

Here's Where Britain's Elusive 'Vanishing Migrants' Were Hiding

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I'm sorry, but WTF.

The Telegraph reports Britain's official government immigration statistics are based on relatively small-scale passenger surveys at airports.

Small-scale passenger surveys at airports...

Surveys that are dramatically incorrect based on a comparison with a new system which aims to actually measure migration.

Incorrect by "tens of thousands" a year for international students alone.

Based on previous figures the analysis suggests that around 3,300 people a year overstay their visas, far lower than estimates which suggest tens of thousands of people "vanish" after finishing their degrees.

Yes, they do vanish... back home overseas...

All those foreign students we thought were staying in the UK illegally actually left a long time ago. Only 3% remain each year according to the new system's figures.

And even the new system introduced in 2015 can't handle it when an immigrant dies, has a second passport they use to exit the country, or someone misspells their name at customs.

By those faults, I alone probably make up about 100 of the tens of thousands of migrants who "vanish". I travelled to the UK on the three countries' passports I've held during my life interchangeably. And then there are the number of variations on spelling Nickolai.

When the number crunchers compared airline data with immigration data from the new system, they still only got a 90% match for people needing visas.

In other words, the new and significantly improved system can't count humans either.

It's pathetic

You have been waiting at airport immigration lines for hours for nothing.

The entire anti-immigration pitch of [Brexit](#) could be nonsense too. Well, it's nonsense anyway because immigration contributes vastly to the UK. But the figures the antagonistic sentiment is based on are nonsense. Migrants are a far smaller share than thought, especially dodgy ones who have "vanished".

Is the Brexit vote valid if it was based on incorrect figures? If the new migration system started in 2015, why was there no word of warning about the problem before the referendum? Do you think it might've been a good idea to *actually count* the number of immigrants before the referendum?

This is worse than when I helped to collect climate change data for the Australian government. It's worse than New Zealand's inflation statistics gathering methods I discovered from an economist working for the Reserve Bank there.

But we don't just miss tens of thousands of "vanishing" students. We also try to expel people by mistake. The Home Office mistakenly sent about 100 letters to immigrants telling them to leave Britain within a month, reports the Financial Times.

I've just completed a partner visa application and I can tell you such a letter would cause quite a drama for the recipient families.

I just don't understand how anyone can expect government to implement any [policy](#) whatsoever with this sort of thing in the news. Anyone who says "the government should..." is profoundly ignorant. The government probably spent millions looking for all those foreign students who "vanish".

As far as I'm concerned, the [End Of Britain](#) is good news if it means the government goes too broke to do small-scale surveys at airports.

Cultural warfare catches on

The racism attributed to Brexit, the Tea Party, America's civil war history, Trump and conservatives generally, has the world in a furore. Statues are being pulled down, books stricken off reading lists and reality flat out ignored.

Australia's designated discoverer Captain Cook is the latest one on the chopping block. You can't discover a country that's already inhabited, after all. You can only invade it.

In Germany a supermarket decided to weigh in on the racism debate with a stunt. This one takes the cake, perhaps for all time.

Staff went through the shop's shelves and removed all foreign-made products. They took pictures of the result with signs saying "So empty is a shelf without foreigners".

At first I thought the message was implying that foreign labour usually stacks the shelves. Without them, there would be no to do it. This argument ironically supports a German nationalist's anti-immigration pitch by illustrating all the jobs stolen by immigrants.

But I misunderstood the point they were trying to make. It's even worse.

They removed *foreign goods* to make a point about how badly we need *immigrants in Germany*. The thing is, foreigners living in Germany don't make the foreign goods... they make the German ones... because they're in Germany...

Removing foreign goods to illustrate the importance of foreigners living in Germany has it backwards. It confuses foreign goods with foreigners. Easy to do, if you're stupid.

I don't think a racist German has a problem with foreigners making their goods. As long as those foreigners stay in a foreign country. Which is the definition of an import – the goods that were removed from the shelves.

But the stunt is a perfect one for illustrating the importance of free markets and trade – something most anti-racism campaigners are probably against and the EU is steadfastly against given its high tariffs.

There's a famous German rock song about a racist German called Sasha (a Croatian name) whose favourite food is cevapcici, but he hates Croats and goes to rallies against immigration...

The song was written by a German band of Liverpool supporters who liked to play *You'll Never Walk Alone* at their concerts.

That is how to battle racism.

In this spirit, I wonder what the supermarket shelf would look like without goods from outside the EU. Goods on which the EU government places enormous tariffs. Tariffs that harm foreigners.

Perhaps the staff could organise a stunt to illustrate what prices would be without those tariffs next time. A big discount on goods from outside the EU. To support foreigners.

In the US, local tensions have hit enough of a boiling point for the UN to notice. A committee for combatting racism globally issued a warning on potential civil conflict in the US. Previous warnings were for Burundi, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Kyrgyzstan and Nigeria.

But the narrative is breaking down before the newscasters' very eyes. CNN invited a group of Americans on TV to criticise the white supremacists and Nazis who protested in Charlottesville and condemn President Trump's response.

Things didn't go as planned. The presenter asked who was troubled by the president's response to the clashes. No was.

Instead, they all echoed his message that there was blame on both sides. They argued there were ordinary people at the protest who were not Nazis or white supremacists. And they argued that even those groups have the right to protest, especially with the permit.

They also exposed the misconception that the protest was attacked. The attacks happened the next day after the protest. Most of the media's narrative comes from selectively using certain facts from the two separate days' incidents as though they were one.

Everyone condemns the violent groups on the subsequent day – Trump's point. The initial protest wasn't violent. Just about a sick ideology that killed a lot of people. Just like the ideology of the counter protesters the next day...

It's funny that even a carefully selected panel can turn on the media narrative. It seems the media is even less popular than Trump.

Credibility is gone. Now what?

You have to understand the implications of all this.

First of all, the anti-racism movement has reached a remarkable level of power. Such fervour is all encompassing. No matter how tenuous, a person can label another as racist and any fight back incurs the wrath of the entire anti-racism movement.

You cannot point out a basic fact without being attacked and associated with racists. Just pointing out that both sides were violent in a street fight between racists and anti-racists makes you a racist. Such power can be used to influence policy that has nothing to do with racism.

Secondly, the world's sources of credibility have lost all credibility. No scientific study, media furore, organisation's press release, or government statistic is trustworthy any more.

Official government statistics used in the Brexit campaign were based on shoddy surveys, for example. Introducing such doubt about everything else leads discussion and debate into the doldrums. But it is not wrong to question things to that level either because that doubt has been confirmed so often.

What else don't we know? What else is yet to be discredited?

If the government can't count humans and humans can't count on the government, what's the rational cause of action for you?

How am I supposed to guide your financial decisions and keep you informed in such a world?

I'm working on the answer.

Until next time,

Nick Hubble
Capital %26 Conflict