



[www.migrationwatchuk.org](http://www.migrationwatchuk.org)

## IPPR REPORT BEYOND BLACK AND WHITE

### Summary

1. A useful report providing detail of the origin, present location and economic performance of our immigrant communities. However, the methodology, based on census comparisons, deals only with the stock of immigrants rather than the flow. It thus obscures the very rapid increase in foreign immigration which has quadrupled since the early 1990s. Immigration now accounts for 84% of projected population growth. There are also very large flows concentrated on London and a similar flow of 100,000 Londoners leaving the city every year. These levels of immigration should not be regarded as immutable. Immigration policy should reflect the wider impact on society, population and infrastructure, including the need for integration.

### Detail

2. The Institute of Public Policy and Research (IPPR) published a very detailed report on the 15th September which provides a range of information on the source of immigrants (defined as those born abroad) in the UK and how this has changed between the 1991 and 2001 censuses. The report also contains earnings data by country of origin and data about the distribution of immigrants within the UK. Some of the findings of the report have been summarised on the BBC website.<sup>[1]</sup>

3. Migration Watch welcomes the research carried out by the IPPR. In particular it provides a valuable insight into the economic performance of various groups of migrants in the UK which is highly varied. For instance, the report finds that Somalis have the lowest employment rate of the countries studied at 12.1% compared to new immigrants from New Zealand who had an employment rate of 93.6%.

4. The report also contains a useful overview of the trends in migration to the UK. It demonstrates that large scale net immigration to the UK is a recent development. In fact the UK was a country of net emigration until 1984 and net immigration was at a modest level until 1998 when it reached 138,800. Since that time net immigration has exceeded 150,000 every year. The report also shows the massive growth in the scale of net foreign immigration which was consistently around 50,000 a year from the mid 1960's to the early 1990's before climbing rapidly to reach levels of over 200,000 a year since 2000.

5. Our first major point of issue with the IPPR report arises from its assertion (in the very first paragraph of the report) that ". there is the growing realisation that immigration is set to continue, as the UK continues to require the skills that immigrants bring, in order to remain competitive in a global economy. This realisation underpins the move to a managed migration policy." This statement implies that increased levels of immigration are somehow inevitable. They are not. They result from deliberate government policy which has allowed immigration through all categories of entry (asylum, work-related and family formation) to increase dramatically.

6. The methodology used by the report to identify migrant numbers is also likely to give a misleading impression of the scale of migration from certain countries into the UK. This is because the report looks at the stock of migrants in the UK rather than at migration flows. The BBC has published data in tabular form comparing the number of people resident in the UK who were born abroad by country of birth in 1991 and 2001. This shows that the number of people born in the Caribbean, for instance, reduced by 12,000 between the 1991 and 2001 censuses. However, this does not mean that there was a net outflow of people born in the Caribbean from the UK during that time. In fact there was a net inflow of 25,000 people from the Caribbean to the UK in the decade from 1991-2000 inclusive. The reduction in the numbers of people born in the Caribbean between the censuses therefore reflects the fact that the large migration flows from the Caribbean were in the 1950's and 1960's and many Caribbean born UK residents were of an older generation and died between the two censuses.

7. The impact of migration flows on the UK in terms of long-term growth in population is also obscured by looking at stocks of migrants. This is because different migrant groups behave very differently when it comes to remaining in the UK in the long-term. A study by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) in Population Trends No. 116 in the Summer of 2004 [2] showed that about two-thirds (65%) of immigrants from the USA and Canada stayed in the UK for less than five years after arrival, as do 57% of immigrants from Australia and New Zealand and 53% of immigrants from continental Europe. This compares with 15% of immigrants from the Indian Sub-continent who leave within 5 years.

8. This has very important implications - socially and economically. From a social point of view immigration from the developed world will have far less impact on the UK's future population as a large portion of it is transitory in nature - thus not only reducing the numbers of first generation migrants but also the number of children born to them who remain in the UK. In contrast immigration from developing countries will add significantly to the UK's population because migrants are likely to stay and to raise families here. An important consequence of this is that immigration now accounts for 84% of projected population growth.[3]

9. From an economic point of view migrants from the developed world also tend to perform well above the average. Furthermore, because many are likely to move back to their country of origin they will also not add to future population ageing pressures.

10. Another effect of considering only the stock of migrants is to overlook the impact of the flow of immigrants on the indigenous population. For example, recent work by Migrationwatch has shown that the flow of immigrants to London has doubled in the past five years while the flow of Londoners from the city has also doubled to about 100,000 a year.[4]

11. Our final concern with the IPPR paper is with the recommendations. They suggest, for instance, that 'The provision and quality of English-language teaching needs to cater to the growth in immigration from non-English-speaking countries.' But the increase in immigration to the UK is largely as a result of deliberate government policy. One of the key selection criteria for potential immigrants should surely be the ability to speak English so that the UK does not bear the costs of teaching immigrants English and so that the immigrants are those who can integrate more easily into UK society.

12. We take the view that immigration policy should reflect the UK's needs and the wider impact of immigration on UK society, population and infrastructure as well as the need for integration. This is in contrast to the IPPR's apparent stance which is that immigration trends are immutable and the UK should adapt its social policies accordingly.

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## **NOTES**

1 [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/uk/05/born\\_abroad/countries/html/overview.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/uk/05/born_abroad/countries/html/overview.stm)

2 [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme\\_population/PT116.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/PT116.pdf)

3 NSO Population Trends No 118 page 11.

4 [Briefing Paper 9.10](#)