



# United Kingdom

## Introduction

The United Kingdom became a country of immigration after the Second World War following large-scale immigration from its former colonies. Labor shortages generated by Britain's relative postwar affluence were filled by colonial workers who took advantage of privileged immigration channels created by the country's citizenship laws.<sup>1</sup> Until the mid-1960s, migration was a market-driven phenomenon sanctioned by an imperial citizenship regime. Migration patterns were largely stable from the early 1970s until the 1990s, with migration disproportionately made up of family reunification. From then, primary immigration—im-



## Background Information

**Capital:** London, England

**Languages:** English, other recognized regional languages

**Area:** 242,900 km<sup>2</sup> (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland)

**Population (2012):** 63,705,000

**Population density:** 262 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>

**Population growth (2012):** +0.7%

**Foreign-born population as a percentage of total population (2010):** 12.9%

**Population comprised of minority ethnic groups (2011):** 14.0% (England and Wales)

**Labor force participation rate (2012):** 62.1%

**Percentage of foreign-born employees amongst gainfully employed (2012):** 13.6%

**Unemployment rate:** 7.8% (2010); 8.0% (2011); 7.9% (2012)

**Religions (2012):** Christianity (59.3%), Muslim (4.8%), Hindu (1.5%), Sikh (0.75%), other (4.3%), no religion (25.1%), not stated (7.2%)

migrants with no previous connection to the UK—began increasing. The migration balance, however, remained negative throughout most of the 1970s and 1980s, meaning that more people emigrated from the UK than immigrated into the country. Since 1994 this is no longer the case. Currently, the UK has over 175,000 net migrants per year. This rise has resulted in greatly increased saliency of immigration as a political issue, and there are some suggestions that it could realign the party system.

## Immigration – A Much Debated Issue

Peak periods of immigration in the postwar period have reliably occasioned public hostility, press hysteria, and party politicization of the issue, with polls continuing to place immigration at the top of Britons' concerns.<sup>2</sup> Migrants are viewed as a problem for reasons being cited already for decades by opponents of immigration: immigrants are competitors for scarce jobs, housing, and social services, and they threaten to alter communities' character against the will of their inhabitants. To these familiar complaints, critics of immigration have added some fresh concerns: first, that immigration undermines social solidarity and thus the welfare state; second, that older generations of immigrants and, above all, their children are failing to identify sufficiently with Britain and British values; and, third, that unskilled migration pushes down wages and limits opportunities for Britain's poorest citizens. At the same time, the United Kingdom has Europe's most elaborate legislative and policy framework combating racial discrimination; moreover, the government, public bodies, and the media

take formal and informal measures to ensure representation of visible minorities.

Events since the mid-1990s have undermined confidence both in the ability of the country to integrate visible minorities/migrants and in the efficacy of multicultural policies in doing so. In 2001, gangs of Asian and white youth fought in England's northern cities; in July 2005, four suicide bombers who were British Muslims attacked London and four others tried; and, in October 2005, riots broke out between members of Birmingham's black and Asian communities. In the late 2000s, the main focus of controversy, and of anti-migration sentiment, has for the first time since the very early postwar years been European migration: EU citizens from Eastern Europe (chiefly Poles) who came to the UK following the 2004 enlargement of the EU.

### Transformations Since the Mid-1990s

Applications for asylum under the 1951 UN convention skyrocketed in the late 1990s, increasing from an average of 35,000 per year from 1991 to 1998, and peaking at 84,132 (only claims of main applicants) in 2002. Restrictive measures have contributed to a sharp, steady decline since 2002, with only 19,865 asylum applications made in 2011. There has been a slight rise since then, with 21,843 asylum applications made in 2012 and 23,507 in 2013. Also in the mid-1990s, skilled migration began increasing, and by 2002 the UK was issuing record numbers of work permits. And, since 2004, a sharp increase in immigration has followed from the granting of labor market rights to A8 (2004 EU accession countries minus Malta and Cyprus) nationals.

Despite promises by the Conservative/Liberal Democratic coalition government formed following the 2010 general election to reduce net migration, it remains high: 175,000 in 2012, rising to 243,000 in 2013.<sup>3</sup> These new arrivals come at a time when the UK has not fully coped with the challenges thrown up by earlier waves in postwar migration. This profile reviews that history, briefly touches on the UK's approach to integration, and examines the current, highly contentious, politics of immigration in the UK.

### Development of Immigration Policy

Until 1962, Commonwealth immigrants, as British subjects, enjoyed unimpeded access to the United Kingdom,<sup>4</sup> and in the 1950s some 500,000 migrants, mostly young, single men, travelled to the UK. Following a large upsurge in arrivals from the late 1950s, the Conservative government enacted the first immigration controls in 1962 (though it exempted the Irish), and the Labour opposition bitterly denounced the measure as populist and racist. Two years later, the Labour government was in power, and it quickly recognized that family reunification meant that every pre-1962 migrant would bring in two to four subsequent migrants in the form of his family members. It thus abandoned its previous commitment to open borders and extended immigration controls in 1965.<sup>5</sup> In 1971, the Conservative govern-

ment placed British subjects on the same legal footing as aliens (though those with British grandparents continued to enjoy entry rights). The measure took effect in 1973, when the UK opened its borders to European Economic Community workers. Restrictive policy towards non-EU migrants continued under Labour and Conservative governments through the ensuing decades. Efforts aimed at reducing asylum applications have been, and remain, a constant. Until the 2000s, EU migration, which was until then mostly skilled, attracted little attention, but since the accession of Eastern European states in 2004 such migration has been highly controversial.

