

# THE PARADOX OF MIGRATION: RECONCILING ECONOMIC COMPETITION AND 'COMMON VALUES' IN BRITAIN

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*“Existing British citizens are well aware that the country needs immigrants both skilled and unskilled...Most people are welcoming. Britain needs immigrants.”*

Introduction to Life in the UK: A Journey to Citizenship Handbook, 2006

*“If you come here lawfully, we welcome you. If you are permitted to stay here permanently, you become an equal member of our community and become one of us. Then you, and all of us, who want to, can worship God in our own way, take pride in our different cultures after our own fashion, respect our distinctive histories according to our own traditions; but do so within a shared space of shared values in which we take no less pride and show no less respect. The right to be different. The duty to integrate. That is what being British means”.*

Rt. Hon. Tony Blair, Prime Minister, Downing Street, December 2006

Problems of population decline and economic competitiveness have prominently moved to the forefront of Western European politics. The growth of newly industrialized and developing economies abroad alongside rising unemployment (up to 23% for French youth!) are only a couple of indicators that, combined with a low birth rate and aging population, make for concerned nation-states. In response, states have both actively and reluctantly turned to migration.<sup>1</sup> How can one policy produce such contrasting sentiments? On the one hand, states are fully committed to economic migration, while on the other hand they balance that need with restrictive arrangements for settlement and membership under a banners of ‘community cohesion’ through the promotion of integration and ‘common values’ through citizenship acquisition. It creates a situation where entry to the state is encouraged and open (for economic migrants) while the entryway to membership in society has become more protected. And whereas this is a firm departure from the stereotypical categorizations of Western European states as

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<sup>1</sup> Jeanette Money (1999:18) makes the conceptual point that control and admission to territory (immigration policies) and membership (citizenship) are two facets of the same policy (migration). Despite linguistic variation (Money refers to the composite of these two policies as “immigration policy”), in this paper, along the guidelines of Geddes (2003) and Hammar (1990), I refer to the view of control alongside belonging (citizenship) as constituting “migration policy,” reserving the term “immigration policy” to refer to the rights and terms of entry and exit.

countries of ‘zero-immigration,’ the spirit of that identity is carried over to citizenship policy where multicultural integration strategies have transitioned to neo-assimilationism.<sup>2</sup>

We can therefore place the requirements promoting integration for settlement and naturalization as a unique policy balance to economic migration. Particularly because the two policies were presented at the same time, in the same white papers, their relationship is striking. Policies of immigration and citizenship inevitably, therefore, interdependent but can create an inconsistency where migration is – at the same time – an economic opportunity and a social cost. Migration policy is inherently one of tradeoffs for the liberal democratic state, where the economic or political ‘need’ for migration can be out of sync from the social or political ‘want’ for the preservation of a national community.

This paper looks at Great Britain as an important case for explaining the inherent paradox of migration policy in Western Europe. Where immigration is an opportunity to jump-start latent industrial or struggling service economies, it is also a dominant political challenge in maintaining national identity and cohesion. This is particularly the case for Britain, where national identity is an inchoate, regularly re-defined concept (see Cesarani 1997; Hampshire 2006). Britain has seen positive economic growth and production in opening up their labor market to over half a million A-8 Accession workers, mainly from Poland and Lithuania. And under the banner of “controlled migration,” the Labor government has introduced a five-tiered, point-based entry system to bring highly skilled

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<sup>2</sup> I use the term neo-assimilationism to describe the current integration strategy evident in Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands, among other countries. While it captures the same process of more traditional assimilationism, it asks not for the substitution of culture directly but rather the adoption of the host society value system. Joppke refers to this ‘paradox of civic integration’ strategy as one of ‘illiberal liberalism,’ where “liberal purposes (shared citizenship, autonomy) [are realized] through illiberal means,” like borders and integration requirements for citizenship (2007: 22). And in the words of former Home Secretary Roy Jenkins, cited in the *Life in the UK Handbook*, it is not a “flattening process” but “equal opportunity” (14).

and need-based non-European migrants to Britain. However, where there is a desire to meet economic needs through migration, immigration has never been more of a contested, salient political issue. The promotion of citizenship requirements emphasizing integration (in English language and UK knowledge assessment) for non-EEA migrants, is an important innovation for defining British national identity, articulating *for the first time* a set of ‘common values’ to underscore the British national community. Britain’s migration calculus, maximizing the economic and social benefits of immigration against the efforts to isolate potential costs of immigration through the first, real definition of “Britishness” exemplifies the inherent paradox of migration for Western European states where more formed or consolidation visions of nation-state pre-dated large-scale migration. Following a review of context in which migration and citizenship laws were changed, discussing Britain’s strategic use of European Enlargement as being able to maintain selective admission alongside economic openness, the second part looks at British policy in detail by examining the most recent development of immigration and citizenship policy, beginning with the 2002 White Paper “Secure Borders, Safe Haven,” and manifesting in the 2005 Five-year strategy, “Controlling Our Borders.” Finally, I conclude with preliminary comparisons between Britain and other Western European countries, who are only now coming to terms with the realization that they are ‘countries of immigration,’ taking on all the benefits and responsibilities that come with it.

#### PARADOX OF MIGRATION: PURSUING OPENNESS THROUGH RESTRICTION?

What is paradoxical about immigration and citizenship in Great Britain?

