the serious deficit between the authority of bodies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Their pursuit of economic liberalisation drives migration across the world, while the weak levels of co-operation between national governments diminish the capacity of democratic institutions to redistribute wealth and promote the welfare of global populations.

Looking at the situation in the UK, **Laurence Cooley** and **Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah** confirm the analysis of migration as a phenomenon driven by economic developments, in particular a long-period of growth and supply shortages in the labour market. In their view increased labour mobility brings significant benefits, and it is the task of policy to minimise the negative impacts which exist in defined areas.

In chapters dealing with migration and its social policy impacts **Bernard Ryan** alerts us to the dangers of creating a multi-tier workforce by limiting the rights of migrants. **Sue Lukes** acknowledges the scale of current housing shortages, but suggests that it will be overcome only by acknowledging the inevitable role of migrants as the builders of homes, and of extracting the cost of accommodating the newly arrived and assisting their integration into local communities.

Rob Berkeley sees migrants as buttressing the principles of progressive education policies, which have traditionally emphasised skilling and empowerment as the proper concerns of schooling, and which relates positively to environments challenged by change and diversity.

Wayne Farah tackles the issue of health services, arguing that policy-makers should be less concerned with the cost of supporting the healthcare needs of migrants, and think more about the implications for wider public well-being if care is withdrawn from vulnerable sections of the community.

The third part of our review considers the question of ‘habits of solidarity’. **Sukhvinder Stubbs** explains that what is meant by this is the capacity of civil society to generate the conditions in which good fellowship prevails over disharmony in local neighbourhoods. **Jon Cruddas** calls for a break with political perspectives which see working-class communities as crude, atavistic, uncultured, threatening and ‘white’. He urges instead a closer examination of the material conditions of life in deprived and marginalised sections of towns and cities which engender mistrust and anxiety about immigration. A better grip on these issues would facilitate strategies aimed at achieving empowerment and imagination local community actions. Sarah Kyambi reviews

government policy on integration and is critical of the way it sets up false binary oppositions between ‘bridging’ activities between communities and the ‘bonding’ which creates a sense of common interests within migrant groups in the first place. In reality a policy agenda which aims for equality and social justice will have to find anchor points in a wide range of behaviours which bring people together.

Finally, **Leonie McCarthy** gives us a sense of what some of these principles might look like in

action when they have been taken up by community activists. The dynamic, campaigning experiences she describes in Peterborough will resonate with many of the readers of this small collection of essays, and suggest to them that, when rooted in the positive context of community action, even immigration can become part of a progressive, grassroots perspective.

Don Flynn is the director of the Migrants’ Rights Network (MRN).

Summary

- As well as welcoming the economic benefits that come from migration, progressive policies should acknowledge the responsibility to honour the rights of migrants.
- Policies that have the objective of assuaging public anxieties only raise suspicion and have been counter-productive. Trust and confidence will be established when policies are seen as being just and fair to all parties.
- Progressive immigration policies need to complement progressive principles in other areas of social policy.
- There are strong currents of support for fairness in dealings with migrants amongst ordinary citizens in Britain today. Progressive policies would make the question of fairness central to the management of migration

The wrong dilemma

Neal Lawson says that there is no ‘progressive dilemma’ over immigration. The task of creating social solidarity has more to do with limiting the power of the market than undermining the standing of immigrants in British society.

The debate on the left about immigration continues to be skewed by David Goodhart’s intervention in February 2004¹ when he offered his take on the progressive dilemma. Reduced to its essence, the argument is that social solidarity and immigration don’t mix and that there is a simple trade-off to be made between ethnic diversity and social trust. We are invited to choose one or the other.

It is more complicated than that. Instead of merely looking at the symptoms of diminishing social cohesion we would do better to examine the underlying causes of social anxiety. It is these causes that we explore here.

Phillipe Legrain in his excellent book *Immigrants: your country needs them*² takes on some of the central arguments of the Goodhart thesis. He argues that cities such as London and New York are diverse but cohesive. Countries like Canada can make a virtue of their diversity and boost their welfare state. Sweden has become much more ethnically diverse but remains far more egalitarian than the USA or the UK with a much stronger welfare system. The economic dynamism of immigration and the innovation caused by pluralism can be a basis to boost the welfare systems rather than undermine them.

Managing change

There is no simple correlation between solidarity and diversity and no simple trade-offs on offer. Everything is complex and depends on the social, economic and cultural context. It is how we manage change that matters and not the fact that change happens. The issues surrounding immigration are intensely political and Goodhart’s ‘dilemma’ is an intensely political attack on the possibility of having both diversity and solidarity. But academic researchers Banting and Kymlicka argue that ‘there is no evidence that countries that

have adopted strong MPCs (multicultural policies) have seen erosion in their welfare states relative to countries that have resisted such programs’.³

If we want to worry about solidarity and welfare provision, as we should, the focus should not be on the victims and the very real symptoms of anxiety and insecurity in our communities, but the causes. These are complex and certainly do involve issues of identity, the end of the culture of deference and the decline of the Fordist state. But the driving force is unquestionably the new found freedom of capital and the separation of power from politics that has intensified over the last quarter century. It is the era of neo-liberalism that has both encouraged immigration and made nations like ours less able to cope with faster flows of people.

Unregulated, free to exploit and drive labour standards down in some parts of the globe but creating affluence in others, immigration is the result of economic processes over which we are forfeiting all control. Once the effects of inequality were kept local but new communications and system of transport have opened the world up. You cannot stop people dreaming of escape and trying to make real their dreams. Today immigrants are the products of free markets which wash up on our shores.

Global consumer capitalism creates a social context of permanent and worsening insecurity. This insecurity operates at a number of levels. Capital demands that labour markets are as flexible as possible so that workers are kept as compliant as possible. When even white-collar jobs can be outsourced to India then everyone is kept on their toes, grateful and subservient. The tax base for a properly functioning welfare system is restricted as private affluence is preferred and public squalor created. The residual public services that are left are increasingly commercialised. Choice becomes the driving value of a market state. Individualism and personalisation instead of being part of the policy mix become ideological imperatives. Little is certain and everything has to be competed for as we are conditioned for the rigours of the free market.

Take the infamous case of the Gate Gourmet workers who packed the ready meals at Heathrow. While they were on their lunch break our flexible

1. Goodhart, D. ‘Too diverse?’, in *Prospect*, February 2004.

2. Legrain, P. *Immigrants: your country needs them*, Little Brown, London 2006.

3. Banting, K. and Will Kymlicka, *Do Multiculturalism Policies Erode the Welfare State?*, paper presented to the Conference on New Challenges for Welfare State Research, Toronto, 21–24 August 2003.

labour laws meant they could be dismissed from their low paid jobs in favour of Eastern Europeans who would work for less. They were almost exclusively Asian women and many of them had worked on the same line for a quarter of century. They were paid around £12,000 per year. One generation of low paid and exploited immigrant workers were being replaced by another. And the state, which should be there to protect them, has its hands tied in the name of market flexibility, and says there is nothing it can do.

‘We are creating a permanently anxious society. In the midst of this anxiety, some people, usually but not always the most insecure, feel they need to blame someone. Papers like the Sun and the Mail give them a hand and point to new immigrants.’

When inequality is exacerbated and social mobility dries up it is the poorest communities that suffer the most pressures – where housing costs and wages are lowest, public services and transport weakest. We are creating a permanently anxious society. In the midst of this anxiety, some people, usually but not always the most insecure, feel they need to blame someone. Papers like the *Sun* and the *Mail* give them a hand and point to new immigrants. This is the toxic mix that the BNP happily walks into and tries to exploit. The political situation is made worse by New Labour’s focus on a few swing voters in a handful of marginal seats in ‘middle England’.

Local solutions are sought for what are globally created challenges– such as dealing with immigration. We do what we feel we can rather than what will really make a difference. Our responses are to the symptoms of insecurity rather than the causes and even these tend to be weak and individualised, tending to reinforce those market forces that are the root cause of the problem. The market creates uncertainty and then sells us a service or product to put thing right, such as gated communities and private security guards, which act as little more than sticking plasters on a broken bones of society.

New Britishness?

Instead of addressing the causes of insecurity Goodhart’s answer to the new stresses and strains on society is the creation of a new civic Britishness as a roof we can all shelter under. Yet it is the very erosion of the social citizenship which reinvigorated British identity after the Second World War – of us being a ‘fair’ people who attempted to run the economy in ways that provide decently paid jobs to those who want work, and whose NHS, education and public housing offered security to its working people – which has been threatened by dodgy privatisations and the marketisation of public welfare during the decades of Thatcher and Blairite governments.

In the Britain plc of the free market reformers it is little wonder that we have a fast diminishing sense of attachment to our nation. The market is flattening national identities, cultures and institutions. Against such a backdrop it is no surprise that some people feel unnerved by the demographic changes going on in their communities.

Citizenship and a sense of belonging cannot be built on nationalism but must be based on some common form of social, economic and democratic equality. A national fabric is established in the institutions we share, the places our lives touch each other’s as equal citizens – not just as consumers. A new Britishness will be forged in the interaction between old majorities and new minorities and the symbiotic relationship between the two. It will be hybrid not pickled in aspic. Britishness will be caught and not taught in the public realm of civic association that the market relentlessly tries to colonise and contaminate for its own ends. A new Britishness cannot be tick boxed and tested. People may cling tighter to the flag when everything around them feels more insecure but the flag will not shelter them from the cold winds and the driving rain of global markets.

Proponents of progressive politics must look out and be confident. The good society is the one where all have liberty: sufficient equality and solidarity to ensure the fullest of life chances for all commensurate with an environmentally sustainable planet. And given the political will there is no reason that Britain – like Canada – can’t mix diversity and solidarity. Gandhi, one of the key political inspirations for Compass, once said ‘I do not want my house to be walled in or my windows blocked. I want the cultures of all

lands to be blown about the house as freely as possible. But I also refuse to be blown off my feet by any.'

If the current and future waves of immigration are going to be better managed and people treated justly then we are going to have to build more affordable housing, and follow the lead of London Citizens in the demand to turn strangers into

citizens through a workers amnesty,⁴ we must celebrate multiculturalism and create new communities of choice over the old communities of coercion. But the 'problem' of immigration will only truly be overcome when we replace the market state with the social state.

Neal Lawson is the Chair of Compass.

