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## **Having one's cake and eating it too: Cameron's Conservatives and Immigration**

**Tim Bale, James Hampshire and Rebecca Partos, University of Sussex<sup>1</sup>**

The May 2010 general election represented a change in tone on immigration and asylum policy for the Conservative Party. Although its manifesto still contained a promise to limit numbers and expressed concern about the abuse of student visas, the Party's previous fixation with asylum seekers had disappeared. This paper considers the rationale for these developments in the light of David Cameron's election as leader in late 2005 and his efforts from then on to reposition his party. Cameron's initial silence on this issue and his appointment of a moderate as immigration spokesman were part of an attempt both to shift the focus onto the economic impact of migration and, more broadly, to 'decontaminate the Tory brand' in order to gain 'permission to be heard' by small-l liberals who were critical to the Party's electoral recovery but alienated by hard-line stances. That said, immigration was never entirely forgotten even in this early period and was always seen, so long as it was carefully-handled, as an issue capable of benefitting the Tories. As such, it was skilfully factored back into the Party's offer from late 2007 onwards. In government, the Conservatives may have the upper hand on immigration over their junior coalition partner, but this is no guarantee that they will be able to deliver the outcomes they promised

Key words: Conservative Party; immigration; David Cameron; modernisation; party positioning

Although immigration and asylum played a smaller part in the Conservative Party's election campaigns in 2001 and 2005 than is sometimes suggested, they were certainly one part of an overall offer to the electorate that can broadly be described as populist. The pitch was that an overly-liberal Labour government was hopelessly out of touch with the feelings and the needs of the people and that it was (to borrow the title of the Conservative Party's 2001 manifesto) 'time for common sense'. Unless something was done, the argument ran, more and more of us would begin to feel that we were living in what William Hague, the Party's leader between 1997 and 2001, famously referred to as 'a foreign land'. A Tory government more in tune with voters' views on immigration – and on tax, crime and Europe – would, the 2001 manifesto promised, take urgent action to end Britain's growing reputation as 'a soft touch for bogus asylum seekers' by ending the 'chaos' into which the country's immigration regime had descended – chaos which had apparently 'seen the cost of the asylum system double and put a great strain on many communities', with coastal towns singled out for particular attention. In 2005, the asylum system was still, the Conservatives claimed, in chaos. Indeed, Labour had 'lost effective control of our borders'. If elected, the Tories would set up a dedicated border police force and introduce a points-based system to control immigration more generally. Moreover, a Conservative government would 'take back powers from Brussels to ensure national control of asylum policy and withdraw from the 1951 Geneva Convention.'

Applications for asylum would be processed outside Britain in cooperation with the UNHCR, with a fixed quota forming part of 'an overall annual limit' on migrants as a whole. And away from the small print, there were, of course, the famous posters

declaring ‘It’s not racist to impose limits on immigration. Are you thinking what we’re thinking?’<sup>2</sup>

Contrary to the opinion of most commentators, the Conservative campaigns in 2001 and 2005 had less to do with mobilising the Party’s so-called ‘core vote’ and more to do with making the most of those few issues on which the Party – as usual – enjoyed a significant lead over Labour.<sup>3</sup> Given that Blair and co. enjoyed supremacy on the economy and public services, and given that Hague and then Duncan Smith and Howard were ultimately unwilling and/or unable to pull Tory policy on those issues appreciably toward the centre, then they were left with little if any choice but to fight on messages that stood at least some chance of detaching voters from the government. That those issues might also mobilise the Party’s right-wing supporters, and minimise defection to fringe parties like UKIP or the BNP, was not, of course, entirely coincidental. On the other hand, there were those close to the leadership (including, in 2005, David Cameron) who were well aware that taking too tough a line risked alienating many of the middle class, ‘small-l liberal’ voters that the Tories needed to win over but who still tended to see them as ‘the nasty party’ – a consideration that led to the Party failing to press home its advantage on such issues as hard as others would have liked.

Fast forward to the manifesto of 2010, and things looked very – but not completely – different. The border police force was still there. So was the annual limit, but this time applied more precisely to non-EU would-be immigrants. However, there was not a single mention of the word asylum. Instead, the group the Party appears to be

most anxious about are those coming in on student visas, notwithstanding the fact that the section of the document dealing with immigration is headed – very positively – ‘attract the brightest and best to our country’. There are also, interestingly enough, some new commitments. The Party committed itself, for instance, to ‘applying transitional controls as a matter of course in the future for all new EU Member States’. It also announced its intention to ‘promote integration into British society’: since ‘everyone coming to this country must be ready to embrace our core values and become a part of their local community’ there would be ‘an English language test for anyone coming here to get married.’ But numbers mattered too: the Party promised to ‘take steps to take net migration back to the levels of the 1990s – tens of thousands a year, not hundreds of thousands.’

