

MARTIAL ARTISTS AGAINST RACISM

We train together, we live together. And together, we live.

THE MYTHS ABOUT IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEES

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
“They Send Us Their Criminals.”	5
“They Come Over Here, They Take Our Jobs. And Our Unemployment Benefits”	13
“They Come Over Here, Our Wages Drop”	18
“The Country’s Full”	23
“They Come Over Here and Take All the Houses”	25
“They Come Over Here and Go Straight Onto an NHS Waiting List”	31
“They Come Over Here In Small Boats, Just to Overwhelm Us”	33

Introduction

Immigration has always brought many benefits to Britain. Some of the best known British brands were started by immigrants, such as Triumph Motorcycles (Siegfried Bettman from Nuremberg) and Marks and Spencers (Michael Marks from Belarus). Despite the foreign-born population of the UK standing under 15%, recent studies show that 39% of the 100 fastest-growing companies in the UK have foreign-born founders or co-founders.

Fish and chips, the quintessential British delicacy, is a fusion of dishes brought to us by Sephardic Jews and Belgian immigrants. Curry is part of the national culture. Today there are more “Indian” restaurants in Greater London than in Delhi and Mumbai combined. As Robin Cook said: the national popularity of curry is a “perfect illustration of the way Britain absorbs and adapts external influences.” 65%-75% of Indian restaurants” in the UK are owned by Bangladeshi immigrants, and meals such as Chicken Tikka Massala are fusions of Bangladeshi and British cuisine.

While the tandoor-cooked chicken tikka was Indian, some say that the cream-filled masala sauce was added to satisfy the desire of British people to have their meat served in gravy. **Fusion is part of creation, purity is a myth and massively overrated.** My base martial art is Goju Ryu karate, a hybrid of Monk Fist and White Crane Kung Fu, along with other Chinese styles blended into the mix. When people talk about the “pure Japanese art” they are perpetuating a myth, one with political, and racial overtones. Until the 1930s, the various arts that we now know as “karate” were know as “Toudi,” the art of the “China hand.” Against a background of rising Japanese nationalism and militarism, the name “karate” was adopted, the art of the empty hand.

Always seek understanding beyond your immediate perception, the best lesson I every picked up from martial arts training. The

following deals with the most common, and toxic, myths about immigration and the refugee situation. Use it as ammunition against racists, and feel free to share with students or anybody else.

We are not saying that there are absolutely no concerns about immigration, there is some evidence that it can have a small negative impact on wages at the lower end of the market (see below) But the evidence is mixed and inconclusive, and as a society we have the means to counteract that tendency. Regarding “identity” issues, these have always been islands with complicated layers of mixed identity. I live in South East London one of the most diverse communities on the planet. My friends are Jewish, British-Pakistani, Brazilian, British-Irish, South African and a couple of “token” English. None of this diminishes my identity as Irish-Scottish person who would live nowhere else but South-East London. Nothing about the diversity of the area prevents me from pursuing any of my cultural interests including football and music. Quite the opposite regarding the latter, I can go to the Deptford Dub Club one night and the Concert Halls the night after: I can enjoy both Lee Perry and Beethoven, I don’t have to choose a side.

Regarding integration and the supposed “erosion of British Values,” I don’t know what these much-used terms are supposed to mean. The two South Asian Women in my neighbourhood spend more time looking after the older people than anyone, a lot more than do the old white men like me. When I went to teach in Covent Garden I would always see the Sikh Niksham SWAT team out feeding the many homeless people in the neighbourhood. Their work being mirrored by that of the Muslim Hands charity that established the Open Kitchen, a community kitchen for those affected by food poverty in West London. After the overwhelming response it received, they opened a second kitchen in Nottingham. “Serving around 500 meals daily, The Open Kitchens also provide a warm, community-centred space where people are welcomed with respect and compassion.”

Respect, compassion, helping out others in distress, tolerance of differences..these and others are universal values of decency that



are shared by all the diverse peoples that make up our common home across these islands.

We train together, we live together. And together, we live

References:

<https://www.myjewishcoventry.com/people/siegfried-bettmann>

<https://archive.marksandspencer.com/timeline/the-ms-story/>

<https://www.tenentrepreneurs.org/immigrantfounders#:~:text=Despite%20the%20foreign%2Dborn%20population,Synthesia%2C%20Kroo%2C%20and%20Zilch.>

<https://www.bowmaningredients.co.uk/the-history-of-fish-and-chips/>

<https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/The-British-Curry/>

<https://www.martialhouse.com.au/wgka-association-2#:~:text=From%20a%20historical%20view%20point,simply%20geometrical%20principles%20of%20movement>

<https://www.karatebyjesse.com/karate-name-meaning/>
<https://medium.com/@haupenthal/the-meeting-that-changed-karate-history-forever-okinawa-1936-90464a7531be>

<https://www.martialhouse.com.au/wgka-association-2#:~:text=From%20a%20historical%20view%20point,simply%20geometrical%20principles%20of%20movement>

<https://www.nishkamswat.com/>

<https://muslimhands.org.uk/appeals/the-open-kitchen>

“THEY COME OVER HERE”

THE MYTHS AND REALITY

“They Send Us Their Criminals.”

Immigration does not increase crime, the facts suggest the opposite in a society characterised by falling crime levels.

Firstly, it has to be made clear that most forms of crime in the UK, including violent crime, have been on a long-term decline.

Figure 1: Headline crime estimates from the CSEW years ending December 1981 to March 2024

England and Wales, annual estimates



For the crime types and population it covers, the CSEW, the Crime Survey for England and Wales, is a better indicator of long-term trends than police recorded crime. It is unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police or police recording practices. **Since the mid-1990s, there have been long-term falls in violence with and without injury, theft offences and criminal damage.**

A recent Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) showed the **volume of violent crime fell by nearly three-fifths (58%) between 2008-09 and 2021-22. Crime overall had fallen by 53% in Scotland across this period.**

<https://theferret.scot/explainer-do-refugees-increase-crime-uk/?nordt=1>

78% of people in England and Wales think that crime has gone up in the last few years, according to the latest survey.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingdecember2023>

But the data on actual crime shows the exact opposite. As of 2024, violence, burglary and car crime have been declining for 30 years and is down by nearly 90% compared to the mid-90s according to the CSEW.