4. <http://www.strangersintocitizens.org.uk/>

Summary

- Progressives should examine the underlying causes of social anxiety in formulating immigration policy, not be resigned to a trade-off between ethnic diversity and social trust as outlined in Goodhart's 'progressive dilemma'.
- If the causes of social anxiety are tackled, including the competitive and individualistic ethos of the market state and unacceptable material living conditions like poor housing and insecurity of income, society will be more confident and able to accommodate new-comers and adapt to change.
- The economic dynamisms of immigration and the innovation caused by pluralism can be a basis to boost welfare systems rather than undermine them.
- Social, economic and democratic equality should be the basis to build citizenship, not nationalism.

Globalisation and migration

International migration is a fundamental feature of the modern world, argues **Stephen Castles**, and progress will be possible only if the interests of migrants and the countries they come from are properly acknowledged.

International migration is an integral part of globalisation. As new areas are drawn into global economic linkages, powerful processes of social transformation are unleashed, often leading to migration. In turn, migration may cause major changes in both sending and receiving areas. An essential characteristic of globalisation is large-scale flows across national borders. Governments welcome economic flows – especially of finance and trade – but are more ambivalent on flows of people. The movement of highly skilled personnel is encouraged, but policies on movement of lower-skilled workers, family members and refugees are increasingly restrictive.

Key trends

The world total of international migrants (defined as people living outside their country of birth for at least a year) grew from about 100 million in 1960 to 175 million in 2000. About

half the world's migrants are women. Most of the increase was in the period of rapid globalisation since 1980. Much migration is within regions: North–North migration often concerns skilled personnel, while South–South mobility involves workers moving from areas with large labour surplus to dynamic economies with falling birth rates. Most refugees remain in the South: they flee violence and human rights violations but often find refuge in neighbouring countries that are just as poor and insecure as their place of origin.

However, South–North migration is growing fast. As Table 1 shows, migrants in developed countries more than doubled from 48 million in 1980 to 110 million in 2000, while numbers in developing countries increased more slowly (from 52 to 65 million).

More recent UN calculations show a global total of 190 million migrants of whom 61 million moved from one southern country to another (within Africa, Asia or Latin America), 62 million moved from the South to northern industrial countries, 53 million moved from one northern country to another, while 14 million moved from North to South.¹

However, it is important to realise that most people remain at home: only about 3 per cent of the world's population are migrants. What makes migration such an important factor in social change is its regional and local concentration. By 2000, 63 per cent of the world's migrants were in developed countries, where they made up 8.7 per cent of the total population. By contrast, the share in developing

Table 1. Stock of international migrants by major area 1960–2000

Major area	Number of international migrants (millions)					International migrants by percentage of population		Distribution by major area	
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	1960	2000	1960	2000
World	75.9	81.5	99.8	154.0	174.9	2.5	2.9	100.0	100.0
Developed countries	32.1	38.3	47.7	89.7	110.3	3.4	8.7	42.3	63.1
Developing countries	43.8	43.2	52.1	64.3	64.6	2.1	1.3	57.7	36.9

Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Economic and Social Survey 2004: International Migration*, United Nations, New York, 2004. Table II.1.

1. United Nations, *Analysis Prepared by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs*, UN, New York, September 2006.

countries had fallen to 37 per cent, only 1.3 per cent of total population. There are 35 million immigrants in the USA (12.3 per cent of the total population), 32 million in Western Europe (9.7 per cent), 5.7 million in Canada (19 per cent) and 4 million in Australia (23 per cent).² Migrants and their descendants settle mainly in large cities; for example they constitute 44 per cent of the population of Toronto, 25 per cent of the population in London and 29 per cent of the population in Brussels.

How globalisation shapes migration

Globalisation has increased North–South disparities in incomes and human security. In the South globalisation brings about radical social transformations. The ‘green revolution’ and industrialisation destroy traditional modes of production causing rural–urban migration. Where there are too few urban jobs for growing labour forces, overseas migration may be the next step. Economic liberalisation, competition from multinationals and structural adjustment policies are all instruments of social transformation. Weak economies and weak states often go together, so impoverishment and violence are closely linked. People have multiple motivations for movement, making it hard to distinguish between economic migrants and refugees.

Globalisation also creates the cultural and technical conditions for mobility. Global media beam idealised images of northern life-styles into the poorest villages. Electronic communications provide knowledge of migration routes and work opportunities. Long-distance travel has become cheaper and more accessible. Once migratory flows are established they generate ‘migration networks’: previous migrants help members of their families or communities who wish to follow with information on work, accommodation and official rules. Facilitating migration has become a major international business, including travel agents, bankers, lawyers and recruiters. The ‘migration industry’ also has an illegal side – smuggling and trafficking – which governments try to restrict. Yet the more governments try to control borders, the greater the flows of undocumented migrants seem to be. Governments remain focused on control national models,

while migrants follow the transnational logic of globalised labour markets.

How migration shapes globalisation

International migration is a major force for change. Some observers see it as an instrument for reducing global inequality and achieving development. However, migration can also have negative effects, such as a ‘brain drain’ of skilled personnel (e.g. doctors, nurses and IT specialists). Governments of sending countries hope that migration will stimulate development through remittances (money sent home by migrants) and transfer of skills. Global remittances were estimated at over US\$150 billion in 2005 – considerably more than overseas development aid. Remittances often go into consumption, but some are invested in health, education and productive activities. Many migrants are employed abroad in unskilled jobs and are unable to upgrade their skills. Those in high-status jobs are only likely to return to countries that can offer stability, security and growth.

Migration leads to cultural and social change. In areas of origin, returnees may import new ideas that unsettle traditional practices and hierarchies. In receiving areas, migration is bringing about unprecedented cultural and religious diversity. The newly multi-ethnic societies of Europe, North America and Oceania have introduced measures to integrate immigrant populations and to improve inter-group relations. But multicultural policies remain controversial, especially in view of security concerns since 2001. Policies on immigration and asylum have become highly restrictive, yet do not seem to have done much to reduce migration. Increased diversity is a consequence of globalisation that will not go away.

Migration can be a ferment for political change in areas of origin, with diasporas supporting movements for democratisation. However, diasporas may also provide the funds that fuel armed conflict. In receiving countries, migrants are often seen as symbols of perceived threats to jobs, livelihoods and cultural identities resulting from globalisation. Campaigns against immigrants and asylum seekers have

become powerful mobilising tools for the extreme right. Historically, nation-states have been based on ideas of common origins and culture. Most migrants moved either with the intention of permanent settlement or of a temporary sojourn in one receiving country. Now it is possible to go back and forth, or to move on to other countries. Increasingly, migrants see themselves as members of transnational communities: groups that live their lives across borders. Many receiving countries have changed their nationality laws to help immigrants and their descendants to become citizens. Rethinking community cohesion and solidarity to include people with diverse cultural and religious practices may be crucial for the future of democracy.

“Rethinking community cohesion and solidarity to include people with diverse cultural and religious practices may be crucial for the future of democracy”

Towards international collaboration?

Globalisation involves the establishment of institutions of global governance such as the IMF and the World Bank for finance, and the WTO for trade. Migration, by contrast, has been seen as a preserve of national sovereignty. There is a serious governance deficit: the international community has failed to build institutions to ensure orderly migration, protect the human rights of migrants and maximise development benefits. Elements of an international framework already exist in ILO Conventions No. 97 of 1949 and No. 143 of 1975, and in the 1990 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. However, relatively few countries have ratified these instruments, and there is little effective co-operation. In fact the most important international measure, the 1990 UN Convention, has only been ratified by 34 nations – out of the 192 members of the UN! Emigration countries have been concerned with reducing internal labour surpluses and maximising remittances.

Immigration countries have been reluctant to take steps that might increase labour costs. Efforts are needed to persuade more countries to implement the Conventions and to link them together in a comprehensive framework for the rights of migrant workers.

Some regional bodies seek to co-operate on migration. The European Union has gone furthest by introducing free movement for citizens of member states, and common policies towards asylum and migration from non-members. No other regional body has gone this far. In future, common policies on migration should be seen as an essential part of regional integration, and should be linked to policies on international co-operation and development. Bilateral co-operation between states could also bring benefits. Migrants could gain through better protection and social security. Emigration countries could benefit from smoother transfer of remittances and restrictions on agents and recruiters. Immigration countries could gain a more stable and better-trained migrant workforce.

In 2003, a Global Commission on International Migration mandated by the UN Secretary General took up its work. The GCIM report published in 2005 argued that migration should ‘become an integral part of national, regional and global strategies for economic growth, in both the developing and the developed world’. The GCIM put forward proposals for maximising the benefits of international migration, including measures to limit the ‘brain drain’, to prevent smuggling and trafficking, to encourage the flow of remittances and to enhance the role of diasporas as agents of development.

The United Nations followed with the first ever ‘High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development’ in New York in September 2006. Although this did not lead to concrete policy decisions, it did decide to hold regular meetings of an intergovernmental ‘Global Forum on Migration and Development’, starting in July 2007 in Brussels. It is to be hoped that this will lead to much greater North–South dialogue and co-operation on migration issues in the future. However, this will only happen if all concerned are willing to abandon old fears and prejudices, and look for

new ways forward that will be of benefit to migrants, sending countries and receiving countries alike.

Stephen Castles is Professor of Migration and Refugee Studies, International Migration Institute, University of Oxford.

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Summary

- Only about 3% of the world's population are migrants.
- Migration is an important factor in social change because of its regional and local concentration.
- Much migration is within regions but North-South migration is growing fast.
- International migration can be an instrument for reducing global inequality and achieving development, not least through remittances sent home. \$150billion is sent to developing countries in remittances, more than development aid.
- International migration can also have negative effects like 'brain drain'.
- Migrants are often seen as symbols of perceived threats to jobs, livelihoods and cultural identities resulting from globalisation.
- Rethinking community cohesion and solidarity to include people with diverse cultural and religious practices may be crucial for the future of democracy.
- Progressives should seek a comprehensive international framework to promote and protect the rights of migrants that builds on existing international Conventions.
- Common policies on migration should be an essential part of regional integration

Facts and figures: a context for understanding the issues

Much of the discussion about immigration centres on numbers and statistics. **Laurence Cooley** and **Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah** review what is really known about immigrants in the UK today.

Recent migration patterns

According to the 2001 Census, the foreign-born population of the UK was 4.9 million, or 8.3 per cent of the total population, compared with 6.7 per cent in 1991. Net immigration to the UK has been increasing over the last decade (Figure 1) and there has been a marked diversification in the range of migrants' source countries.