The greatest change to immigration policy occurred in 2002 with the issuing of a white paper setting out an ambitious and comprehensive plan for "managed migration." The break with previous policy was reiterated in support for high-skilled "economic" migration within the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act of the same year, and the Highly Skilled Migrant Program (HSMP), a scheme based on a points system like Australia's, was introduced. In 2008, the HSMP was abandoned under a reformed immigration system.

### Immigration System Reform

In 2006, the points system was elaborated into a five-tiered system for non-EU migrants following public consultation about immigration system reform. Points are allocated to applicants under the new system based on skills and labor market needs. The 80 or so separate routes of entry previously available have been streamlined as follows: the first tier is for highly-skilled migrants (the only group who do not need a job offer to qualify); the second tier covers skilled workers needed in specific sectors, such as nurses, teachers and engineers; the third tier covers low-skilled workers (these applicants need employer sponsors); the fourth tier is for students; and the fifth tier covers working holidaymakers<sup>6</sup> and professional athletes and musicians. The third tier was never implemented.

On coming to power in 2010, the Conservative/Liberal Democratic coalition, led by Prime Minister David Cameron, promised to reduce net migration to the tens of thousands and has struggled to achieve that goal. In the face of much lobbying from the business community, the government set the annual Tier 1 limit at 1,000 and limited it to the "exceptionally talented;" set the Tier 2 limit at 20,700; but exempted high earners (those earning over £150,000 per year) as well as intra-company transfers and a number of other categories.<sup>7</sup> Tier 4 visas are subject to more rigorous checks (to avoid educational institutions being used as a means to secure easy entry) and subject to a time limit: students may only stay in the UK for five years. Students previously could apply for a Tier 1 (Post Study Work) visa, but now have to apply for a Tier 2 visa. Tier 5 is not subjected to numerical limits, but applicants must secure enough points under a points system (sufficient funds secures 10 points out of the required 30) in order to be issued a visa. In 2012 the government announced a minimum annual salary threshold of £35,000 for Tier 2 migrant workers.

## The Immigrant Population

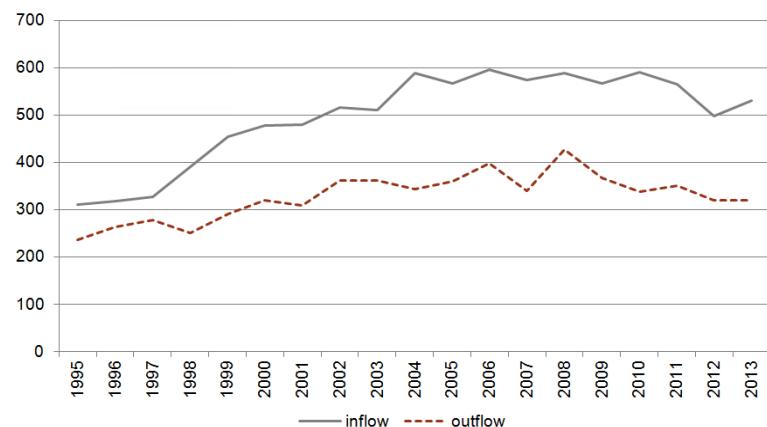
Although immigrants are often popularly thought of as minority ethnic populations, for statistical purposes, they are more narrowly described here as current residents born outside of the UK. In 2011, 7.5 million of the people usually resident in the UK had been born overseas (up from 4.9 million in 2001), which represented 13 percent of the overall population (up from 8.3 percent in 2001).<sup>8</sup> The largest increase in the postwar decades occurred in the decade from 2001 to 2011 (2.6 million people), the second largest from 1991 to 2001 (1.1 million people). In contrast, the next largest increase occurred in the period 1961-1971, when 600,000 people were added to the population through immigration. As in past censuses, the main source country in 2011 was India (694,000). The second-largest source country was Poland (579,000, up from 58,000 in 2001); the third-largest Pakistan (482,000); and the fourth-largest Ireland (407,000). The most striking feature of recent migration to the UK is its white, European, and Christian character. The large-scale arrival of Eastern Europeans provoked widespread opposition, suggesting that numbers, rather than race as such, drive anti-migrant sentiment.