<https://policinginsight.com/feature/analysis/most-crime-has-fallen-by-90-in-30-years-so-why-does-the-public-think-its-increased/>

People's perceptions are manipulated by a racist media, unscrupulous politicians, and lies like the cartoon below shared on social media by those that wish to divide us.



A major 2013 study found no evidence of causal link between immigration and criminal behaviour, and a report published in 2017 suggested a possible link between falling crime rates and waves of immigration. Given that crime rates have been falling at a time of

significant immigration into the country, they may have something, see the links below.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/2193-9039-2-19>

<https://kar.kent.ac.uk/62927/>

A recent New York Times article also indicated the lack of any connection between immigration and crime in the United States.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/18/briefing/the-myth-of-migrant-crime.html>

Certain people have an interest in demonising immigrants and particular immigrant communities. This has led to the myth of “Muslim Grooming Gangs” that has had a baleful impact on our political culture.

The Myths and Lies about Muslim Grooming Gangs

Former Home secretary Suella Braverman perpetuated this poison in 2023. She asserted that so-called “grooming gangs” posed a specific threat to white girls and that the perpetrators are “almost all British-Pakistani.” She presented these assertions as “facts”, but they directly contradict her own department’s findings. A 2020 Home Office report concluded that such “group-based CSE (child sexual exploitation) offenders are most commonly white”, while victims come from many backgrounds, and include boys. To the government’s own evident disappointment, it found no reliable or generalisable evidence of ethnic disproportionality among such offenders.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/dec/19/home-office-report-grooming-gangs-not-muslim?fbclid=IwY2xjawF5GaRleHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHctR9psJhAZb>

[NnkaWO24fYhlXasGHniDo2W3L4bMEkkjosKaAKFQtxIjpg_aem_iKjocjr_ObX68pxIxMz1dg](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/apr/04/suella-braverman-grooming-gangs-child-sexual-abuse-home-secretary-prejudice)

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/apr/04/suella-braverman-grooming-gangs-child-sexual-abuse-home-secretary-prejudice>

In 2012, the New Statesman reported that "Just 50 out of a total UK population of 1.2 million British Pakistanis have been convicted of this crime, yet the lurid press coverage of "Asian sex gangs" gives an entirely different impression. To some observers, it has uncomfortable parallels with the way that African-Caribbean men were demonised as "muggers" in the 1970s and 1980s."

<https://www.newstatesman.com/long-reads/2012/08/how-rochdale-grooming-case-exposed-british-prejudice>

Some studies showed that Asians were disproportionately represented in organised sex abuse of young people in some localities. A 2011 study by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre looked at the 2,379 potential offenders caught grooming girls since 2008. Of 940 suspects *whose race could be identified*, 26% were Asian, 38% were white and 32% were recorded as unknown.

So say that proportion was true for all arrested, which is unlikely, the figure would be around 618 "Asians." Even if they were all muslim, given that the Muslim population of the UK was 2,786,635 in 2011, this would have represented 0.02% of the Muslim population in the UK for that year.

Some parts of the law enforcement structure have always said that is that it was wrong to look at any figures and attribute the race or religion of the perpetrator as that which leads to them committing these crimes. A more credible link, said one senior source involved in bringing the criminals to justice, was their occupations. Speaking on condition of anonymity, the source said the demography of certain areas and the makeup of the night-time economy explained the over-representation of Asian offenders in some areas.

The source said: "Young vulnerable girls migrate to the night-time economy, where they come across taxi drivers and people working in takeaways, who are more likely to be Asian. It is better to focus on the professions of offenders, not their race or religion." **Jewish people are more likely than Pakistanis to be convicted of involvement in financial scandals in the City of London or Wall Street: not because of any inherent racial tendency towards such fraud, but because they are much more represented in that line of work, it's a matter of opportunity.**

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2013/may/14/child-grooming-sexual-abuse-race>

It remains fundamentally wrong to demonise any group of people based on the criminal activities of a tiny percentage of that group.

The Ludicrous Two-Tier-Policing Allegations

When many of the Grooming Gangs cases came to light, many suggested that the gangs were not stopped because "political correctness" prevented the police from pursuing them, they didn't want to be seen as upsetting the Muslim community.

This was nonsense. As stated above, many of the victims were marginalised young people with multiple issues: these people are not listened to, and few care about them. Had their victims been wealthy young white women, then it would have been a different story. And the idea that the police do not pursue Muslim perpetrators for fear of upsetting the community has no foundation in reality.

In a major report in 2014, Lady Lola Young of Hornsey reached these conclusions about the reasons for **the disproportionate representation of Muslim men at all stages of the criminal justice system.**

‘They are more likely to be stopped and searched, more likely to plead not guilty and more likely to be tried.

These disparities... are often part of a complex mix of educational, employment, health and social inequalities that have characterised many of their lives.’

But her study - funded by the Barrow Cadbury Trust, an independent charitable group - also points to evidence of something more disturbing: discrimination. It says policy-makers and politicians haven't "fully grasped" the impact of "negative stereotyping" and "cultural difference."