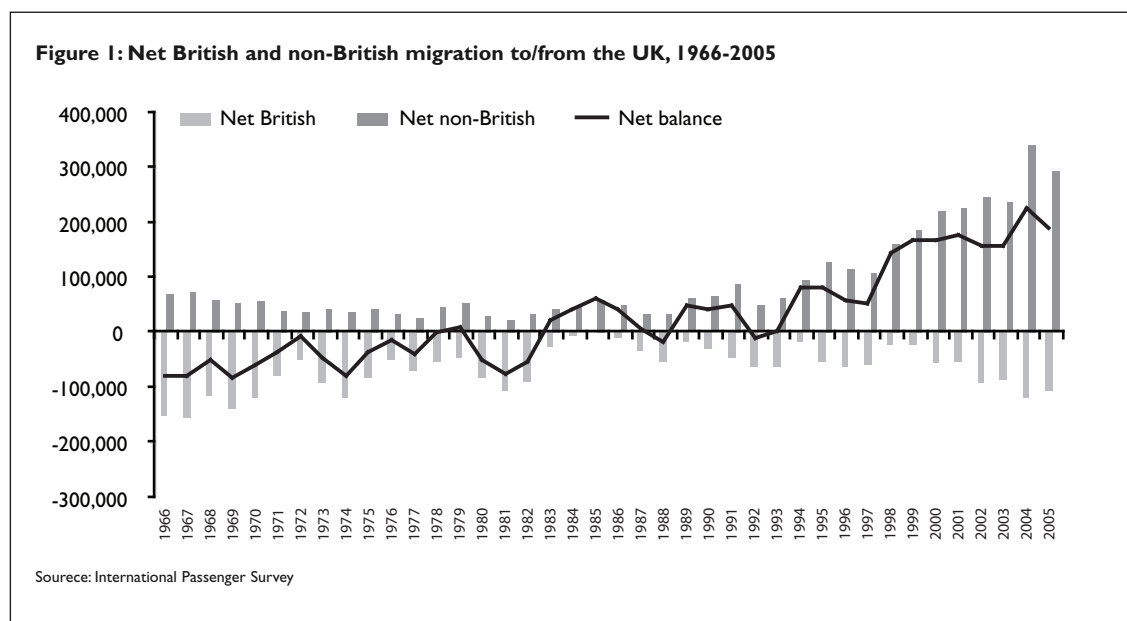
The increase in net immigration that has occurred since the mid-1990s can be attributable to four main factors:

- More people coming from outside the EU on **labour migration schemes**, notably the work permit scheme, which allows UK businesses

to recruit staff from beyond the EU if they cannot fill the post with a suitable European Economic Association (EEA) national. The number of new work permits issued peaked at 88,671 in 2004, compared with 24,161 in 1995.

- Large flows of **migrants coming from the eight Central and Eastern European countries that joined the EU in May 2004** (the so-called 'A8'). Between 1 May 2004 and 31 March 2007, 605,375 people successfully registered on the Worker Registration Scheme for A8 migrants, although the self-employed are not required to register. It is unclear how many of these migrants will since have returned home.
- Rising numbers of **asylum applications** in the late 1990s, reaching a peak of 103,000 in 2002 compared with only 37,000 in 1996. The number of applications has since fallen quickly, with 28,000 made in 2006 – the lowest level since 1993.
- Rising numbers of **international students** attracted to UK universities. In the 2005/06 academic year, there were 330,060 non-UK students registered at higher education establishments, of whom 223,830 were from outside the EU.

Another complicating factor is the position of undocumented migrants in the UK, whose presence has been estimated to number



somewhere in the range of 310,000 to 570,000 people. Most are asylum seekers who have been refused refugee status, or people who entered legally but have remained beyond the period of their permits. Others will have arrived through smuggled routes or the activities of people traffickers. Little research has been conducted into the pathways to irregular immigrant status in the UK and effective remedies to deal with the issue are unlikely to be formulated until its driving elements are better understood.

Although immigration to the UK has increased in recent years, so too has emigration, both in terms of British-born people moving overseas and previous immigrants to the UK moving home or on to third countries. There has been consistent net emigration of British citizens, mainly to countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the USA and South Africa, but more recently to destinations within the European Union (EU) such as Spain and France. As a result, 5.5 million British people are estimated to live overseas permanently.

What is driving immigration?

A long period of sustained economic growth has been responsible for rising levels of labour migration to the UK, along with unique events such as the enlargement of the UK. The combination of economic growth and rising immigration has resulted in the number of people in employment in the UK reaching an all-time high of 29.1 million.

Whereas the foreign-born population of the UK is generally more skilled than the native-born population, recent immigrants tend to be working at a wider range of skills levels than previous cohorts of immigrants. In the case of migrants from the new EU member states, many are quite highly skilled but nonetheless work in relatively routine and unattractive jobs in the UK, including fruit picking, food processing and factory work.

The rising number of asylum seekers coming to the UK from the late 1990s until 2002 occurred against the backdrop of conflicts such as that in Kosovo, continuing violence in a number of African countries such as Somalia, political repression in states such as Zimbabwe and instability in countries including Afghanistan and Iraq. The fall in the number of applications since 2002 probably

has more to do with government policies aimed at reducing asylum flows than any reduction in the global refugee population, which remains high.

The rising number of international students studying in the UK is not only due to the positive reputation of British universities overseas, but has also been driven by universities' active attempts to recruit more overseas students. Such attempts are motivated by the extra income that fee-paying overseas students bring to a university, and by a desire to become more internationally competitive.

Whereas immigrants have traditionally been seen as moving primarily to a relatively small number of major towns and cities (most notably London), recent migrants (particularly those from the A8 states) appear to be moving to areas with little previous experience of immigration, including rural areas where they are drawn by jobs in the agricultural sector.

Economic impacts of migration

There is considerable debate over the economic impacts of immigration on receiving countries and their labour markets. Public debates often assume that immigration results in increased unemployment among the native-born population. This view, however, rests on what is termed the 'lump of labour' fallacy – the belief that there are a fixed number of jobs in the economy and therefore that migration displaces local workers from their jobs. On the contrary, healthy economic conditions in recent years may mean that immigration to the UK may have helped to create additional employment opportunities for native workers by filling previously vacant gaps in the labour market – for example migrant workers working in food processing may increase the supply capacity of this sector, creating employment opportunities in fishing and agriculture.

Public debate also often assumes that immigration lowers the wages of native workers through increasing labour supply, but again this is not necessarily the case if migrants add substantially to demand as well as supply, or if migrants tend to work in different sectors of the economy to locals. While academics have not reached consensus on the impacts of migration on the employment and income prospects of the native workforce, the balance

of evidence from studies carried out in the UK seems to suggest that the impacts are neutral or mildly positive.

Social impacts of migration

Whereas the economic impacts of migration are somewhat understood, a lack of hard evidence makes understanding the social impacts even more challenging. In this vacuum of reliable evidence, anecdotal claims about negative social impacts, often at a very localised level, are given currency and can play a prominent role in public and media debates surrounding immigration.

What little evidence that does exist on the social impacts of migration suggests that tensions are most likely to occur around resource allocation, particularly where there is scarcity of these resources. The most obvious case of this relates to social housing, with considerable tension existing around the allocation of housing to immigrants where their need is greater than that of local people. Again though, myths and anecdotal claims often dominate this debate, with little acknowledgement that the majority of new immigrants do not qualify for social housing.

We also need to recognise that while immigration can create social tensions, it also brings social benefits in terms of increasing the diversity of cultural experience open to the population as a whole, and in fostering greater creativity and innovation.

Conclusions

The UK has experienced rising net immigration over the last decade, caused in part by a longer

period of persistent economic growth, policy developments such as the decision to grant free access to the labour markets for citizens of new EU member states, and by conflict and human rights abuses overseas. The UK is not alone in experiencing this: many other European countries are experiencing record levels of immigration, and migration to countries with long histories of immigration such as the USA, Canada and Australia is at its highest rate for decades.

There are some indications that the current high level of migration to the UK will not continue, given the unique nature of the impacts of EU enlargement in 2004 and the government's attempts to reduce asylum flows. However, a combination of sustained global inequality, the persistence of violent conflict, and increased ease of travel facilitated by cheaper transportation and better communications means that mass migration seems likely to remain a key feature of the modern world. The challenge for policy-makers is to maximise the benefits that this increased mobility brings successfully while at the same time minimising any negative impacts and protecting the rights of the most vulnerable groups of migrants.

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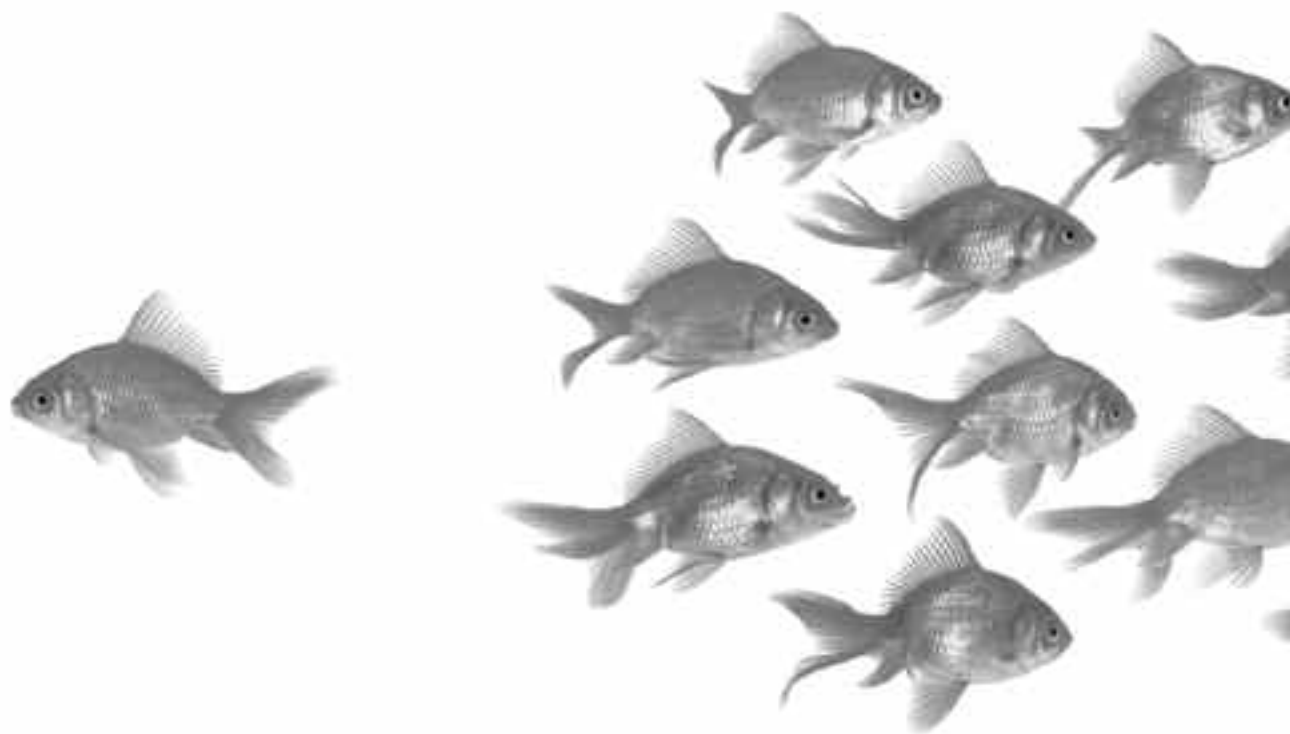
Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah is Director of Research Strategy and Head of Migration, Equalities and Citizenship also at the Institute for Public Policy Research.