That something changed between 2005 and 2010 seems obvious. But the scope and nature of that change is, as the above should serve to indicate, more subtle than is often appreciated. Those who wanted to believe that David Cameron had gone some considerable way to modernising the Conservative Party may have overestimated quite how far that process had gone. On the other hand, those who worried that such modernisation went so far that it effectively denied the Tories the use of weapons that might have secured them an overall majority may have underestimated quite how tough they continued to be. The gap between those two views is an interesting one and one we hope to bridge by closely analysing the course of, and the rationale for, the changes in the Conservatives’ approach over the last half-decade.

### **Radio silence and rebalancing**

Unlike Labour's Ed Miliband, David Cameron had weeks, if not months, to plan what he would do when he became leader. After a convincing win over David Davis in early December 2005, Cameron used the New Year to launch a both a blizzard of new initiatives and a bonfire of old promises, all designed to signal that he really was a very different kind of Conservative from his immediate predecessors. The Party's policies on asylum, however, were part of neither process. Unlike measures such as the pupils' or the patients' passports they were not explicitly abandoned, but nor did they merit any high-profile attention from the Policy Groups that Cameron set up, ostensibly to advise him but in actual fact to short-circuit calls for him to come up with commitments much earlier than would have been sensible. These Groups also had the purpose of attracting a little celebrity credibility and keeping some senior figures whom Cameron had no intention of bringing back into the frontline conveniently busy. The thinking ran that the Party had to concentrate on those issues that it had ceded to Labour and the Liberal Democrats, most obviously the economy and public services, on the one hand, and the environment and international development, on the other. In the meantime, the Party would effectively turn down the volume on issues it already 'owned', including of course immigration, on the grounds that it was probably already benefiting as much as it could do from them and risked alienating voters that it needed to win back by talking much more about them.

Certainly, Cameron himself steered clear of the immigration issue, while sending a signal to the media that henceforth it would be dealt with reasonably and moderately by appointing that most reasonable and moderate of modern Tory politicians, Damian

Green, as his frontbench spokesman on the issue. Green, of course, was not given a completely free hand, since his ‘boss’ the Shadow Home Secretary, David Davis, would also have a say in producing policy in this area. Indeed, with Green an arch-moderate and Davis, a more populist figure in tune with the grassroots, this dual responsibility embodied Cameron’s strategy of keeping the right onside, while not alienating more liberal-minded voters. The two men soon began work on a document that would, to all intents and purposes, form the basis of the Tory offer in 2010.

Published in November 2006, *Controlling Economic Migration* moved the argument away from asylum. In any case, the number of asylum applications was beginning to fall but this issue would apparently be dealt with in a later paper (which never in fact eventuated). Having thereby taken some of the heat out of the issue, it then attempted (pretty successfully) to steer a careful course between the Scylla of pathological and populist obsession and the Charybdis of outright denial:

The subject of immigration is one which political leaders find particularly testing. For the past five years it has featured as one of the most important political issues in the minds of the British people, so mainstream politicians must give it serious attention. At the same time they need to do so in a calm and rational way. The need for such a tone is obvious; ill judged language can cause genuine hurt and damage community relations. Yet one common political response in these circumstances, to avoid any risks by downplaying the issue, is inadequate. Taking such a course gives rise to a disconnection between the politicians and the electorate, which in turn leaves the field open to the misinformed and the conspiracy theorists.

The document looked forward to the (re)establishment of a consensus on immigration – one that would have been familiar to British politicians in, for example, the 1960s,

based as it was on the idea that good community relations are best maintained by strict control of immigration designed to benefit the economy without placing too much strain on public services. The document attempted a balanced presentation of regimes in other countries (mostly European but also Canada and Australia) and the economic pros and cons of immigration. The balance, it concluded, was potentially positive but only if the country concentrated on trying to attract highly-skilled workers, not least because letting in anyone else (especially given free movement from within the EU) reduced the incentives to get Britain's reserve army of NEETs (young people not currently in employment, education or training) into work. The measures to achieve this balance, however, represented no departure from the policies presented by the Party in 2005, namely some sort of annually determined limit combined with a border police force. As well as this, there would be a commitment to bring in transitional controls on any new accession countries. The document also mentioned the concern that those who did come should be encouraged to integrate into British society and 'embrace' its 'core values' rather than stay somehow apart.