Lady Young says: "Most of the prisoners we met with all said that they experienced differential treatment as a result of their race, ethnicity or faith."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-31794599>

The idea that the straw man of political correctness is working against locking up bad ethnic people, in a legal system that doesn't like to pursue them, is feeble stuff that does not deserve to be taken seriously. A recent report showed that black people

are nine times more likely to be stopped and searched by police than white people.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/oct/27/black-people-nine-times-more-likely-to-face-stop-and-search-than-white-people>

The problems don't end with the police force, a recent report from the Institute of Race Relations showed that the institutional issues operate through the structure of law enforcement:

'Not just the police, but prosecuting agencies, magistrates, judges, lawyers, prison officers and probation services can also engage in negative stereotyping about particular BME groups. **A survey of 373 legal professionals found that 56% had witnessed at least one judge acting in a racially biased way, with 52% witnessing discrimination in judicial decision-making, most frequently directed towards Asians and black people – lawyers, witnesses and defendants.** In addition, these institutions are not diverse, ie, do not reflect the total population.

The workers within them will be unlikely to have the same lived racial and class experience as defendants. For example, in 2019 92.6% of judges in England and Wales were white and 7.4% were from a BME background. In 2020, 92.7% of police officers were white and 7.3% were from BME backgrounds. And in 2022, 91.9% of officers were white, and 8.1% identified as belonging to a minority ethnic group.

In addition, BME staff within these organisations also experience stereotyping and discrimination. Baroness Casey's review found that black officers were 81% more likely to face disciplinary action and new ethnic recruits over 120% more likely to be served with a Regulation 13 ('unsuitable for policing') notice than their white counterparts. Many black prison staff who participated in a survey carried out by HM Inspectorate of Prisons said they experienced discrimination that hindered their career progression, adding that they were viewed by colleagues with the same suspicion that

affected black prisoners and worried about being accused of collusion or corruption.’

https://irr.org.uk/research/statistics/criminal-justice/?fbclid=IwY2xjawF5JKxleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHXrefcqvGYDpGedfIMm0x4n-rcE-QYphlkBgEtb2KM65jfKU-pbZixOk5Q_aem_ICoQwWl8SHDgNf0kQcOJ3Q

“They Come Over Here, They Take Our Jobs. And Our Unemployment Benefits”

Immigrants meet gaps in the local labour supply, are less likely to be unemployed for long periods and less likely to claim unemployment benefits.

Immigration is driven primarily by demand for labour. Immigrants from developing and middle-income countries (The Global South) come to developed countries (The Global North) to do jobs that indigenous labour cannot do, will not do, or for which there is an inadequate supply of labour for demographics reasons. This is the view stated very clearly by Dutch academic Hein de Haas in his recent book “How Migration Really Works.”

<https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/455478/how-migration-really-works-by-haas-hein-de/9780241998779>

De Haas states that border crackdowns and other restrictions have clearly failed because they were not based on an understanding of how migration really works. Politicians that like to attract support by condemning immigration ignore the most important root cause of migration: persistent labour demand.

Recent examples in the UK:

The government has been forced to relax immigration rules for construction workers after it was warned that new restrictions were causing labour shortages on building sites.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-immigration-labour-shortages-construction-b2376790.html>

The government announced in January 2024 that it would temporarily relax the immigration rules for overseas care workers in an attempt to recruit more staff to the UK. Care workers became eligible for a Health and Care Visa for 12 months.

<https://iasservices.org.uk/immigration-rules-to-be-relaxed-for-care-workers/>

However, As of 11 March 2024, overseas care workers have not been able to bring their partners or children with them to the UK. This limits the appeal of the UK as a destination and a recruitment crisis still exists in this important sector. There are an estimate 152,000 vacancies in the UK's social care workforce. Given the rapid ageing of the population, the sector will need an extra 440,000 roles by 2035 to meet rising demand for care.

Across construction sites in London, the labour force is between 50% and 70% foreign born. They are not employed because they are cheap, this is an industry that has seen healthy wage growth compared to others, see here and the next section of this paper.

'In the three months to April 2024, annual wage growth in construction grew to 2.7%, up from 0.3% in March. In December 2023, annual wage growth reached a peak of 6.4%. Although construction demand has softened, the industry shortage of skilled workers remains acute, and that continues to fuel wage inflation.'

<https://constructionmanagement.co.uk/construction-materials-prices/>

Employers have had to go overseas to get labour for this vital industry.

What Recent Trends Reveal

Immigration has driven overwhelmingly by demand for labour and Britain's success in attracting overseas students.

The vast majority of immigration is legal: across 2022/23, only about 4% of people who came to the country did so irregularly.
See below

Factors behind increases in Non-EU Immigration:

43% of the increase from 2019 to the year ending June 2023 was due to international students coming to study. This is a big money spinner for the country, **worth £42 billion per annum** according to one study. <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/latest/news/international-students-boost-uk-economy>

International students accounted for nearly two-fifths of non-EU immigration to the UK and almost three-fifths of non-EU emigration from the UK over the past five years (since 2019).

This should put the net migration figures in some perspective.
Always seek understanding beyond your immediate perception.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/articles/reasonforinternationalmigrationinternationalstudentsupdate/may2024>

Skilled workers: 37% of the increase in long-term immigration from 2019 to the year ending June 2023 resulted from those arriving for work purposes — particularly skilled workers — and

their dependants. Health and care was the main industry driving the growth, including care workers who received access to the immigration system in February 2022. There has also been higher demand for some workers who were already eligible for visas under the old system, such as doctors and nurses.

Humanitarian visa routes and refugee resettlement accounted for a further 13% of the increase in long-term international migration. This follows the introduction of visa routes for Ukrainians and Hong Kong British Nationals.

https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/long-term-international-migration-flows-to-and-from-the-uk/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR0R_g6rjVsVi5B117Ge6QQxt8XjXO0BroFXtFmYY69C9B7j05LA0AbpE04_aem_BofFYYZg7PZP-WA5mIFhyg

Global Picture and Summary

The popular press pushes the idea of a “migration crisis” that will require drastic countermeasures to prevent massive waves of people arriving in the future, apparently exceeding the absorption capacity of western societies and economies.

Despite this, however, there is no scientific evidence to sustain the claim that global migration is accelerating. International migrants account for about 3% of the world population, and this percentage has remained remarkably stable over the past half a century.

