



Justice and Home Affairs Committee

Uncorrected oral evidence: Settlement, citizenship and integration

Tuesday 16 December 2025

10.35 am

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Members present: Lord Foster of Bath (The Chair); Lord Bach; Baroness Buscombe; Baroness Cash; Lord Dubs; Lord Filkin; Lord Henley; Baroness Hughes of Stretford; Baroness Prashar; Lord Tope.

Also present: Lord Anderson of Ipswich.

Evidence Session No. 5

Heard in Public

Questions 62 - 77

Witnesses

I: Professor Gareth Davies, Professor of European Law, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam; Professor Christian Joppke, Professor of Sociology, Department of Political Science, LUISS University, Rome; Professor Ricky van Oers, Professor of Immigrant Inclusion and Law, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, and Assistant Professor, Centre for Migration Law, Radboud University, The Netherlands.

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Examination of witnesses

Professor Gareth Davies, Professor Christian Joppke and Professor Ricky van Oers.

Q62 **The Chair:** Welcome, everyone, to the fifth public oral evidence session of the committee's inquiry into settlement, citizenship and integration. We are delighted to have three expert witnesses with us today; I would be enormously grateful if you could introduce yourselves for the record.

Professor Gareth Davies: Good morning. I am a professor of EU law at Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam.

Professor Ricky van Oers: I am an assistant professor at the Centre for Migration Law at Radboud University in the Netherlands. I am also affiliated with the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences in Bergen, where I am a professor of immigrant inclusion and law.

Professor Christian Joppke: I am a professor of sociology at LUISS University in Rome.

The Chair: Thank you very much indeed for being with us. We are going to kick off with a question from Baroness Buscombe.

Q63 **Baroness Buscombe:** Going straight into it, do states want migrants to integrate or to assimilate?

Professor Christian Joppke: What they want is them to assimilate, though not necessarily in the cultural sense. To impose a particular way of life on people against their consent is not in line with the liberal principles that you British—or you English—invented, but what they can realistically do, as long as they observe liberal constraints, is integrate. Notionally speaking, that is a two-way process in which migrants have the burden of taking up the language of the new place and acquiring its basic civic knowledge, while, in turn, receiving societies have to make space for these newcomers and provide resources.

Integration being a two-way process is the standard in Europe. There was a famous European Council paper on that in 2004, which was actually the year when the Dutch were presiding over the European Union. Yes, integration is the liberal legal standard, but assimilation is what everybody wants. It is the natural endpoint: newcomers are no longer distinguishable under the critical markers of income, education and residence. What other goal can we have in that respect?

Professor Gareth Davies: Everyone disagrees a little on what these words mean. My preference would be to understand integration in a functional sense, according to whether someone can participate in society and be successful and self-sufficient; and to understand assimilation in a more cultural sense, in terms of whether someone becomes more similar to the majority—the mythical majority, perhaps—in their attitudes.

I entirely agree with Christian that it is not justified to force assimilation, but it also does not work practically: you cannot make people feel certain

things. The best way to achieve assimilation is probably through integration over time. If people are given the possibility to function well in society, over generations—it is important to think in terms of generations—they will probably assimilate.

Baroness Buscombe: You say that people are given functions. Can you expand on that a little?

Professor Gareth Davies: It is a shock to arrive in a new place. Many people—this may not be so urgent for consultants coming in to work in the City—need help with their ability to get a job, to learn the language, to meet people and to work out how to live in decent conditions, but the more they are able to do that, the greater the chance of them becoming successful, functioning, loyal and respectable members of society; the same goes for their children. In that sense, they will in fact assimilate. The most effective form of assimilation policy is to enable functional integration.

Professor Ricky van Oers: I agree with what has been said before, but I stress that integration is a long-term process. Research has shown that it takes at least several generations for a group to become integrated—that is, to become an integral part of society. States that want immigrants to integrate need to be patient and need to provide a climate in which immigrants can integrate.

Three important drivers for integration are: security of residence and protection against expulsion; equal treatment comparable to other citizens in crucial domains such as education, the employment market and housing; and family reunification. States that create these three measures create a climate in which integration can successfully take place. If these conditions are not present—notably, security of residence and protection against expulsion—it is difficult for a new group to integrate, and any measure taken to promote integration will fail because the basic conditions are not present in those cases. That is what I would add.

Q64 **The Chair:** Thank you for that. Professor van Oers, can we stay with you for a second? I will then bring in the others. Our inquiry is looking at how we can aid people who come to this country to integrate more easily. As you and others have rightly said, there is some dispute as to exactly what we mean by integration, and there is limited research on measures to assess integration, as it were. None the less, we have a broad feel for what we mean by it, and we are keen on integration rather than assimilation, because we can benefit from people coming. If we take all of that uncertainty into account, what measures should be taken, either by national Governments or by local or regional government, to assist in the process of integration?

Professor Ricky van Oers: That is a good question. I will start by focusing on the role of local authorities. They play a very important role, notably when it comes to access to housing and offering possibilities to learn the language, for instance. These are important drivers for

integration. However, as I have already stated, local authorities remain powerless when central government is taking measures that impede integration. Security of residence and protection against expulsion in particular are central factors that determine integration. If promoting integration is the goal, the most important and effective measure a Government can take is to provide for security of residence. People are able to make plans for the longer term and organise their lives only if they have a secure future perspective.

A second important driver for integration, as I have already alluded to, is equal treatment, particularly in crucial areas such as housing, employment and education. The third important measure a Government can take, if they are genuinely interested in promoting immigrant integration, is the possibility of reuniting with family members. If you do not provide for these conditions and have these measures—and, notably, do not have the prospect of secure legal residence—integration will be hampered rather than furthered, despite any initiatives being taken at the local level.

The Chair: That issue of protection against expulsion is one we want to explore; Baroness Hughes will come on to it a little later.

Professor Gareth Davies: I do not have a lot to say on that. From my experience of working with Dutch municipalities, I have noticed that, at a local level—I am sure that it is the same here—they are good at helping, facilitating and encouraging. Whether it is in organising courses or training people, they have the local contact and the sensitivity, and this is the kind of thing they are equipped for.

What they are particularly bad at is judging. I am shocked at the amount of law-breaking that goes on in local Dutch authorities, for example, not because of corruption but because they perceive that they have discretion to judge whether someone has complied, has been working properly and has been living here, as well as how long they have been in the country and all kinds of issues that are often vague in the life of a migrant. They engage in common-sense judgments—there is a risk that they are sometimes overly sympathetic and sometimes overly strict—but they are not really equipped for that. When local authorities have a judging function about when someone has integrated, it is potentially very toxic.

Professor Christian Joppke: It is about language; of course, it all depends on your typical incoming groups by way of national origins. Particularly after Brexit, when Europeans stayed away or had to stay away, you had a lot of new intake from south-east Asia—and not by accident, because it was part of your empire, so I assume that they speak English on arrival and that this is not particularly urgent. This is an urgent thing in a country such as Germany, as you cannot expect newcomers to speak that difficult language. So it is language, language, language.