Consistent with the definition, policies are paradoxical when they promote means or a

course of action which would produce an opposite or unexpected outcome than what common sense would expect. Migration policies, therefore, would be paradoxical where the goal is openness and the policy articulates closure, or when the policy promotes closure but the borders are open. However, policy is more nuanced than a zero-sum definition would suggest. Migration policy in the UK is a paradox because it presents Britain as a country dependent and desirous of immigration, evident in its commitment to liberalizing economic migration, but through uncharacteristic use of European Enlargement (intra-EU labor movement) and citizenship strategies,<sup>3</sup> has actually created a highly restrictive migration scheme maintaining its status or impression as a country reluctant and limiting toward immigration. This manifests in both tightened restrictions on temporary and low skilled workers, further limitations on asylum seekers (like removing the right to work), and renewed attempts to crackdown on illegality. A second way in which migration policy is paradoxical is that, despite its best efforts for controlled and limited entry, migrants continue to come to Britain in large numbers. While this latter contradiction or gap has been prominently addressed in the literature (see Freeman 1995; Joppke 1995; and Cornelius et. Al. 2004), this article turns to the former issue with hopes of opening up further research. Where new ‘countries of immigration’ (Weil 2001) - whose futures clearly lie in the quality and quantity of migration - hold tight to goals of ‘control’ both on the border and in society, they are making assertions for the preservation national citizenship. The concomitant building up (and in Britain’s case - invention) of integration criteria for citizenship only furthers this point. So while Britain

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<sup>3</sup> The criteria for the acquisition of nationality (a legal transformation) are largely parallel to the expectations of integration (a social transformation), for citizenship establishes legal bonds to the state through the accumulation of rights and simultaneously establishes social bonds to the nation-state through full membership (Bauböck 1995).

has begun to identify itself as a 'country of immigration' it has actually become more difficult for immigrants to enter and join British society.

There is abundant research tracing these inconsistent dynamics of British migration policy. Randall Hansen points out that Britain is the model *par excellence* of combining “relatively easy access to nationality with strict migration controls,” and in excesses of each thrust, being both slightly more liberal and more restrictive in each policy in comparison to the rest of Europe (Hansen 2000: 207). Somerville updates this paradox through migration policy under New Labor, where he draws a line from the dual approach of migration control and anti-discrimination from the Hattersley equation of the early 1960s (Saggar 1992) up to what he describes as a bifurcated migration policy model (*forthcoming*). And Zig Layton-Henry described the “combination of tough political rhetoric and liberal policy practice” as likely to remain a “feature of British immigration politics” (in Cornelius et al. 2004:332). And while each of these suggests an inherent or surprising lack of complementarity between policy at the border and in society, there is theoretical grounding to suggest that the control of migration alongside the promotion of national cohesion (through access, equality and liberal values) is really interdependent. John Torpey poignantly updates Weber’s definition of the state through controlling the “legitimate means of *movement*” (2000: 9), arguing that in order for the state to “penetrate” or control defined populations it must first “embrace” or draw-in said persons. The emphasis on cohesion in the state has been articulated since citizenship’s foundational literature, where T.H. Marshall posits that a “sense of community membership based on loyalty to a civilization” is a precondition for conferring rights (1950: 24). Rawls also made explicit the connection between a “well-ordered society”

(1993: 35) as a condition for mutual recognition of justice. The logic here, that ‘control’ or mutuality through values in society is directly tied to immigration – in the words of Rogers Brubaker, that citizenship evolved out of the need to control ‘extra-territorial’ movement – is exemplified in the British case, where commitments to economic migration have been coupled with concern for the promotion of ‘common values.’ What are the conditions under which Britain recognized immigration as both a “social problem” and an “economic imperative” – in the words of the Home Office White Paper *Secure Borders, Safe Haven* - and accordingly produced policy changes relating the two concerns to the fate of British national community?<sup>4</sup> I argue below that economic conditions motivated immigration changes, whereas social conditions motivated citizenship changes. But despite the different sources for change, they produce policies of similar intent – restriction – despite their stated goals for openness and inclusion, respectively.

### *Economic Sources for Change*

While the outcomes of these policies are intrinsically related, their source for change was not. Whereas citizenship changes emerged in the fallout of the 2001 Northern Riots, immigration change was grounded in economic imperatives. The Prime Minister’s speech to the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) in April 2004 was Tony Blair’s first major speech on immigration. In it he makes the case why Britain needs migrants for

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<sup>4</sup> The directionality of this argument – that the state moves to the source - is necessarily a normative one. The definition of integration is that of a newcomer coming into a pre-existing framework. This is not to overlook important perspectives on the ways in which immigrants, in turn, influence the process of integration and the state’s conception of immigration (Geddes 2003). Integration is a two-way, mutually influential process, but in studying the crafting of state policies to respond to immigration, it necessitates taking the top-down view.

job recruitment, despite public concern for mass immigration, which he describes, is at a crucial 'crunch point':

The vast bulk of the British people are not racist. It is in their nature to be moderate. But they expect Government to respond to their worries. They can accept migration that is controlled and selective. They accept and welcome migrants who play by the rules. But they will not accept abuse or absurdity and why should they? So now is the time to make the argument for controlled migration simultaneous with tackling the abuses we can identify; and then, longer term, put in place a system that gives us the best guarantee of future integrity in our migration policy... We will neither be Fortress Britain, nor will we be an open house. Where necessary, we will tighten the immigration system. Where there are abuses we will deal with them, so that public support for the controlled migration that benefits Britain is maintained.

But while this call for an immigration regime somewhere between restriction and openness was the first public acknowledgment that the goals of economic migration and public opinion might be at odds, New Labor's interest in making the British economy more competitive through immigration was evident as early as 1998 with the White Paper, *Our Competitive Future: Building the Knowledge Driven Economy* (DTI, 1998). In it, the idea was proposed to lower immigration barriers for skilled professionals and entrepreneurs. This manifested first in the expansion of the work permit system, such as allowing for multiple entries and lowering job experience requirement, later with the adoption of a points-based skill assessment with the High Skilled Migrant Program, and finally culminating in the point-system for all skill levels in the 2006 policy strategy, *A Points-Based System: Making Migration Work for Britain* (Home Office). And while a Sector Based Schemes (SBS) was also created to bring low skilled workers to the UK, like the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS) both are being phased out under the new migration force from Eastern Europe.



Evaluating the economic gains from migration in Britain has become a highly politically consequential research topic. Policy think tanks, including the Labour-leaning Institute for Public Politics Research (see Sriskandarajah et al., 2005), the National Institute for Economic and Social Policy Research and Royal Economic Society, have concluded that immigration has yielded unmatched economic benefits for Britain, from impact on wage levels (Haque 2002) to economic growth rate and even mitigating a pension crisis (Blake and Mayhew 2006). Ernst and Young Item Club, an influential economic group who runs quarterly treasury forecasts, estimated that immigration had kept inflation and interest rates low and will add £4bn to GDP in 2007 (2006). And the government, of course, is ever-ready with enthusiastic assessments of migrant contributions. It is, for example, an oft-cited claim found in the 2002 Home Office Research Paper *The Migrant Population in the UK: Fiscal effects* that immigration has contributed approximately £2.5bn to the budget. And by looking at unemployment, figures steadily decreased across the past ten years, despite the increase in stock of foreign labor as a percentage of the total labor force. And net gains for GDP has also grown successively over this period.

