
Immigration: Eric Pickles isn't the only one without a clue

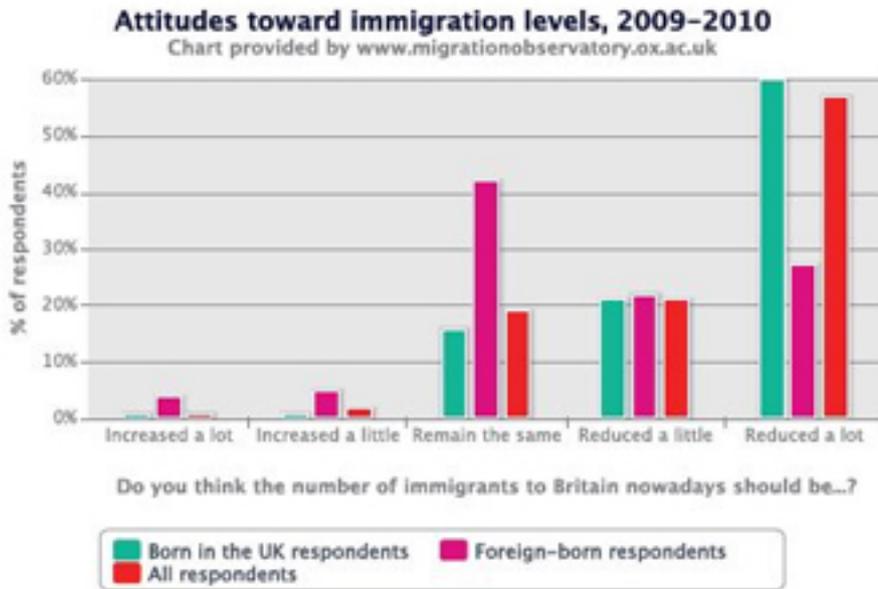
By Len Gibbs

2013 started out with the hardy perennial of tabloids and broadsheets – **immigration**. There were three aspects of the usual stories that lit the touchpaper this time: the first was the 2011 census releases showing the huge change in the complexion of London (amongst other cities); the second was Eric Pickles' admission that nobody had a clue about the potential extent of inward migration from Romania and Bulgaria and the third was the increased reporting of the links between the benefits system and migration. Underlying all the reporting was a significant change of tack by Ed Miliband with his admission that Labour had made mistakes and his floating of the concepts of benefits restrictions on migrants and tighter border controls. No doubt there is also a link between this issue and the Conservatives pledge to hold a referendum on the future of Britain in the European Union.

Concerns about immigration were often quickly conflated with racism by the Left up until very recently, and even now the Guardian/Observer often fails to report key data releases. Polling evidence shows that migration is a key concern of many voters, in fact there is often a harsher stance taken by second and third generation migrants. In 2010 Demos reported that,

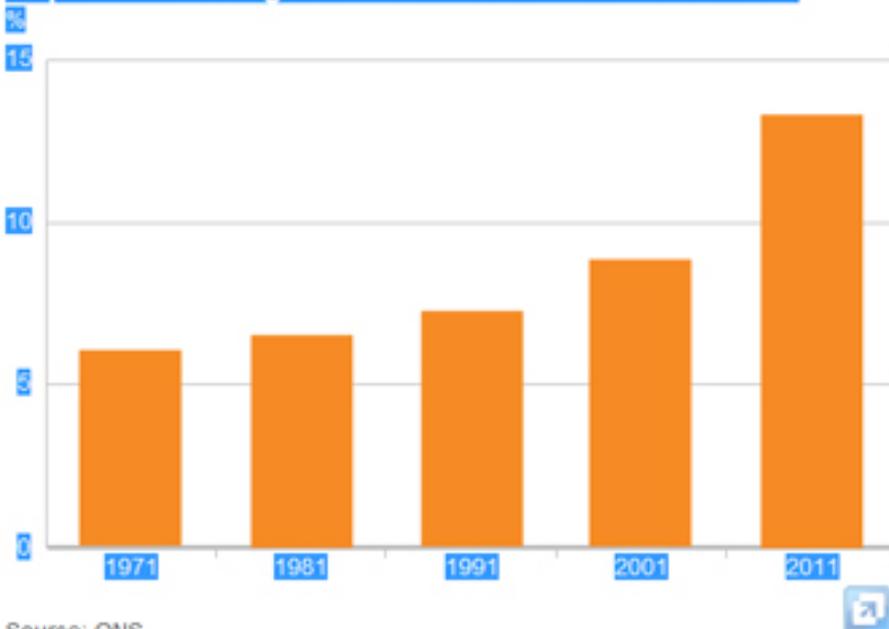
“More than a third (36%) of voters that Labour lost at the last election agreed that ‘Britain should limit the number of people coming from other countries to live and work here because, on balance, they damage our economy and society’, compared with just over one in four (28%) voters who stayed loyal to Labour”.

The 2010 report of the Migration Observatory contained the following poll evidence:



Source: Citizenship Survey, 2009–2010

Population of England & Wales born outside the UK



Source: ONS

Some background articles

[Rise of 'white flight'](#) , by Emma Reynolds, Daily Mail 27 January 2013

[Worried about immigration?](#) Then go and live in Romania, by Marie Dhumieres, Independent 31 January 2013