Non-discrimination is clearly obvious, but it is in place. Secure legal residence is surely important, but one has to consider the multiplicity of

incoming channels. I understand that it should be easier for asylum seekers who are still in the process to work in the UK, but the UK has been very drastic in that respect in past years. If their claim is not adjudicated, they can never have the same level of secure legal residence, because that would render the asylum policy dysfunctional. There are difficulties there.

In all of this, one also has to consider what other citizens have. I mean, newcomers can never expect to have more than other citizens. This is the whole reason for the populist upheaval and has to be observed. With respect to welfare, other citizens are increasingly treated in a very meagre, if not mean, way. This is the baseline that immigrants have to face as well. So language and non-discrimination are the two important items to me.

The Chair: That is very helpful; thank you. I turn to Lord Tope, but I think that we now have to look at what can be done on prioritising in the receiving country.

Q65 **Lord Tope:** Thank you for that introduction. We have partly covered this, but what factors actually drive successful integration?

Professor Christian Joppke: What factors drive successful integration? Work, work, work.

Lord Tope: Do you put that at the top of the list?

Professor Christian Joppke: Absolutely. The second is language. The third important thing is mixed residence. If newcomers add to heavily ethnically mono settlements, this is very bad. One has to take this very seriously. I understand that Denmark no longer has the status of being a pariah within the liberal state community in Europe—it levelled up to being the model—but its ghetto laws are not all wrong, even though the word is of course despicable. The idea that you have to put limits on or control the ethnic composition of urban settlements is an important thing. Of course, it is tricky to implement it with respect to liberal rules, but mixed residence and the degree to which it is assured by active policy is third on my list.

Professor Ricky van Oers: Language is indeed important, but I stress that this is not a plea for introducing difficult language requirements or language tests that immigrants would have to pass in order to qualify for a more secure residence status, for example. There is no evidence that these promote integration, but there is evidence that they lead to exclusion, notably among more vulnerable immigrant groups such as traumatised refugees, women in disadvantaged positions and those who had little education growing up. They will not be able to pass these tests, meaning that they will not be able to access a more secure residence status and their integration will be hampered rather than promoted. As I stated before, security of residence is a very important driver for integration.

I agree that language is crucial when it comes to integration but, rather than introducing difficult tests or raising the level of existing tests, states should encourage people to learn the language by providing ample possibilities to attend courses—and at different levels. There are people with different learning capabilities and different needs for language skills, so tailor-made courses that are freely accessible should be provided.

I also think that how the receiving society responds to immigrants and their stay in the country is an important issue when it comes to integration. If the attitude of the receiving society is “negative”, in quotation marks, a negative climate that will not benefit integration is created. If immigrant integration is lagging behind—for instance, because there are no possibilities to secure a residence status, to make long-term plans or to build a life—the attitude towards immigrants will also be more negative, which will not further integration. So withholding secure residence status creates a vicious circle for integration: not only does it impede immigrants in making plans for the future and building their lives but, because this will hamper their integration, the attitude towards them from the receiving society will also become more negative, which will further hamper integration. This is again a plea to make sure that the conditions are present for immigrants to integrate in society properly.

Professor Gareth Davies: It is probably worth sparing a few seconds to think about the integration of other groups, rather than the typical stereotype of a non-integrated migrant. One could make a very good argument that this is a political problem rather than an economic one; and that the politics of it are driven, in a way, by the relatively unintegrated nature of other groups in society. One might think of the very rich, who can opt out and live in a bubble. That has significant political effects.

A continental European approach to that would be universal public services. If they have their own schools and their own healthcare, they will not be interested or involved in the rest of society, which creates a polarising effect. Inasmuch as those services are sufficiently good, they become part of something and share something with the rest of society.

The native-born Brit outside of the big cities is a slightly contentious way to put it, perhaps—it is fair to say that Britain is a dynamic, multicultural and successful society, in many ways—but an awful lot of Brits are not integrated into that society. Where they live, it does not look like that. It is perhaps fair to use the integration concept, as they are not really integrated into the mainstream of what Britain is today, but it is quite a challenge to achieve that; I do not think that I have an answer, but it has to be said that that is probably just as much a part of the problem.

The Chair: I saw Professor Joppke nodding vigorously. Do you want to add anything on that point?

Professor Christian Joppke: Professor Davies got a bit carried away. At the academic level, I agree, but, in practical life terms, I do not. I fully agree with this idea—it is not an idea, but a reality. Michael Sandel, who

was an American philosopher, called it the “skyboxification” of society, where the ultra-rich sit in skyboxes and live in completely different worlds. Your word in God’s ear is all I can say about that.

Q66 Baroness Prashar: Can we talk a little about the Life in the UK Test? As you know, the Government are proposing to refresh it. How would you refresh it? Are there alternative assessment models for integration and commitment to a new country that would work better?

Professor Ricky van Oers: As regards your first question, it is often claimed that the Life in the UK Test encourages integration, in quotation marks, by ensuring that applicants must take steps to ensure that they have the knowledge that underpins an understanding of life in the UK. However, there is no evidence from studies or research that passing the Life in the UK Test actually promotes integration.

What the research does show—I have already alluded to this—is that, despite the facts that the pass rate is quite high and that this is not an explicit goal for which the test was introduced, the test leads to selection and inclusion. It is mainly immigrants in disadvantaged positions—elderly migrants, those who have had little prior schooling, illiterates, women in disadvantaged positions, et cetera—who struggle to pass this standardised Life in the UK Test. For them, the inability to pass this test means that they are unable to qualify for indefinite leave to remain or citizenship. This does not promote their integration because a secure residence status is, as I have emphasised, the most important driver for integration.

If better integration is the goal, I would argue that, rather than linking settlement or citizenship to a migrant’s ability to pass a standardised test, states should encourage migrants to learn the language and learn about society by providing generous, tailor-made learning opportunities, rather than putting all this emphasis on the ability to pass a Life in the UK Test—refreshed or as it is now.

The Chair: I apologise for interrupting but you said, “Provide opportunities”. Can we be clear: is it your view that we should just make them available, or should they be made available with a requirement for attendance at them?

Baroness Prashar: Should they be mandatory?

Professor Ricky van Oers: That is a good question. Governments often assume that, if you do not make it a mandatory requirement, people will not attend these courses. That also has not been proven by research: countries with experience of providing free language courses have seen that migrants attend them even though they are not legally obliged to do so. I can speak from experience in the Netherlands, where passing a test is a requirement. It is about not necessarily following the courses but passing the test at the end. People need to follow the courses or they will not pass the test. The moment you start making attending courses mandatory, you also have to monitor people attending them. How do you

do that? It creates a whole new system of bureaucracy. I do not know how helpful that would be; it will cost a lot of money and take up a lot of time.

