

Nationalism, Prejudice, and the Excuses for Ethnic Marginalisation: A Call for Truth Over Fear – *Brendon Naicker*

Abstract

In recent years, ethnic minorities have frequently been scapegoated for a variety of societal challenges—rising crime, economic struggles, and the supposed erosion of national identity. While these claims have long existed, they have gained renewed prominence in political, social, and even religious spaces. Yet, such narratives are often based on misconceptions, subconscious biases, or outright fabrications, serving as convenient distractions from systemic inequalities.

This paper critiques the excuses used to justify ethnic marginalisation in the UK, highlights the dangers of nationalism when used as a tool of exclusion, and examines how these attitudes have infiltrated religious institutions, particularly our case study with the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC). Through a critical analysis of political discourse, sociological research, and biblical principles, this paper argues for a more honest and reflective approach—one that prioritises justice, accountability, and inclusivity over fear and misinformation.

Introduction: The Scapegoating Spectacle

History has a curious habit of repeating itself. When societies experience economic hardship or cultural shifts, they often look for someone to blame. In the UK, as in many other Western nations, ethnic minorities have frequently found themselves at the receiving end of accusations—claims that they are responsible for crime waves, job shortages, and social instability. While these narratives are often presented as facts, they rarely withstand scrutiny. The same pattern is emerging in Christian spaces, where nationalism and cultural protectionism are creeping into theological discourse. More concerning still is the reluctance of certain independent church bodies—such as the FIEC—to engage in discussions on racial inclusivity in leadership.

The Crime Narrative: A Manufactured Crisis?

The idea that ethnic minorities contribute disproportionately to crime has long been a staple of anti-immigrant rhetoric. While crime statistics can be selectively cited to support this claim, a closer look reveals a more nuanced reality. For example, studies have shown that

ethnic minorities are more likely to be over-policed, disproportionately stopped and searched, and subjected to harsher sentencing than their white counterparts¹. The Lammy Review, commissioned by the UK government, found that black people were nine times more likely to be stopped and searched than white individuals². However, this disparity was not necessarily linked to higher crime rates but rather to institutional biases within the criminal justice system.

Moreover, research has consistently debunked the idea that immigration leads to higher crime rates. A report by the London School of Economics found no significant link between immigration and increased crime³. In fact, certain immigrant communities have lower crime rates than the national average, yet they continue to be portrayed as a threat.

The real issue, then, is not crime itself but the way it is reported, policed, and politicised. The media, in particular, plays a crucial role in shaping public perception, often disproportionately covering crimes involving ethnic minorities while underreporting similar offences committed by white individuals⁴.

The Job Market Myth: “They’re Taking Our Jobs!”

The belief that immigrants are ‘taking jobs’ from native workers is another recurring theme in nationalist discourse. Yet, economic research tells a different story.

Studies indicate that immigrants tend to fill labour shortages rather than displacing local workers. In fact, migrant workers have played a crucial role in sustaining the NHS, the construction industry, and agriculture⁵. A government report found that European Economic Area (EEA) migrants contribute more in taxes than they receive in public benefits⁶.

Furthermore, higher immigration has been linked to economic growth, increased entrepreneurship, and a stronger workforce⁷.

Yet, the myth persists, largely because it serves as an easy explanation for deeper economic problems such as wage stagnation and job insecurity. Instead of addressing issues such as

¹ Ben Bowling and Coretta Phillips, *Racism, Crime and Justice* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2002), 87.

² David Lammy, *The Lammy Review: An Independent Review into the Treatment of, and Outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Individuals in the Criminal Justice System* (London: Ministry of Justice, 2017), 14.

³ Brian Bell, Francesco Fasani, and Stephen Machin, *Crime and Immigration: Evidence from Large Immigrant Waves* (London: London School of Economics, 2013), 22.

⁴ Teun A. van Dijk, *Racism and the Press* (London: Routledge, 1991), 67.

⁵ Migration Advisory Committee, *EEA Migration in the UK: Final Report* (London: Home Office, 2018), 45.

⁶ Christian Dustmann and Tommaso Frattini, “The Fiscal Effects of Immigration to the UK,” *The Economic Journal* 124, no. 580 (2014): F593.

⁷ Jonathan Portes, “The Economic Impact of Immigration on the UK,” *National Institute Economic Review* 248, no. 1 (2019): R26.

corporate outsourcing, the rise of automation, and the casualisation of labour, populist rhetoric shifts the blame onto ethnic minorities.

Nationalism and Its Discontents

Nationalism, in its milder forms, can be a source of pride and cultural identity. However, when taken to extremes, it becomes a tool for exclusion, encouraging a climate of suspicion and division. Across Europe, far-right nationalist movements have gained traction by positioning themselves as defenders of ‘traditional values’ against an influx of ethnic diversity⁸. This ideology has also permeated Christian spaces, where churches have, at times, aligned themselves with nationalist rhetoric rather than the biblical mandate for justice and inclusion.

The Bible, however, presents a very different vision of community. Scripture repeatedly calls for hospitality, equality, and the breaking down of barriers between groups. Galatians 3:28 affirms that “there is neither Jew nor Greek... for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Similarly, Revelation 7:9 depicts a diverse, multi-ethnic people worshipping before God—a stark contrast to the homogenous vision of some nationalist movements.

The FIEC and the Problem of Unchecked Bias

The case of the FIEC highlights a broader issue within independent evangelical networks: a lack of external accountability. Since January, multiple attempts have been made to engage the FIEC on the issue of racial inclusivity in leadership, yet no response has been forthcoming. This silence raises serious ethical and theological questions.

Without oversight, institutions risk becoming echo chambers, reinforcing existing biases rather than engaging in meaningful self-reflection. The absence of diversity in leadership within such networks is not just a matter of representation—it is a theological issue. If churches are serious about biblical justice, they must actively address racial disparities rather than dismiss them.

⁸ Cas Mudde, *The Far Right Today* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019), 38.

A Call for Truth and Justice

At its core, this debate is about more than statistics or funding—it is about truth and justice. Misinformation, fear, and nationalism, when left unchecked, have the power to divide communities and causes resentment. If we are to move forward, we must commit to challenging falsehoods, holding institutions accountable, and encouraging a society that is genuinely inclusive.

Christian communities, in particular, have a duty to stand against prejudice. The FIEC and similar institutions must recognise that silence on issues of racial inclusion is not neutrality—it is complicity. The choice before us is clear: will we be guided by fear, or will we embrace the biblical call to justice and love? The excuses used to justify ethnic marginalisation—crime, job shortages, funding disparities—are just that: excuses. It is time to set them aside and engage in honest, transformative conversations about the kind of society we want to build.