Summary

- There are 4.9million foreign born people in the UK population according to the 2001 Census.
- Additionally, the number of undocumented migrants is estimated to be between 310,000 and 570,000.
- An estimated 5.5million British people now live overseas permanently.
- Net immigration to the UK has been increasing over the last decade. Factors include sustained economic growth and enlargement of the EU and associated labour migration schemes
- Numbers of asylum applications increased from the late 1990's until 2002 and have fallen since.
- UK universities are actively recruiting overseas students resulting in increasing numbers of international students.
- The balance of evidence suggests that the impact of migrant workers on the employment and income prospects of the 'native' population is neutral or mildly positive.
- Immigration can create social tensions but it also brings social benefits.

part two

the social policy agenda



Migrant rights in the workplace

The government's 'points-based system' for the management of migration is in danger of promoting inequality and injustice in the workplace. **Bernard Ryan** explains why the right to protection against exploitation must come to the forefront of policy.

The years since 2000 have seen a large expansion in labour migration to Britain. In particular, the number of work permits has risen to close to 100,000 a year, while at the last count 683,000 nationals of the new Central and Eastern European member states had registered for employment in Britain since being permitted to do so in 2004. It is to the credit of recent Labour governments that they have encouraged labour migration because of its benefits to the British economy. The evidence to date is that the predominant effect of recent migrants is to fill occupational and geographical gaps in the labour market.

While the admission of more migrant workers is welcome, there remain deficiencies in their treatment within the UK. The tendency is for migrant labour to be instrumentalised under the catchphrase 'making migration work for Britain'. What is lacking is recognition that both migrants and established workers have an interest in the fair treatment of newcomers. Anything less risks creating second- and third-class members of the workforce and of society, potentially exposed to loss of immigration entitlements, exploitative employment practices and the risk of destitution.

Points systems

One concern is the negative impact of points systems on the position of migrant workers. The re-orientation of the highly skilled migrant programme in December 2006 so as to promote youth and education over experience offers an example of that. The new policy is applied to workers already in the UK under the old scheme, even though the consequence may well be that they lose their entitlement to stay in the UK, and

this has been condemned by the parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights as 'contrary to basic notions of fairness'. Domestic workers who come to the UK with an employer are set to be another category of accidental victims of points systems. The current position is that the vulnerability of these domestic workers to exploitation is counteracted by permitting them to change employer and to obtain settlement after five years' employment. However, because domestic workers do not fit within the logic of the points-based system for labour migration to be rolled-out in 2008, the government's intention is that they will be re-classified as visitors and prevented from changing employer or from staying for more than six months. The net result will be that they will either lose employment or end up in an irregular position in the UK.

A second issue is the restrictions on the right of migrant workers to resign and change employer more broadly. The possibility for workers to resign without sanction is among the most fundamental of labour market principles, as it confers enhanced bargaining power on workers, while permitting occupational and geographical mobility. Yet this basic right is constrained in the case of many migrant workers who come to the UK. In particular, work permit holders must become settled in order to acquire full labour market freedom – and that requires five years' employment, passing the 'life in the UK' test and the payment of a fee of at least £750. It is not a coincidence that many of the worst cases of exploitation found in British employment in recent years have concerned this group, who can find themselves trapped with unscrupulous employers, with both their immigration status and their right to work at risk if they seek to take the conventional route of resignation.

Social benefits

Restrictions on access to social benefits are a further potential problem for many migrant workers. Non-EEA workers are denied non-contributory benefits until they obtain settlement after five or more years, while workers from the new EU member states are denied most benefits in their first year of employment. The predictable result of these policies is that, when things go wrong in their employment, migrant workers are left exposed to the risk of destitution – for

example, agencies report the emergence of homelessness among Polish nationals in the UK. Here again we see an established labour market principle – in this case, that workers should not be at risk of destitution through unemployment – being disapplied in the case of migrant workers.

Questions may also be asked about public policy concerning irregular workers. It is unarguable that work which takes place without legal permission is undesirable for a variety of reasons, including that it exposes migrant workers to exploitation, while other employers and workers face unfair competition. Nevertheless, there is a danger that an over-zealous policy of immigration enforcement is counter-productive, by worsening the position of irregular workers. One deficiency in the law is that irregular workers typically lack any entitlement to enforce their contracts or statutory rights. A more practical problem is that enforcement action is left to the immigration authorities, who focus on identifying irregular workers, while offering concessions to employers who cooperate with them. The refusal to accept the logic of regularisation for longer-term cases is another aspect of the over-zealous policy in this area. A better policy would seek to make the rights of irregular workers *less* marginal within the labour market, while accepting that irregular work should not give rise to immunity from the immigration laws.

‘The strategy of “making migration work for Britain” has two flaws. It fails to respect the legitimate interests of migrant workers, and so opens the door to unfair treatment and exploitation.’

Ultimately, the strategy of ‘making migration work for Britain’ has two flaws. It fails to respect the legitimate interests of migrant workers, and so opens the door to unfair treatment and exploitation. It also falsely implies a unity of interest among the British population in extracting the most from migrants. In truth, the established workforce has little or no reason to support the marginalisation of new workers’ rights. Both considerations – respecting migrant workers, while protecting the position of the established workforce – point in the same direction: to the recognition of equality of treatment as the guiding principle in the treatment of migrants actually present in the UK labour market. The challenge today is to make that the root philosophy of public policy on labour migration.

Bernard Ryan is a senior lecturer in law at the University of Kent.

Summary

- Both migrants and established workers have an interest in the fair treatment of newcomers.
- Points systems risk promoting inequality and injustice in the workplace.
- Migrant workers should have access to social benefits if they face destitution through unemployment.
- Migrant workers should have the right to resign and change employer.
- Rights of irregular workers should be made less marginal in the labour market and should be entitled to enforce their contract or statutory rights.

Housing newcomers: how intractable is the problem?

Part of the problem, or part of the solution? **Sue Lukes** argues that we can't build new houses without migrants, and it would be unjust to exclude them from decent homes.

There is an undeniable housing problem in the UK. Although the number of homes in England and Wales has increased (by 4.8 million since 1981), the number of homes available to rent (from private landlords, local authorities and housing associations) has actually decreased by 1.2 million since then. Why? Two million homes have been sold by local authorities to private individuals or companies, and simply not replaced (local authorities in the whole of England built 195 new homes in 2005/6).¹ In the private sector uncontrolled rents and no security of tenure have fuelled a boom in 'buy to lets' (often in ex-council properties) but these expensive, insecure homes do not house the homeless without the huge public subsidy involved in housing benefit.² The current government recognises the need, if not its scale: the green paper Homes for the Future³ promises 45,000 new social rented homes a year by 2010/11, which, if continued, would make up the shortfall within about 25 years.

Building homes

Homes do not build themselves. Even before the green paper was published, the Construction Skills Network had estimated that the industry would need 87,600 new workers per year.⁴ Migrants are not causing housing problems, and without them there will be no solution. A failure to produce positive policies for migration will make it impossible for even those new rented homes that are planned to be built. And migrants are already contributing more than just their labour. In Leeds, for example, a partnership led by Canopy Housing has seen refugees rebuilding homes; this is one of many examples of how the arrival of refugees in some hitherto hopeless areas

has led to regeneration. Another project hopes to establish a community land trust in London to provide a demonstration model for migrant housing.

Migrants, however, face two major problems. In spite of the notorious statements made by cabinet minister Margaret Hodge in her Barking constituency earlier in the year, many have no entitlement to apply for local authority housing, even though they may be building it and paying taxes towards its cost. In all sectors they face discrimination in accessing the housing they need. Some may also be excluded from the benefits system, such as the asylum seekers who are denied the right to work, and so become destitute.

One result of this is that many migrants find themselves in unsuitable housing: overcrowded, overcharged and sometimes in danger. Local authorities report that many of the new Rachmans are employers, gangmasters and agencies. Communities and local government feel dumped on. Employers get cheap, biddable labour while they pay the costs: directly in inspecting and enforcing against these Dickensian conditions and indirectly as they affect local cohesion. Told by central government that migration is essential for the economy, they are given no assistance to deal with its consequences, no leadership in welcoming and integrating the new arrivals and often unclear guidance about entitlement to local services.

Many of the immigration and housing rules also destroy cohesion because they militate against family migration, creating artificial, transient communities which are then perceived as threatening or simply rootless. We have even failed to develop good models of housing, in the social or private sector, for those working temporarily in an area, including migrants.

Core principles

A housing policy fit for communities in which managed migration and a commitment to asylum are welcome must be built around some core principles:

- Those who pay taxes should be able to benefit from them: to go on to local waiting lists and be assisted if homeless, on the same terms as others in the communities to which they are contributing.

1. www.communities.gov.uk/pub/312/Table208_id1511312.xls

2. £3.374 billion in 2004/5; www.york.ac.uk/res/ukhr/ukhr0607/tables&figures/06121a_b.pdf

3. www.communities.gov.uk/pub/967/HomesfortheFuturemoreaffordablemoresustainableHousingGreenPaper_id1511967.pdf

4. www.constructionskills.net/research/constructionskillsnetwork/forecast-model/constructionskillsnetworkoutputs/uk/

- Employers should expect to pay the full costs of bringing migrants into an area, including the costs of providing decent, safe housing, via social landlords who can be trusted to do this (since, hitherto, many employers have failed even when required to do so).
- All housing (and other service providers) need to move from seeing migrants and refugees as essentially a bundle of needs to seeing them as actual and potential assets to their areas, and so devise projects and programmes that will enable those assets of social capital, resourcefulness and energy to benefit the communities where they live.
- Housing and migration policy should encourage and support family life, while also offering proper protection to the vulnerable such as women escaping violence or children needing protection: the rules on recourse to public funds and family members should be scrapped.
- Destitution has no place as an arm of public policy, whether in the asylum system or in dealing with those who lose employment.
- Local authorities need encouragement and support to develop proper provision to house migrants in their areas. This includes leadership, the provision of good-quality information and adequate resources.

