



Nothing Is Less True Than The Claim We Are A Nation Of Migrants

There is a very persistent myth about Britain, that we are 'a nation of immigrants.' Ed West in his excellent book *The Diversity Illusion* [↗](#), debunks this claim comprehensively.

Below is a list of the key points West tackles on this issue and his reasons for saying this claim is untrue.

- In September 2000, Immigration Minister Barbara Roche said in a speech at the IPPR: *"This country is a country of migrants."*
- Almost nothing could be less true than this statement.
- British DNA dates back to the first Paleolithic and Mesolithic settlers who crossed the English Channel around 10,000 years ago, says Bryan Sykes, professor of Human Genetics at Oxford and author of *Blood of the Isles, Exploring the Genetic Roots of our Tribal History*. 'By about 6,000 years ago the pattern was set for the rest of the history of the Isles and very little has disturbed it since... Overall the genetic structure of the Isles [suggests] descent from people who were here before the Romans...' 'We are an ancient people, and though the Isles have been the target of invasion...ever since Julius Caesar first stepped onto the shingle shores of Kent, these have barely scratched the topsoil of our deep-rooted ancestry.'
- Most British DNA was probably in place even before the arrival of the first Indo-European speaking farmers from the Middle East around 4000BC
- In the worlds of Stephen Oppenheimer the author of 'Origins of the British', the ultimate numerical impact of the Near Eastern Neolithic Invasion on Europe was generally underwhelming[affecting] no more than a third of European gene lines, and usually rather less. In NW Europe that figure falls to 5% of the indigenous maternal DNA lines. The male line is rather more modern, for obvious reasons. Oppenheimer concludes 'three quarters of British ancestors arrived long before the first farmers. This applies to 88% of Irish, 81% of Welsh, 70% of the people of Scotland, 68% of the English'.
- These recent studies overturned the previously held view that the English were largely descended from 5th century Germanic invaders who displaced the natives, a belief known as Anglo-Saxon genocide theory. According to Oppenheimer, the English are only about 5.5% Anglo-Saxon, although this varies by region, Norfolk being the most at 15%. In Professor Jared Diamond's phrase, it was very hard to replace a population before the medieval period and the proliferation of guns, germs and steel (NB and mass immigration it might be added)
- The Vikings who invaded in waves between 8th and 11th centuries comprise a very similar proportion of English DNA. In the late 9th century the Danes had almost overrun the land, conquering all but one of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms until Alfred the Great stopped their advances. His grandson Athelstan went on to unite England in 927 making it one of the oldest nation-states in the world
- As David Conway, Author of 'A Nation of Immigrants?' points out, the term 'immigrant' tends to be reserved only for those who move from elsewhere to somewhere that is already inhabited by a people among whom there have grown up sufficient mutual affinities, relations, and bonds to qualify them for being considered a nation, and enough political organisation and unity as qualifies their territory as a state. The people who arrived before 927 were colonisers, invaders, settlers, or slaves but not immigrants.
- The English of 1927 were more than 90% the descendants of the English of 927 which makes it

entirely untrue to talk of a 'nation of immigrants'.

- The Jews of Rouen never totaled more than 5,000 or 6,000 before Edward I expelled them in 1290/ Jewish return occurred under Charles II in 1660s.
 - Even in the early modern period immigration was uncommon.
 - As Conway says – from the 16th century to the Second World War, very little of Britain’s net increase in population can be attributed to immigration. Virtually all of its increase was a purely natural one.
 - Non-European immigration into Britain was extremely rare. 10,000 Africans came during era of Atlantic slavery and there is minimal pre-Windrush African DNA in Britain.
 - Asian Immigration was minute until the 1950s – between the wars around 1,000 Indian doctors lived in Britain, part of a sub-continental population of under 7,000..
 - There was also a Chinese population of under 1,000 but generally foreign populations were concentrated in port towns especially in London, Liverpool, Cardiff and Tyneside, which had a 3,000 strong Yemeni population in the 1890s, the first settled Muslim community in Britain.
 - 20k-30k non-whites in UK in 1939 (around 0.04 of the population) including about 5,000 Africans and West Indians.
 - All these migrations were vastly different to what happened after the British 1948 Nationality Act which heralded the start of mass immigration and after 1997 when it intensified.
 - Almost all of those coming before this were northern Europeans, coming in small numbers, often over very long periods, nor did newcomers retain connections with their homelands, forcing them to integrate out of economic and social necessity.
 - **At the end of World War Two, over 70% of British DNA dated back more than 6,000 years on these islands**, and between them the Celts, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings and Normans made less of a genetic impact than post-war immigration has.
 - Genetically the nation born the year Britain hosted the 1948 Olympics may have been closer to the Britain of 4,000 BC before work on Stonehenge was begun, than the generation born during the 2012 games
 - The DNA of the British people has been changed more in one lifetime than in the previous 6,000 years...
 - [in a separate passage] the demographic change (that Britain has experienced in recent decades) was not just unprecedented in British history, but in almost any country that has not suffered catastrophic military defeat.
 - As Kevin Myers wrote in the Irish Independent, London has undergone a demographic transplant unlike that experienced by any European capital since the Fall of Constantinople’ in 1453.
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