

Multiculturalism and immigration in the UK: a divided opinion

Immigration and multiculturalism are still divisive topics in the United Kingdom. The documents – an article from The Guardian published in September 2018, an opinion piece published in the HuffPost UK on the same day, an article published in The Conversation in July 2019 and a cartoon published in The Guardian in February 2017 – all deal with this issue. So, can British people overcome their divisions over the issue of multiculturalism? While the British seem profoundly divided, the documents hint at explanations and potential solutions to bridge the gap.

Many British people recognize the positive impact of immigration on the British society, both economically and culturally. Pasha-Robinson, who comes from a mixed-race family, argues that multiculturalism is the foundation of British culture. The cartoonist Andrej Krauze adopts a similar stance by representing people from various nationalities queuing to make the British factory work thanks to their common effort. **Similarly**, a study found that 63% of the British people interrogated considered that immigrants benefited the economy by doing jobs unwanted by British workers (doc. 1). **However**, the same study revealed that 40% of people felt that multiculturalism had undermined culture, that immigrants put a pressure on public services and represent a risk of lowering wages.

Document 3 attempts to account for such divergences of opinion on immigration by analysing the differences between generations. The author claims that the younger generations are more tolerant as they have been more exposed to foreigners than their elders (probably thanks to cheaper international travel, among other factors), making them more capable of empathy. Similarly, doc. 1 notes that the more rural the residents, the less positive they are about immigration. **Finally**, Lucy Pasha-Robinson argues that multiculturalism is still controversial because of the enduring stereotypes that associate immigration with low skilled workers and the segregation of communities.

Several solutions are envisioned to reconcile British people with multiculturalism, and communication seems to be the key. **While** doc. 3 suggests that more contact between people makes them more tolerant, the report's authors (doc. 1) call for a national conversation on immigration to allow people to voice their concerns. **Furthermore**, doc. 2 underlines the importance of representing immigrants in the media and popular culture by celebrating the country's diversity and the fact that immigrants make the country thrive, as doc. 4 does. Pasha-Robinson **also** advocates for more social mobility in education and employment to achieve more equality.

Despite a persistent anti-immigration feeling, which can be one of the explanations for the Brexit referendum result, the younger generation seems to value multiculturalism, leading to a progressive change of opinion on the issue.