CONSTRUCTIONS OF MIGRANT INTEGRATION IN BRITISH PUBLIC DISCOURSE

BECOMING BRITISH

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Constructions of Migrant Integration in British Public Discourse

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Becoming British

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We asked for workers, but instead human beings came

– Max Frisch

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1.1 Immigration and integration: Two sides of the same coin

Immigration has changed in character to such a great extent that migration research can no longer be decoupled from issues of settlement and integration. Immigration is not just a moving across geographical borders, but also a moving across 'conceptual borders of identity, belonging and entitlement' (Geddes 2007: 452). The subsequent long-term settlement of incoming non-nationals[1] affects how individuals, communities and nations discursively define themselves (and their cohabitants) spatially, temporally and corporeally (Fortier 2006). That is, continued large-scale immigration throws into question how non-nationals are integrated into local communities as well as the wider 'imagined' national communities (Anderson 1983) and poses a dilemma as to how to 'reconcile cultural pluralism with political membership' (Favell 1998: 22).

That this dilemma exists is partly due to the universal-particularist paradox of liberal thought and the failure is to sufficiently theorize about the foreigner (Cole 2000). By their very nature as a non-citizen, the Other is outside the normal modes of questioning in liberal thought. They are almost literally beyond the scope of comprehension. The result is that those who reside in a state, but who are not citizens, are excluded from political thought because there are no, or at least very limited, obligations to them. In the modern state, this results in their denial of access to public funds. Without a fundamental philosophical basis on how to conceptualize the long-term presence of non-citizens, the potential for the 'successful' integration of incoming non-nationals appears hamstrung from the outset. A second paradox of liberal thought is revealed in the inconsistency of late capitalism between the liberal freedom movement for goods and services, on the one hand, and the control of movement of people, on the other. Freedom of movement has been enshrined in European law since the 1957 Treaty of Rome, but today's common migration policies, based as they are on control, challenge this commitment to borderless economies and lived realities.

The current restrictive policies and exclusionary language present in public sphere discourse of immigration and integration are not solely down to questions of philosophy though. Over the last seventy-five years, there has been a change in the character

of migration to Europe (and within this the UK), which has experienced a large-scale upswing in inward migration. However, when this migration started, it was insufficiently envisaged (and certainly not desired) that those who came would settle in the country long term, and as such, incoming non-nationals were seen as neither potential citizens nor political actors (Martinello 2006).

Up until the late 1960s, political and public discussions on migration policy were thin on the ground and bureaucratically curtailed; there was a general convergence of opinions among mainstream parties on migration, which resulted in political consensus and collectively accepted policy pathways. During the 1970s and 1980s though, it became clear that migrant workers had begun to permanently settle. Combined with the economic downturn caused by the oil crisis, this led to public debates on culture, identity and what political rights should be afforded to non-citizens, as well as to social unrest and an increase in racism. Over time, the discourse on immigration widened and became interdiscursive in nature as connections were made by public sphere actors between migration and other social fields, including the economy, education, security, health and welfare. The phenomenon became politicized: *processes of migration* became *crises of immigration* that threatened security, nations, welfare access, health, education and the economy.

As immigration shifted from being an issue of economics to one of social and political import, policy responses began to deal with integration, underpinned by the belief that part of any 'successful' integration policy would include control of further immigration. Over time, more and more restrictions have been placed on inward migration to the UK, and successive British governments have followed integration policy pathways that ran from race relations through multiculturalism to social cohesion, which, as I will argue, are explicitly and implicitly neo-assimilationist in both their language and measures, often in reaction to successive mediatizations of immigration. As such, 'to the old policy assumption that restrictive immigration is a necessary condition for the success of an integration policy, a new one [has been] added: integration policy measures are used to select those immigrants that are able and willing to integrate and deter who are not' (Penninx 2010: 26). This change in policy and rhetoric comes at a time when, throughout Europe, immigration and integration have become increasingly politicized and mediatized issues, and there has been noticeable discursive and policy shifts to the right.

At this juncture, I would like to make clear that I am not arguing here for a simple causal relationship whereby increased immigration leads to racism. To do so would first fall into the lazy 'seuil de tolérance' argument, whereby the presence of too many racially different people leads to social tensions and a rise in racism. Second, it ignores the pre-existence of racism in the UK that has been directed by many different national, religious or ethnic groups for centuries and was used, among other things, to justify colonial domination. Popular racism was present throughout the last century and has not gone away; indeed, it seems to be becoming more and more accepted, normalized, legitimized and co-opted by major parties and media outlets. That said, I do believe that integration policies and integration discourse are inextricably linked to immigration.