[Figure One and Two about here]

One can abstract from this view that while immigration has increased (despite government efforts at minimization) more jobs have been created as a consequence, leading migration to positively contribute to overall economic growth.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> A reservation to the overall benefit of migration is the *rate* at which migrants come the country, which could imbalance inflation.

But where there is abundant evidence on the economic benefits of migration, there has also been disagreement toward this economic success story. Coleman and Rowthorn conclude that economic benefits from migration are “trivial, negative or transient” (2004). John Salt of the migration research unit at University College of London agrees, stating that “On the whole the economic impact of immigration is broadly neutral to mildly positive” (1993). And the conservative, MigrationWatch UK has conducted several studies challenging the government’s claims of immigration benefits, particularly for large-scale migration, and highlighting many overlooked costs of migration, including health services and housing. Most famously, they concluded using the governments own assessment that migration contributes approximately 4 pence into the pocket of each Briton a week, that immigration benefit is equivalent to a ‘Mars bar a month’ (2007).

While there is debate on the benefits and drawbacks of migration, there is no doubt that the influx of over half a million migrants from Eastern European enabled a fundamental restructuring of British migration policy. Britain’s uncharacteristic ‘opting-in’ to opening up its labor market economy to European workers from the A-8 accession countries (mainly Poland and Lithuania) upon their entry into the European Union on May 1, 2004, has been a powerful strategy for maintaining its status of a ‘country of immigration’ without actually opening its front door to a lot of immigrants.<sup>6</sup> Joined only by Ireland and Sweden, Britain has created a two-tracked migration scheme, where front-door migration (based on skill and need through points-based evaluation) is subject to

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<sup>6</sup> Intra-European movement, while certainly an important facet of migration should be treated as qualitatively different as non-European immigration. Whereas the former is predicated by several iterations of policy integration and accession, rendering intra-EU migration more a process of fungible labor movement, immigration from outside Europe is subject to an entirely different set of barriers for entry, characterizing it more strongly as entry than movement.

different criteria and controls than back-door (EEA, only requiring sign-up to the Workers Registration Scheme) migration. While it is not possible to obtain exact numbers, because self-employment and exit of A-8 workers is not recorded, it is estimated that over 600,000 migrants have registered to work with the government, a majority of them Polish (DWP 2006: 4). Eastern European workers have been so enthusiastic about coming to Britain that the Home Office was able to close off low skilled migration from outside of the EU (Home Office 2005a). Through these two-tracks, Britain has been able to present itself as both a destination for economic opportunity while maintaining a restrictive barrier for non-European migration.<sup>7</sup>

Likewise, A-8 workers are not subject to integration criteria (like English language acquisition and country knowledge assessment) to settle in the UK, unlike ‘front-door’ migrants. And while there is evidence that A-8 migrants take full advantage of English Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) classes (which they get for free by virtue of European citizenship), they are not required to demonstrate English proficiency for residence, unlike front-door migrants. The premise is that, to use Poland as an example, by virtue of meeting various social and economic criteria to enter the European Union, Polish workers have already ‘achieved integration’ Second, the very logic of European Union membership is that it encourages broad economic development through free movement of labor. By using the benefits of European Enlargement, the typically Euroskeptical Britain has been able to meet a majority of its lower skilled domestic needs

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<sup>7</sup> This duality is especially evident in comparing Polish access to the British labor market to that of Romanian and Bulgarian (A-2) workers. As Britain did not allow for the same access at point of access, where A-2 Europeans can come and live in Britain freely but cannot work (except through self-employment).

through European migration. Therefore, Britain has instrumentally used this two-tracked system to simultaneously promote and prohibit immigration.

So where there exists a commitment to liberalizing economic migration across the political divide and an opening up of their labor market to mass-Eastern European migration ensuring that “Britain continues to benefit from people from abroad who work hard and add to our prosperity,” (Home Office 2005a: 5), there has been an equal commitment to restricting immigration, with the increase of controls against unauthorized and illegal migration, the limitation of rights for asylum seekers (such as work), and even the closing of the labor market to the most recent wave of European Accession states (Romania and Bulgaria). And while the reasons for immigration change are diverse, from interest politics (Freeman 1995) emerging from employer associations like the CBI and the British Chamber of Commerce, advocating a “pause” in opening the labor market to migrant workers from Romania and Bulgaria (Financial Times 2006), to institutional constraints itself, where previous restrictions toward immigration (starting with the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act) condition current attitudes toward migration, they are largely driven by economy-based decisions. Where these unmatched goals of labor recruitment and restriction are largely driven by economic considerations, a look at the other half of migration policy change – citizenship – reveals different conditions for change. Where Britain boasts one of the most liberal citizenship models in Europe in terms of low barrier for access to rights, recent additions of integration criteria (language and country knowledge testing) has made settlement and citizenship acquisition considerably more difficult. I look at this addition of barriers, concomitant to the restrictive turn in immigration policy, as being based in social factors. Factoring in social

costs takes public opinion seriously, but there is ample evidence to suggest that this is an important driver in policy change.

### *Social Sources for Changes*

Perception of mass immigration and its consequences on larger society and perceived failures of previous law, lack of organization, and gross system abuses in the Immigration Nationality Directorate are all important considerations to take into account in explaining migration policy change. While many explanations can be posited, from a Huntingtonian cultural clash argument to a European imitation model, where changes in the Netherlands – the first move from multiculturalism to civic integration (Joppke 2007), we need not look outside of Britain’s domestic politics to locate a strong incentives for change. Evidence suggesting a salient role for public opinion appears in the introduction of nearly every Home Office document or public statement on immigration. When the Labor Government introduced changes to immigration policy, it signified not only an attempt to control immigration but also, as former Home Secretary Charles Clarke made clear in the Five-year strategy, to restore “public confidence in the immigration system” (2005a: 7). The then- Immigration Minister Tony McNulty further articulated this important goal during a House of Commons parliamentary debate:

There is no doubt, in the broadest of terms of British public policy over 30 years, that we have collectively run away from a substantive debate on asylum and immigration...The quid pro quo for public confidence in a transparent, simplified, managed migration system is – this goes to the heart of the Bill – a proper regime, which includes employers taking responsibility for dealing with illegal working (HC Deb 16 November 2005: cc1062-6).