Baroness Prashar: Can that requirement of getting citizenship be not mandatory but a requirement as a step towards citizenship?

Professor Ricky van Oers: Yes, it can be. States can expect their prospective citizens to have knowledge of the majority language. However, it is important to make sure that, if you introduce such a requirement, it does not exclude those who are unable to fulfil the requirements. You can have a requirement, but make it tailor-made.

The UK was doing pretty well until 2015, when it abolished the possibility of acquiring citizenship. You proved that you had improved your language skills with one ESOL level. That did not lead to the exclusion of groups because you had to make an effort to learn the language; if you proved that you had progressed one level, you would fulfil the language requirement and apply for citizenship. That is a good example of requiring people to make an effort to learn a language by motivating them to improve their language skills but not excluding them from becoming fully-fledged members. There is a load of disadvantages attached to not allowing people to acquire fully-fledged membership. For starters, it creates a problem of democratic legitimacy. Becoming naturalised is also an important driver for integration. What you do not want is for any requirements to exclude people from becoming citizens, with the exception of public order requirements; I can imagine that people who have violated criminal laws are not able to naturalise.

Professor Christian Joppke: The *Economist* recently had a fun article entitled "Could you pass the British citizenship test?" It had the Battle of Hastings and an Ulster fry. It ridiculed the test.

I would not ridicule it. There is nothing wrong with putting in these questions. As long as these matters can be learned and are cognitively accessible, you can put in what you like. Of course, you have to find a moderate balance between history, culture and political principles. My favourite question from one of the British citizenship tests was the famous one: "What do you do if somebody spills a beer over you in the pub?" What is the correct way of behaving? I always taught that to my Swiss students over the years. It is funny but it is important to know how to behave. Why not be instructed about the norms and customs of everyday life? What one should think about is how difficult the test is to pass, in the end. I am in the process of acquiring Swiss citizenship. I am proud to report that, of 30 questions, I was wrong on just one of them. It was a delight for me to learn about the history of democracy.

Lord Bach: Which question did you get wrong?

Professor Christian Joppke: It was a complicated question about where child allowance is on your wage slip—whether it is on the first or on the second. I never read my wage slip. I was always happy to get the

result: 15,000 francs every month and, in December, a double salary. I did not know the answer, and it was not in the instruction materials. All the rest was in the instructions.

Interestingly, you can always laugh about the Swiss's restrictive citizenship laws. Today, they still do not have *jus soli* or any element of it, but you can pass that test if you get just 60% of the questions right. In the British test, it is 75%, which is tough. I do not make any judgment on that, but these are things you could think about. Basically, it is all right to have that test and have no problem with it.

Professor Gareth Davies: It is hard to imagine that these tests meaningfully make anyone more British or more Swiss, or that they even fundamentally change their attitudes to a great extent. I understand the tests as largely symbolic. If you wish to become a citizen, you should be prepared to make a certain effort. I do not have a problem with that; it is reasonable enough. It is more of a symbolic ritual.

A certain amount of ritual around citizenship is perhaps fine, but it is important to tailor it to the people doing it and not make it unreasonable. For about 30 years, I have been thinking that I should like to learn French or German, but it has not really happened. Those tests are tough demands. The Dutch have different options. You can, for example, do a more advanced language test or a lower-level language test, and then do a little cultural test that is not massively demanding. You could have the option of more practical, different paths according to people's educational level or what they choose. It is okay to ask people to make a certain effort, but it is not okay to ask for things they cannot reasonably achieve. What Christian can do is probably not what every migrant can.

Professor Christian Joppke: Thank you for the flowers.

Baroness Buscombe: Can I ask all of you something? Do you not think that the reasoning behind some of this could be, for example, acting as a lever to ensure that women coming from societies where they have no freedoms at all are allowed to learn and become more a part of this society?

Professor Gareth Davies: It is difficult to achieve those goals, but I could imagine that. Then again, make it the right kind of test, because a high-level democratic test involving lots of kings and queens is probably not the most effective. There could be functional, practical skills that might be really helpful for them.

Q67 **Lord Filkin:** Staying with the same theme, there is no difference between the three of you on the importance of language for integration in society. There may be a difference between you on to what extent there are sticks as well as carrots; we will perhaps come to that. Can I ask, first, a factual question? What language requirements are used at different stages of the settlement journey: at entry, at residence and for citizenship? I am talking about language proficiency. Can you answer about the British process but illustrate it, if useful, with any differences

from continental Europe?

Professor Christian Joppke: I looked into the language level that the Germans require for settlement and citizenship. It is B1, but it is a damn complex language. I am proud to be able to speak it but I could not do so if I had had to learn it. It is probably a bit easier for the British. It is the equivalent of the lingua franca of Esperanto. I find nothing wrong in you moving it from B1 to B2, as I understand is your project, simply because the language is a simple tongue and a universal mobility resource.

What I also find useful in what you British are doing is the progression: you start with moderate language requirements at the first level, then progressively increase it over the next levels. It is a useful idea but B2 should probably be the stopping point because a level C is something that that you should not require by law.

Lord Filkin: For the record, as I understand it, the British position will, in effect, become that, if you want to come into the country as a dependant, you will need to have A1 and, for a visa extension, you will need A2. I am just trying to check where you will need B2; I will let you answer that.

Professor Christian Joppke: Settlement would be B2.

Lord Filkin: B2 is, in effect, A-level fluency in common English parlance. Are you supportive of that idea?

Professor Christian Joppke: Yes.

Lord Filkin: Ricky van Oers, what is your view?

Professor Ricky van Oers: There is huge variation throughout Europe in the language required to obtain citizenship. This shows that it is very difficult to make a language test that is actually useful for citizenship. Language test experts have repeatedly contended that it is virtually impossible to establish a link between language proficiency, on the one hand, and language tests for citizenship, on the other hand. Such a link does exist between language proficiency and language tests to perform certain jobs or access higher education, but the question of how someone needs to master the majority language in order to obtain citizenship is virtually impossible to answer.

This, as I said, becomes apparent from the huge variation in the level of language proficiency that is required for citizenship in different countries in Europe, including which language skills are required in order to obtain citizenship. In some countries, it is only oral language skills—speaking and listening—but, in other countries, written language skills are also required. The level that is required also differs greatly, from a very basic level to an almost academic level, as is the case in Denmark, for instance. This is important to state. Would you also like me to expand a little on language requirements in other stages of the settlement journey?

Lord Filkin: No; that is clear enough for now. If I have understood and paid attention properly to what you said earlier, you would not have any

requirements at all, because, in essence, you think that a better method is to offer the ability to learn rather than having any of what others might call incentives or requirements to do so.