What is vital here is that local communities and central government do not end up paying all the costs of providing a decent housing policy for

managed migration, because this effectively subsidises the worst employers and feeds the real fears of local communities about migrants undercutting not only wages but also housing conditions. Specifically we need to develop measures that require those employers who benefit from migrant labour to contribute towards migrant housing, but not to use housing as a further means of enforcing exploitation. These must visibly increase the availability of housing for the whole community as well. They could include:

- a requirement placed on all employers of migrant workers to contribute land to community land trusts or social housing providers as a condition of getting work permits etc.
- a requirement that employers recruiting migrants to work in areas of higher housing demand provide the finance for equivalent units of housing via social housing providers in the area
- an investment in the development of new models of decent social housing for transient populations, including migrants
- incentives for employers to contribute to the development of affordable housing for sale in partnership with local authorities and housing associations.

Sue Lukes is a consultant, trainer and researcher with over 20 years' experience of housing policy issues.

Summary

- Migrants pay taxes and should have access to local public services, including social housing and assistance if homeless.
- Employers who benefit from migrant labour should contribute towards migrant housing.
- It is unacceptable that housing be used as a means to enforce exploitation.
- Housing (and other) service providers should recognise migrants are actual and potential assets to their areas.
- Housing policy should help migrants (and others) realise their right to family life.
- Housing policy should protect vulnerable people, including those in the migrant community.
- New models of decent social housing for transient populations, including migrants should be developed.

Schools, progressive education and immigration

Skilling and empowerment should be the object of education argues **Rob Berkeley**. If we accept that, immigration adds to its progressive potential.

Education policy lies at the centre of progressive aims to create a more equal, democratic and just society. Immigration has many effects on the education system, some more visible than others, yet there has been scant analysis of the impact of recent migration on our classrooms or many serious attempts to make the argument for schools to value migration as an educational resource, rather than an administrative burden.

Increased investment in education has been a hallmark of the New Labour government. Education is viewed as the major route to tackling inequality and increasing social mobility. Despite increases in spending, standards in education improve only by increments. Progress towards greater equality is proving to be slow and social mobility appears also to have stalled as we recognise the limits of an education system designed for different times. A return to first principles in education policy is desirable in order to ask what it will mean to be 'educated' in the twenty-first century, and how best we prepare young people to operate successfully in modern society.

Purpose of education

Visions of the purpose of education are inherently political and contested. Rightist approaches to education often prioritise the credentialist functions of education systems – from an individualist vision of maintenance of advantage. This approach recognises and thrives on the exchange value of education: the recognition that while education has an intrinsic value, it also has an exchange value. If my education is better than yours it places me in a better position in the labour market. This recognition of education's exchange

value is in part why grammar schools, distortion of the housing market based on school catchment areas, and families masquerading as religious to gain access to highly regarded faith schools are current features of our education system. Seen through this prism, government growth of the academy school programme can fit with a right-wing world view – given the maxim that the British have a particular talent for 'turning diversity into hierarchy'¹ – rather than the more classically leftist desire to bring investment and change to inner city schools facing a particular set of challenges. In this scenario, while migrants are seen as a negative influence in schools and a threat to the maintenance of advantage – in particular when they access schools seen as positioned towards the top of the educational hierarchy – they are unlikely to be welcomed into our school system.

A more progressive approach to education would emphasise the skilling and empowerment functions of education. This may also appeal to individualist discourses of personal success, but is less dependent on competition (exchange) in education. A discourse that emphasises skills does not need to be focused solely on basic skills (important though they are) but also on the 'soft skills' currently much prized by industry such as intercultural understanding, language skills and critical thinking. There are other skills that relate less to the labour market and more to our democracy that can also be seen as skills for modern living; these include understanding difference and resolving conflict, valuing our shared humanity and recognising equality. Migrants are much less challenging to this conception of education and indeed can be seen as a resource. In our current phase of global interaction, an ability to speak languages other than English, trans-national links and intercultural understanding will become important far beyond the elites that have typically been engaged in diplomacy and international business. Multilingualism is an important educational, intellectual, economic, developmental, and cultural resource. Increasing numbers of bilingual children in our schools should be seen as having the potential to make a significant contribution to our society and to the skills base of all our children.

Celebrate difference

These competing views of the purpose of education also impact on the style of education

1. Chief Executive of HEFCE in comments to the Education and Skills Committee, Fifth Report of Session 2002-03, *The Future of Higher Education*, HC 425-II.

delivery in schools. Michael McManus develops a typology which uses the Durkheimian model of organic and mechanical solidarity to highlight how schools understand their roles and missions.² Schools that operate closer to a conception of organic solidarity are more likely to understand and operate effectively with difference. The personalised learning agenda in schools has taken on an almost totemic significance for progressive educationalists; it can only be delivered effectively where difference is seen as a virtue rather than models where individuality is seen as a challenge. Schools operating in such a way as to understand and celebrate difference will be well equipped to work with migrants and respond to their needs – linguistic or otherwise.

A progressive conception of education would then emphasise the skilling and empowerment functions of education, recognise the changing world that current pupils will have to negotiate in order to thrive in adult life, and celebrate difference over uniformity. This is an understanding already reflected in other arenas of education. The 1999 Prime Minister's Initiative set out to increase the numbers of international students in UK universities. As well as the financial benefits of attracting students from overseas, it was also recognised that there are educational benefits. If this is true for universities, then it is likely also to be true for schools. In 2005, there were nearly ten times more international students in our universities (330,000) than migrant children arriving in our schools (38,000).

The numbers of languages in use by young people in the UK is growing and diversity is spreading to parts of the country where previously few languages other than English were spoken. The 300 languages spoken in London's primary schools is a testament to London's role as

a global city. In Scotland over 100 languages are spoken by schoolchildren; 75% of school children in Kensington and Chelsea speak a language other than English; Nepali is the most widespread of the 51 languages spoken in schools in Hampshire; 63 languages are spoken in Plymouth schools; and Manchester has 129 languages spoken in its schools.³

'An ability to speak languages other than English, trans-national links and intercultural understanding will become important far beyond the elites that have typically been engaged in diplomacy and international business.'

If this growth in linguistic diversity in schools is seen as a benefit, then financial resources should follow. The recent reforms to the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant were aimed at responding more quickly to the dynamic changes in school populations. There is some worry, however, that although government spending has increased yearly, needs are not being fully met as local expertise is lost through increasing devolution of funds to schools rather than local education authorities.⁴ In order to ensure that we maximise the potential of multilingualism in our classrooms, and to support a vision of progressive education which can cope with difference, it is crucial that migrant children gain access to adequate support for learning English.

Rob Berkeley is the Deputy Director of the Runnymede Trust

2. McManus, M. *Troublesome Behaviour in Secondary Classrooms: meeting individual needs*, London, Routledge, 1995.

3. Key findings from CLT's 2005 survey of community languages in England, Scotland and Wales.

4. NALDIC/NUT EMAG Survey, 2005.

Summary

- We should emphasise the skill building and empowerment functions of education, not just competition and maintaining advantage over others.
- 'Skills' should include 'soft skills' (intercultural understanding; language skills and critical thinking) as well as basic skills.
- Seeing difference as a virtue is the only effective way to deliver the personalised learning agenda.
- Linguistic diversity should be seen as a positive and financial resources should reflect this.
- It is vital that migrant children gain access to adequate support for learning English.

Health services: a new immigration injustice?

We should be alarmed by government proposals to restrict health services to migrants. **Wayne Farah** explains why this offends against the basic principles of the NHS.

Government plans to curtail access to health services for certain groups of migrants as part of a strategy to create an 'increasingly uncomfortable environment' for tens of thousands of migrants.¹ The government argues that free health care is an immigration pull factor, and that migrants place intolerable strains on the NHS. To protect the limited resources of the NHS from migrant 'health tourists' they claim it is necessary to intensify the nexus between immigration status and access to free NHS care.²

Regulations already deny undocumented migrants and refused asylum seekers access to free hospital and maternity services, or HIV/AIDS³ treatment. The predictable, and predicted, damaging consequences for these people's health and human rights are increasingly apparent.⁴ This is leading to growing concern about the validity of the policy and its wider implications for the NHS and public health.

Newham study

Newham, in East London, is the eleventh most deprived borough in the UK. Multiple deprivations create marked health inequities, high rates of preventable ill health and low life expectancy.⁵ Two-thirds of residents are from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, 73 per 1000 are from an asylum-seeking background⁶ and last year 13,000 new migrants registered with local GPs. Almost half of the new migrants were from Asia, a fifth from Africa, and a quarter from the recent EU accession states. Two-thirds of them were under 35, and over 40 per cent were women.

Newham attracts these new migrants because of its established migration chains and the high demand for labour to build the 2012 Olympics. Their presence has not thrown Newham's health

services into crisis. Residents report rising satisfaction with their local health services and the Health Care Commission rate Newham Primary Care Trust (PCT) as one of the most efficient in London. However, Newham PCT has criticised the government's proposals to restrict undocumented migrants and refused asylum seekers access to free primary health care⁷ as unwanted, unnecessary and unhelpful.⁸

Unlike the government, Newham PCT could base its critique on empirical evidence, because it commissioned the International Health Unit, Imperial College, to undertake a prospective Health Impact Assessment of the proposals. Their review of the evidence led the researchers to conclude that the proposals were unwanted because existing restrictions on access to maternity services could be implicated in the low perinatal birth weights of many children in the borough. Moreover, they could lead to the creation of a new and costly bureaucracy, promote a culture of suspicion that would legitimise discrimination, and intensify existing barriers to access faced by established BME communities.

They could also conflict with clinicians' ethical duty to treat patients based on clinical need. The proposals were unnecessary, because most health tourists were family members of the settled BME communities, the actual numbers and costs involved were small, and any savings likely to be offset by the increased use of expensive A&E services. They were unhelpful, because they would likely undermine public health strategies, reducing surveillance of communicable diseases, and child immunisation, and create the conditions for the development of unregulated backstreet health services.

The Newham critique suggests that excluding migrants from access to health care involves significant risks for the NHS and the health of the wider community.