It is estimated that migrants contribute a net gain to the UK's economy—EU migrants are said to have contributed between 2001 and 2011 to the fiscal system 34 percent more than they took out—though critics of immigration dispute these figures.<sup>9</sup> The medical and health sector is particularly dependent on immigrants, with 26 percent of the doctors and 14 percent of clinical staff being non-British. Other sectors of notable immigrant concentration for which statistics are available are apparel manufacturing (41.5 percent), industrial plant operations (41.4 percent, including occupations such as packers, bottlers, canners, etc.), and food preparation (28.4 percent).<sup>10</sup>

### Flows

Figure 1 shows total international migration into and out of the UK between 1995 and 2013. Following past patterns,

**Figure 1: International migration into and out of the UK, 1995-2013  
(in thousands)**



Source: Office for National Statistics

employed migrants who come to the UK from more developed countries are more likely to leave again, whereas those from elsewhere are more likely to stay. British citizens are the largest group of emigrants, with Australia and Spain being the most popular destinations for long-term migrants (short-term migrants tend to move to other EU countries). Net outflows of British citizens have increased from 17,000 in 1994 to over 126,000 in 2006 before dropping back.<sup>11</sup> Between 2007 and 2012, net emigration of British citizens averaged 66,000 per annum. At the same time, net inflows of non-British citizens increased from 127,000 in 1995 to 218,000 in 2006. Between 2007 and 2012, the annual net immigration of non-British citizens averaged 115,400.

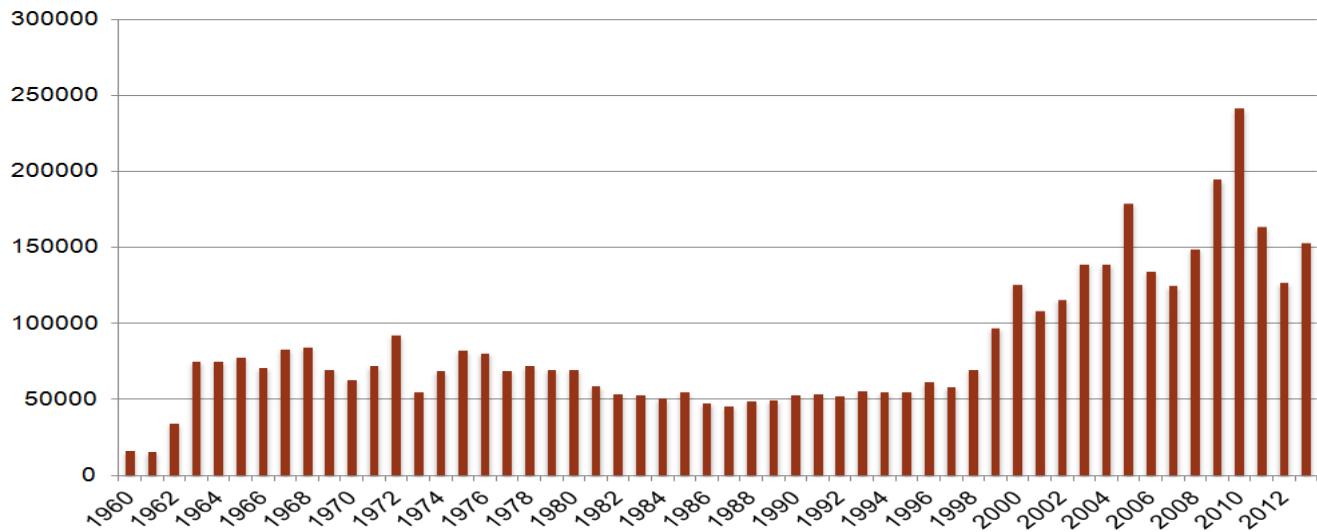
Because of the Labour government's decision to allow newly acceded EU member state citizens access to the UK labor market in 2004 (rather than invoking, as most countries did, legal waiting periods), much migration to the UK in the late 2000s was European. Between 2004 and 2012, total net A8 migration amounted to 423,000 people.<sup>12</sup> Whereas annual net EU immigration had averaged 61,000 from 1991 to 2003, the 2004-2012 average was 170,000.<sup>13</sup> The migration numbers can be further summarized in terms of foreign labor inflows. Foreign labor immigration has seen an enormous increase since the 2004 accession of ten countries to the EU and the granting of labor market access to the Eastern and Central European A8 countries.

The best estimates put the total number of A8 migrant arrivals in the UK between 2004 and 2011 at 730,000,<sup>14</sup> and most evidence—such as the Workers Registration Scheme (which ran from 2004 to 2011)—suggests that A8 nationals were predominantly lower skilled. By contrast, 89 percent of worker permit approvals under the old work permit system were for managerial, professional, or technical positions, and the new Tier 2 visas are limited to skilled categories