Professor Ricky van Oers: I imagine that a country that is genuinely interested in promoting immigrant integration would require its prospective citizens to have certain language skills in order to obtain citizenship, but the most effective way to do this is to promote ample, accessible, tailor-made language courses and not to set uniform requirements that everyone needs to meet. The moment you start doing that, you exclude people who will not be able to reach that level.

Lord Filkin: The reverse argument, which is Baroness Buscombe's argument and for which there is a fair degree of evidence in Britain, is that some migrants live in closed migrant communities. The women in those communities do not, for strong cultural reasons, participate fully in society, not least—there are other reasons—because they cannot speak the language and there is no incentive to do so. If I understand that history, it seems a fundamental issue that is wrong in terms of those women's ability to participate fully in British society. You seem to disagree with that.

Professor Ricky van Oers: It is very important for these women to have the opportunity to integrate, so it would be helpful for them to attend language courses and learn the language. However, I do not think that it is helpful to introduce a language test that needs to be passed in order for them to obtain citizenship, because it would be very difficult for them to achieve the uniform level that needs to be reached by all. They will fail this test and will not be able to secure their residence status to obtain citizenship. This will not help their integration at all; it will actually isolate them more and mean that they remain outside society even more.

If you are truly interested in promoting the integration of these marginalised groups, providing the opportunity for them to learn the language effectively and encouraging them to attend these courses is a more effective means than making them pass a language test, which is virtually unattainable for them, in order to achieve a status that is equal to other citizens and to become fully fledged members of society.

Lord Filkin: I must admit that I struggle to understand why you should not have an incentive as well as offers to comply. For most of us, incentives are fundamental to shift our behaviours.

Professor Ricky van Oers: In this case, an incentive would be okay: "You want to become a citizen or secure your residence status by applying for a settlement permit. We want you to show that you've made an effort to learn our language". That is a requirement you can introduce, and it can also be an incentive. Rather than saying, "We want everyone applying for citizenship or settlement to pass this test at this level, and you need to have these language skills", I would offer the opportunity for people to access language courses.

You could make it obligatory for them to attend these courses. In the UK, until 2015, as long as people demonstrated that they had progressed in their language skills—so that their level when exiting the language course was higher than when they started—it showed that they had made an effort that had opened up the world of language learning and attending courses, with which they were unfamiliar before. That would work at both ends: the Government would make sure that people make an effort to learn the language and that people have certain language skills before they become members, but it would not lead to the exclusion of being fully fledged members of society with all of the attached benefits.

Lord Filkin: Christian was broadly supportive of the hierarchy of tests—in other words, you have a basic minimum before you could come in, even as a dependant, but that progresses as you get permanent status and citizenship. He was broadly supportive of what the UK Government are doing on that hierarchy; that largely met some of the concerns that the committee had in earlier discussions. Gareth, what is your view on that? Is it sensible or not?

Professor Gareth Davies: It is very difficult to answer that without distinguishing between the different groups. In that sense, what you do with some groups is fine. For expats who want to settle here, it is fine to have progressive language tests; it is hard to object to that. For the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, there is a trade-off. I entirely accept the point about closed communities and women who stay at home. At the same time, if you have recognised someone as an asylum seeker fleeing persecution, it is hard to justify saying, “You can’t see your family until they’ve learned English”, when they are in difficult circumstances somewhere in the world, almost by definition. You could offer online teaching, but that depends on their facilities.

This is not going to be solved by a policy. It is generally helpful to remember that, just like a policy against rain on Saturdays, there is limited power to solve this problem. As long as there are wars and droughts, people will come, and they will change society. We can be unhappy about it or not, but it is realistic and adults do not change that much. So I am not at all opposed to making efforts on compulsory language courses when people are here and making genuine, intelligent efforts to integrate people. At the same time, it is helpful to remember that you just are not going to achieve radical change. You are not going to turn women from one background into women from another background.

Actually, a smart policy would be to focus on the next generation and ask, “What conditions are their children growing up in?” Most migrants come at a relatively early stage of their adult life. I notice that, in the Netherlands, the politicisation was around second or third-generation migrants.

Lord Filkin: Is that not the fundamental moral reason for insisting on basic proficiency from a dependent mother coming in? It is not because you are forcing her to do something she does not want to do; you are

concerned about the ability of the children to integrate if they do not speak English with their parents.

Professor Gareth Davies: If you insist on it before they come in, for certain groups, it is the same as saying, "You can't come". It may be an unreasonable demand for some people in some circumstances. You may just be saying to certain groups, "Sorry, you don't get to see your family".

Lord Filkin: That implies that, although you would not apply the test as rigidly on entry for a dependant, you would apply a hierarchy of tests once they were here.

Professor Gareth Davies: Once they were here, I would not have a problem with some compulsion or a hierarchy of tests. Again, some people are better at learning languages than others, but you can push. The important thing is: what do you if someone fails? It is easy to have a moral claim—"We're going to do X, Y and Z—but suppose people fail. Realistically, they are not sent back. It may be that a demanding or aspirational policy that says, "No, we want everyone to do this, this and this", becomes a policy that simply creates lots of marginalised people because they fail. That then works against what you are trying to achieve, because you have people being less integrated. A softer policy, perhaps with slightly lower tests or something that people are more inclined to engage with, might be better. These are all context-specific, in a way, but they are judgments. Simply laying down your ideal does not mean it will happen.

The Chair: Thank you for some very thought-provoking answers.

Q68 **Baroness Hughes of Stretford:** We have spent a lot of time talking about language and testing regimes as a condition of settlement. I want to think about something that Professor Joppke mentioned earlier: the role of national government, as well as local and regional government, in having an impact on these things.

Do you think that the use of temporary or highly restrictive visa regulations undermines long-term integration processes? We have a debate here about the Government's direction of travel in this regard. What are your thoughts on that? Are they likely to undermine long-term integration? In your answer, can you help us understand whether there is any evidence to suggest a link between highly restrictive visa regulation and integration—or, indeed, a lack of it? Who would like to start?

Professor Gareth Davies: I will jump in. I became Dutch after Brexit. They were not about to throw me out; I had lived there for 15 years and nobody really cared about English law professors. I could have got a permanent visa without any trouble at all, but it was about being committed to a country. My children are growing up there and I did not want to live as a foreigner. It is an insecurity. If you make the wrong kind of mistake or a new Government change their policy, it is not a nice way

to live. Living in security is better. I know some other people who have done it. The commitment goes both ways, so I made that choice.

If you ask people to live a large amount of their adult life in insecurity, that is not only cruel but asks an awful lot of people. If you want people to feel loyal and be committed to being British, that is exactly how you do not achieve it. Typically, when you have every kind of high-achieving, patriotic, second-generation migrants—a Michael Howard figure—being them, you will find a story of parents or grandparents who were treated with great kindness and welcomed. My grandmother was a migrant patriot who was even more patriotic than one could realistically be; that was because she regarded the country as having treated her with great decency and kindness when she came as a refugee. In the long term, you shoot yourself in the foot by asking people to live for long periods in situations of marginal status or as an outsider in insecurity.