Refugee migration is much more limited than political rhetoric and media images suggest. About 10% of all international migrants are refugees, representing 0.3% of the world population. While refugee flows fluctuate strongly with levels of conflict, there is no evidence of a long-term increasing trend. **About 80-85% of refugees remain**

in regions of origin, and that share has also remained rather stable over the past decades. And there is no evidence that illegal migration is spinning out of control – in fact, the large majority of migrants who move from the global south to the global north continue to move legally. For instance, nine out of 10 Africans move to Europe legally, with passports and papers in hand.

De Haas puts modern immigration nicely into perspective:

‘In total, between 1846 and 1940 some 150 million people moved across continents - 9% of the world population in 1900 - and this does not even take account large-scale population movements within Europe...approximately 48 million Europeans left the continent between 1846 and 1924 alone...about 12% of the European population in 1900..Between 1869 and 1940, about 16.4 million Italians emigrated to destinations in northern Europe and South and North America - no less than 50% of the Italian population in 1900’

Modern-day immigration is no great aberration, our world is very much the product of great migrations.

The vast majority of immigration today is legal and is a result of the demand for labour from the Global North, a collection of rich countries with ageing populations that need care. As de Haas comments, this legal migration contrasts with much of that that took place from the mid-19th Century.

‘European colonial powers...colonise most of the entire territories of Africa and Asia...This went along with the emigration of European settlers to these new colonies, such as Britons moving to South Africa, Rhodesia and Kenya, and large numbers of French and other European *colons* settling in Algeria. **Evidently, they did so without asking permission from native populations. European colonialism is arguably the biggest illegal migration in human history.**’

Immigrants are not taking our jobs, or our territory. Various factors have led to labour shortages in the Global North; these have fuelled a growing demand for migrant workers in sectors such as agriculture, construction, cleaning, hospitality, transport and food processing, as supplies of local workers willing and able to do such jobs have increasingly run dry. **Without such chronic labour shortages, most migrants wouldn't have come.**

This raises questions beyond the scope of this paper about training, low wages, precarity and lack of respect for labour, and the relative poverty of the Global South. **We cannot divorce debates about immigration from broader debates about inequality, social justice and the demographic crises facing the Global North (and countries like China and South Korea, but immigration is a derivative of those great problems, not the cause.**

"They Come Over Here, Our Wages Drop"

There's no evidence for this, and the wider economic benefits of immigration can cancel out any negative effects

See below from The Migration Observatory.

"Several studies have examined whether immigration leads to higher unemployment or lower wages among existing workers, and most have found either small or no effects.

In 2018, the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) reviewed the results of studies conducted between 2003 and 2018 and drew three conclusions. **First, immigration had little or no impact on average**

employment or unemployment of existing workers. Second, where an impact was found, it was usually concentrated among certain groups – i.e. a negative effect for those with lower education and a positive effect for those with higher levels of education. And third, the impact may depend on the economic cycle; some – though not all – studies have found adverse effects on employment or unemployment, specifically during downturns.”

Similarly, the **MAC review concluded that immigration had had little impact on average wages, according to previous research. Some studies had found a small negative impact on average wages, while others found positive average effects.**

Low-wage workers are more likely to lose out from immigration, while medium and high-paid workers are more likely to gain, **but the effects are small.**

Empirical research on the labour market effects of immigration in the UK has found negative effects on low-paid workers and positive effects on high-paid workers, but both effects are small. **In other words, immigration is not one of the major factors that shape low-wage workers’ prospects in the labour market.**

For example, a 2022 study found that immigration to the UK from 1994 to 2016 reduced the hourly wage of UK-born wage earners at the 5th percentile (i.e. the lowest earners in the labour market) by around half of one pence per year. The gains for top earners were also small: 1.7p per year for people at the 90th percentile of wage earners. Another study focusing on wage effects at the occupational level found that, in low-wage service sector jobs, a 1 percentage point rise in the share of migrants reduced average wages in that occupation by about 0.2%. These results are broadly similar to findings from other studies.

The wage effects of immigration are likely to be greatest for resident workers who are migrants themselves. Research suggests that any adverse wage effects of immigration are likely to be greatest for

resident workers who are themselves, migrants. This is because the skills of new migrants are likely to be closer substitutes for the skills of migrants already employed in the UK than for those of UK-born workers. For example, one UK study concludes that the main impact of increased immigration from 1975 to 2005 was on the wages of migrants already in the UK. The finding that negative impacts on wages fall primarily on people who migrated themselves is consistent with earlier research from the United States.’

<https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/the-labour-market-effects-of-immigration/>

My Own Experience as a Martial Arts Instructor

Over 2003/2004, there were only 10 active teachers in my discipline across the UK. Various factors increased that number quite quickly, including an influx of a number of very competent instructors from Poland. This increased the quantity and quality of competition, but a number of other factors cancelled out any potentially damaging impact on my classes. At that time of free movement, a significant number of people from Poland and other European countries moved to London, and the rest of the country. These tended to be young, educated and enterprising people willing to try new things and not content to spend the evenings at home or in the pub. This wave of new students was a massive benefit, as was the increased awareness of the style precipitated by new instructors and people talking about the system. All this contributed to my not having to get a proper job ever again.

As The Migration Observatory report referred to above says:

“immigration **can also** expand the demand for workers and thus create new jobs. For example, migrants themselves buy goods and services, increasing demand. Employers may increase production in sectors where migration allows them to employ more people (e.g. in the agriculture or care sectors) or use more labour-intensive production methods.”

Overall Benefits to the Economy

Immigrants are not a drain on the economy, they come here to work, not draw the dole, and bring important skills and energy.

According to the Centre for Economic and Business Research (CEBR), immigration is estimated to yield £3.3 billion annually for public finances as the UK sees near threefold increase in non-EU immigration since 2018.