### Settlement

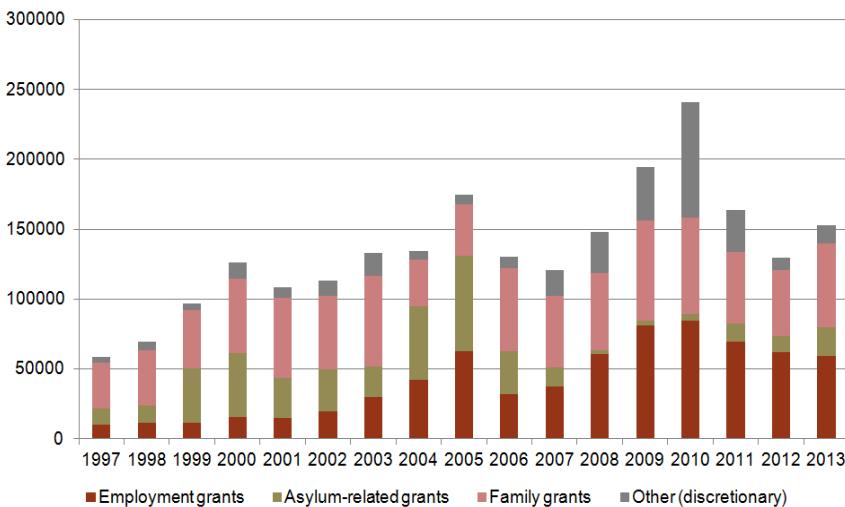
Grants of settlement, which record persons given leave to remain in the UK indefinitely (permanent residency), provide another useful summary of immigration trends. Figure 2 shows acceptances for settlement under all programs from 1960 to 2013. The large increase in 2005 is the result of a clearing of backlog, and settlement granted under the Family ILR Exercise announced in 2003, which allowed some asylum-seeking families that had lodged their asylum application before 2 October 2000, to stay (23,000 main applicants have been awarded grants in this manner). Between 2005 and 2011, grants of settlement averaged 170,000 per year.

Settlement can be granted on arrival, but it also increasingly reflects adjustments to the status of those originally admitted under other programs. Figure 3 shows grants by type. Since 2008, the largest category has been

**Figure 2: Number of persons accepted for settlement per year, 1960-2013**

Source: Office for National Statistics

that of employment-related grants, with settlement granted after five years of employment with a work permit (which had been increased from a minimum of four years in 2006). Asylum-related grants have grown in both absolute and relative terms, comprising 26 percent of grants in 2001, and 38 percent of grants in 2005. Since 2005, asylum-related grants dropped off sharply (from 67,810 in 2005 to some 13,000 in 2011). Family formation and reunion grants have seen the largest decline, comprising 52 percent of grants in 2001 and 21 percent in 2005. However, in general employment-related and family formation grants have remained high, with some fluctuation from year to year. The uptick in the "Other" category in 2010 was due to an increase in grants made on a discretionary basis as a result of measures implemented to clear a backlog of applications.<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 3: Grants of settlement by category of grant, 1997-2013**

Source: Home Office, The National Archives

## Ethnic and Minority Populations

According to the 2011 census, 12.8 percent of the population self-identify as ethnic minorities. The census asks respondents to classify themselves according to five broad categories of ethnicity: these include "White," "mixed/multiple ethnic," "Asian or Asian British," "Black/African/Caribbean/Black British," and "Other." Finer ethnic or source country distinctions are made consistently across all of the UK areas only within the "Asian" and "Black" categories. The breakdown for the UK is shown in Table 1.

Visible minorities are concentrated in England's cities, above all in London: according to the 2011 census, white Londoners are now a minority: 54 percent of the capital's population is composed of ethnic minorities; 37 percent of Londoners were born outside the country, up from 27 percent in the previous census in 2001. There are also substantial visible minority concentrations in the West Midlands (including Birmingham) and in West Yorkshire (including Bradford), but these now-de-industrialized regions have been less attractive than the capital to recent immigrants.

## Aspects of Immigrant and Minority Integration

### Multiculturalism

Following the election of the Labour government under Tony Blair in 1997, multiculturalism (which was never defined) became a fashionable term in the UK. However, since the outbreak of inter-ethnic violence in northern England in 2001,

**Table 1: Population of the UK by ethnic group, 2011**

	Total population		Ethnic minority population
	Number (in thousands)	%	%
<b>White</b>	50,073	79.3	n/a
<b>Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups</b>	1,250	2.0	15.4
<b>Asian or Asian British</b>	4,373	6.9	53.9
Indian	1,452	2.3	17.9
Pakistani	1,175	1.9	14.5
Bangladeshi	452	0.7	5.6
Chinese	433	0.7	5.3
Other Asian	862	1.4	10.6
<b>Black/African/Caribbean/ Black British</b>	1,905	3.0	23.5
<b>Other Ethnic Group</b>	580	0.9	7.2
<i>All ethnic minority population</i>	8,109	12.8	100.0
<b>Total population</b>	63,182	100.0	n/a

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census

the term ‘multiculturalism’ has been viewed with increased suspicion in the UK. The major newspapers have run articles and editorials denouncing the balkanizing effects of multiculturalism, and the Home Office has placed the accent once again on integration in and loyalty to Britain. This partly is dependent on one’s definition of multiculturalism: for above all Canadians, ‘multiculturalism’ means integration; for Britons and many other Europeans, it means segregation.