The emphasis on employer accountability is only one of the many problems characterizing the old system. Inherent subjectivity in assessment criteria, unsystematic decision-making processes, and manifold visa schemes (over eighty visa and quota arrangements!) all contributed to a confusing and perceived unwieldy immigration system. The language of “A Points-Based System: Making Migration Work for Britain,” carries the knowledge of this reputation with calls for “simplifying and rationalizing” the current immigration system with “objective and transparent criteria” to produce “structured and defensible decision-making processes” (2006c: 14-15). While the content of managed migration was to bring skilled and labor based on sector needs, the entire transparent restructuring was motivated by this need to boost public confidence in the immigration system. This was evident in the set-up of a lengthy, ten-month process of active consultation following the launch of the Five-year strategy, *Controlling Our Borders*, from July through November 2005. Soliciting opinions and concerns from groups as varied as the CRE to the Confederation of British Industry and Trade Unions Congress, this consultation, including stakeholders, small businesses, and academicians, demonstrated a clear intent of framing immigration policy changes as a “response” to public opinion and in the interest of employers and migrants.<sup>8</sup> Finally, the 2006 reform strategy *Fair, effective, transparent and trusted: Rebuilding confidence in our immigration system* signified the transition to this ‘proper regime’ of managed migration.

While public opinion is generally more restrictive toward immigration, due to either a localized perception of competition (Money 1999) or limited information generally (Freeman 1995), the meaningful measure is the degree to which policymakers

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<sup>8</sup> As an example, the Home Office included an overwhelming, 75% response of “yes” to the question “Is the current system too complex?” in its partial regulatory impact assessment (2006d).

are aware and constrained (Hansen 2002) by this sentiment. The number of people who claim immigration is a problem is often staggering; an August 2006 poll appearing in the *Sunday Times* indicated that 63% of Britons think “laws on immigration should be much tougher,” with an additional 12% thinking immigration should be “stopped altogether” (MORI 2006). Additionally, Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of British respondent who think “race relations/ immigration/ immigrants is an important issue” (topping off at 45% in August 2006) alongside actual intake per year (including asylum seekers and adjusted status migrants).

[Figure Three about here]

While the general trends match up – increased immigration and increased perception that immigration is important, public opinion is not consistent or accurate. But while public opinion is “unstable and easily manipulated,” Lahav suggests that it still matters in “conditioning the debate” (2004: 105, 97). The value of garnering public support is not overlooked by the British government, especially when a clear majority (75%) find aspects of immigration problematic, who made clear through abundant language in the Five-year strategy, that “public confidence in the immigration system is a top priority” (2005: 7). Of course, given the gap between the intentions of migration policy and actual outcomes, scholars are quick to note that the public need not see real change to influence their confidence in government capacity to control immigration of government control. For example, Cornelius *et al.* attribute the rise of “symbolic efforts by receiving country governments to deter new immigration” resulting from, among other factors, “pressure from an increasingly hostile public opinion” (2004: 40). The very theme of ‘common values’ and the restructuring of citizenship acquisition asserting

national characteristics through language and country knowledge criteria may indeed be symbolic concessions to public fears, but they are actual barriers for the applicant citizen.

The *perception* of control is important, therefore language of control alongside concerns for public support proliferate in the new legislation. Where the far right, like the British National Party or the UK Independence party, the Conservative opposition, or the media have opportunities to drum up anti-immigrant sentiment, the government sees its responsibility to temper inauthentic public fears by managing the immigration debate and provoking a public debate on ‘common values’ (Geddes 2003).

The debate over common values and the impact of immigration for British community is at the forefront of policy and public debate. In a 2006 talk entitled *Our Nation’s Future*, Tony Blair describes the costs of immigration and diversity (the two concepts being inextricably linked in Britain, where the dominant frame of reference is ‘race’ not ‘ethnicity’ or ‘religion’ (Bleich 2003)) in explicitly social terms: “We like our diversity. But how do we react when that ‘difference’ leads to separation and alienation from the values that define what we hold in common? For the first time in a generation there is an unease, an anxiety, even at points a resentment that our very openness, our willingness to welcome difference ... is being used against us” (Blair 2006). Of course, much of the subtext underlying this type of integration discourse is terrorism and Islam. The reconfiguration of integration was borne out of this underlying subtext, where segregation came to a head between white and Muslim communities during the Northern Riots of 2001, in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham. The Cattle Report, written in response, was the starting point for addressing issues of Muslim exclusion, poverty, unemployment, and above all, integration. The suicide bombing by Muslim British nationals on July 7,



2005 was seen in the context of this larger chronology of social exclusion and values, as indicated by Race Chief Trevor Philips post-7/7 accusation that Britain is “sleepwalking into segregation.”

Rooting citizenship changes toward the promotion of ‘common values’ in public opinion is an important distinction for interpreting migration policy change. Whereas restriction in immigration policy – directing degrees of openness or closure for migrants of various skills and origins – is driven largely by economic competitiveness, restrictions on access to citizenship is motivated by perception of social costs, by both the public and the government’s perception of public want. The fact is that immigration to Britain, unlike traditional settler states, began *after* the formation of the nation-state, not alongside,<sup>9</sup> and given that immigration to Britain has been characterized as largely “unwanted” (Hansen 2000; Geddes 2003), the place and relationship of immigrants in British society has re-defined the very meaning of diversity and ‘common values’ which bind a prominently multicultural British society. This distinction is useful for interpreting actual policy change, addressed in the following section.