‘...a more comprehensive assessment will also take into account the indirect impacts through the expansion of labour supply and the productivity-enhancing effects of greater diversity and creativity...

We have estimated the impact of 2022’s net migration on taxes, spending, and GDP. Using the updated data, we can also estimate the future economic impact of migration, based on the Cebr’s dynamic model developed in 2017. ..We estimate the impacts by 2025, when the full effects will have worked through, of a scenario in which 2022’s net migration figure was zero.

Our modelling finds that 2025 GDP would have been 0.94% lower, tax receipts would have been £9.4 billion less, and public spending would have been £6.1 billion less.’

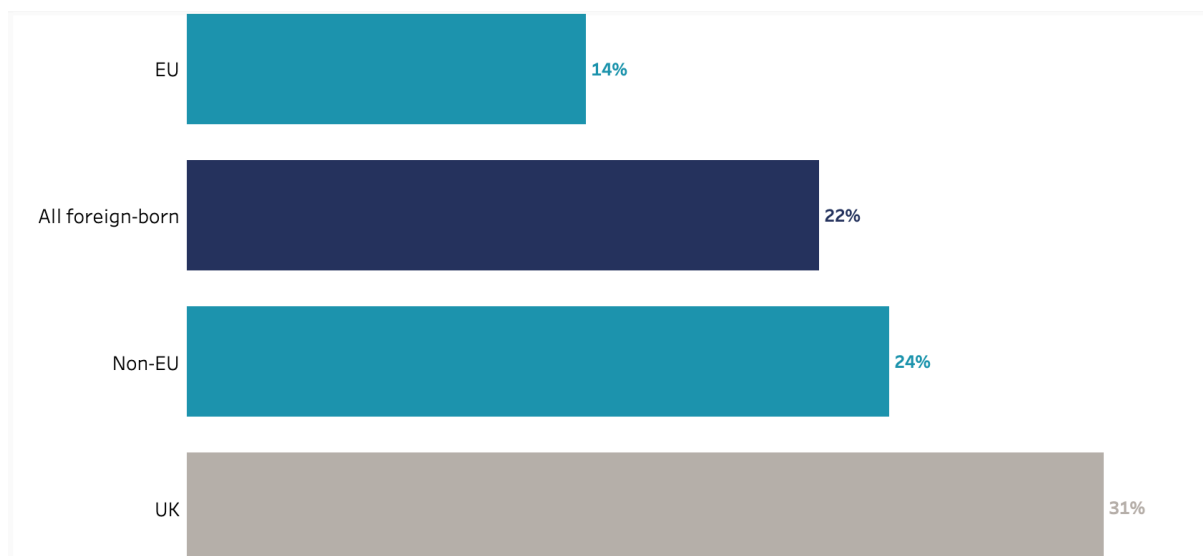
<https://cebr.com/blogs/immigration-is-estimated-to-yield-3-3-billion-annually-for-public-finances-as-the-uk-sees-near-threefold-increase-in-non-eu-immigration-since-2018/>

That’s just an estimate of the fiscal benefits. **According to the Office for National Statistics, migrants contribute approximately £83 billion to the UK’s economic output annually.**

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/longterminternationalmigrationprovisional/yearendingjune2023>

Migrants are also less likely to claim unemployment benefits than those born in the UK.

Share of unemployed workers claiming unemployment benefits, 2022 (Age 16 to 64)



Source: Migration Observatory analysis of the Annual Population Survey 2022.

Note: Only unemployment-related benefits (Universal Credit or Jobseekers' Allowance) are considered. Data are broken down only for EU and non-EU due to low number of survey respondents.



Migrants are less likely to be unemployed for long periods. In 2022, 26% of those born in the UK who were unemployed had been so for over a year, compared to 20% of non-EU migrants and 15% of EU migrants.

<https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migrants-in-the-uk-labour-market-an-overview/>

Summary

Immigration makes an overall contribution to the economy that is very important. Immigrants are essential to the running of certain key sectors; they also bring youth, energy and creativity to a ageing society.

Although the evidence suggests that there is no significant downwards impact on wages, it cannot be denied that at the lower end of the market, there can be negative effects, albeit small. These are the people that need most protection. Again, outside the scope of this paper, but the proper implementation of minimum wage and other policies designed to protect people at this end of the labour market is essential in a society that has to become accustomed to high levels of immigration.

“The Country’s Full”

It’s not, it’s really not.

In 2011 a huge piece of mapping of the UK was completed, the UK National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA). Five hundred experts analysed vast quantities of data and produced what they claim is the first coherent body of evidence about the state of Britain's natural environment.

Having looked at all the information, they calculated that "6.8% of the UK's land area is now classified as urban," a definition that includes rural development and roads.

The urban landscape accounts for 10.6% of England, 1.9% of Scotland, 3.6% of Northern Ireland and 4.1% of Wales.

So 93% of the UK is not urban according this definition. Not the full story because urban is not the same as built upon.

In urban England, for example, the researchers found that just over half the land (54%) in our towns and cities was greenspace - parks, allotments, sports pitches etcetera. Furthermore, domestic gardens account for another 18% of urban land use; rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs an additional 6.6%.

The overall conclusion:

In England, 79% of urban areas is designated as natural rather than built upon. Since urban only covers a tenth of the country, **this means that the proportion of England's landscape which is built on is 2.3%**

Almost 98% of England is, in the NEA's word, natural. Elsewhere in the UK, the figure rises to more than 99%. It is clear that only a small fraction of Britain has been concreted over.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-18623096>

The economists Jonathan Portes and Danny Darling also highlight some important points about the realities of “overcrowding” and the potential better utilisation of space within a more equal society with different priorities:

‘Jonathan Portes points out that much of the UK is not crowded anyway. All population statistics are by definition slightly out of date and approximate, but while England has roughly 410 people a sq km – the second highest in the EU – Wales has only 150, Northern Ireland 135 and Scotland 70. Even heaving, stressful London is much less full of people than is widely supposed.