In the following chapters, I set out my argument that there was a distinct and clear intensification in the discursive construction of integration in public sphere in the UK between 2000 and 2010. At the beginning of the period, integration was more

framed as a two-way process, but later, immigrants and certain groups of British citizens were expected to conform to so-called British values. Over time, both policy and public discourse came to be characterized by neo-assimilatory rhetoric, informed by a wider spread of neoliberal discourse. Overtly, at least, the first years of the Labour government were, by comparison to the later period, more open and welcoming of immigrants. This intensification should be contextualized within an extensive history of racist public discourse. As I mention in Chapter 4, racism has long been present in the UK, and the first discriminatory legislation dealing with immigrants was passed in 1905. Thus, I propose that this period was a continuation of a much longer process of race-based policies of immigration rather than a radical break in policy and discourse. This period was marked by an intensification of the discriminatory public discourse and corrective policies based on broadly neoliberal values that later came to be directed at Muslims (and continued to be directed at other groups, such as asylum-seekers). As I argue in later chapters, this extended the discourse and integration policy provisions to existing British citizens so that integration became a question of racial (qua 'cultural/religious') difference rather than immigration per se. Again though, it is crucial to note that Islamophobia in the UK pre-exists the discursive change under Labour, as well as the global events such as 9/11 and 7/7 bombings. To be clear, I am arguing in this book that, despite the presence of racism in public discourse and politics before 2000, there was nonetheless a discernible intensification of discriminatory integration policy between 2000 and 2010.

1.2 Why critical discourse?

Discursively, I take as my starting point the assumption that in order to understand problems within society, the question of how societies speak (and indeed who speaks) about these problems publically needs to be addressed. The social world around us, the spaces in which we all exist and function, has been formed by social biases, inequalities and imbalances of power. As a linguist, albeit one with a natural affinity for the social sciences, I am drawn to attempts to uncover the true nature of these inequalities that are discursively hidden or distorted, with the broader, 'emancipatory' aim to empower those in society who are in some way affected by injustice. This has naturally led me to work within the critical discourse studies (CDS), which holds that because language is a form of social interaction, a thorough analysis of the micro- and macro-context of a discourse is vital to fully comprehend a given phenomenon. It is not, though, just a belief that a discourse event is influenced by context, but also that a discourse event itself influences the context. According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997), the socially constituted and constitutive nature of discourse directly relies on the Foucauldian premise that discourses are 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault 1972: 50).

The problems which CDS practitioners gravitate to are varied, but all concern social inequalities in some shape or form, and the belief of critical discourse analysts is that these social inequalities are established and maintained through the use both of certain language and of control over the means of discourse production and distribution.

Language choice is believed to be ideological, that is, discourse is not objective, and so there is a function to the language people use. The role of the researcher is to identify these choices as well as their effects and the motivation(s) behind them to critique dominant discourses and reveal the contradictions and non-expressions (Jäger 2001). Thus, in Weiss and Wodak's words (2003: 45), the aim of CDS is 'to demystify discourses by deciphering ideologies'. By demystifying discourses and bringing hidden ideologies to the fore, the sociopolitical aim of CDS is to systematize awareness of such a state of affairs as a precursor to the empowerment of individuals or communities that continue to be discriminated against. The practical application of findings can then be used to inform policy, be disseminated via workshops for professionals and media, or even to inform changes in school textbooks (Wodak 2001b).[2]

To qualitatively and critically analyse my data in the analytical chapters, I employ the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA; see Section 1.7). The DHA has been used by many researchers to analyse different forms of exclusion, especially racism and nationalism (cf. Wodak et al. 1999, 2009; Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Krzyżanowski and Wodak 2008). The approach is appealing because, rather than focusing purely on language, it looks at wider social practices and analyses them linguistically. However, the key benefit that DHA brings to the table is that DHA practitioners should, wherever possible, endeavour to offer prospective critique. That is, it is problem-oriented and aims to 'contribute to an improvement of communication' (Wodak 2009: 88).

Given the starting point of this work and my decision to use DHA, the proceeding chapters thus have a certain practical relevancy in terms of informing local and national integration strategies, which are becoming more and more politicized and mediatized in the wake of increased migration, the result of the Brexit referendum, and the revival of populist politics in the UK and across Europe. Indeed, as I write this introduction, yet another government-commissioned independent report on integration – the Casey Review (2016) – has just been published; the UK Home Office has launched an immigration inquiry; and a former Labour leadership candidate, Andy Burnham, has said that lack of action by the left on immigration is 'undermining the cohesion of our communities and the safety of our streets' (HC Debate, 7 December 2016). There is thus a clear and present need for rigorous academic work on immigration and integration, now more than ever, and in this book I aim to add to and develop research into integration theory by providing an in-depth analysis on how migrants and other stakeholders view the process of integration. This is something which, as Bauböck (2006a) notes, has been lacking in the literature on integration up to now. The book also has a number of practical outcomes directly applicable to policy formation, both nationally and locally. It is hoped that by improving the understanding of how incoming non-nationals experience integration, local integration strategies can be improved.