#### BRITISH MIGRATION POLICY: RESTRICTIVE TURNS

This section explores the contemporary policy developments in immigration and citizenship policies, teasing out open and inclusive *intents* but restrictive *outcomes*. The relationship between restrictive immigration and an articulated concept of citizenship through integration were first presented side by side in the 2002 Home Office White paper *Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain*. While

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<sup>9</sup> This distinction is found in Joppke (1999), Freeman (1995), and even in the typologies of immigrant-receiving states of Castles and Miller (1993).

emphasizing *secure borders* (i.e., organized and enforced border and entry policies) and *safe haven* (a moral commitment to asylum), the subtitle “Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain” recognizes the imperative of embracing Britain’s multiple ethnic identities. The White paper identifies immigration as both challenging Britain’s “concepts of national identity and citizenship” (9) and also economic interests and opportunities, ensuring Britain “has the people it needs to prosper in the world economy” (11). These nationality and economic concerns were the foundation for both the points-based migration scheme and citizenship acquisition procedures detailed in the subsequent Five-year strategy *Controlling Our Borders*. In sections titled “Who we admit and why” and “Who we allow to stay and why,” the Five-year plan consolidates the strategy of controlled cohesion.

The new immigration system is one based on self-assessment, where an applicant completes an online evaluation of his/her skills guided by objective criteria toward a single decision-making process. To diminish the amount of expensive and speculative visa applications, this online assessment of skills indicates which tier a potential migrant qualifies under for work in the UK which, with the exception of changed skills or conditions, is binding.<sup>10</sup> Second, unlike the previous system where applicants underwent a two-staged process, first issued an immigrant visa abroad and then assessed of employment qualifications by the Home Office (not the employer) in the UK, this is a one-staged process which vets the applicant *abroad*. The new scheme is finally sponsor-bound, so whereas the applicant was formerly granted a visa for entry and then had to

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<sup>10</sup> The removal of the appeal process or more precisely, the emplacement of a rationalized appeal process was indeed “the “most contentious part of the bill.” Mr. Tony McNulty, “Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Bill reading” (HC Deb 16 November 2005: c1063). The only grounds for appeal are administrative (Townsend 2006).

find a job, the new scheme does not permit entry without a certificate of sponsorship for employment (with the exception of highly-skilled migrants). Summarily, the PBS aims to replace the old scheme with an objective, transparent, structured system aimed at “delivering greater efficiency in decision-making and more certainty for applicants about the outcome of their applications” (15).

The points-based system expands upon the previously established Highly Skilled Migrants Programme (HSMP) by creating a five-tiered points-based entry scheme for newcomers “explicitly designed to deliver on the U.K.’s economic and control objectives” (HO 2005b: 3). The first tier, like HSMP, is reserved for highly skilled workers like scientists or entrepreneurs. These work permit holders can enter irrespective of previously determined labor needs and without an established job offer. This tier offers the most direct route to settlement along with dependents. The second tier is the employer-led system of work visa granting. This is for medium-skilled, sponsored workers who fill labor needs and shortages identified by the Migration Advisory Committee (formerly the Skills Advisory Board), which most recently have included positions in the Health and Computer Services sectors (HO 2006d: 18). A “shortage” is identified when the resident labor market is unable to fill skill needs. Tier two also offers a route toward settlement after the established five-year residence. The addition of dependents to that residency requirement under Tier two is yet to be finalized (Townsend 2006). The third tier is the low-skilled route, the only remaining route under the new system that would be quota-based, operator-led, and subject to review. This third tier is a residual category with the intent of eventually “phasing out low-skilled migration” from outside the European Union (EU) and European Economic Area (EEA). Finally, tiers

four and five take on the various other non-EU or EEA persons seeking temporary stay in the UK; Tier four is for students, with regulation of their visa tied to a sponsoring institution, and tier five satisfies non-economic objectives of employment (like cultural exchange) in temporary/seasonal employment. Tiers three, four and five are explicitly temporary.

The restrictive hues come out of the points-based system in looking at the structure of tiers based on labor shortages. There are some obvious concerns of exclusion, as the Home Office acknowledges in its Race Equality Impact Assessment: “Immigration control is, by its nature, something which impacts differently on different nationalities” (2006d: 39). The most noted of these restrictive changes is in the phasing out of low-skilled migrant programs “in light of new labor available from the European Union” (2005a: 9). Whereas an estimated 5,000 to 18,000 were expected, roughly 600,000 have applied to the Work Registration Scheme (Britain’s work benefits program). This sizable influx has significantly diminished the need for low skilled migrants from other countries. And while the overwhelming number of Eastern European workers has caused a backlash by establishing quotas for low skilled workers from the 2007 Enlargement (specifically Bulgaria and Romania), the impact on non-European applicants is obvious.

And while the government does not anticipate a racial impact in the move toward more restrictive immigration policies, as articulated in their Impact Assessment, there has been a very public campaign to distinguish restriction from racism, seen in Home Secretary John Reid’s rejection of the idea that “anybody who talks about immigration is somehow a racist.” In looking beyond the low skilled migrant route, past migration schemes saw the largest refusal rates for highly skilled persons on applications from

India, Pakistan and Nigeria, and for student visas, from Equatorial and South Africa, South Asia and the West Indies (HO 2006d: 41-43). While these large refusal rates are proportional to the volume of visa applications submitted, and a central goal of the PBS is to minimize the number of fraudulent and speculative visa applications in the first place, the opportunities for migrants in these areas to apply at all is either diminished or highly restricted by being contingent on both demand-side labor needs and supply-side skill sets. And though this type of restriction has been construed publicly as racial, the clear priority in the managed migration scheme, articulated by Charles Clarke, is the UK's economic needs: "If people come from outside that area (this country and the EU) to work they should do so on the basis of this country's national priorities. It is therefore right to set skills as the top issue" (HC Deb 7 March 2006: c725).

Given globalized migration and European Union enlargement, both promoting a large degree of movement of persons to the state, immigration policy is used here to manage the ends of the skills spectrum, whereby highly skilled migrants are encouraged to stay (with a route to permanent settlement and shortened residency requirements) and low-skilled and temporary workers find increased barriers to settling in Britain. This scheme, to reiterate, does not apply to Eastern European workers from the A-8 accession countries, thereby re-enforcing 'frontdoor' and 'backdoor' opportunities. In linking economic to immigration goals, Britain aims to manage the number of newcomers to their national community using the market mechanism of demand, as to more nation-based, cultural appeals.