Baroness Hughes of Stretford: That makes intuitive sense to me, but is there any evidence from a country that has become more restrictive on what happened in terms of integration?

Professor Ricky van Oers: If a country makes it more difficult to secure resident status—it is clear from research that having secure residence and being protected from expulsion is a huge driver for integration—it is a crucial factor because, without that, people will not be able to build their lives. When integration is the goal, the most important and effective measure a Government can take is provide for security of residence, as I have said before. If people do not have that, they will not be able to make long-term plans or orient themselves towards long-term settlement in the country, which will hamper, rather than foster, integration, as Gareth Davies has already stated.

Also, integration is a process that takes several generations. It is very difficult to measure the direct effect on integration of, for instance, making the residence requirement to qualify for settlement longer. Research has shown, however, that security of residence is an important driver for integration. That is also the reason why, in the EU, several directives were adopted in the early 2000s to provide for security of residence for long-term resident third-country nationals. For those who are not EU nationals, there is a long-term residence directive that gives a special status—EU long-term resident status—after a period of five years. It grants third-country nationals a status that is almost equal to EU nationals who have made use of their free movement rights, specifically with the goal of promoting their integration. Security of residence is a fundamental issue when it comes to the integration of migrants. There is no evidence suggesting that longer periods of residence promote integration; it is really the other way round.

Q69 **Baroness Hughes of Stretford:** To summarise—I will ask Professor Joppke whether he agrees—you would say that, in looking at the Government's direction of travel in their various White Papers and announcements, making the requirements to achieve settlement and citizenship more than twice as long as they are now, as well as increasing

the cost so that it is very expensive, would mitigate against creating the security that you argue is essential for integration. Is that a fair summary?

Professor Christian Joppke: If you ask for evidence on the relationship between tightening visa rules and long-term integration, I can say fairly confidently that there is no such evidence. I do not know of any serious, quantitative social science study that has investigated the topic. I am also confident that, if you asked ChatGPT, it would come up with nonsense if it provided you with an answer.

My take is that is temporary residence absolutely does not harm long-term integration, but only if—it is a big “if”—the possibility of permanent residence or settlement, as you call it, exists. If it is not possible, you go down the route of the Gulf states or Singapore; I do not think that western liberal societies want to do that. So my answer is, “Not necessarily”.

Actually, there are two big logics in place here in how you deal with the matter. The European, particularly continental European, logic has always been what German lawyers called *Aufenthaltsverfestigung*—it translates as “consolidation of residence”—where, over time, you acquire ever more security. At one point, the Germans introduced the possibility of a long-term residence card, which did not exist in the beginning. Even the French “*Carte de résident de 10 ans*”—the 10-year card, which is their permanent residence title—only came in over time.

Interestingly, the classic immigration countries of Canada and America take the reverse route. In Canada, there is two-step migration: the typical immigrant comes through a work contract and is a temporary resident—as I was in British Columbia for one year—then acquires the possibility of permanent residence. In America, typical immigrants move there by way of the H-1B, which Donald has now made it more difficult to access; I also had the H-1B. There is nothing wrong with the principle of temporary residence, even for high-skilled people, at the initial moment of moving into a new society. Of course, with your 10-year rule, you must be aware that you will be an outlier in Europe. The European average is five years; when you double that, you must think about the consequences. I find it very drastic.

Q70 The Chair: I want to pick up on something about which I am genuinely rather confused. We have heard a strong argument from one witness that there is a wealth of evidence that security of residence is a huge driver for integration, but I have equally heard almost the opposite—that you can have integration even with temporary visas and, anyway, there is the question of how you define successful integration and so on. There are genuinely two different arguments there. Have I got it wrong? Have I misheard the two cases that are being made by Professor Joppke and Professor van Oers? Are you disagreeing, or have I got it wrong?

Professor Ricky van Oers: We are not disagreeing to a great extent. Of course, when people enter a country, they initially have a

temporary residence. What I have heard Professor Joppke clearly state is that that is not a problem as long as there is the prospect of obtaining a more permanent and secure residence status. The average in the EU is currently five years. That is for a reason: EU legislation has been adopted with the aim of promoting immigrant integration to provide for this permanent EU resident status after five years. That is why the general residence requirement in the EU for permanent residence is five years.

The Chair: I am going to stop you because what I am hearing is a slight walking back on the disagreement. We will want to spend a bit of time just looking back through the precise words that you used. I say to Professor Joppke that, of course, all of this is irrelevant because you answered an earlier question by saying that the only thing that matters is "work, work, work". I am well aware that you meant much more than that. In the same way, a famous Prime Minister of ours said, "Education, education, education", then went and did lots of other things as well.

I am preventing Professor—I mean "Lord"—Anderson coming in. I am sorry; I am so used to professors today.

Q71 **Lord Anderson of Ipswich:** I am not a professor, I am afraid, but this has been a fascinating discussion. Perhaps I could bring in Professor Davies. You rightly said that the proposed new rules in the UK would have a standard indefinite leave to remain—a settlement period of 10 years—but what they are trying to do is build in a number of incentives so that 10 years is only a starting point. They call it "earned settlement". So, if you are a high earner or a key public service worker, or you can demonstrate that you have volunteered in particular ways, you might earn a reduction, whereas, if you have relied on public funds or breached the Immigration Rules, those 10 years can extend as far as 20 or 30 years. In other words, you are looking at incentives that go well beyond: "Have you committed a criminal offence? Do you command the language?"

I am sure that views in the room will differ as to whether this is a good idea, but I am very interested to know from you whether there is research on this. Have other countries pioneered such a sophisticated earned settlement model? Does it work in practice?

Professor Gareth Davies: Well, "sophisticated" is one way of putting it. To me, it sounds overly complicated; generally, with most policies, overcomplication is not desirable. As Ricky has been saying, the EU has a standard: for five years, you are conditional. It is simple: it is lawful residence, so the conditions are attached to lawfulness. You do not have a right to benefits but you have the right to work and so on, then you become permanent.

As Christian said, there is no real experiment, so we do not know, but, intuitively, it seems to me that any disagreement here is about numbers. Everybody accepts the idea that you might be temporary for a while then permanent. The question is: at what point is that? How long is it reasonable to expect people to remain temporary? Most of the world

thinks that 10 or 20 years is pretty long. Intuitively, it seems rather long. A question you might want to ask yourself is: what happens to these people? The big issue here is the proposition that, if people fail, they will leave after a while. That is a very different policy situation from accepting that, in practice, for most groups, it is the case that they are here—they are not going anywhere.