The document attracted little media interest, other than a few acknowledgements in the broadsheets that it seemed to represent a change of tone, while the tabloids welcomed the fact that the Tories had at least begun to talk about the issue.

Understandably, this might have come as a slight disappointment to its authors, but it was nevertheless politically functional. Without moving much beyond policies it had come up with under the previous leader, the Conservative Party had made progress in terms of the way it was perceived to be talking about the issue – not least by those media outlets, such as the BBC and the Guardian, which Cameron was especially



keen to impress, believing that they provided a connection to the liberal middle classes, His efforts to impress these media outlets on a range of other issues, notably the environment but also in relation to policies impacting on children and young people, did not, however, go unremarked by those within his party (including its so-called friends in the media) who were concerned that he was moving too far and too fast. Their criticisms proved relatively easy for the leadership to resist as long as Cameron's so-called 'decontamination' or 'detoxification' strategy appeared to be paying electoral dividends. After all, if the Party seemed to be winning, then it was difficult to claim that it needed to do something different let alone to revert to the approach that had lost the Conservatives two elections in a row.

But there were limits: in the spring of 2007 Cameron had to effect an unedifying compromise with the advocates of selective grammar schools after his Education spokesman, David Willetts, had the temerity not only to remind them that the Party had no plans to build more but that they were no longer really engines of social mobility. Even more problematically, as spring turned into summer the Conservatives suffered an embarrassingly bad defeat at the Ealing and Southall by-election and any poll lead they had enjoyed appeared to evaporate in the wake of the 'Brown bounce' being enjoyed by the new Prime Minister. The bounce seemed so big that speculation began about a snap election.

Cameron refused to panic but he did decide to bring forward something he had been planning to do rather later on, namely the reincorporation of some of the Party's more populist policies. He did so – having gained 'permission to be heard' – partly in

anticipation of an early contest and partly to quell mounting concern within his own ranks. On August 29 Cameron was interviewed on one of the BBC's flagship news and current affairs programmes, *Newsnight*. Having said virtually nothing on the subject since he became leader, he acknowledged that

people have a very real concern about levels of immigration and not because of different cultures or the colour of their skin. I think that people's concern is about services. It's the pressure on schools, pressure on hospitals, pressure on housing. It is important to understand that if your child is going into a reception class and suddenly twenty new kids turn up because lots more families have arrived then that is a big pressure.

Cameron's intervention was subtle. By making a distinction – accurate or otherwise – between, on the one hand, cultural or ethnic prejudice and, on the other, concern over apparently practical matters like health, housing and education, it made it difficult, if not impossible, for critics to accuse him of playing the race card. It also avoided the emotive language employed by Margaret Thatcher in her now famous remarks in a television interview in January 1978 when she speculated that 'by the end of the century there would be four million people of the new Commonwealth or Pakistan here', and observed 'that is an awful lot and I think it means that people are really rather afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture.' Nevertheless, Cameron's words were likewise intended to signal to voters who may have forgotten – and to members of the Party and its cheerleaders in the press – that the Tories were in touch with the concerns of ordinary people on the issue in question.

In 2005, the Conservative campaign had been accused of employing so-called dog-whistle politics on immigration, the implication being that it had found a clever, implicit, way of appealing to people's baser (or at least their gut) instincts without attracting opprobrium from their fairer-minded compatriots. However, given, for instance, the brickbats that their poster campaign attracted and the extent to which their leader was perceived (inaccurately) as going on and on about the subject, it is hard to support such a claim. If any case is to be made against the Conservatives for use of the dog-whistle, it would be much more convincingly based upon Cameron's far more sophisticated intervention two and a half years later – an intervention that was followed up in a speech on 30 October in which he called for 'a grown-up conversation' about reducing immigration. The speech garnered some predictably good headlines from the right-wing media ('Cameron throws down the gauntlet on immigration', 'Cam: You can't come in'). But it also provoked a relatively, and encouragingly muted reaction from the centre-left of British politics and its friends in the media, suggesting that Cameron, on this issue at least, could have his cake and eat it too. Unlike his predecessors, then, he might be able to talk about and earn praise from his own side without provoking howls of outrage from his opponents.