But how does this vetting process link up to the intent and outcome of promoting national cohesion through 'common values?' The perception of a "lack of control,"

driven both by actual government failures as well as public perceptions of government competence to control borders are determined less by actual figures of incoming migrants but more by the extent to which they see migration as impacting their everyday lives. This localizes immigration; the degree to which immigration is perceived of felt to be a problem contributes to the extent to which it becomes politically important (Money 1999). It actually matters very little what happens on the border but matters quite a lot what happens on the high street.

The logic behind the reconfiguration of citizenship was to make the process of becoming British something “meaningful and celebratory rather than simply a bureaucratic process” (Life in the UK Advisory Group 2004: 11). Alterations to an already liberal citizenship policy presented in the White paper and the Five-year strategy were, therefore, aimed at adding *content* to citizenship. And whereas the first goal in revising citizenship was to construct British nationality as a meaningful identity, the other was to make “outsiders” want to take up that identity. Low take-up rates by permanent residents, 28% of eligible residents during the Advisory Group’s examination in 2003 (7), was a powerful indicator of perpetuating ethnic division and a lacking identification to British values.<sup>11</sup> To overcome this trend, the Life in the UK Advisory Group, formed in September 2002 to serve in an advisory capacity on “the method, conduct and implementation of a ‘Life in the United Kingdom’ naturalization test” (2003:3), acknowledged a unifying, de-racialized meaning of British identity and belonging:

To be British ... mean[s] that we respect the laws, the elected parliamentary and democratic political structures, traditional values of mutual tolerance, respect for

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<sup>11</sup> The interest in take-up rates as an underlying factor in changing citizenship criteria is also evident in the changing statistical reports of the Home Office. The Research Development and Statistics Directorate, since 2003, has carried out analyses of citizenship “take-up” rates based on information from the UK Labour Force Survey, at the behest of the Life in the UK Advisory Group (HO 2006e: 7).

equal rights and mutual concern; and that we give our allegiance to the state (as commonly symbolized in the Crown) in return for its protection. To be British is to respect those over-arching specific institutions, values, beliefs and traditions that bind us all, the different nations and cultures together in peace and in a legal order (2004: 14).

In re-defining British citizenship through civic value-commitments not vague, “cultural idioms” (Brubaker 1992),<sup>12</sup> an accessible, inclusive concept of citizenship aims to overcome social exclusion associated with immigrant-related diversity. The ‘common values’ which British newcomers and natives were expected to uphold, consequently, was defined as “how we behave towards each other collectively and that is what binds us together, rather than assertions of national, ethnic or religious priorities or particular interpretations of history” (Life in the UK Advisory Group And while this assertion of common values certainly suggests an inclusive goal for citizenship, its implementation came through the addition of barrier to settlement and naturalization, a contradiction Christian Joppke refers to as ‘illiberal liberalism’ (2007).2003: 12).

The process of changing citizenship into an instrument promoting integration and social cohesion was spearheaded by David Blunkett and Sir Bernard Crick. Matching their success in integrating citizenship studies into the National Curriculum, Blunkett again tipped Crick to promote an active, civic republican model of citizenship to immigrants (Crick 2006) through the establishment of:

a flexible Program of Studies that will lead not only to formal, legal citizenship but also focus at every level on what people need to settle in and begin to be equipped to be citizens in the full sense as is now being taught and learnt in our schools: active citizenship, interacting supportively and effectively, critically if needs be, but acting responsibly towards each other, other communities and public authorities (New and the Old 13).

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<sup>12</sup> Joppke notes this transition among postcolonial states where nation-state centered concepts of immigration have been eclipsed by liberal-state ones. Citizenship policies, therefore, “no longer can explicitly and directly reproduce and reinvigorate particular nationhood” (2005: 2).

The cornerstone upon which this process of “settling in” rests is the ability to speak English. The handbook for the citizenship test, “Life in the United Kingdom: A Journey to Citizenship,” describes English acquisition as an “immediate need” to using the institution of everyday life. Additionally, “the better the command of English, the more one can be aware of and able to exercise the rights and duties of both legal and active citizens” (2004: 10). Demonstrating a knowledge of English is not just a requirement for citizenship,<sup>13</sup> but a necessity for integration, whereby a “stronger sense of social participation and shared values...help strengthen mutual understanding between people of diverse cultural background” (HO 2005a: 22-23).

Acknowledging the direct relationship between language acquisition and integration, and appreciating the wide range of language skills among immigrants, the Advisory group, supported by the Home Office’s Social Policy Unit in Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND), set forth in advising on two routes to naturalization split along English-speaking ability. In effect since November 1, 2005, applicants with sufficient English are required to take a 24-question, multiple-choice, computer-based citizenship test, “Life in the UK,” at one of many testing centers across the country. The first Life in the UK handbook, released in December 2005 served as the information base for this exam with questions coming out of chapters 2, 3, and 4 only (“A changing society,” “Britain today: a profile,” and “How Britain is governed,” respectively). It tests

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<sup>13</sup> While a requirement for English knowledge and life in the UK has been requisite for citizenship acquisition since the British Nationality Act of 1981, it did not specify the means or need of evidence on which to substantiate this requirement until the Nationality, Immigration and citizenship Act of 2002 (I 1(1) (c)).



practical knowledge, not analysis or “problematic” interpretations of history (Taylor 2006).

The second path to naturalization, which while certainly less politicized is more frequently used, provides applicants who need to improve their English skills with citizenship lessons (a recommended twenty hours) through the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) ‘Skills for Life’ curriculum, the Department for Education Service’s national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills. These classes teach “English language in a citizenship context” (Sunderland 2006) based on material from the “Citizenship Materials for ESOL Learners” pack, and upon completion, learners obtain an accredited qualification.<sup>14</sup> The course route covers twelve areas of civic knowledge, including What is citizenship?, parliamentary democracy, Britain in Europe and the Commonwealth, Human Rights, Opportunities for participation, Britain as a multi-cultural society, employment, health, housing, education, the regions of the UK, and knowing the law. These pillars, essentially, of what it means to be British, are “menus not prescriptions” (Taylor et al. 2004) whereby ESOL teachers can select among any of these, so long as they reach the recommended number of hours of citizenship lessons.

