

Crime statistics relationship to the possession of ID Cards

It would be possible to collect huge amounts of evidence and write many pages to support the opposition to ID cards but that would not help this issue. Rather it is better to show that an ordinary member of the public can gather readily available data from the web, to show that this and previous governments are not telling the truth with respect to the necessity for the introduction of ID Cards.

When the reasons for their introduction are even casually examined they are found wanting. Here is such a list quoted from Mr Blunkett's Bill launched 29 Nov. 2004, in which he claims that ID Cards will combat:

- Terrorism
- Crime
- Illegal working
- Immigration abuse
- Abuse by foreigners of free public services, e.g. the NHS

He added "the national ID card will give people confidence, convenience and security in an increasingly vital aspect of modern life – proving and protecting their identity".

A casual inspection of data readily available on the web shows either the government has not bothered to examine the evidence or they are lying to the public. Table 1 shows the ranking of various European countries in order of % change in total crime rate over the years 1995 – 99. Also in this table are selected data for drug trafficking, homicides and terrorist incidents. The countries selected are then characterised by colour into three categories of ID Card possession namely:

No Cards **Green**: ID Cards, non-compulsory **Yellow**: ID Cards, compulsory **Red**.

(N.B. Compulsory means cards must be in possession of holder. Non-compulsory means they are a requirement but do not have to be carried at all times, although must be produced later if requested).

The results of Table 1 even at first glance are striking, indicating countries not requiring ID Cards have reduced total crime, with crime statistics increasing from non-compulsory to compulsory ID Cards possession. Spelling this out it shows that countries with ID Cards have worse levels of criminality and importantly worse levels of terrorism.

These statements are emphasised when the data is summarised as in Table 2. Here the three ID Card categories are listed and compared against the averaged crime values for each category. The results are stunning especially for the important terrorist incidents. Going from no ID to non-compulsory ID to compulsory ID Cards we find:

A large worsening increase in total crime change,
A large worsening increase in drug trafficking,
An increase in homicides for the worse,
A huge worsening increase in terrorist incidents.

All categories looked at were negative with respect to card possession - that is they worsened, contradicting statements made by this and previous governments. So the intention to introduce an expensive new, intrusive system, based on the above

statements can be shown to be entirely contradictory to the facts. A system that will be open to abuse by criminals, whether in the business of producing counterfeit cards, or hacking into our personal data, when it is stored in computer systems. A system potentially introducing a whole new raft of criminal offences possibilities for the average, honest man in the street, e.g.-

£1000 fine for failure to say you have moved house,
£2500 fine for not signing up for the card when - as it will be - it is made compulsory,
£????? cost of the card, likely to be £50+,
£1000 fine for spoiling application form,
Up to 10 years jail for fraudulent use of ID cards,

Add to this the fact these cards will carry the most personal biometric data and we have a situation of total intrusion into our lives, by the state and the possibility of obtaining a criminal record in any one or more of the categories listed above and simply based on rhetoric not on hard, easily available facts. Why should we put up with a system that will add more layers of bureaucracy and cost, with only dubious benefit? In fact it would seem that the opposite will occur, i.e. possession of ID cards will lead to a false sense of security. This analysis does not suggest countries using ID cards leads to more crime and terrorism. What it does suggest is that we in the UK do not need them. On the most important parameter of all, i.e. terrorist incidents, there is no obvious requirement for ID cards when compared to most E.U. countries.

On the rather flimsy issues of immigration abuse and abuse by foreigners of our services, e.g. the NHS the need for ID cards is totally without foundation. For the former not having ID – which they do not have now – will not change the issue because they will either be given ID by the system or carry easily obtained false ID.

As for the NHS issue if abuse is known to exist at present, it should be easy to stop *now*. For a start we are all issued at birth with a NHS Medical Card containing name, address, date of birth and an NHS eight letter/figure code. No one in my family or circle of friends has ever been required to produce this card. In a similar vein, when applying for employment, no one of my acquaintance has been asked to produce references, or more importantly, proof of qualification possession, including degrees.

In summary there is no good evidence to suggest that the possession of ID Cards will improve our lives or make them more secure. There is good evidence to suggest that the U.K. in particular would not benefit from their possession. We would simply increase the levels of state interference at great cost with the added disadvantages of increased personal costs; increased chances of obtaining a criminal record; ready excuses for insurance companies to refuse us cover and more potential for the police to interfere on a daily basis in our lives.

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Table 1^a: **Crime Recorded by Police in EU Countries 1995 - 1999**

Country	% change Recorded Crime	% change Drug - Trafficking	Homicides /100,000 Avg 97-99	Terrorist Incidents ^b 1968-2005	ID Cards NC: not compulsory C: compulsory
EIRE	- 21	+139	1.35	26	No Cards
ENGLAND ¹	- 10	- 6	1.45	165 uk*	No Cards
SCOTLAND	- 8	+ 9	2.10	uk	No Cards
DENMARK	- 8	- 56	1.20	28	No Cards
LUXEMBOURGH	- 5	+ 23	0.83	5	ID NC
GERMANY	- 5	+ 33	1.22	458	ID C
FRANCE	- 3	+ 29	1.63	1027	ID NC
FINLAND	- 2	+ 29	2.55	1	ID NC
SPAIN	+ 1	- 12	2.60	1218	ID C
AUSTRIA	+ 1	+ 40	0.84	64	ID NC
SWEDEN	+ 2	- 32	1.94	40	ID NC
NETHERLANDS	+ 2	+ 119	1.66	77	ID NC
ITALY	+ 5	+ 18	1.56	405	ID NC
PORTUGAL	+11	- 9	1.39	51	ID NC
GREECE	+14	+ 128	1.69	593	ID C
BELGIUM	+18	+ 45	1.75	119	ID C

* N. Ireland had 618 incidents

1 England and Wales

a International comparisons of criminal justice; 1999 spreadsheet RDS website

issue 6/01 Gordon Barclay et al May 2001 Source: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/

b Incidents from MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base Source: www.tkb.org/Home.jsp

Table 2: **Crime data v ID Card possession. (Table 1 data re-analysed). 95 - 99**

Country: Type of ID card.	All Crime	Drug Trafficking	Homicides ²	Terrorist Incidents ²
No Card	All reduced	2 + 2-	1.53	73 ^c (167) ^d
Non-Compulsory Card	3 reduced 5 increased	5+ 3-	1.55	208
Compulsory Card	1 reduced 3 increased	3+ 1-	1.82	597

c Average was divided by 3 because Scotland was included as UK data.

d Including N. Ireland and averaged for 5 countries i.e. + Scotland.

2 Averaged data for each ID Card category.