How much the absence of the latter had to do with Cameron's eminently reasonable tone and his refusal to return to talk of abandoning the Geneva Conventions, stranding asylum-seekers on offshore islands, and clamping down on gypsy camps, and how much it had to do with Gordon Brown, the Prime Minister, arguably moving the debate rightward by making absurdly nationalistic promises of 'British jobs for British workers' is a moot point. Still, Trevor Phillips, Head of the new Equality and

Human Rights Commission, went so far as to suggest that Cameron's handling of the issue marked an historic 'turning point'. Given how Phillips had laid into Michael Howard's approach at the 2005 election, this really did represent 'permission to be heard'.

Even then, the subject was still a minefield. Only a few days after Cameron's speech, the Party felt obliged to deselect a Conservative candidate in the West Midlands who refused to apologize for what some saw as an inflammatory newspaper article referring to 'the way we roll out the red carpet for foreigners while leaving the locals to fend for themselves' and noting that Enoch Powell was right in arguing that immigration would dramatically change the country. Judging from the outrage expressed at his treatment on their favourite website, ConservativeHome, many (though by no means all) Tory activists sympathized with him. But Cameron, just as he had been in March 2007 when he had sacked his frontbench home security spokesman, Patrick Mercer, for using apparently racist language, was as unequivocal as he was merciless. He was also determined to carry on with his relatively sophisticated approach. The spring of 2008 saw the launch of a Conservative billboard poster which showed a picture of a young family (wife, husband, two kids) in silhouette alongside the tagline 'REDUCE THE PRESSURE. PROPER CONTROLS ON IMMIGRATION SO OUR PUBLIC SERVICES CAN COPE. You can get it if you really want.'

By then, of course, not only had an early election been averted but Brown's failure to call it, combined with a chapter of accidents that undermined Labour's reputation for

governing competence, had turned the public against him. The Conservatives, meanwhile, began to build up a healthy lead in the opinion polls. To some right-wingers this confirmed their view that the Party did best when it swung in their direction. To Cameron, and those around him, it showed that it was best off trying to talk both tough and tender. Immigration should not be forgotten but it was hard to see how the Party could possibly extend its lead on the issue any further. And even supposing it could, would there really be much of an electoral benefit? More likely than not, it would risk reanimating concerns about the ‘nasty party’ among those liberal middle class voters that Cameron seemed to have won back from Labour and the Lib Dems. Better to leave the table, cash the chips, bank the winnings, and focus once again on games that still needed playing, most notably the NHS and the economy. If Cameron’s intervention on immigration really was, as his opponents predictably wasted no time in alleging, a ‘lurch to the right’, it was a very temporary as well as a very temperate one.

### **Position and valence**

Cameron was not, of course, the only Conservative to talk about immigration. Indeed, part of the plan was to have others get on with making life difficult for Labour on the issue while he stood above the fray and focused on other matters. Leading the charge, at least before his bizarre resignation from the Commons cost him his job on the frontbench, was David Davis. Some of his efforts accentuated the positive side of his concern with the issues, in particular his insistence that one reason to crack down was to combat the trafficking of women and children. Most of them, however were

relentlessly negative, exposing – in the best tradition of Her Majesty’s Opposition – the multiple failures of the government on the issue. His attack on Labour concentrated above all on its credibility and its competence, always with the implication that its failure to control migration would strain community relations. And it certainly rattled the government, not least because Davis was able to claim the scalps of both junior and senior ministers after showing major operational shortcomings in the relevant departments. The bypassing of proper checks in the visa system led to Immigration minister Beverley Hughes’ resignation in 2004. In the same year, David Blunkett resigned as Home Secretary following claims that he had expedited the visa application of his former lover’s nanny. His successor, Charles Clarke was dismissed from his post in the 2006 government reshuffle after it emerged that foreign prisoners had been released without being considered for deportation.

In other words, immigration was handled as much as a valence as a position issue. Labour was on the wrong side of an either-or argument about more or less immigration. But even, the argument ran, if one accepted Labour wanted the same thing as the Tories and the vast majority of voters – as suggested by its plans to introduce a points-based system and some pretty tough talk from the ministers (for instance, Liam Byrne and Phil Woolas) who took over the brief – it was also portrayed as hopeless at managing the system and not turning talk into action. The Tories laid into Labour on the grounds that government policy was damaging and dangerous, their claims supported by media reports of illegal immigrants given employment in sensitive, high-security areas. Furthermore, the government was condemned as ‘in denial’ as to the weak points within the system and their impact on

communities. Conservative spokesmen (Davis himself, but also people like Philip Hammond and Chris Grayling) also pointed to strains on public services, the cost of translation services provided for immigrants who should really be encouraged instead to improve their English, the fact that child benefit was apparently being claimed by EU migrants whose offspring were living back in their home country rather than with them in the UK, abuse of student visas, and the fact that the government seemed content having migrants do low paid, low-skilled work while doing nothing to encourage or equip welfare dependent British citizens to compete with them in the jobs market.