While a goal of presenting these two pathways to citizenship is to encourage permanent residents and those with indefinite leave to remain to take up citizenship, it also, importantly, provides newcomers who qualify for citizenship a setting for integration by learning English and citizenship life skills in a classroom with other

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<sup>14</sup> The distinction here of teaching language in a civic context is important. There was a great concern by ESOL teachers that they were “extensions of the Home Office” by integrating citizenship material into what were English-language classes. The concern of serving the needs of the learners was put first in explicitly describing these courses as “language with civic content” (Norfield 2006).

learners at their level. But the successes of ESOL citizenship lessons and the citizenship test have been uneven. The Citizenship for ESOL learner's route to naturalization has been positively evaluated by learners and teachers and successful courses in England have been met with efforts at regional implementation in Scotland and Northern Ireland.<sup>15</sup> But the number of workers from the A8 accession states seeking to improve their English for better employment opportunity, and who do not have to pay for classes, have led to ESOL classes becoming "grievously overstretched" (ABNI 2006: ii). A three-year rule requiring non-EU/EAA immigrants be in the UK for three years before receiving fee remission for ESOL classes problematizes the goal of beginning integration at the earliest stage possible.<sup>16</sup> Whereas English is critical for participating in Britain's society and labor market, the high costs to acquiring English act as a further only increase the chance for permanent social alienation.

The citizenship test has also had its share of problems. While for the first four months of its implementation, the test passed an approximate 70% of test-takers (HC Written Question, April 18 2006), there have been wide reports of cheating and problems with the "study guide" itself. The Historical Association has noted several inaccuracies in the first chapter, "The Making of the United Kingdom," and omission of regional content which resulted in the exclusion of history-based questions from early tests (Taylor 2006).

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<sup>15</sup> The Final Report for the "Citizenship Materials for ESOL learners: a development project," references positive responses in a variety of areas, from presentation of the pack to training support from NIACE and LLU+ staff. While no survey work has been conducted to measure the effects of the citizenship material, interviews with learners have yielded positive results. With regard to regional compatibility, the process of adapting language qualification levels and content was problematic, and difficulties encountered in making the pack and familiarization courses compatible in Scotland, including translating English qualifications to levels determined by the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA), and recruiting ESOL teachers in Dundee and Inverness, served as good lessons for subsequent implementation in Northern Ireland.

<sup>16</sup> The three-year rule is the outcome of limited funds in DfES (Norfield 2006). It is based on the establishment of home student status. Non-EU/EAA immigrants need to meet a three year residency requirement, and spouses in England can receive home student status after one year. Scotland does not have a three-year rule, and immigrants can receive free English and skills education from the beginning of their residency.

Additionally, the handbook to prepare for the “Life in the UK” test is written far above an ESOL Entry Level Three /Intermediate One, the required English proficiency needed to take the exam (Kiwani 2006). The second edition of the handbook, written by an ESOL teacher, has been a major initiative of the Advisory Board on Naturalization and Integration (ABNI), an independent advisory body created from a recommendation of the Advisory Group, to maintain their advisory role for the government on citizenship and integration programs.

Finally, in addition to the two routes for naturalization, each fulfilling the requirement for demonstrating English and knowledge of life in the UK, the new citizenship agenda provides for an American-styled citizenship ceremony at the culmination of the naturalization process. The White paper builds the concern emerging from the 2001 race riots for the establishment of “common elements of nationhood” (Cantle 2001: 19) into the new citizenship ceremony by requiring an oath of allegiance to the monarchy and a pledge to uphold the democratic values of the state. New citizens are presented with a certificate of naturalization and a welcome pack, containing information on voting.

These changes toward establishing a “wider, active citizenship” all share the intention of promoting broad cohesion under a distinct, de-ethnicized definition of Britishness, but by adding more restrictions for settlement (as of April 2007) and naturalization; maintain the paradoxical logic of migration. Those extra steps required for settlement and citizenship, while incorporating one into a national community of rights and belonging, has been perceived by many applicants as excessively bureaucratic, indicated by the enormous jump in British citizen applicants in 2005 (up 64% from 2004)

before the new knowledge of life in the UK requirement was introduced in November (HO 2006e). The barrier for admission to society is much greater, though the membership to that society is based on minimal value commitments.

#### CONCLUSION: A NEW DIRECTION FOR COUNTRIES OF IMMIGRATION?

By allowing, in the language of the Five-year strategy, “a small proportion of [people] to settle permanently where there is clear economic benefit and where they are prepared to integrate socially” (2005a: 8), policymakers are directly influencing a future vision of Britain’s national community. It encourages newcomers to join its community, but admits only certain newcomers to that possibility. And furthermore, where they type of ‘common values’ and means of integration are promoted as the lowest common denominator between multicultural groups, the barriers to gaining membership have become higher as a result of integration criteria for citizenship acquisition and settlement. What does this all add up to? Consistent with the paradox of migration, while the goal for Britain is promoting itself as a county of immigration committed to economic migration and diversity, the content of this policy is one of restriction for both entry and establishment.

