



MPhil in Development Studies, 2016-18

Entrance Test 2016

Date: July 16, 2016

Time allowed: 2 hours (12.00-2.00 pm)

1. Read the following excerpt:

[30 marks]

The targeting of settled immigrant population in Germany and France by right-wing extremists received much political attention. The question is sometimes raised as to why Britain has, to a great extent, escaped this problem, even though decades ago when the large-scale immigration took place, Britain had strong anti-immigrant sentiments as well. But, in the event, those sentiments seem not to have caused the kind of flourishing of right-wing extremism and severe targeting of immigrants that have occurred in Germany and France. (Some of my British friends seem to think that this is because they are just “nicer”; the explanatory power of this causal hypothesis is not pre-eminently obvious!)

I would argue that the explanation lies partly in the political exclusion from voting rights from which most of the settled immigrants in Germany and France suffer. Indeed, in much of Europe, legally settled immigrants do not have the political right to vote because of the difficulties and delays in acquiring citizenship. This keeps them outside the political process in a systematic way—this is clearly an active exclusion. In France, the required qualification for acquiring French citizenship is quite exacting. In Germany the situation is worse, in this respect; German citizenship is very difficult to obtain even for the long-run residents from elsewhere. This political exclusion results in disenfranchisement of the immigrants, even long-term settled immigrants, and this in turn makes their social integration that much harder.

Because of an imperial tradition, taken over by the Commonwealth, the right to vote is determined in the United Kingdom not exclusively by British citizenship, but also by the citizenship of the Commonwealth. Indeed, any citizen of the Commonwealth—any subject of the Queen as the head of the Commonwealth—immediately acquires voting rights in Britain on being accepted for settlement. Since most of the non-white immigrants to Britain have come from the Commonwealth countries (such as the West Indies, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, and Uganda), they have had the right of political participation in Britain immediately on arrival on a permanent basis. The absence of this political exclusion has the effect of drawing the settled immigrants directly into British politics, where their votes are sought and taken into account.

If right-wing extremists in Germany make strongly anti-immigrant statements, they do not lose the votes of immigrants (who have none), whereas they pick up votes of those who are inclined in the same anti-immigrant direction. In Britain, in contrast, such statements would