1.3 'Discourse', 'text' and 'context'

There has been, and continues to be, disagreement between whether discourse analysis can or should include the analysis of written texts. David Crystal (1986: 116) argues

that discourse analysis is the study of 'naturally occurring spoken language', and this is placed in contrast to text analysis, although he goes on to note that this distinction is often not clear. Within the field of text linguistics (de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981), there is a distinction between discourse, which is spoken and text, which is written, whereas Schiffrin (1992) notes that in the English-speaking world, there is more of a tendency to include both the written and the spoken in discourse.

One major criticism which is often levelled at (critical) discourse analysts is that there is no systematized conceptual toolkit, and so understandings of 'discourse' and 'text' differ from author to author. Mills (2004: 6) points out that in Foucault's work, there are three different meanings for 'discourse'. First, in its broadest terms, it can mean all utterances and statements that have an effect on the real world. Such an approach is echoed by Macdonell (1986: 4), who argues that 'whatever signifies or has meaning can be considered part of a discourse'. Second, discourse can mean 'a regulated practice which accounts for a number of statements' (Foucault 1972: 80). I would contend, though, that this understanding is more relevant as a description of the 'order of discourse' or 'genre' within which a discursive event is produced as it deals with rules and structures of a discourse. The third and final use of 'discourse' by Foucault is that which, with a few minor adjustments, seems to be the most adhered to by discourse practitioners – namely that a discourse is a group of statements that 'belong to a single discursive formation' and which, taken together, have some level of coherence (Smart 2002: 32).[3] Foucault talks of the 'positivity' of a discourse which, according to Smart, 'characterizes the unity of a group of statements above and beyond books, texts, authors, through time, and independently of the proximity of epistemological validity, scientificity or truth. It reveals that within a discourse, reference is being made to the same thing within the same conceptual field, at the same level' (ibid.). Going forward, I align myself with other DHA practitioners in following Reisigl and Wodak's (2001) definition of a discourse which, unsurprisingly, is similar to that of Foucault's: 'a complex bundle of simultaneous and sequential interrelated linguistic acts, which manifest themselves with and across the social fields of action as thematically interrelated semiotic, oral or written tokens, very often as texts that belong to specific semiotic types, i.e. genres'. This definition seems to point to the thematic nature of Foucault's third use of discourse, but also includes the importance of the second – genre – to a discourse. In a similar vein, for Fairclough (1995: 14), 'a discourse is a way of signifying a particular domain of social practice from a particular perspective'. This intervention also points obliquely to the ideological nature of discourses and the subjectivity involved in all discursive events. It also points to another source of thinking of discourse, Bakhtin (1981: 293), who argued that a discourse is a way of using words which presumes authority and distinct perspective.

Regarding texts, Mills (2004) rightly notes that a discourse is often defined negatively, and it is quite often juxtaposed to the concept of a text, possibly because texts are slightly easier to define through the use of positivist criteria, such as de Beaugrande and Dressler's (1981) seven criteria of textuality. Within some approaches to the critical analysis of discourse, such as the DHA and Teun van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach, discourse is described as a form of knowledge and memory, whereas texts are concrete 'oral utterances or written documents' (Weiss and Wodak 2003: 13).[4] However,

Fairclough (1995) argues that although texts should be primarily linguistic, there are increasing instances of non-linguistic texts, or at least texts which combine both linguistic and non-linguistic qualities.

Finally, it should be made clear where a text ends and where a discourse begins. Is an interview one text or a collection of separate texts? One e-mail or many? One debate or a series? Can a text have more than one speaker/author? The ultimate decision is the responsibility of the individual researcher, who must decide for themselves what understanding best suits their research. It is crucial though that, once decided upon, the researcher should ensure that their initial definition is adhered to throughout the analysis to guard against conceptual 'slippage' and subsequent confusion, which could impinge upon the methodological quality of the work. Lemke (1995: 7) forwards a useful separation of the text and discourse, which I attempt to follow in this book:

> When I speak about discourse in general, I will usually mean the social activity of making meanings with language and other symbolic systems … On each occasion when the particular meaning characteristic of these discourses is being made, a text is produced … When we want to focus on the specifics of an event or occasion, we speak of the text; when we want to look at patterns, commonality, relationships that embrace different texts and occasions, we can speak of discourses.