This attack was complemented by outriders on the Tory backbenches who could be relied upon to ask pointed questions in parliament or provide predictably hard-line quotes on immigration to friendly newspapers, which were happy to splash on the supposedly explosive details and numbers such questions apparently revealed.

Busiest at Westminster in this respect was James Clappison, but Philip and David Davies (not, note, Davis) also deserve a mention. Also important was Sayeeda Warsi, then Shadow Community cohesion spokesman, a strong supporter of strict controls and increased integration, whose pronouncements Labour, because she came from an ethnic minority, found difficult to attack. The Party could also rely on external pressure groups – in particular Sir Andrew Green’s Migration Watch – to provide the media with a constant stream of stories and surveys (on, for instance, the question of the UK’s population) that kept up the pressure on Labour. One example of how all these factors could combine comes from the *Express* on 6 April 2009:

FOREIGNERS carried out one in six rapes in Britain last year, police figures have revealed.

And migrant workers, illegal immigrants and even tourists were responsible for up to a third of all sex attacks in some areas.

In Greater London, the worst area affected, foreigners were charged in connection with one in three rapes, statistics obtained under the Freedom of Information Act show. Other areas with large immigration populations - Cambridgeshire, Merseyside, Hertfordshire, Avon and Somerset - also recorded high numbers of non-UK citizens charged with sex attacks.

Police blame the influx of eastern Europeans into Britain following EU enlargement in 2004 for compounding the problem and have called for tougher border controls.

Last night critics said the figures provided further evidence of Labour's mishandling of the immigration system.

Conservative MP David Davies said: "The immigration system is a complete shambles.

"We need to make sure that anyone who has convictions for serious offences in their own country is not allowed into Britain. Anyone found guilty of this heinous crime should be given a long prison sentence and then be deported to their country of origin, whatever that country's human rights record."

Sir Andrew Green, of MigrationWatch UK, said: "This is the downside of the free movement of people."

The prevalence of this kind of story made it easy for Cameron to sound measured – firm but fair. So much so that he was relaxed enough to reveal the thinking behind his approach in an interview on Sky Television on 26 January the same year:



I think it needs to be limited and I think the numbers need to come down... I don't think in any way I've shied away from this policy, but I wanted to make sure the Conservative Party would be listened to and heard as a bunch of reasonable people making a reasonable point. The problem in the past is whenever we've talked about this issue people questioned our motives - why are they doing that? I think it was very important to make it clear that we believe in a multiracial Britain. We believe it's a success. We think immigration has been good for Britain in the past. We think immigration will continue, but not any immigration, not all immigration, it needs to be controlled. We think that is reasonable, sensible and I think the British public will back it.

## **Cake**

If opinion polls were anything to go by, Cameron was right. Although they suggested that the Tories still had rather more work to do to convince enough voters that they were a safe bet on election-deciding issues like the economy and public services – something they ultimately failed to do by the time the general election was called in the spring of 2010 – they continued to enjoy big leads over both their rivals on immigration: towards the end of March, for instance, IPSOS Mori found that the Conservative lead over Labour on immigration and asylum was 11 percentage points, slightly higher than the Party's ten point lead on crime, and considerably higher than its three point lead on the economy, its one point lead on education and its nine point deficit on health.. As such, and given continuing concern about attracting and maintaining the support of 'small-l liberal' voters, it was hardly surprising that the issue did not loom at all large in the Party's national media campaign during the election itself.<sup>4</sup>

The Conservative Party did not fail to win outright because it modernized and moved into the centre. It failed because, for some voters at least, that process had not gone far enough on the economy and public services. Arguments that the Party could have short-circuited such concerns by talking more about immigration may have appealed (and, judging from comments by MPs and, for instance, ConservativeHome, will continue to appeal) to right-wingers. But they fly in the face of both the evidence and elementary logic. Immigration was an important issue for the country, but most voters did not see it as that significant for themselves or their family, especially when compared to the economy. As in previous elections, most of those particularly concerned about the issue either would be voting Conservative already or were likely to stick with Labour because they retained a residual faith in the latter's capacity either to protect their jobs or to protect them from poverty should they lose them. And, as in previous elections, a more strident stance on the issue would have risked alienating the middle-class 'small-l liberals' whom the Conservative Party desperately needed to win back.