Then the question is: what kind of relationship do you want them to have with the rest of society? Christian may know more about this, as a sociologist, but it is plausible to say that it is desirable to encourage these people to be full members of society within a reasonable time—five, six or seven years—so that they can feel like they are a part of society rather than keeping them, for a large part of their adult lives, feeling that they are conditional. It is important to remember that they are here. There is not an option of, “If they’re not good enough, we can make them disappear”. That does not usually happen.

Lord Anderson of Ipswich: One advantage of what is proposed, I suppose, is that it dispenses with the illusory threat to deport and says, “If you don’t behave in ways that we consider public-spirited, you’ll have insecure status for longer. If, on the other hand, you take rapid strides towards integration in ways of which we approve, your insecure status will last for a shorter time”. In a sense, those are more realistic incentives than the threat of deportation, which we all know will never happen.

Professor Gareth Davies: There is a principle there; I do not object to it. Crime is a particular issue. You can say that crime is disqualifying, although, if it is a minor crime, that could be unreasonable. It certainly plays a role; you can have your conditions. As to whether it is advantageous to have these complicated levels of things, that will encourage a certain amount of cynicism. In practice, it means that the rich get in quickly while the poor struggle; that is not necessarily compatible with broader images of what citizenship, or even Britain, is about.

The Chair: Bearing in mind the time, let us speed on a little more quickly. In picking up that point and developing it, Lord Henley has a question.

Q72 **Lord Henley:** I was going to ask about how the UK settlement and permanent residence requirements compare with those of the EU, but it seems that the crucial distinction is between five years and 10 years. You think that 10 years is too long. There seems to be a growing political momentum across many EU countries to tighten up their requirements on immigration and settlement; I am thinking of Denmark in particular, but the same would be true of others. Would you like to take that a bit further?

Professor Gareth Davies: There is certainly a desire, but I do not have the perception that many of them are successfully finding ways to do it.

Denmark is a tempting example and definitely worth studying, but it is a very small country in a unique situation.

I do not think that there is much to learn from Denmark. If Cheltenham became particularly vicious towards migrants, probably none would go to Cheltenham, but that is because they would have other options. In that sense, Denmark is the Cheltenham of Europe. It is a small country next to large ones that have softer requirements and are more admitting. Nobody particularly wants to go to Denmark—unless it is for a nice weekend—so, in practice, it is easy for people to go to Germany or Sweden. So Denmark can exploit its unusual situation in Europe. You could say, “Good for Denmark”—that would perhaps be rather un-European or not very public-spirited—but Denmark can exploit that situation. There is a limit to how many countries can do that, though, and it is not really going to work for Britain. I do not think that Denmark teaches us that much.

Lord Henley: I do not think that any Members here come from Cheltenham, so we can probably forget that. Professor Joppke, would you like to add anything?

Professor Gareth Davies: Apologies—it was hypothetical.

Professor Christian Joppke: I would underline Gareth’s point that over-complexification is undesirable. This is an overly complex scheme with the pluses and the minuses.

I think that 10 years is problematic. Why move away from the five years? You even have 20 years for certain incomers; if they do not have papers and they claim asylum, as I understand it, they have 20 years. We in Europe have a cynical asylum system whereby you can request asylum at the border only if you are undocumented, basically, so we are also culprits of making them wait if they show up at the border—not that I necessarily support that regime, which is unviable in the long run.

I am not that much in favour of 10 years, and I do not support Gareth’s negative views on Denmark. There is a terribly nicely functioning beach community over there. They did the right thing with migration. It is a fabulous society—almost rivalling Switzerland. Certain things that the Social Democrats are now doing very successfully go overboard, such as the jewellery laws, where they plan to take property off people if they go through the asylum procedure. I find that very questionable, and there is a dark history to that kind of policy, but the Danish do a lot of things right. I do not disapprove of the idea of Denmark as a model.

Professor Ricky van Oers: I am more on Gareth’s side when it comes to the evaluation of Denmark. It is very strict when it comes to the requirements for permanent residence and citizenship. It requires a very high, advanced level for citizenship, in terms of language and knowledge of society, which means that a lot of people who are unable to achieve this level are in effect excluded from fully fledged membership. These strict requirements for citizenship—such as a nine-year residence

requirement when five years is really the standard in Europe—create a problem of democratic legitimacy, because people who are permanently resident are living under laws that affect them but cannot exercise any influence over them because they do not have voting rights.

Even Germany adapted its citizenship legislation last year to provide for a five-year residence requirement—and, by the way, to allow for dual citizenship, which is a huge shift in the attitude towards dual citizenship in Europe. In Denmark, there is still a nine-year residence requirement. Comparative research has shown that, after 20 years' residence, only 36% of first-generation immigrants have naturalised. Compare that to a country such as Sweden, where 80% have naturalised after 20 years. This means that a big class of second-class citizens living in Denmark are not able to participate fully or integrate effectively. So I am not a big fan of the Danish policies relating to immigrants and how they are treated there.

The Chair: You touched on dual citizenship; we will move on to that.

Q73 **Baroness Cash:** I have a quick database question for each witness. What trends have you seen in dual or multiple citizenship, both in the UK and in Europe?

Professor Gareth Davies: I understand that the trend in most countries is towards a greater acceptance of it, simply because it is the reality of the world—if you force people to choose, you are more likely to get angry citizens rather than loyal ones—but there certainly are countries that are very concerned about it. For example, in the Netherlands, they are concerned about Turkish and Moroccan dual citizens in particular, which is an integration and loyalty issue: they would like people to commit to being Dutch. In practice, it has become almost impossible. It is a bit of a sideshow; citizenship is not really the primary issue here. There might be issues around integration and social harmony, but I do not think that the passport as such is the major issue. Most countries are becoming more accepting on the whole.

Professor Christian Joppke: I have nothing to add to that. The general trend is to acknowledge multiple citizenship, as Germany—long an outlier—is demonstrating. Even Switzerland allows dual citizenship in many respects, although not in all respects. We are moving from a geopolitical space of Lockean trade to one of Hobbesian war, and I do not think that that will change the picture. Modern warfare is no longer just mass conscription—although even the Germans are thinking about reintroducing the draft, but in a soft way. Modern warfare is done with drones and technology. I do not think that the trend towards accepting dual or multiple citizenship will be interrupted by the new situation in Europe.

Baroness Cash: Do either of you have numbers? You both referred to the trend increasing. What are those increases?

Professor Gareth Davies: I do not know.

Professor Ricky van Oers: Do you mean the increases in the number of countries that are accepting dual nationality?

Baroness Cash: Yes. Two witnesses have said so far that they have seen an increase in acceptance; I am interested in that data.

Professor Ricky van Oers: I can point to the GLOBALCIT database provided by the EUI—European University Institute—in Florence. It regularly publishes on citizenship legislation in the EU and more broadly in the world. It published a recent report suggesting that there is a worldwide trend towards accepting dual nationality.

The Chair: We will check that out.