In its very basest form, CDS calls for the discourse in its social context. Texts, as forms of interaction, are seen as discursive practices, and these discursive practices are also social practices. Succinctly put, 'discourse makes people as well as people make discourse' (Fairclough 1995: 39), or at least the parameters in which discourse is produced. This idea echoes Halliday's (1978: 2) view that 'by their everyday acts of meaning, people act out the social structure affirming their own statuses and roles and establishing and transmitting the shared systems of value and of knowledge'. Elsewhere, Weiss and Wodak (2003: 10) state that 'symbolic practices do not take place within social systems. Instead they reproduce the latter simply by taking place; the systems reproduced in this way then retroact on the conditions of action' and thus 'text production equals system reproduction'. Jäger (2001: 45) goes even further and argues that 'everything that is human consciousness is constituted discursively', and this echoes van Leeuwen's (1993: 13) call that a critical approach to language 'is, or should be, concerned with … discourse as the instrument of power and control as well as with discourse as the instrument of the social construction of reality'.

1.4 The public sphere: A space for discursive constructions and discursive practices

1.4.1 Models of the public sphere

At base, the functioning of the public sphere rests upon acts of communication among private actors (individuals, interest groups) but also between these private actors and *the* public actor, the state. It is 'a theatre in modern societies in which political

participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, and hence an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction' (Fraser 1992: 59).

Today, the term 'public sphere', although widely used, has come to mean varied things to different scholars and public commentators. According to Dahlgren (1995: ix), it is the space 'where information, ideas and debate can circulate in society, and where political opinion can be formed'. For Calhoun (2001), communication within the public sphere may seek to influence the state, civil society or even private individuals, whereas the Habermassian public sphere is constituted by private individuals who are concerned with public issues. It is thus 'a domain of our social life where such a thing as public opinion can be formed [where] citizens … deal with matters of general interest without being subject to coercion … [to] express and publicize their views' (Habermas 1997: 105). Many outside academia subscribe to a very narrow definition of the public sphere, though, as merely pertaining to the media, which in modern society plays a central role in how the public sphere operates. It is the primary vessel of information – a way by which news and opinion can be transmitted on a wide scale to large populations, or – as Habermas (ibid.) would have it – 'when the public is large this kind of communication requires certain means of dissemination and influence: today, newspapers and periodicals, radio and television are the media of the public sphere'. Indeed, one can now talk of post-national diasporic public spheres (Appadurai 1996) or transnational public spheres or spheres which are only now possible due to globalization and advances in technology (Fraser 2007). The possibility of such communication with larger audiences and the expansion of the public sphere are relatively new phenomena – the importance of the media in the construction and mediation of the public sphere was extensively anticipated and explicated by Habermas. Thus, to talk of the public sphere as merely a mediatized or mediated society is to ignore previous and current conceptions of public debate and the relationship between those who govern and those who are governed.

A wider definition of the public sphere points towards a space, or spaces (both real and virtual) where communication takes places surrounding issues of public interest and where an often uneasy consensus is reached. Even this very simple definition is fraught with uncertainties and begs more questions than it answers. What constitutes an issue of public interest? How is consensus reached? How is discussion mediated and controlled? And – maybe most importantly for work on integration and migrants – who constitutes a public, and how does one gain access? Or, in other words, how does one gain the 'symbolic tools' (Cohen 1985) required by a certain society to partake in public discussion?

Aristotle distinguished the private as consisting of the oikos (household) – men, women, slaves and children – whereas the public consisted of citizens (effectively only men). However, unlike later theorists such as Habermas, Aristotle accepted that the public and private were inseparable and that there was considerable interplay between the two (Triadafilopoulos 1999). The agora was the interface where public and private met. Citizens of a polis shared the responsibility of debating issues of public importance (war, imports, exports and legislation) and 'critically examining policies of the state' (Goçan 2008: 3). In Hannah Arendt's (1958) view, this classic model of the public

sphere that existed was characterized by its agonal nature; the deliberations within the public space were combative with the idea of winning an argument rather than coming to a compromise.