Following the 2001 Asian-white riots, the government stiffened requirements for citizenship with the goal of ensuring that naturalized migrants were better integrated. Even the Commission for Racial Equality, until 2006 the official voice of visible minority concerns in the UK, chimed in to the integrationist chorus. In 2004, its black director, Trevor Phillips, secured national headlines by telling the country “multiculturalism is dead.” He has since warned of a drift towards US-style segregation and urged a greater emphasis on accentuating common Britishness. The organization’s 2004 report defines the organization’s leitmotif as an “integrated Britain where all are equal.” In the fol-

lowing year, the realization that three out of four of the July 2005 bombers were born in Britain to relatively affluent backgrounds was a profound shock to the national psyche. At the 2011 Munich Security Conference Prime Minister David Cameron declared that “state multiculturalism has failed” and that what was required was not a “passive tolerance” that allowed extremism to flourish but, rather, a “muscular liberalism.”<sup>16</sup>

As is the case throughout Europe, the discussion of integration is really a discussion of Islam and Muslims<sup>17</sup>, and the now decade-old debate between those who believe that Muslims are failing to integrate (meaning that values of particularly young male Muslims differ from those of the broader society and show tendencies toward violent religious extremism) and those who believe that the “problem” of Muslim integration is an Islamophobic construction shows no sign of ebbing. Indeed, the emergence of evidence in late summer 2014 that British Jihadists are travelling to Syria and Iraq to fight with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has reignited debates about Muslim integration.<sup>18</sup>

## Anti-Discrimination Policies

Britain has had a long history—often discussed under the rubric of “race relations”—of anti-discrimination legislation. The country’s anti-discrimination framework has been developed gradually since the 1960s, always under Labour governments.

The most important change in anti-discrimination policy in the last decades was the Race Relations Amendment Act of 2000. Although enacted in reaction to the failings of the police service, it affected a much broader range of institutions. The legislation extended the 1976 race-relations legislation (which outlawed both intentional and unintentional discrimination) to all public bodies—police, the universities, the National Health Service (NHS)—and to all private bodies exercising public functions, with the exception of Parliament, the security services (i.e., MI5 and MI6), and immigration officers. It also placed a “general duty” on public authorities to work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups. In 2010, the Race Relations Act (2000) was merged into the new Equality Act. The latter brought under a single act over one hundred legislative instruments, including those outlawing discrimination on the basis of race, age, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability. In the main, the legislation covered the same groups protected under existing legislation, but it did add new prohibitions of discrimination on the grounds of association and perception (when one is perceived to belong to a particular group). These post-2000 changes amounted to an important evolution in anti-discrimination legislation. Whereas previous policies had targeted access and opportunity, the new measures are concerned with outcome. Public bodies are compelled to consider their ethnic makeup and to question whether insufficient ethnic-minority representation reflects their policies. That said, the measures only touch one part of the economy. They do not affect the private sector, and still less do they affect the ill-paid, precarious, and often undocumented sector of the job market in which migrants and visible minorities are disproportionately concentrated.

## Education

The quality of the school attended has a decisive impact on visible minorities’ integration and life chances. For historical reasons, the education system has tended to replicate rather than remove race-based differences in educational outcomes. This is mainly because access to good schools is generally gained by living within a particular catchment area<sup>19</sup> or by paying very high tuition fees.

This is of particular concern to visible minorities, as those with the worst school results—Pakistanis and Bangladeshis—tend to live in areas with the worst schools. Although causality is difficult to establish, there can be little doubt that their fairly dreadful school results cannot be separated from the quality of inner-city schools. So far, attempts of reform had little effect.

## Religion and Diversity

The United Kingdom—particularly England—is in the curious position of having an established church while being among the most secular societies in the Western world. Religion was a non-issue throughout much of the postwar period. This situation changed drastically in 1989, when Salman Rushdie published *The Satanic Verses*. The publication led the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran to issue a fatwa sentencing the author to death. The fatwa made international headlines, but of greater local interest was the reaction of British Muslims: large demonstrations against Rushdie in Trafalgar Square, replete with an effigy of Rushdie with a slashed throat, and copies of the book burned in northern England.

Since the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States and the July 7, 2005 bombings in London, the traditional preoccupation in the United Kingdom with categories of race has been partially transcended by a concern with religion, particularly Islam. These attacks were followed by an increase in racially motivated violence, and by a general climate of suspicion of and hostility towards Muslims.

While Muslims enjoyed civil law protections as visible minorities under the Race Relations Act, they lacked the protection of criminal law sanctions specifically designed to address religiously motivated crimes. To change this, the Labour government adopted in 2006 the Racial and Religious Hatred Bill, still in force, which for the first time made religious hatred a criminal offence. Prosecution, however, can only be initiated by the British government, not by aggrieved individuals.

The 2006 bill was highly controversial when introduced. The same is true for another measure initiated under Labour: expansion of faith-based schools. Religious schools are nothing new in the UK; there are approximately 7,000 Christian schools receiving state funding. By contrast, only thirteen of some 156 full-time Muslim schools in the UK (2014) receive state funding,<sup>20</sup> a result described by the House of Lords as “institutionally racist.” As part of its effort to create academies (state-funded schools with more autonomy over curriculum and operation), the Labour government under Tony Blair began funding Muslim schools. The measure has been expanded under a Conservative education secretary since 2010. For some, the funding is a matter of equity as Catholic and Anglican schools receive funding; for others, Islamic schools create particular problems of religious extremism.<sup>21</sup>

## Citizenship

Until 2005, the United Kingdom provided liberal access to citizenship. Though viewed as inclusionary today, citizenship by birth—*jus soli*—has its origins in feudalism (what’s born within the realm of the lord belongs to the lord) and imperialism. From the early seventeenth century, anyone born within the realm of the British monarch was a subject of that monarch, and British-subject status was the basis

of British nationality right up to 1981. This basic principle was carried over into the age of empire, and all those born within the British Empire were British subjects who enjoyed, in theory, full rights within the UK. This system was reaffirmed in 1948, and it meant that the 500,000 non-white British subjects who entered the UK before 1962 did so not as immigrants but as citizens. The UK ended pure *jus soli* in 1981, but there has otherwise been a high degree of continuity in citizenship policy. All those born in the UK to parents who are permanent residents, citizens, or recognized refugees are citizens at birth. Others may naturalize after three years of marriage to a UK citizen or after five years of residence in the UK. Dual citizenship is fully accepted.