Q74 **Baroness Buscombe:** We are talking a lot about citizenship, dual citizenship and so on, but we are in a fast-moving world. As a committee, we have been discussing attitudes towards people moving, mostly for work, and towards citizenship by investment and instrumental citizenship. There is a changing attitude here. Young people are moving for work: quite a lot of well-educated and highly skilled young people are leaving this country at the moment. They are going to countries in, for example, the Middle East. They do not seem concerned at all about the long-term citizenship situation; they are going for a future, a job and prospects, which are a problem here. We have growing unemployment and massive stress on our housing. Young people cannot afford to buy a house in this country. None of you have talked about numbers here, in terms of what works on a small island. Let us focus on this changing of attitudes.

Professor Gareth Davies: The Middle East is an unusual situation. A very small number of people go off to Dubai.

Baroness Buscombe: But it is symbolic, do you not think?

Professor Gareth Davies: Of what?

Baroness Buscombe: It is symbolic of people's desire to move to countries without worrying too much about what their status might be in 20 years.

Professor Gareth Davies: Some people do, but I genuinely do not know whether that is true of the average migrant. Some people are going off to seek their fortune, certainly, but there is a big division. Some people regard a passport and citizenship as a functional document or piece of paper showing that you have citizenship where you live; that is very legitimate, and there is a respectable theology behind it. Alternatively, you can regard it as meaningful membership of a community, but that is incompatible with the idea of citizenship by investment: you cannot really have both, because that is basically just selling it. At the same time, I am not sure whether the average British-born person regards it as meaningful community value or just a piece of paper that means they can go on holiday. There is probably a lot of diversity in how people feel about it.

Baroness Buscombe: I do not know whether you are getting any data together on this. We are talking about the young generation: those in their late 20s and the 30-somethings. Are you focusing on their movements and attitudes?

Professor Gareth Davies: For Britain, Brexit created dual nationals. Certainly, lots of Britons who had a grandmother from somewhere else went off, if they could, and got an Irish, Italian or other passport in order to keep their doors open.

Baroness Buscombe: That is for movement, so that they can travel.

Professor Gareth Davies: Exactly. They became instrumental users of citizenship, ironically, because they had to.

The Chair: This is helpful, but I am very conscious of time. The points that you are making—the others may make similar ones in response to Baroness Buscombe's question—can lead us on to expanding it with the question from Lord Bach, which picks up where we have ended up going.

Lord Bach: It seems to me that the question I was going to ask has been answered four or five times already—quite rightly—by our speakers. I will ask it, though, and see whether there is anything new to say on it.

The Chair: I am keen to pursue this because our internal debate helps inform the discussion. At the moment, we are talking about people coming here and citizenship being attractive to them, but Baroness Buscombe said, "Actually, young people don't really care. Whatever they need to get to the country so that they can do whatever they want is the thing that matters". That leaves us with a question: how important is it to go to the next step after getting in here, in having permission to stay, as opposed to the biggie, if you like, of citizenship?

Q75 **Lord Bach:** Let me ask the question. What are the typical advantages—I am talking about Europe as much as I am about the UK—associated with citizenship versus remaining on right to residency or indefinite leave to remain? By way of example, there are voting rights, but there may be other things. The committee is looking for a comparative view across Europe.

Professor Ricky van Oers: A number of benefits associated with citizenship are not attached to settlement or indefinite leave to remain. An important benefit is that citizenship obviously provides genuine protection against expulsion, in most cases, and the most secure residence status; that is, as I have mentioned before, the most important driver for integration. There are also a number of other benefits associated with citizenship. I will briefly mention four, but the list is not exhaustive.

The first one is mentioned in your question: being a citizen means that you are able to vote. This will increase feelings of belonging on the part of the new citizen, but it is also of pivotal importance for a liberal democracy, as I said; you cannot exclude a large part of the permanently

residing population from exercising influence over laws and policies that affect them.

Enhanced mobility rights have also been alluded to—those with UK citizenship are easily able to obtain entry visas to many countries—but a third, important benefit attached to citizenship versus indefinite leave to remain or settlement is that migrants with citizenship status have better labour market outcomes than their peers who did not opt for naturalisation. Naturalisation appears to open up access to employment, especially to the public sector and to higher-skilled, better-paid occupations. It has a positive impact on wages and occupational mobility, thus it promotes labour market integration; that is affirmed by research.

The fourth and final advantage I would like to mention is that it has important implications for an immigrant's social integration. It is linked with domains of immigrant integration such as language, housing and other areas of social integration. Obtaining citizenship generally increases the feeling of being French or British, and immigrants with citizenship report less discrimination. These findings, which are based on research, make one wonder why states, instead of opening up access to citizenship for their residents who are there permanently—those who are not going to leave, as Gareth Davies already stated—do not aim to introduce new hurdles such as long residence requirements and difficult language requirements.

Professor Christian Joppke: The typical dividing line in the world of liberal states concerns individual rights in living in a state society. It is between legal permanent residents and citizens, on the one side, and all others. Historically speaking, after World War II, this commonality of citizens' rights and legal permanent residents' rights has been strengthened; there is a lot of academic literature on it. If I remember correctly, you British people already tried, under the Blair Government, to change that game and make the new dividing line between citizens on the one side and all others on the other side; I think that, under the Blair Government, it was called "probationary citizenship", but it was immediately abandoned by their Tory successors.

The question is: what is the preferable way of setting up the dividing line? You are again experimenting with building on making the dividing line between citizens and all others, at least in the idea to make social benefits inaccessible to anyone but citizens; the effect of that is still to be seen. We talked about instrumental citizenship earlier. Would that not feed more instrumental attitudes to citizenship, because the incentive to become British is to be more socially protected? I raise that as an issue but you should be aware that, with that drastic move, you establish a new regime: citizens and all others. I am not so sure that that is a desirable regime.

Professor Gareth Davies: I do not have much to add but, on citizenship by investment, I know that, for many people, one reason to obtain that kind of citizenship is global travel; it is not so much that they want to settle in Malta, but it is convenient to have that passport because it gives

them freedom to go wherever they like. However, that instrumental use of citizenship is done only with passports that are fairly easy and quick, where you can get it in a year, with a payment or whatever. I have never heard of that happening with the kinds of passport where you have to be in the country for five, seven or eight years. With people who are gaining those nationalities—for example, British—that is overwhelmingly because they see their future in that country and want to be settled there.

Baroness Buscombe: Professor van Oers, you talked about the lack of discrimination against people who obtain citizenship. We have an appalling rise in antisemitism going right across Europe and as we now know, further on. A lot of Jewish people came to this country after the war and worked hard to integrate. How does that square with what you are saying now about discrimination?

Professor Ricky van Oers: Do you mean that I said that those who have obtained citizenship report less discrimination?

Baroness Buscombe: Yes.