Fundamental principle

Undermining universal NHS provision by excluding some migrants from access to health care may have an intuitive appeal to middle England, but universality is a fundamental principle of the NHS for sound public health and epidemiological reasons and because they are central to reduce health inequalities.⁹

1. Home Office, *Enforcing the Rules: a strategy to ensure and enforce compliance with immigration laws*, London, Home Office, 2007.

2. Except for emergency or immediately necessary treatment.

3. 2004 hospital regulations and HIV rules.

4. Refugee Council, *First Do No Harm*.

5. London Borough of Newham, *Annual Public Health Report*, 2004.

6. Bardsley, M. and M. Storkey, 'Estimating the number of refugees in London', *Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 22, 2000, pp406-412.

7. Proposals to exclude overseas visitors from access to free NHS primary health care.

8. Hargreaves, S., J. Friedland, A. Holmes, S. Saxena *The Identification and Charging of Overseas Visitors at NHS Services in Newham: A consultation Newham PCT*, May 2006

9. The variations in health between different groups in the population that are unacceptable on grounds of equity and social justice.

Our social environment is a powerful determinant of our health and welfare. The psycho-social pathways by which social inequality impacts on health suggest that relative poverty, low social status and weak social affiliations explain most variations in health inequalities in the industrialised countries.¹⁰ In unequal societies relative deprivation and low social status brings down overall health outcomes and contributes to poor social relations, characterised by lower levels of trust and community involvement. This, along with increased violence and discrimination within the community exert an equally powerful negative influence on health.

The epidemiological evidence demonstrates that healthy people don't just need consumer

choice; they need to be free from arbitrary power, and not made to feel subservient or inferior to anyone. They need close friendships, strong social affiliations and active social engagement. In essence a healthy society needs autonomy and solidarity. Equality is a pre-requisite for such an environment, because inequality undermines good social relations.

Autonomy, solidarity and equality are the antithesis to social exclusion. They are traditional values that remain relevant to the modern NHS because the science tells us they are good for our health.

Wayne Farah is a board member of the Newham Primary Care Trust

10. Wilkinson, R. 'Linking social structure and individual vulnerability', *Journal of Community Work and Development*, late 2003 or early 2004.

Summary

- Inclusion and social justice are central to the ethos of the National Health Service. They represent principles that apply equally to migrants and the permanently resident community.
- The promotion of public health standards requires the participation of all people resident within the jurisdiction of the health trusts. Imposing immigration control duties on PCTs and acute trusts conflicts with the attainment of high levels of participation.
- Immigration controls cut through communities and can even divide families on the basis of their rights to receive health and other public services. They undermine the confidence of wider sections of local population in their dealings with the health service than those who are the object of controls.
- The duty to check immigration status erodes the ethos of universal provision amongst health service workers. Over time, this will have damaging consequences for the standard of services.
- Migrants have played a strong role in the work of the NHS since its establishment, as doctors, nurses and ancillary workers. It should be presented as a model of the good which can be achieved through the presence of migrants in British society, rather than a mechanism for excluding them from health benefits.

part three

habits of solidarity: moving beyond suspicion



Britishness and the habits of solidarity

Tests of loyalty to an abstract notion of 'Britishness' are not the way to take forward the debate on citizenship. **Sukhvinder Stubbs** calls for an approach that builds solidarity at the community level.

In the green paper *The Governance of Britain*¹, the government sets out its vision and proposals for constitutional renewal. Part of this process will involve an engagement with people around the country in a discussion on citizenship and British values. The paper suggests that a clearer definition of citizenship will give people a better sense of their British identity in an increasingly globalised world. A dialogue with and between the people of Britain on a statement of values is also seen as a means for restoring trust in politics and ensuring that the voices of citizens are reflected in the fabric of British politics and society.

Creating a clearer definition of citizenship might be a necessary response to the challenges and uncertainties posed by secessionist discourse in Scotland, Wales or England. It may also be a necessary response to greater European integration, globalisation, increasing diversity in our cities or Muslim fundamentalism. Yet the identification and promotion of common values may not be enough for uniting the country behind a shared patriotic vision for the future. Abstract principles such as liberty, democracy, tolerance, free speech, fair play and civic duty might appeal to hearts and minds. However, unless these principles are accompanied with measures to tackle poverty, inequality and discrimination, they will only have a limited impact on improving cohesion. For many at the bottom end of the earnings scale, British citizenship is devoid of real meaning if equal citizenship is not accompanied with equal life chances in areas such as health, education and employment.

Ethnic disadvantage

Although considerable progress has been made to improve the life chances of Britain's poor during

the last ten years, poverty remains the daily reality of too many people. This is particularly so for people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Statistics between ethnic minority communities vary widely, but there is one overriding trend: whether you take employment rates, drug abuse or prison populations, indicators show that ethnic minorities remain disproportionately disadvantaged. For instance, one in five Pakistani and Bangladeshi men are out of work²; only 22% of Black Caribbean boys achieve five or more good GCSEs³; and 36% of all British Muslim children leave school with no qualifications at all.⁴

Recently arrived migrants fare little better. There have been numerous studies highlighting the net positive impact of migration on the British economy. Yet migrants, especially those who have few or no skills, are in a highly vulnerable position. They are easy prey for unscrupulous, exploitative employers and often have limited or no access to public services.

Many white working-class communities are also affected by severe disadvantage. These communities often blame their situation on a host of equally unfortunate 'theys' – from Muslims to asylum seekers to Eastern European migrant workers – whom they regard as unjustly favoured competitors for jobs and resources. A recent Joseph Rowntree Foundation study in North Tottenham and Moss Side highlighted this point: 'While tensions among residents in the neighbourhoods commonly took a racial form, they were mostly driven by [a] struggle for resources such as employment and housing. People's perception of "unfairness" of the distribution or allocation of such resources pervaded many accounts.'⁵ In fact, white working-class communities have a great deal in common with asylum seekers and poor ethnic minority communities. The material disadvantage and social problems they face are often very similar.

During the launch of his campaign for leadership of the Labour Party in May 2007, Gordon Brown observed: 'There are too many people in Iraq who don't have a stake in the economic future of the country, too many people unemployed, too many people who are not seeing services developed...and therefore too many people who don't feel loyalty to the regime.'⁶

The situation between Iraq and Britain is, of course, far from comparable. Nevertheless, in

1. Ministry of Justice *The Governance of Britain* CM 7170, TSO, July 2007

2. Abbas, T. and P. Griffith 'A community in crisis' in Bunting, M. (Ed.) *Islam, Race and Being British*, The Guardian in association with the Barrow Cadbury Trust, 2005

3. Brittain, E. et al. *Black and Minority Ethnic Women in the UK*, The Fawcett Society, February 2005

4. Abbas, T. and P. Griffith *op cit.*

5. Hudson, M, J. Phillips, K. Ray and H. Barnes *Social cohesion in diverse communities* Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York, 2007. pg 48 <http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/2036-social-cohesion-communities.pdf>

6. Labour Leadership launch event 11th May 2007 see report at: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article1780037.ece>

Britain as in Iraq, poverty reduction plays a crucial role in forging social stability. Rather than raising the barrier of ‘belonging’ to Britain with more stringent tests of loyalty for ‘others’, what is needed are public policy interventions to provide everyone with a fair chance in life.

Furthermore, as long as poor, diverse communities remain divided through distrust and resource competition, the harder it will be for them to pursue the interests that will really make a difference to their lives. Concerted efforts are needed to build habits of solidarity: bridges across communities, away from narrowly constructed ethnic, religious or cultural identities, in pursuit of common objectives and a common future. This is by no means an easy task in modern cities where mobility, flexibility and individualism are the norm. However, there are examples of excellent projects run by voluntary and community groups that help to foster habits of solidarity between people of different religious, cultural or social backgrounds.

Empowering the marginalised

The East London Communities Organisation’s Living Wage Campaign⁷, for instance, is one such example of community cohesion in action. There, a diverse group of organisations, from churches to mosques to trade unions, joined forces to lobby for a London-weighted ‘living wage’ for the poorest paid workers in the capital. In coming together, not only were marginalised people empowered to take control over the forces that affect their lives, but people from different backgrounds worked successfully together in an example of genuine and sustainable community cohesion.

By supporting projects in which people are brought together by their similarities, we

encourage people to recognise what they have in common. This facilitates the realisation of shared identities, regardless of ethnicity or religion. But is this enough? In the case of marginalised groups, it might not be. Targeted interventions might still be necessary to enable isolated, invisible communities to gain the confidence and trust to take part in more mainstream discussions.

Groups that face daily hostility, such as severely marginalised women, will inevitably turn inwards in search of support and protection. Exclusive organisations can engage marginalised people and help build the confidence and leadership skills necessary for them to participate in wider society. This has certainly been Barrow Cadbury’s experience working with organisations in Bosnian, Sudanese and new migrant communities. While recognising the importance of moving away from the failures of multiculturalism, there remains an urgency to continue providing ethno-specific funding to help build the confidence and capacity of marginalised communities.

The green paper *The Governance of Britain* talks about the role of symbols in embodying a national culture and citizenship. It also refers to the idea of a British statement of values. Barrow Cadbury believes that a decent standard of living, fair working conditions and adequate health and education are prerequisites for the principles that bind us together as a nation. They are inherent in human freedom and dignity. They are also necessary for ensuring that a common future for Britain becomes a future of equal life chances and social justice for all.

Sukhvinder Kaur Stubbs is the Chief Executive of the Barrow Cadbury Trust.

7. <http://www.livingwage.org.uk/>

Summary

- Promotion of ‘British values’ and citizenship must be accompanied by measures to tackle poverty, inequality and discrimination to have any impact on social cohesion.
- Poverty reduction and material living standards, including decent housing; fair working conditions; and adequate health and education provision, play a crucial role in forging social stability.
- Targeted public policy interventions are necessary to provide everyone with a fair chance in life.
- Ethno-specific interventions are necessary to build confidence; trust; skills; and capacity in amongst isolated communities in empower people to participate in wider society.

Migrants and social inclusion: what would a progressive approach look like?

It is a mistake to see migrants as an exceptionally difficult subject for social inclusion. **Sarah Kyambi** argues that a renewed emphasis on social justice would build links between other marginalised groups.

Approaches to integration have changed radically in recent years. Multiculturalism has been pronounced dead and increasingly policies focus on binding people together rather than recognising diversity. While some of the oppositions posited in this area of policy are overstated, the changes in rhetoric are, in part, a reflection of changes on the ground.

‘We need to figure out how to allocate resources in ways that do not reinforce resentment between different groups.’