In 2011, 53 percent of UK citizenship grants went to migrants who had fulfilled the five-year residency requirement (six years for non-EEA and Swiss nationals).<sup>22</sup> Since 2005, prospective citizens have had to pass a "Life in the UK" test,<sup>23</sup> which assesses the applicant's knowledge of British history and culture, as well as an English-language proficiency test. However, if the applicant's language ability is low, language classes may be taken instead. Finally, as citizenship has become harder to acquire, it has become easier to lose: the government has expanded its power to revoke people's citizenship. The Home Secretary may strip dual nationals (naturalized, registered, and native born) of their citizenship if she thinks them holding citizenship is not "conducive to the public good" (a longstanding concept in British immigration policy). She can strip single nationals of their citizenship if they are naturalized citizens and then only if they have acted in a manner seriously prejudicial to the vital interests of the UK (generally, engaging in terrorist activities).<sup>24</sup> Finally, in 2009 the British government passed the Borders, Citizenship, and Immigration Act, which raised from five to eight years (and from three to five for those married to a Briton) the residence requirement for naturalization. This requirement could, however, be reduced by two years (to six for regular applicants, or to three for those

married to a Briton) through community service. According to Home Office websites, these requirements have now been reduced: the residency requirements are currently set at the previous thresholds of five and three years, respectively.<sup>25</sup>

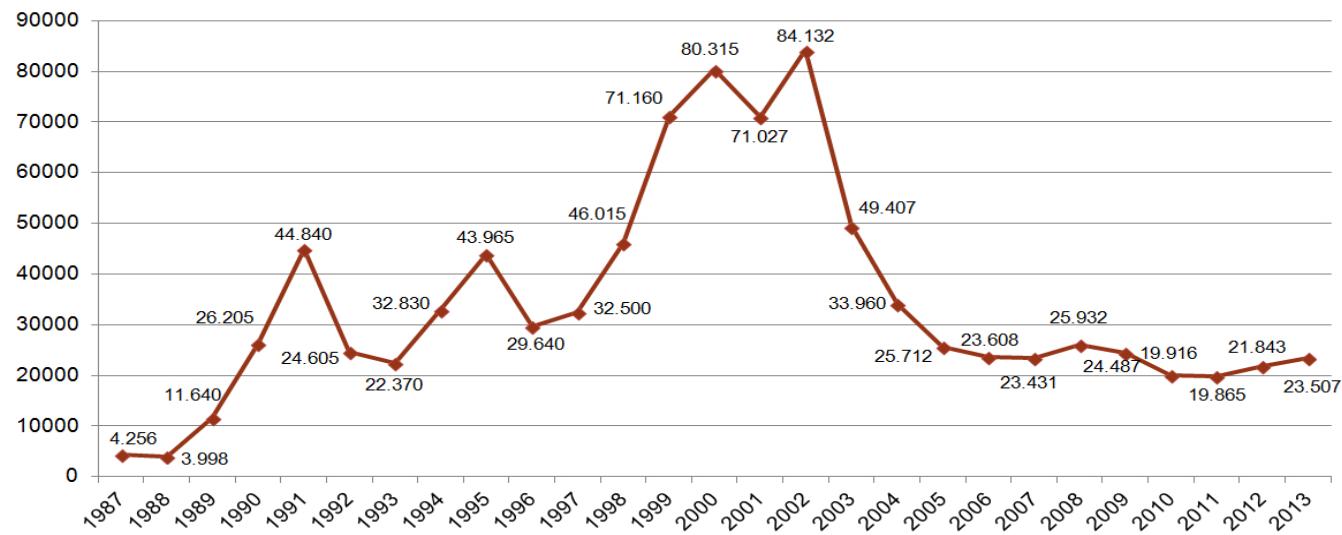
The British government has also made applications for permanent residency (indefinite leave to remain) more restrictive. Since 2007 applicants have been required to pass the "Life in the UK" test. Since autumn 2013, they also have to obtain a "Speaking and Listening Qualification in English for Speakers of Other Languages" (ESOL). The standard is intermediate, B1 in the Common European Framework for Languages.

Since the late 2000s, fees for adjustments to status (along with fees for visas and work permits) have been raised significantly. The fee for permanent residency (previously available after four years to those on work permits, then raised to five years in 2006) was increased from £335 to £1,093 in 2014.<sup>26</sup> Naturalization, which previously cost £200, was raised to £906 (2014).

## Refugee and Asylum

British refugee policy is governed by the United Nations convention relating to the status of refugees and its 1967 protocol, which the UK has signed. Until the late 1980s, the UK was not a popular destination for asylum seekers. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) statistics, in 1988 only 5,700 people lodged applications for asylum. This situation changed in the 1990s: applications rose sharply, reaching a peak of almost 100,000 in 2000, and the UK overtook Germany as the most popular destination for asylum seekers in Europe. Migration once again rose to the top of the political agenda, and the tabloids led a demonic campaign against "scrounging" asylum seekers.