Professor Ricky van Oers: I am not sure if I understand your question. What I meant to say is that those who have obtained citizenship have obtained a legal position that is equal to that of citizens because they have become citizens themselves. For that reason, they are less discriminated against; they report less discrimination. I am not sure how this relates to the fact that there is supposedly a rise in antisemitism, but maybe I misunderstood your question.

The Chair: We can write and get in touch with you about it.

Professor Ricky van Oers: Sure.

Q76 **Lord Dubs:** We have seen in recent years that states have tended to take away or revoke the citizenship of people living in the country; that seems to be an increasing trend. What does it say about the state's view of its citizens if it can take citizenship away like that? How does the UK's use of citizenship deprivation orders compare internationally? You will know that there is the notorious case of Shamima Begum, who had her British citizenship taken away. She joined ISIS as a 15 year-old and is now in north-east Syria. The British Government have taken away her citizenship on the grounds that she is Bangladeshi, but the Bangladeshi Government will not accept that argument. That is just one example of this issue.

Professor Gareth Davies: I understand why people want to do it if someone commits treason or acts against their country. If you distinguish between those who are naturalised and those who are born citizens, that is quite hard to reconcile with the idea of equality of citizenship, to which most countries, including Britain, commit. If you are going to take it away, you should probably take it away from anyone who fundamentally acts against your country.

I have mixed feelings about it. The motive is understandable, but that does not necessarily mean it is wise. Who are these people? If they have committed some terrorist, treasonous or terrible criminal act in the country, they are going to be in prison anyway, in which case it is symbolic and it does not really matter whether you take it away; I am not sure how useful a passport is in prison. If they are abroad, then you are really saying that they cannot come back, which is entirely understandable but means that you are handing over potentially dangerous people into the responsibility of another Government who may well be less capable of dealing with them. You could make the comparison with expelling violent criminals. We used to send them to Australia, which worked out rather well on the whole, but is that responsible? If you have violent criminals, perhaps you should deal with them yourself, rather than just getting rid of them and saying that they are someone else's problem.

It is totally understandable. I do not find it morally objectionable to take nationality away from someone who has shown themselves fundamentally opposed to a country in a dramatic way—with some ifs and buts as to whether they are a minor and so on—but I am not entirely sure whether it is responsible and leads to a better world, because of the risk of these people basically being free of your jurisdiction.

Professor Christian Joppke: This phenomenon of making it easier to strip people of their second citizenship, mostly, is conceptually interesting—although, empirically, it is a nullity—because it is the logical flip side to the idea that citizenship is not a right but a privilege and something to be earned. The British invented this notion of earned citizenship under Blair. It is only a logical progression for this concept now to be applied to settlement. What is the commonality between earned citizenship and citizenship deprivation? Citizenship is no longer an iron status: it becomes conditional on virtuous behaviour and on the capability and proved capacity to contribute.

I am not surprised that this is an issue, but it is symbolic politics because so few cases are involved. You have a system of citizenship that is in principle endowed with a high level of discretion, which makes Britain a bit of an outlier in the liberal state world. This is ironic, because you invented liberalism, but, with respect to citizenship, you were always very nasty. Remember the lover of Lady Di—the father, the guy who owned Harrods, tried to become a British citizen but he was denied, with no letter or reason given, because it is completely discretionary. If the acquisition of citizenship via naturalisation is discretionary, there is also a high level of discretion with respect to stripping it. So it is no surprise that Britain is also quite drastic on revocation. That is all I can say about it: empirically, it is not important, and it arises mostly in the context of terrorism and counterterrorism.

Now there is an attempt, however—I was recently interviewed by a *Guardian* journalist and I did not even know about it—to enlarge the scope and make it easier to strip someone's citizenship due to crime.

Friedrich Merz, the German Chancellor, has thrown it like a ball into the arena. It will certainly not fly in Germany because the constitutional status of citizenship means that it cannot be stripped. That is because of the Nazi experience. It may be different in other countries. It is conceptually interesting and absolutely logical that it will appear, but it is symbolic politics and not a matter for the empirical world.

Professor Ricky van Oers: In this regard, two issues are important. I agree with what the other speakers have said. First, mostly only dual nationals are targeted by this measure, because you cannot leave someone stateless. International obligations stand in the way of that. This affects mainly those of immigrant descent, who are often born and raised in the country but have dual citizenship. Their citizenship becomes conditional. They are becoming second-class citizens. Their single-national peers who have committed similar crimes are affected only by criminal law, but they receive the extra punishment of also having their citizenship withdrawn. That creates discrimination between the two different classes of citizens.

Secondly, it is important to emphasise that the public order goals these measures are aiming to achieve—such as a safer society, because these terrorists are either expelled or prevented entering the country again—are not achieved in reality. The Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service has warned about that. A number of Dutch-Moroccan citizens were convicted of preparing terrorist crimes so their Dutch citizenship was revoked. They are currently imprisoned and their sentences are about to end. As their Dutch citizenship has been revoked, they need to return to Morocco, but Morocco is refusing to accept these Dutch homegrown terrorists, so to speak, who were brought up in the Netherlands.

So they are not returning to Morocco. This means that they will disappear into illegality; they will remain in Dutch society, but the intelligence services will lose sight of them. Some might still have terrorist sympathies. This will not create a safer society, and those who no longer have these sympathies have no chance of resocialising because they have no rights, citizenship or view to obtaining any kind of residence status in the Netherlands. The goal of improving the security of society is not achieved by this measure in reality, symbolic as it often may be, because it does not affect large numbers of citizens. The goal that is aimed for is not achieved, and it amounts to discrimination. These are important issues to keep in mind.

Q77 Lord Anderson of Ipswich: Two of you have said that this is symbolic because it does not affect many citizens. It is perfectly right that deprivations of citizenship on the basis that they are conducive to the public good are exercised something like 12 times a year on average in this country, which is a very small number. However, when a Bill went through Parliament three or four years ago about this—it was proposed to enshrine in statute the power to deprive people of citizenship without giving them notice—a petition was signed by 300,000 people who felt

alarmed by this. There are all-party parliamentary groups in this place totting up the number of naturalised citizens, and they are coming up with figures like 9 million or 12 million. I do not know who is right about that, but is it not right that, although this power may be exercised in only a very few cases, it can make an awful lot of people feel that their citizenship is insecure?

Professor Ricky van Oers: Yes, that is true. I agree.

Professor Christian Joppke: Yes.

Professor Gareth Davies: I agree.

The Chair: That is the right way to end—with unanimity. We have to draw things to a close. This has been a very helpful and informative session. It is also good that there was some disagreement for us to pick over. We will sort out our own views in due course. I thank all three of you, both for being excellent witnesses and for your contributions. If there are other issues that you think the committee would learn from but you did not have the time to tell us about, please feel free to write to us. We will also feel fairly free to write to you with any further questions we may have; you can choose whether or not to answer them. On behalf of the entire committee, thank you very much indeed. This public evidence session has now concluded.