The move away from cultural relativism in integration policy began by reasoning that policies set to tackle disadvantage could institutionalise differences and difficulties. The 2001 riots in Oldham, Bradford and Burnley sparked concerns that different communities were leading parallel lives and multicultural policies did little to bridge the gap between communities. Consequently cohesion policies were promoted that included fostering cross cultural contact and a focus on citizenship and civic renewal. But the present division posited between policies that promote bridging activities between different groups and those which help to bond and build particular communities distracts from the recognition that both activities are necessary and appropriate in building inclusive societies.

Progressive dilemma?

Debates on how entitlements to welfare should be structured have also gained prominence. David Goodhart alleged the existence of a ‘progressive dilemma’ in a notable article published in *Prospect* in 2004. He argued that immigration undermines the solidarity needed for a redistributive welfare state. He draws on evidence from the USA that indicates a decreased propensity to share with those who are ‘not like us’. However, further studies on the links between ethnic diversity and declining solidarity and welfare state acceptance yield limited findings and reveal the models to be context specific. Support for welfare states and redistributive policies is decidedly more influenced by national politics and the national welfare state histories than by immigration or ethnic diversity.

Though a causal relationship between immigration and declining support for welfare states cannot be established, Goodhart’s dilemma unearths a set of questions that policy-makers are increasingly taking seriously. How does the welfare state adapt to a more mobile global environment? What access should newcomers have to welfare benefits? Questions on how we determine entitlements to welfare benefits continually resurface and these underlie the increased visibility of concerns regarding the white working class. The resentments of this group against the benefit entitlements of newcomers are echoed in the resentments of other disadvantaged minority communities. This indicates difficulties arising from a needs-based calculation of welfare state entitlement where the needs of new arrivals are seen to be prioritised over the wants of more established communities. Recent research such as the Young Foundation’s report on the East End shows the damage to community cohesion incurred through this form of redistribution. There is a rising concern that such resentment, if left unacknowledged, will turn into support for far-right anti-immigration parties. We need to figure out how to allocate resources in ways that do not reinforce resentment between different groups.

Complicating this picture is the rise of what some are calling ‘super-diversity’. The new immigration is not just greater in number than previously, it also more diverse than before. The diversification of migrants’ source countries is

beginning to impact on what diversity means in the UK and the policies needed to get the best from it. The UK is starting to move away from the Black–White–Asian triad that has dominated race relations since the 1970s. The need for policies to be sensitive to local particularities is being increasingly recognised.

Migration to the UK has lost its link with empire and the aftermath of colonialism. As more people arrive from countries that have no historical link to the UK, English language proficiency is becoming a central concern of integration policy. Knowledge of the UK and English has become a requirement for citizenship and settlement in recent years. In addition, changing settlement patterns mean diversity is no longer a mainly urban phenomenon. Rural areas unaccustomed to newcomers are having to adjust to receiving new arrivals often drawn in by the labour needs of the agricultural and food processing sectors. Urban areas also have to adjust to changing diversity where the new groups arriving have profiles and needs that can be significantly different from more established communities.

Reducing tensions

In June 2007 the Commission on Integration and Cohesion reported on its consultation on practical approaches to building communities' capacity to reduce tensions and create opportunities for more integrated and cohesive societies. The Commission stressed that integration is a two-way process of adaptation and expressly distinguished this from assimilation, which it saw as the requirement for incoming groups to take up the norms of existing residents. The Commission elaborated on an expanded concept

of cohesion to include the relationship between all manner of groups, not confined to differences of race or faith. Under this new definition developing community cohesion also encompasses conflict resolution between young people and older people, or disputes between rural people and those who own second homes in rural areas. According to the Commission, 'cohesion is principally the process that must happen in all communities to ensure different groups of people get on well together; while integration is principally the process that ensures new residents and existing residents adapt to one another' (2007, para 3.3).

Particular challenges taken up by the Commission include the need to diversify and improve the delivery of English language classes. Ensuring flexibility of access to English classes is key to enabling migrants to learn English. More broadly, providing migrants with the chance to speak English in the community and through the workplace will vastly boost their chances of acquiring proficiency in English. Finally, a progressive approach to social inclusion needs to encompass an emphasis on equality and social justice. Narrowing the gaps in attainment and opportunities available to different groups is central to ensuring all feel themselves to have a stake in society. The importance of this commitment to equality is stressed in the Commission's report. However, building the rights of migrants into equality and anti-discrimination legislation would help migrant groups benefit from the same protections offered to other groups.

Sarah Kyambi worked as the policy director of the Migrants' Rights Network during its first year of work

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Summary

- Both activities that seek to build bridges between different groups and activities that help to bond and build particular communities are necessary and appropriate in building inclusive societies.
- Resources should be allocated in ways that do not reinforce resentment between different groups.
- A true picture of immigration should inform policies sensitive and appropriate to new communities.
- Integration is a two-way process of adaptation and not about assimilation.
- The delivery of English language classes should be flexible.
- A progressive approach to social inclusion must encompass an emphasis on equality and social justice.
- The rights of migrants should be incorporated into equality and anti-discrimination legislation.

Class, migration and the demand for labour

The term ‘class’ is now symbolic shorthand for a de-cultured, violent and irrational ‘white’ working class. **Jon Cruddas** argues that if immigration policy is to take a progressive turn, we will need to appreciate better the cultural diversity of the working class, and the material contingencies of its existence.

In popular culture the working class is everywhere, albeit successively demonised in comedy or in debate around fear, crime and anti-social behaviour, seen through caricature while patronised by reality TV. Arguably the cumulative effect of this is that the working class itself has been de-humanised, now to be feared and simultaneously served up as entertainment.

In contrast, in political debate discussion of class remains deeply unfashionable. When the concept is introduced it tends to be in a way that reinforces the cultural attack on the working class so as to help reinforce the political party’s bona fides with the voters that matter – what we define as ‘middle England’.

The consequences of mass unemployment and failings in the education system have led to generations without work, structured training or even a basic education. Alternatively they remain trapped in low wage, unskilled employment. The richness of working class life – something valued in the past – appears to be being replaced by a stylised white working-class culture built around violence, ignorance, criminality and degeneracy. The ‘whiteness’ of the subjects ignores the very heterogeneity of the British working class and reinforces a ‘them and us’ binary debate in terms of talk around migration and class.

Arguably the Labour Party has colluded in this process through its retreat from class and movement towards the political imperatives of middle England. Yet this process of disengagement is rarely discussed in the party itself. This is an extraordinary state of affairs given the historic role of the Labour Party as the emancipatory vehicle for the self-same working class.

A consequence of this retreat from class politics and its reinforcement, culturally, of a stylised notion of a white working-class identity is our approach to immigration. Having helped define an illiberal, violent mob it becomes self evident that it could not handle a proper, progressive discussion around race, migration and the complexities of the modern world.

The question is – can we construct, politically, a different debate; a more mature, progressive debate around class and migration? I think it is possible but only by grounding policy debate in the empirical realities of the modern world both in terms of the demand for labour and patterns of demographic change.

Economic revolution?

Throughout much of the last decade or so, many economists and politicians have assumed a revolution in economics. These commentators have suggested the emergence of a new ‘knowledge economy’ through the rapid growth in scientific, technical, managerial and professional employment driven by technological change. In turn, we were supposed to see a corresponding decline in traditional patterns of work.

This notion of the ‘knowledge economy’ has been central to Labour Party repositioning over the last thirteen years. It allowed New Labour to escape from a working class that was apparently withering away and become pre-occupied with social groupings A and B.

There remains one basic problem – empirical evidence. The facts are that manual workers still account for close to 40 per cent of total employment. If you were to add in clerical and secretarial work then the traditional labour force stands at some 15 million – approaching two in three jobs.

Growth areas in the economy have been accounted for by slight rises in computer managers, software engineers and programmers but the real growth has been in the service sector, which has witnessed a massive expansion in cleaning and support workers, and increased work among the caring occupations – for example care assistants, welfare and community workers and nursery nurses.

These basic facts underscore why a reintroduction of class as an economic and political category can help in our understanding of the modern world. Moreover, politically – and again this is

verified by the empirical data – the most significant movements away from supporting Labour since 1997 are among those whom we have wrongly assumed are of declining significance in the economy – among manual working-class voters. This partly underscores the rise in support for the BNP – who at the most recent local elections secured on average 15 per cent of the vote wherever they stood.

A fundamental contradiction operates at the heart of the contemporary approach developed in terms of the politics and the economics of migration. On the one hand, to use the wretched terminology of modern politics, we triangulate around migration and race on the basis of the prejudices of the swing voter in the swing seats, where ‘toughness’ and ‘clamp-downs’ are all you hear about. Yet, on the other hand, migrant labour – regularised and un-regularised – has in reality been the cornerstone of government economic strategy, fuelled by the demand for relatively low waged labour at the bottom of our modern hour-glass economy.

The best illustration of this collision between rhetoric and reality is the data regarding the minimal prosecutions for those employing un-regularised migrant labour. Given the velocity of inward migration alongside the lack of market regulation, it is impossible to conclude anything other than that migrant labour is seen as a key driver in tacitly de-regulating the labour market in order to reproduce a relatively flexible low waged economy.

A simple rehearsal of some of the figures demonstrates the sheer velocity of change that is occurring within the British economy. It is a common estimate that some 600,000 A8 EU nationals have now migrated to the UK – and this estimate does not include dependants. Moreover, the Home Office has recently conceded the existence of some 450,000 failed asylum applications – again, this figure does not include dependants. We must add to these two estimates the empirical realities of undocumented migrants, students, trafficked workers and others involved in employment. In short, there appears to have been a massive demographic movement into the UK driven by the demand for certain forms of labour. Yet many of these families do not appear on the radar of public policy-makers, who remain attached to an out of date census that cannot

comprehend the sheer demographic dynamic that has developed over the last few years. At the same time many of these workers remain exploited at the workplace yet are invisible for the purposes of public policy.

‘This demands a policy response grounded in the material concerns of working-class communities; not least to remove the forces that are feeding extremist political forces.’

In turn, it is through this combined approach to market economics and migration that conditions in many working-class communities are in decline in relation to terms and conditions at work, the consumption of public services and housing pressures. In short, the populations are growing faster than the state increases investment in public services as the baseline for this investment is out of date. Disproportionately low-cost housing markets in urban areas are taking the strain in terms of modern demographic movements. Real and growing tensions exist in segmented labour markets as migration has tacitly been used by the state in a race to the bottom in terms of standards at the workplace. This in turn creates the material conditions for an upsurge of the far right.