“London is the lowest-density mega-city on the planet,” says Danny Dorling. “The densest part of London is four times less dense than Barcelona, a normal, well-planned European city that Britons all want to visit.”

Dorling argues that the UK's "overpopulation problem" is really the product of poor land use and social division, of corporate wage squeezes and cuts in state provision. "We've managed to organise ourselves so that much of our daily lives is crowded. We have the smallest homes in Europe. Meanwhile, there's lots of wasted space." Inner London is increasingly taken up by the huge, little-occupied homes of the super-rich and empty investors' properties – a less tatty, but in some ways more dysfunctional and depressing, form of urban emptiness than the rundown streets of the 70s and 80s. At least those had the potential to become spaces for community groups, poor immigrants or Bohemians.'

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/09/is-britain-full-home-truths-about-population-panic>

There are more rooms than people in London, the country is not full, we just need to organise ourselves better.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/mar/02/all-that-is-solid-review-house-prices-danny-dorling>

Summary

This remains primarily a green and pleasant land, with ample space for expansion. This raises issues regarding the impact of economic growth on the environment, and the desirability of that economic growth itself. These are questions beyond the scope of this paper, but the simplistic assertion that the "country is full" is clearly inaccurate.

"They Come Over Here and Take All the Houses"

This is a persistent myth, easily exploitable by those who wish to divide us.

Their arguments rely on misguided understandings about how migration and housing are intertwined, and scapegoat migrants for government failures in providing homes. While the two issues can overlap, **there is no evidence of a causal connection between a lack of available accommodation and levels of migration, and migrants are most definitely not privileged when it comes to offers of housing.**

‘As we explained above, most recent migrants aren’t eligible to apply for social housing — this includes asylum seekers, who can’t apply for housing or any other mainstream benefits (though they may be eligible for accommodation and a cash allowance if destitute).

In its response to a consultation of the previous government’s proposals published earlier this month, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government said currently 90% of social lets are allocated to UK nationals, with the remainder allocated to “EEA, Swiss and Irish citizens or migrants in severe housing need”.’

<https://fullfact.org/immigration/social-housing-waiting-lists/>

There is some evidence that migration has increased house prices, but the scale of this effect, and the causal relationship, is difficult to assess. Particularly in social housing, there are other factors affecting supply and demand, such as the Right to Buy, other government policies, the construction of new homes and overseas investors buying British housing as an opportunity for capital gains.

‘When considering foreign investment, the study estimates that property prices in 2014 would have been just £174,000 on average had it not been for the additional overseas investment – an overall price difference of around 21%.....

For every one percentage point added to the share of residential property owned by an overseas entity, according to the research, house prices increase by around 2.1%....(although the greatest impact was in London) it was noted that a “trickle down” effect from the rising prices in London meant that even houses at the bottom of the pricing scale had seen their values pushed up, with major cities in the north of England such as Manchester and Liverpool seeing price inflation linked to foreign investment.’

See this study for more information:

<https://www.buyassociationgroup.com/en-gb/news/the-true-effects-of-foreign-investment-in-uk-property-market/>

There are many barriers in place to stop migrants from accessing social housing. Foreign-born nationals make up a very small proportion of social renters. “British homes for British workers” is a policy looking for a problem.

Around 80% of migrants who have lived in the UK for less than five years live in the private rented sector compared to 20% of the UK born population.

Research also shows that around 20% of migrants live in social rented accommodation. Government statistics show that 93% of lead tenants in social housing are from the British Isles.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62c562758fa8f54e8d8ac950/EHS20-21_Social_Rented_Sector_Report.pdf

<https://theconversation.com/election-2024-migrants-arent-to-blame-for-britains-housing-crisis-222931>

The Real Cause of Housing Shortages

The supply of social housing in England and Wales has decreased by 300,000 units since 2010. This is a consequence of austerity cuts to social housing funding, the Right to Buy, demolitions and properties converting to “affordable” rents as per 2011 UK government directive to permit rents to be set at 80% of market rent. While below market levels, these are rarely affordable to low-income households in high demand areas.

Supply of new homes is falling well short of demand from the local population. According to the National Housing Federation, only 8,386 new social homes were built in England in 2022-23. In the same period, councils recognised 52,800 households as requiring help because they were homeless or threatened with homelessness. As a group of social housing sector leaders pointed out in a letter to the prime minister, proposals that make it harder for people to get on the housing register are more likely to force people into homelessness. They certainly do not stop people from needing a place to live. **Migrants represent nearly a fifth of all homeless households.**

<https://www.cih.org/media/xu1phiuk/housing-sector-letter-to-pm-and-sos-luhc-re-british-homes-for-british-workers.pdf>

There is already plenty of existing legislation that already makes it difficult for migrants to access social housing. Homelessness legislation in England stipulates that applicants demonstrate a local connection to their area to receive priority for social housing. This means that many migrants are instead directed to the private rented sector.

Recent migrants are also likely to be low priority applicants as they will not have had sufficient time on waiting lists. **Studies have shown very limited use of social housing by migrants, often in specific areas. And some groups – including refugees, asylum seekers and students – are unlikely to qualify at all, as they have no access to public funds.**

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/allocation-social-housing-eb7.pdf>

The Right to Rent provisions of the 2014 Immigration Act, which were designed to make it more difficult for migrants without legal status to access all rented accommodation, contain strict limitations on eligibility. Landlords are already obliged to check their tenants' immigration status, so many will refrain from renting to migrants anyway.

All in all, there is no evidence of widespread opportunism among migrants taking advantage of a lax housing allocation system. And blaming migration for housing shortages allows politicians to distract from the real causes.

As the above-cited letter from housing professionals comments: "Further rationing of an already scarce resource does not address the failures of the last 40 years." Rather than excluding groups from accessing housing, whoever is next in Number 10 must prioritise making this resource more plentiful. Both main parties have promised to build homes, but without making them affordable and accessible, the housing crisis will continue.