For Habermas, the public sphere was the interface at which the relationship between the state and private individuals was mediated (Roberts and Crossley 2004). A separation of the public (the state) from the private (work and family) existed during the early mercantilist period. During this period, a further split emerged between home and work for the burgeoning bourgeoisie, and the issues that were seen as private became filtered out from the public debate. The nascent middle class now sought a space in which to 'be public' – the coffee houses and salons that proliferated during the eighteenth century – where literature and art could be discussed through the use of reason and carefully crafted argument. As these places evolved into spaces for discussions that were more political, economic and social in nature, Habermas argues that the participants came to use logical, well-argued debate to reach consensus (ibid.: 3). Running concurrently to this was the growth of newspapers, which facilitated the wider dissemination of information. Interested parties in the geographical and financial expansion of trade required up-to-date news on relevant matters such as taxes and prices. Later, as these newspapers developed to include news, comment, opinion and literary reviews, 'critical reasoning made its way into the daily press' (Habermas 1989: 25), which began to bring into question the previously solid control over public opinion and power that had hitherto been maintained by the state and church. This enabled the public to apply pressure on state institutions, and as a consequence, politicians started to appeal to the public opinion as transmitted in the newspapers and salons of the time.

1.4.2 A public sphere, but who are 'the public'?

Habermas' burgeoning (ideal) public sphere was shaped in principle by the 'values of egalitarian dialogue' (Goode 2005: 9) and the concept of disregarding status altogether. Everyone who participated had equal stature, and the debates were thus open. Although Habermas accepted that access to this public sphere was limited in practice to property-owning men, he nevertheless maintained that within the idea of free, critical argumentation and rational debate as a way of arriving at consensus on issues of public interest, there was a 'kernel of something emancipatory' (Benson 2009: 176). Fraser argues it is wrong though to start from the assumption that access to the public sphere was open to all on an equal footing and that social equality and status could be 'bracketed' (Fraser 1992: 524). In reality, participation in the public sphere was conditional on markers of style and decorum which, both during the rise of the bourgeois public sphere and today still, are also markers of status inequality that '[function] informally to marginalise women and members of the plebeian classes and to prevent them from participating as peers' (ibid.: 525). Following Cohen (1985), this is what I would term the 'symbolic tools of a community' or, as Bourdieu (1986: 241) would call it, 'cultural capital', access to which is further compounded in modern democracies that have witnessed mass migration

by the need to have a good grasp of the native language in order to participate fully. Habermas' attempt to 'bracket' identities as if they did not exist actually ignores many inequalities and eliminates the possibility of 'participatory parity' (Fraser 1992: 525) and ignores the reality of the presence of myriad cultures within modern democracies and that these cultures are not valued equally. In a socially stratified society where there is only one formal (bourgeois) public sphere, members of subordinated groups are denied the institutionalized space where they can exchange communication of their interests and any action on their part would be guided by the principles of the dominant public sphere. Marginalized, or in Fraser's words 'subordinated', groups (ibid.: 526) are thus often excluded from access to 'the material means for equal participation'.

In the twenty-first century we are faced with a post-Westphalian reality in which geopolitically bounded publics are becoming increasingly multicultural. A result of this is that public opinion and the common good are no longer territorially restricted to the extent that in many countries the public 'no longer coincides with a national citizenry' (Fraser 2007: 16). For Husband, public spheres in countries of immigration are multi-ethnic in nature in which ethnic groups do not though co-exist in an equal way but rather 'operate within a hegemonic context in which culture and identity is contested' (1996: 207). Minorities are often denied access to or excluded entirely from the means of public communication, and this sets them at a disadvantage when it comes to participation in the modern public sphere where the media play such an important role. Subsequently, there is disconnect between those affected (by a policy) and political membership. From here, Fraser asks two very pertinent questions as far as this chapter is concerned:

> If the interlocutors do not constitute a *demos*, how can their collective opinion be translated into binding laws and administrative policies? If, moreover, they are not fellow citizens, putatively equal in participation rights, status and voice, then how can the opinion they generate be considered legitimate? How, in sum, can the *critical* criteria of *efficacy* and *legitimacy* be meaningfully applied to transnational public opinion in a post-Westphalian world? (2007: 16)

The partial remedy to these questions, Fraser argues, is for public sphere participation to be not limited by political membership and, as Calhoun (1992: 6) notes, 'the importance of the public sphere lies in its potential as a mode of societal integration'. The risk is that if minority voices are not heard, then interests cannot be forwarded and society remains unequal. Migrants especially are formally and informally (discursively) excluded from the public sphere, and this leaves them particularly susceptible to exclusion from the public sphere. There is a link between 'life chances' and 'discourse chances' and calls for greater provision of resources for excluded groups for 'participation in and access to the public sphere' (Goode 2005: 42). Following this line of argument, it becomes clear that access to the public sphere is a major component of integration of migrants, and from here, it is therefore necessary to investigate how and why migrants are discursively excluded/integrated.