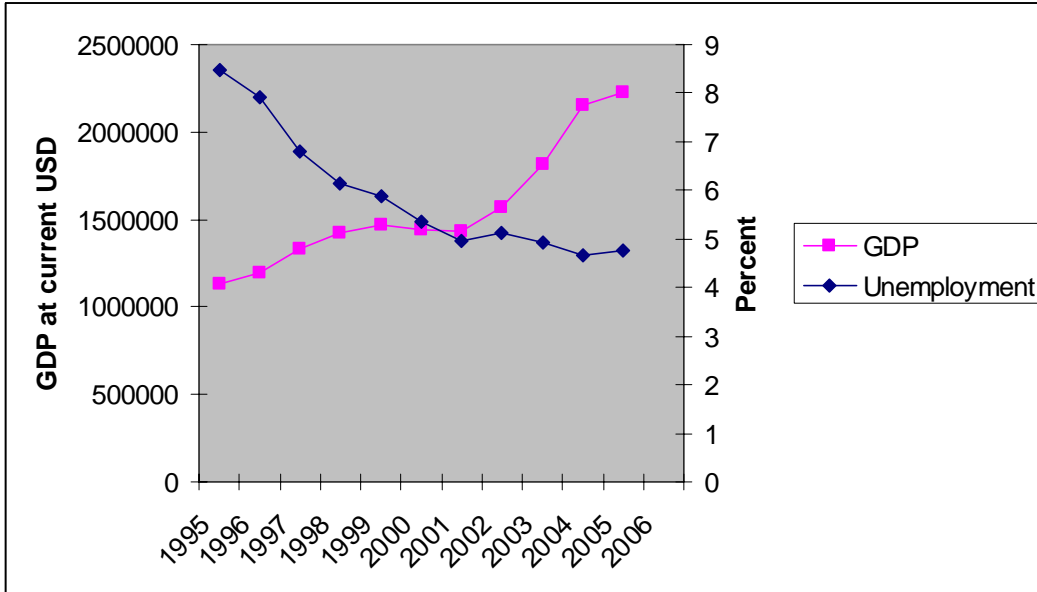
Britain is only one case examined here but there are a panoply of other European cases where this dynamic is evident. Taking on the benefits and responsibilities that come with the transition to a ‘country of immigration’ requires states to take stock of what it means to be a ‘national’ member, particularly in an age of European integration, globalization and “deterritorialized politics” (Benhabib 2002). Attracting skilled migration has become the *zeitgeist* of contemporary European migration strategies. From

France to Norway and Italy, countries are re-configuring immigration policies to attract the 'best and the brightest,' to maintain economic competitiveness in an atmosphere of declining native demographics. At the same time, these countries are also pursuing citizenship strategies for integration. Notably France, who has linked citizenship and assimilation since the mid-nineteenth century, has recently implemented an integration contract (*contract d'accueil et d'integration*) to formalize the obligation to integration between the immigrant and the state. And Netherlands, another country with a notably liberal citizenship policy in terms of access has added several integration requirements for acquisition, including a mandatory integration course, focusing on Dutch proficiency and social orientation.

The re-design of immigration and citizenship policies is a telling indicator that states are adjusting to migration as a reality. Cognizant that there are social and political costs alongside economic gains, restriction has been the path through which openness is promoted. Because of this paradox, the resulting picture is mixed; where there can be economic successes, like Britain's managed migration strategy, there are inherently some failures and unmitigating social costs, such as integration. The balance between these two outcomes will be the dominant challenge for the immigrant-receiving nation-states of Western Europe for the foreseeable future.

**Figure One**

**Annual GDP charted against percent unemployment by year**



Source: OECD

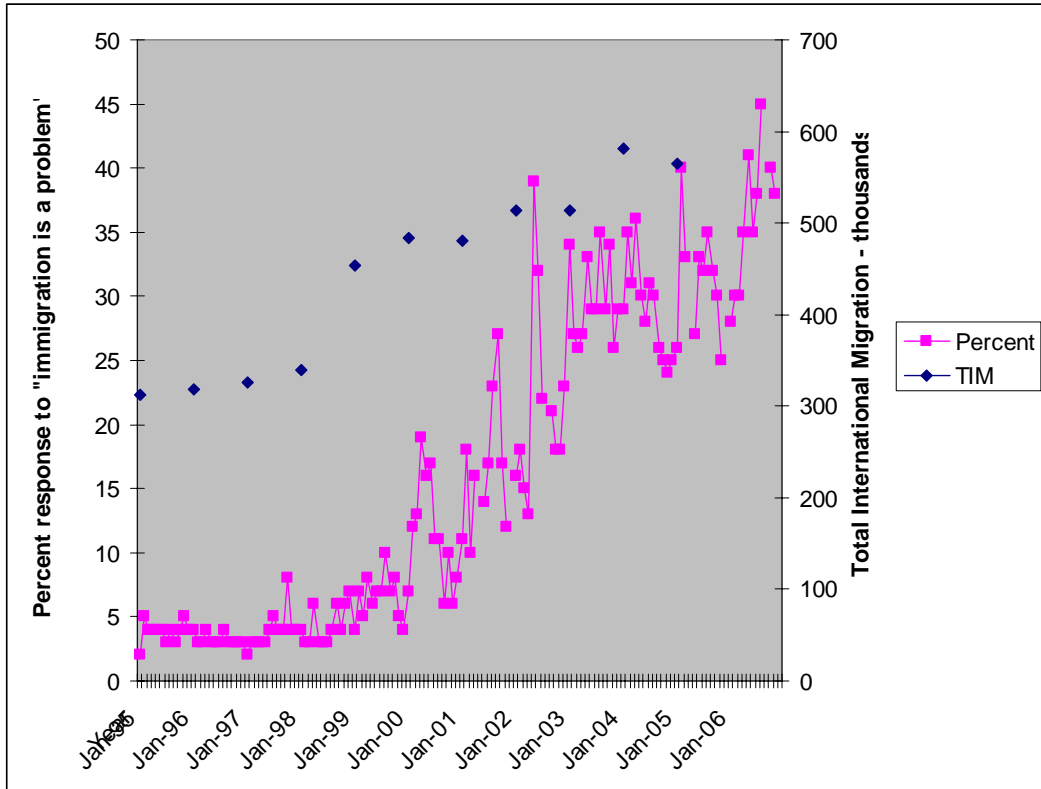
**Figure Two**



Source: OECD

Figure Three

Perception of immigration as an important issue (“percent”) against Total International Migration (“TIM”) to the UK



Percent response to the question “What would you say is the most important issue facing Britain today?”

Sources: Ipsos MORI, Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Note: I use the TIM as a source for immigration per year, as opposed to International Passenger Survey because the TIM adjusts the IPS to take into account overlooked sources for immigration, including movement from Ireland, migration and visitor “switchers,” and asylum seekers.

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