In any case, the Party made a considerable effort to carry on having its cake and eating it on the issue. For one thing, although the Tories themselves made relatively little noise about immigration in the campaign – except to join Labour in attempting to counter post-debate 'Cleggmania' by laying into the Liberal Democrats' amnesty for illegal immigrants – they could rely on their supporters in the media not to forget about the issue, especially after Gordon Brown was overheard calling a voter who had raised it with him 'a bigoted woman'. For another, immigration was featured in some of the 17 million pieces of direct mail that the Party sent out to swing voters in target

constituencies as part of a ‘ground war’ – an effort which may have failed to stop Labour exploiting anxiety about welfare benefits and public-sector jobs to prevent a catastrophic loss of votes translating into an equally catastrophic loss of seats, but probably helped to ensure that the Conservatives emerged as the biggest single party after polling day.<sup>5</sup>

### **Coalition – and a reality check**

After most UK general elections it is safe to assume that many, if not most of the winning party’s manifesto promises will be implemented, at least after a fashion: whether the desired outcomes are attained is another matter. A hung parliament and a coalition government interferes with this assumption: parties’ manifesto promises may have to be bargained away in order that they get into government. And there will no doubt be much debate – academic and otherwise – as to whether the Lib Dems or the Conservatives got most out of the coalition agreement overall. When it comes to immigration, however, there can be little doubt that it was the Tories who trumped their junior partners. Not one of the policies outlined in their manifesto in that area was dropped: all that was added was the inclusion of a Lib Dem promise to end the detention of children in asylum cases – a promise that even many ‘mainstream’ Conservatives could live with. All accounts of the formation of the coalition suggest that immigration was a non-negotiable ‘red-line’ for the Tories and that the Lib Dems were made aware of this from the off. It is also notable that the issue figured prominently in Cameron’s concerted effort to reassure both Party members and voters (and probably MPs as well) about his Tory credentials. As he stressed in articles and

interviews in the *Mail*, the *Telegraph*, and the *News of the World* over the weekend of 21–3 May, he was still a Conservative PM delivering an agenda on immigration, on Europe, on spending cuts, and on education and health reform, of which they could be proud.

But the coalition agreement, of course, is no guarantee of delivery. Further research is needed to explore the extent to which Cameron's Conservatives are able to deliver on their promises, not least on reducing numbers coming into the country from outside the European Union. After all, the current government, like many before it in Britain and in other parts of the world, often encounters considerable resistance from powerful interests in the business community and legally-savvy pressure groups happy to use the courts to oblige politicians to abandon pledges that in hindsight they might have been better off not making. Those same politicians also have to face the fact that those wishing to get to and stay in Britain have always proved themselves adept at outwitting the authorities, whichever party professes to be in charge. In opposition, those parties can talk a good game. In power they have to play one too.

<sup>1</sup> The authors would like to thank those who attended the Conference on Governance and Public Policy held at Nottingham University's Centre for British Politics on 10 December 2010 for their comments on an earlier version of this paper. Special thanks go to Dr Andrew Denham, the conference convenor.

<sup>2</sup> For more detail on the 2005 campaign, see Andrew Geddes, 'Immigration and Asylum' in Andrew Geddes and Jonathan Tonge (eds.) *Britain Decides: The UK General Election 2005* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> For a longer-term perspective on party positioning and comparative advantage on the issue in the UK, see (among others) the following: Donley T Studlar 'Policy Voting in Britain: The Colored Immigration Issue in the 1964, 1966, and 1970 General Elections', *American Political Science Review*, 72 (1), 1978, pp. 46-64; Anthony Messina, *Race and Party Competition in Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); and Zig Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration: Immigration, Race and Race Relations in Post-War Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992). For an analysis of public opinion on the issue in more recent times, see Lauren McLaren and Mark Johnson, M., 'Resources, Group Conflict and Symbols: Explaining Anti-Immigration Hostility in Britain', *Political Studies*, 55 (4), 2007, pp. 709–732.

<sup>4</sup> For more detail on the 2010 campaign, see Sean Carey and Andrew Geddes, 'Less is more: immigration and European integration at the 2010 general election', in Andrew Geddes and Jonathan Tonge (eds.) *Britain Votes 2010* (Oxford: OUP/Hansard Society, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> See Michael Ashcroft, *Minority Verdict: The Conservative Party, the Voters and the 2010 Election* (London: Biteback, 2010).