<https://policyblog.stir.ac.uk/2024/06/18/election-2024-migrants-arent-to-blame-for-britains-housing-crisis/>

Summary

There are many factors behind the housing crisis, One of the major factors being the mass privatisation of the country's housing stock. As I wrote in an article in 2021:

‘Around two million council homes have been sold since the introduction of the Right to Buy in 1981. Around 40 per cent of these homes are now in the hands of buy-to-let landlords, charging up to three times the council rent for the same properties....

England is continuing to lose up to 20,000 low-cost social rented homes a year.. under this reactionary legislation...We need rent controls and proper regulation of the private rented sector. Local communities need to take control of housing development so it can meet their needs rather than lining the pockets of developers, landowners and wealthy foreign investors whose interests mean housebuilding has become a racket for profiteers rather than social good.”

<https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/f/homes-for-the-people>

The last point refers only to the fact that not enough genuinely affordable houses are being built. The demands for profitability amongst builders, bankers, developers and overseas investors dictate otherwise. Like many of our issues, they are functions of inequality of income, wealth, and power: nothing to do with immigration.

Official statistics suggest that 325,000 new homes per year are required simply to meet demand caused by demographic change. This would not tackle the current backlog and yet this level of housebuilding has not been seen since 1970 when council-house building was at its height. **Everyone agrees that new houses need to be built, and given our current reliance on immigrant workers in the construction industry, any attempts to reduce levels of immigration or “send them back” will be massively counterproductive.**

“They Come Over Here and Go Straight Onto an NHS Waiting List”

Immigrants are generally younger and healthier than the indigenous population, many work in the NHS and are essential to its functioning, they reduce rather than increase waiting lists.

As the NHS Confederation said at the end of 2023,

‘There has been an argument for reducing migration that says that it will, in turn, significantly reduce demand on NHS services, however, those making this argument may not always factor in the typical migrant demographic. The majority of migrants to the UK are in their 20s and 30s and either work or pay to study, thus contributing taxes to fund public services. They also tend to be less likely to consume health services given they are young.’

The same report goes on to say;

‘According to reports and data, immigration isn’t harmful to the NHS with the Migration Advisory Committee reporting, for example, that ‘EEA migrants contribute much more to the health service and the provision of social care in financial resources and work than they consume in services’.

The benefits of immigration to the NHS workforce

With a high number of vacancies across the NHS, health services are clearly struggling to find and retain the staff to keep up with demand. All health professional roles have been on the shortage occupations list (SOL) for some time, and while increasing training places, diversifying training routes, and incentivising work in the NHS are helpful policies for domestic recruitment set out in the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan, they don’t necessarily deal with

the demand right now, given the time it takes to train to enter healthcare professions.

To help fill the current 100,00+ vacancies in the NHS, immigration and international recruitment allows a wide pool of candidates.

Recent NHS data shows that across all NHS staff in England (1.4 million), more than 17 per cent (264,815) are from overseas. Percentages for nurses are much higher – nearly 27 per cent of NHS nurses are from outside the UK (99,856 of the 372,605 nurses and health visitors recorded).'

<https://www.nhsconfed.org/articles/immigration-harming-nhs>

A 2015 study found that

‘(immigration) reduced waiting times for outpatient referrals and did not have significant effects on waiting times in Accident and Emergency (A&E) and elective care. These results are explained by the fact that immigration increases natives' internal mobility and that immigrants tend to be healthier than the natives moving to different areas.’

<https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/9351/the-effects-of-immigration-on-nhs-waiting-times>

Summary

In 2010 and 2014 the NHS was ranked very highly across many key areas by major comparative studies of health services in the developed world. In 2014, The NHS was declared the best healthcare system by an international panel of experts who rated its care superior to countries which spent far more on health. Note that some of the data for this study went back to 2011; for the 2010 study, some data went back to 2007.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/jun/17/nhs-health>

The UK experienced significant immigration across those periods. Any deterioration in NHS performance since then has been due to decisions taken by various governments regarding spending cuts and priorities, not immigration. **The ageing of the indigenous population has also increased pressure on the NHS, which makes the case for the immigration of younger, healthier people to (i) fill vacancies the the NHS and (ii) work to generate the taxes to pay for the service, a national treasure.**

“They Come Over Here In Small Boats, Just to Overwhelm Us”

Small boats represent a tiny percentage of immigration, and most of the people are legitimate refugees that have been denied regular means of applying for asylum in Britain. No human being is illegal.

The first thing to fully appreciate is that the majority of people crossing the Channel in small boats are fleeing war-torn or oppressive countries where no safe and formal routes exist for making an asylum claim in the UK. They are no coming to the UK ‘illegally,’ their arrivals are ‘irregular’ because there are very few regular routes by which they can arrive in the UK to claim asylum.

In terms of the number of asylum applications per head of population, the UK ranks 20th highest in Europe.

There were 31,493 people detected arriving by small boats between July 2023 and June 2024. This was a decrease of 29% compared to the previous year.

In the year to June 2024, 57% of small boat arrivals were from just five nationalities:

Afghanistan (18%)

Iranian (13%)

Vietnamese (10%)

Turkish (10%)

Syrian (9%).

Since July 2020, 93% of those who crossed the channel claimed asylum in the UK, but only 46% had received a decision.

Of those who did receive a decision, 36,671 (71%) were **grants of protection**.

57% of initial decisions made in the year to June 2024 have been grants of protection, meaning they have been awarded refugee status or humanitarian protection.

A total of 66,454 people were granted protection in the year ending June 2024 as a result of an asylum claim, a 217% increase from the previous year when 24,123 people were granted.

The proportion of asylum appeals allowed in the year to March 2024 was 48% (almost unchanged from the previous year). The appeal success rate has been steadily increasing over the last decade (up from 29% in 2010).