**Figure 4: Asylum applications (only main applicants) in the UK, 1987-2013**



Source: Migration Observatory

In response to this pressure, the UK adopted a range of measures designed to deter asylum seekers, including reduced social benefits, time limits for lodging applications, the declaring of British airports to be international zones,<sup>27</sup> reduced appeal rights, and the fast-tracking of claims deemed “manifestly unfounded.” The UK also participates in European efforts to harmonize asylum policy, including the Dublin conventions requiring asylum seekers to apply for refugee status in the first EU state they reach. In recent years, the number of asylum applications has fallen dramatically. In 2006 applications were at their lowest level since 1993, and most initial decisions were made within two months of application. 23,507 asylum applications were made in 2013; only 37 percent of 17,647 initial decisions taken that year were granted.

## Irregular Migration

In 2005 the issue of irregular migrants made headlines when David Roberts, Head of Removals at the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) provoked an uproar by admitting that he did not have the “faintest idea” how many immigrants were illegally living in the UK.<sup>28</sup> The Home Office quickly released an estimate of approximately 500,000. Other organizations cited a higher figure, ranging upwards of 800,000.

In 2007, Home Secretary John Reid tabled proposals designed to make life difficult for those illegally in the country, and he reiterated the government’s commitment to “throwing out” as many as possible. The punitive rhetoric and targeting of “foreigners” who “steal our benefits”<sup>29</sup> provoked alternative proposals.

Growing civil society resistance to these measures included calls for regularization of some 500,000 illegal residents and anti-deportation activism supported by the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns (NCADC). In 2007, 65 Labour party backbenchers led by Jon Cruddas signed a motion lending their support to the Strangers into Citizens regularization proposal<sup>30</sup> put forward by a coalition of faith-based and community organizations. The Labour government rejected the proposal and expanded deportation instead. The UK Borders Act, 2007 introduced the concept of automatic deportation, which meant that the Home Secretary is under an obligation to deport non-EU citizens convicted of a crime with a sentence of twelve months or more or if they commit another serious crime (as specified by the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act of 2002). In 2013 a total of 45,712 persons were deported (13,051 enforced removals, 32,661 voluntary departures).

## Current Developments and Future Challenges

At the time of writing, immigration remains a highly controversial topic in the UK for several reasons. First, the government’s promise to reduce net immigration to below 100,000 appears to have little chance of success; most recent figures place net immigration at 243,000 annual-

ly. The reasons for this failure are clear: the government only indirectly limits intra-EU migration (by requiring that inactive immigrants are self-supporting for particular periods of time) and it has no control over emigration. If the economy continues to improve, emigration may be expected to decrease while immigration increases. Second, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) is enjoying poll support ranging from 9 percent to 16 percent. Much of its appeal is based on opposition to immigration, particularly from EU countries; and the party poses the greatest threat to the governing Conservatives.<sup>31</sup> In the May 2014 European Parliament elections, UKIP secured the highest vote and largest number of seats: 27.5 percent (23 seats) vs. Labour’s 25.4 percent and the Conservatives’ 23.94 percent (both latter parties won 18 seats) on a platform opposing immigration and urging withdrawal from the EU. Third, and closely related to the last point, the removal of transitional controls on Romanian and Bulgarian immigration from 1 January 2014 created new concerns, exploited by UKIP of uncontrolled EU migration.

UKIP is a powerful force in UK politics because the party has successfully united three longstanding bases of populist and far-right support: anti-EU sentiment, anti-immigration sentiment, and xenophobia (which of course partly informs the first two). The government, led very much by the Conservative party, has responded with three measures. First, it has resorted to symbolic anti-immigration politics.<sup>32</sup> In July and August 2013, the government paid for buses to drive through six London boroughs with large posters reading ‘In the UK illegally? Go home or face arrest.’ Such campaigns will have little effect (most calls to the government number listed on the poster were hoaxes), but they are designed more for the public than immigrants: they are meant to reassure anti-migrant voters that the government is doing something.

Second, David Cameron, with some support from Germany, has called for an end to ‘benefit tourism,’ or the alleged practice of moving from poorer countries in the EU to wealthier ones in order to claim welfare benefits.<sup>33</sup> In the summer of 2014, he announced that from November the time during which EU migrant workers can claim benefits will be reduced from six months to three months.<sup>34</sup> The measure has enjoyed some support elsewhere in the EU.

Finally, the UK’s Conservative/Liberal Democratic coalition has promised a referendum on remaining within the EU after the next election, following a renegotiation of Britain’s terms of membership. A key element in that negotiation, were the Conservatives to prevail, would be an increased capacity to limit intra-EU migration.