Disproportionate effect

Two basic problems can be identified which underscore the debate around migration and class. First, an assumption that the working class is withering away. Although apparently functional for political purposes this has the effect of relegating the needs of working-class communities on issues such as housing, labour market policies, inequalities in terms of access to public services and the like.

This omission is compounded by the second problem, namely the capacity to evaluate the impact of extraordinary levels of migration over the last few years. It is these self-same working-class communities that are most disproportionately affected, especially when many of these changes are not even acknowledged by the state because of the severe limitations of the ten-yearly census as the

baseline for resource distribution. The effect is the sense of a heightened struggle for limited resources among those who feel an increasing alienation from their traditional parliamentary representation through the Labour Party.

This demands a policy response grounded in the material concerns of working-class communities, not least to remove the forces that are feeding extremist political forces. This would cover the real time demographic makeup of the country, housing, labour market regulation, public service resource allocation and the like. The heightening of insecurity does not lead to concerns about identity as some claim, but to an increased sense of poverty, immobility and inequality

We are witnessing the manipulation of issues of identity by political elites seeking to reinforce class stereotypes to demonstrate their strength to cohorts of swing voters. Populist debate around crime and migration – or the retreat from the basic tenets of a pluralist multiculturalism, or a bidding war in terms of who is toughest in banning symbols of difference in and of themselves – undermines the

construction of a language that can help us navigate through today's insecurities built around a modern pluralism – a respect and indeed celebration of difference and the complexities of the modern world. Yet they cross reference with an increasingly hostile cultural definition of white working-class identity through much of the media, which reinforces the political desire for tough populist messages.

Whether these cultural movements can be unpacked is a complex question beyond the reach of this present contribution. Yet what might be agreed is that these cultural issues would have less traction if we built our immigration policy and broader public policy framework more adequately around the material conditions in those communities within which the migrant tends to reside. Solely having a debate about the relative strength of the government's immigration policy in and of itself does not help build the cohesive communities of the future.

Jon Cruddas is the Labour MP for Dagenham.

Summary

- Progressives need to challenge popular class analysis – the 'working class' should be seen as complex and multicultural rather than a-cultural and only white.
- The progressive debate around class and migration must be grounded in the empirical realities of demand for labour; demographic change; and the material conditions people live in.
- The 'Knowledge economy' model does not correlate to empirical evidence. The assumption that the working class is withering away is incorrect.
- Public policy must be based on, and respond to, accurate and real time data of migration and the changing demography of communities.
- Immigration policy should be built around realistic understanding of the material conditions in those communities within which the migrant tends to reside.

Interaction at neighbourhood level: strategic approaches can bring success

New migration poses inevitable challenges, argues **Leonie McCarthy**, but a healthy dose of imaginative, strategic thinking and action can overcome most of them.

Peterborough became a dispersal area under the government's refugee policy in 2001. It is a city which had seen new communities establish themselves over many years in the past, including East Africans, Pakistani, Poles, Italians and Lithuanians. But over a very short time it found itself hosting 80 per cent of eastern England's asylum population and receiving over sixty different nationalities at one time. During the same period a sizeable number of Portuguese people arrived in the city in exercise of their European Union free movement rights, followed by people from Eastern European after the accession states joined the EU in 2004.

Local services, organisations and residents were not prepared for an influx of so many new communities at once. The public perception of illegal/bogus/benefit grabbers was widespread and local officials were often wrongly informed about what the migrants could and could not do. There were incidents of asylum seekers being sent to the Job Centre to claim benefits they were not entitled to receive, and migrant workers directed to the National Asylum Support Service for help. City Council services, health officials and the police did not know who was entitled to what, why people were here, or whether the services they were providing met the needs of the new communities. Tensions between the new arrivals and settled communities began to increase to a point where there were a number of significant disturbances.

To tackle these issues a bid was put into the Home Office under the 'Invest to Save' programme and a partnership of police, council

and health trusts asked for £2.2 million for three years to run nine projects which would work for the smooth integration of new arrivals into the life of Peterborough. The projects included the establishment of a one-stop centre, New Link, where new arrivals would come for information or assistance about a variety of matters which concerned them as individuals.

'It is vital that a joined-up approach be taken by all agencies working on the ground on these very sensitive issues.'

The centre looked at how new arrivals (and New Link) could contribute to Peterborough's needs as a growing city. The need for specific advice was used as a point of first contact with the client, and a process of enquiry was initiated which involved questions about what the new arrivals had done in their home country and what skills they had, and to map them against the skills and languages gaps that existed in the city. The intention was to encourage the newly arrived to move out of the 'picking, plucking and packing' work most were engaged in, to work for a better fit for their skills and abilities.

Providing information

In addition, the centre encouraged public service organisations to provide information about the way they were run to ensure new migrants were aware of their services, so that people were provided with as much important information as possible on arrival in Peterborough. Early contact also allowed checks to ensure that children were enrolled in school, which anticipated the complaints of some settled residents about noise and commotion on the streets. Migrants would be urged to register with a GP, dissipating the concerns of some health professionals that the health needs of the newly arrived translated into blocked accident and emergency departments.

The complaints of settled residents that migrants 'lowered wages' by working for less than the minimum wage were dealt with by ensuring they knew about their rights under employment law. The belief that they were all living in overcrowded accommodation was tackled by assisting

new arrivals in getting rent books and decent living conditions.

The benefit of having information across the twenty-odd questions asked of people on their first visit not only helped collate statistics on things like migrant skills (confirming that many are highly qualified), but also helped equip New Link with evidence that the newcomers were not ‘abusing hospitality’, and this has proven invaluable in busting myths and misconceptions.

Another project is run by a community development officer based at the centre. It tackled the need to engage with the new communities in a more holistic way and be less reliant on dealings with community ‘gatekeepers’, who tended to be those who had resided longest and had the best English. To do this we asked new arrivals if they would they would be interested in getting together with friends to set up a group. This proved to be incredibly successful and twenty groups have been established from among the different nationalities. Although some participants had taken years to consider getting a group together, others ran with the idea much more quickly. The groups have democratically elected representatives and a new arrival forum has been established where ten of the groups are represented and discussions take place on issues around integration and access to services in Peterborough.

Our aim is for this group to feed into the Local Strategic Partnership – the multi-agency forum which brings together the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to support one another and work together more effectively. This forum has enabled services to access information and advice on how to best meet the needs of the new migrants. It has assisted the police in recruiting police community support officers from among the new communities, tackling such issues as the best way to advertise and market the role to these communities.

Local media

Community development work has also played a role in engaging the local media with the newly arrived. Community-based events have involved the press, and, because the groups have received media training, they have been able to convey the right type of messages.

It is the case that there are tensions between

communities, in particularly among groups coming from regions where there is inter-ethnic and national conflict. When this has happened the projects have been able to involve mediation and to get community leaders to discuss issues and address the need to resolve conflicts.

Sometimes the authorities in Peterborough have not been sufficiently sensitive to issues that motivate the different communities. An example of this occurred recently when the local Iraqi Kurdish community celebrated the victory of the Iraq national football team in the final of the Asian Cup. The local police who, like most people in Peterborough, did not know of the Iraqi team’s achievement and were unaware of the reason for eruption of celebratory young men onto the streets of the town, acted by booking many of the Kurds for unruly behaviour. The Kurdish men felt they had been discriminated against unfairly and their community leaders brought their complaints to the New Link development worker. He arranged a meeting with the police and they agreed that had they known in advance about the match they would have been less inclined to book people for their celebrations. A mechanism for ensuring this wouldn’t happen again was put in place and peace was resumed between the parties.

Housing conditions in the private rented sector have also generated friction. Residential areas dominated by family homes have seen properties leased out to shared households of young men, with overcrowding being common. The impact on the settled residents in those areas has been very negative. Complaints have been made about mattresses thrown in back yards, bins filled to overflowing, cars parked on the pavement and drives, houses without curtains in the windows, and unkempt gardens, and so on

It is vital that a joined-up approach be taken by all agencies working on the ground on these very sensitive issues. Overcrowding is an offence which arises because of the activities of unscrupulous landlords and there is a need to identify who they are and enforce the public health laws against them. This can be a lengthy and difficult process. Another way to tackle them is through the use of mediation services, and New Links is currently using one of them to train individuals from the newly arrived communities to be ‘community facilitators’. Local residents are encouraged to let us know when a problem exists

and then a facilitator from the nationality of the people concerned goes to the houses to discuss what the issues are. This enables the settled resident to realise that not all new arrivals from that community are anti-social neighbours and also helps them to see the importance of interaction. The facilitator will have a ‘when in Rome’ conversation with the perpetrators of the misdemeanours and will advise them of any help they may need in settling into Peterborough – letting them know of English classes, or the work of New Link and so on.

The experience of new migrant settlement in Peterborough certainly shows that problems arise when people of different cultural backgrounds first come into contact as neighbours in settled communities. But New Link has demonstrated

that we do not need to be overwhelmed by such problems, and that strategic thinking and joined-up actions can make a huge difference to community relations. What is needed are public authorities that in the first instance value the contribution of new migrants in their local area, but are also imaginative enough to anticipate the sort of issues that can generate friction and tension, and put in place structures to deal with it when it happens. New Link is just one such example of how this can happen, but one which very definitely illustrates the potential for success for such a strategy.

Leonie McCarthy is a policy officer at New Links in Peterborough and was a member of the recent committee on integration and cohesion.

Summary

- Collecting specific information about migrants’ skills, experience and needs when they first arrive in a community:
 - helps migrant workers find suitable employment, relevant to their abilities, as well as better access to public services
 - helps public service providers organise and plan their services according to local needs as well as developing outreach strategies relevant to new communities
 - helps rebut myths and misconceptions
- Follow up checks based on information collected on arrival (eg that children are enrolled in school)
 - ensures new migrants are accessing the services they need
 - can help with community cohesion
- Ensuring settled residents are aware of their rights, for example with regards to employment helps offset concerns about the effects of new labour sources on their jobs and wages.
- Setting up New Arrivals groups and ‘community facilitators’
 - helps engage all members of migrant communities, not just gatekeepers
 - provides useful information to multi-agency fora
 - helps build links between new communities and the police
 - community facilitators can be a link between new arrivals and the settled residents, explaining local customs and traditions as well as mediating in disputes.
- Training the local media can help in building community cohesion by
 - helping counter myths and misconceptions
 - helping inform communities about each other’s traditions through coverage of local events.
- Enforcing public health laws can be used to protect migrants against unscrupulous landlords and overcrowded living spaces
 - This can also help ease tensions with settled residents

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