The quality of decision-making is often poor, with many refugees having to rely on the courts to award protection following an appeal of the Government's initial decision.

The appeals process can be complex and lengthy, with people seeking asylum having to wait months for their appeals to be heard.

So, a significant number of people claiming asylum do have legitimate rights to make that claim. Many of those rejected achieve success on appeal. These are people in very difficult circumstances,

they are not 'economic migrants trying to fiddle the system and come to Britain to claim benefits. **The 31,493 who arrived by small boats in the year to June 2024 represents 0.0463% of Britain's population. Net migration in 2023 was 685,000, so the small boats represented around 4.6% of that figure.**

The real disgrace is the lack of safe, regular routes of asylum for people for all but a few countries, the amount of time it takes to process claims, and the exploitation of the situation by a small group of racist and/or opportunist political figures.

At the end of June 2024, 100,995 people seeking asylum were being supported by the Government.

Of those, three in ten (29,585) were living in hotels, a decrease of 14% from 35,530 at the end of March 2024.

People seeking asylum are banned from working and are provided with a £7 per day from the Government to cover the costs of their basic necessities.

The UK Government has the power to detain people who are here seeking refuge. Sometimes this even includes children. There is no maximum time limit in place for people held in detention, meaning people are held indefinitely.

The latest statistics show that there were 18,918 people detained in immigration removal centres during the twelve months to June 2024; among them were 7,275 people seeking asylum. Despite a government promise in 2010 to end the practice of detaining children, there were 10 occurrences of children entering immigration detention in the year to June 2024.

<https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/information/refugee-asylum-facts/top-10-facts-about-refugees-and-people-seeking-asylum/>

<https://asylummatters.org/campaigns/support-rates/>



Why Do They Come to the UK From “Safe” Countries

From the UK Refugee Council:

‘Many have been left wondering why refugees leave “safe” countries, such as France, to seek protection in the UK instead. It’s important to first acknowledge the global context, **which is that the vast majority of refugees – 72% – live in a neighbouring country to the one they have fled. Other European countries including France receive many more asylum applications than the UK. The people who do come to the UK to claim asylum represent a tiny proportion of refugees globally. Here are some of the factors that lead to them seeking protection here.**

Family and community.

Seeking out family and community is a human impulse, and it is only natural for refugees to want to be reunited with their loved ones. With the UK's restricted pathways to family reunion, however, refugee families torn apart by war are forced to face indefinite separation or make the desperate choice to risk their lives to be reunited.

What is safe? A country that you consider "safe" may not feel safe to every individual. Refugees may have had bad experiences in a country that make them feel unsafe or unwelcome. Or they may have had difficulties accessing that country's asylum system. Poor living conditions and lack of food, shelter and healthcare are also factors that push people to take even greater risks in their journey to safety.

One refugee, Veritasy, told us that he did not feel safe in France:

"The police are very cruel...So from Calais we were thinking about moving to another safe place." For some, crossing the Channel feels like their only hope; the only way for the nightmare to finally end: "It was psychologically not a logical decision, but I had no other choice. Either way I'll die; either at sea, in France or by going back to Syria. That's how I found myself in a boat going to England."

Language and familiarity.

Refugees are forced to leave everything behind as they flee their homes; their only hope being the chance to rebuild their lives in a foreign country. Familiarity with some of the culture and language of the UK can at least make this process a little easier and allow refugees to feel more safe and at ease in a difficult and challenging situation. Familiarity may also come from historical links between the UK and a refugee's country or from the UK's reputation internationally as a safe and democratic country.

Farzad, who came to the UK from Iran, explained that language was an important reason for wanting to come to the UK: “I knew English before I came. My priority was the UK. I was in France for a while, but the language was a problem for me, I have studied English back in my country, I thought at my age, I’m 45, to start learning a language would take me a while.”

Element of choice. Not all refugees get to choose the destination of their journey. People smugglers may dictate where refugees go and may even provide refugees with false information about how dangerous the journey across the Channel actually is.

The bottom line is that there is a myriad of reasons why someone might be willing to risk their lives in search for safety in the UK. And the reality is that most refugees do not travel through multiple safe countries in search for a new home. Nor do most of them end up in the UK. **In fact, the majority of refugees are hosted in countries that neighbour their countries of origin.**

Those who do take great risks to come to the UK do so because there is no better alternative – they are men, women and children fleeing war and oppression. The real problem is that we are not offering them safe routes to take to make a claim for asylum...

The vast majority of refugees do not have access to safe routes to reach the UK.

In the first nine months of 2022, 24,881 people from the seven countries set out above crossed the channel. (Albania, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Eritrea, Sudan.)

During the same period, only 867 people from those same countries were resettled through a safe route, working in collaboration with the UNHCR, to the UK. The majority of

those people were resettled from Syria, with only 14 and 9 people resettled from Eritrea and Iran respectively.

Ukrainian refugees do have access to safe routes through the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme (as of 3 January 2023, 210,800 visas had been issued to people displaced by the war in Ukraine through these two schemes.). As a result, there were no Ukrainians recorded as having crossed the Channel during the first nine months of 2022.

The safe routes available to refugees from other parts of the world are extremely limited, and fewer people are currently accessing them compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic. Refugee resettlement provided in collaboration with the UNHCR is currently 75% lower than the pre-COVID level in 2019, and refugee family reunion visas are 36% down on their pre-COVID level.'

<https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/information/refugee-asylum-facts/understanding-channel-crossings/>

Summary

The impact on the UK of refugees, particularly those that come here via small boats, is massively overstated by various unscrupulous individuals and factions. The evidence suggests that the majority who arrive have legitimate claims: to go through the extreme difficulties entailed in getting to Britain as an asylum seeker indicates that these are desperate people.

These are also very determined and resourceful people. **Their presence in the country will probably add more value than that of some of the people who abuse them for publicity and in pursuit of political/monetary gain.**

Stewart McGill
Martial Artists Against Racism
October 2024