## Conclusion

Immigration is currently higher on the political agenda than at any time during the United Kingdom’s history, and for the first time in British political history, immigration poses a direct threat to the electoral viability of the most successful political party in British history: the Conservatives. Two factors underlie the current crisis. First, a decade ago (2004), the Labour government took the decision to apply

no transitional controls to A8 EU migration; this decision was purely voluntary, and the immigration crisis that followed was in this sense elective.<sup>35</sup>

It was elective—but unexpected. The government had predicted that some 15,000 migrants would enter annually after May 2004.<sup>36</sup> The actual figure was between 700,000 and one million.<sup>37</sup> Whereas the long-term impact of this immigration is an open question, A8 workers have been subject to public resentment but have otherwise provoked few integration crises in the form of mass unemployment (they came for work) or violence. Moreover, there is considerable evidence that most A8 workers returned home. From 2005 to 2011, fully 695,000 A10 workers left the UK. Thus, in contrast with past migrations, in which unskilled migration was largely permanent and followed by large-scale family reunification, the majority of A10 migration has been circulatory. However, in 2007, when Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU, restrictions on their nationals' entry were kept in place for the maximum allowable period—until January 1, 2014. It is too early to draw conclusions about migration from these two countries, but as of February 2014 there were 127,000 Bulgarians and Romanians in the UK who were “in employment,” most of whom likely arrived as work permit holders after 2007.<sup>38</sup>

The second factor that contributes to the immigration-related political shifts has been the rise of UKIP. Since the run-up to the EU elections in May 2014, UKIP has successfully linked anti-immigration sentiment with one of the defining cleavages of UK politics: Europe, meaning membership of the European Union. Because EU immigration is so difficult to control given the free movement provisions of EU law, and because membership of the EU is such a divisive issue for the Conservative Party, David Cameron and the Conservative leadership have found it extremely difficult to reduce the political and electoral saliency to immigration and to see off the threat of UKIP. How these developments will play out will depend on which party/parties win the next general election (in 2015 at the latest). For the moment, continued net immigration well over 100,000 per year, and UKIP’s successful linkage of immigration with a critique of the EU’s threat to British sovereignty, will keep the topic high on the British political agenda.

Taiwan, some residents of British overseas territories and British Nationals (Overseas), chiefly from Hong Kong, can come to the United Kingdom for an extended holiday of up to two years; they are entitled to work for up to twelve months within this two-year period.

<sup>7</sup> For an overview, see Hansen (2014).

<sup>8</sup> Office for National Statistics (2012).

<sup>9</sup> Cohen (2013).

<sup>10</sup> Rienzo (2013).

<sup>11</sup> Vargas-Silva/Carlos (2014a).

<sup>12</sup> That is, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

<sup>13</sup> Vargas-Silva/Carlos (2014b).

<sup>14</sup> Salt (2012).

<sup>15</sup> Home Office/The National Archives (2012).

<sup>16</sup> New Statesman (2011).

<sup>17</sup> Joppke (2014).

<sup>18</sup> See for instance Haynes/Hamilton (2014).

<sup>19</sup> In 2003, estate agents estimated that access to a good state school added EUR 69,000 to the price of a house. For particular schools, the figure can be closer to EUR 220,000, or double the price of an average UK house.

<sup>20</sup> Association of Muslim Schools UK, “FAQs,” <http://ams-uk.org/faq/> (accessed: 9-17-2014).

<sup>21</sup> On the latter, see the comments by Russell Hobby, leader of the National Association of Head Teachers, in “Headteachers’ union raises serious concerns about Trojan Horse,” *The Guardian*, May 2, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> Blinder (2013).

<sup>23</sup> For a discussion of integration courses and tests in the Netherlands, France, Germany and the United Kingdom, see Joppke (2007).

<sup>24</sup> Gibney (2014).

<sup>25</sup> Gov.uk (2014a) and Gov.uk (2014b).

<sup>26</sup> Home Office (2014b).

<sup>27</sup> By declaring airports to be international zones—and not UK territory—access to asylum is reduced, as passengers arriving at the airports cannot claim asylum in the UK if they are not on UK territory.

<sup>28</sup> Ford (2006).

<sup>29</sup> BBC News (2006).

<sup>30</sup> Workpermit.com (2007).

<sup>31</sup> Clark (2014); YouGov (2014).

<sup>32</sup> Sparrow (2013).

<sup>33</sup> Fontanella-Khan/Parker (2013).

<sup>34</sup> Parker/Warrell (2013).

<sup>35</sup> Hansen (2014).

<sup>36</sup> For a further discussion of EU expansion and the free movement of workers, see also Heinen/Pegels (2006).

<sup>37</sup> Galgócz et al. (2011).

<sup>38</sup> Migration Observatory (2014).

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Hansen (2000).

<sup>2</sup> Ipsos MORI (2007).

<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistics (2014).

<sup>4</sup> Hansen (2000).

<sup>5</sup> Hansen (2000).

<sup>6</sup> Under the Working Holidaymaker Scheme, persons aged 17 to 30 from Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Monaco, and

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The Migration Observatory:

<http://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/>

Office for National Statistics:

[www.ons.gov.uk/ons/index.html](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/index.html)

Home Office:

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office)

Points-based calculator:

[www.points.homeoffice.gov.uk/gui-migrant-jsf/SelfAssessment/SelfAssessment.faces](http://www.points.homeoffice.gov.uk/gui-migrant-jsf/SelfAssessment/SelfAssessment.faces)

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