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Short title: Agency and accountability in integration talk

Full title: ‘Some people it’s very difficult to trust’: Attributions of agency and accountability in practitioners’ talk about integration

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Abstract

The concept of 'integration' plays an important role in policy and practice regarding the settlement of migrants, yet the term is used in a variety of ways. This article examines how practitioners who support the integration of refugees in Scotland construct 'integration' at the community level to justify or challenge particular policies and sets of social relations.

Analysis shows that integration can be worked up in contexts involving (a) descriptions of 'us' and 'them' in relation to a single community, (b) social inclusion of those in multiple communities, or (c) group level intercultural contact. Each version of integration is bound up with different attributions of agency for advancing integration and attributions of blame for current problems. Instead of relying upon a concept that is so open to multiple uses, local organisations might usefully specify outcomes in terms of social actors and interactions.

Keywords: Practitioners; Integration; Communities; Discourse analysis; Refugees; Attributions

Introduction

The concept of integration plays an important role in policy and practice regarding the settlement of migrants in a variety of international contexts, including Europe (Castles, Korac, Vasta & Vertovec, 2002; Farrugia, 2009; Horner & Weber, 2011), North America (Berry, 1997; Lacroix, 2004) and Australasia (Hanson-Easey, & Augoustinos, 2010; McPherson, 2010). In the UK, the integration of migrants is a stated policy goal of both the current and former government (Home Office, 2008; May, 2010). However, the term ‘integration’ is used by policy makers, politicians and practitioners in a variety of ways (Ager & Strang, 2008), meaning that a multitude of different and potentially conflicting political strategies could be advocated in the name of ‘integration’. To explore this issue, this article focuses on how the notion of integration is used within discourse at the community level to justify or challenge particular policies and sets of social relations with consequences for the structure of society.

Even within academic literature, ‘integration’ is defined in a variety of ways. For instance, Strang and Ager (2010) suggested that integration is both a *goal*, in that people can seek to become successfully integrated in society, and a *process*, in that it may be experienced in different ways at different times in relation to different aspects of someone’s life. Their ‘indicators of integration’ (Ager & Strang, 2004) include access to resources, such as employment, housing, education and health, as well as social relationships, cultural knowledge, safety and rights. Alternatively, Berry (1997) defined integration as one possible *strategy* for people coming into contact with a different culture, and characterised it as engaging with the majority culture whilst also maintaining aspects of one’s own culture. Furthermore, Castles et al. (2002) suggested that lay people tend to see integration as being one-way, as something that members of the minority group do, whereas practitioners tend to conceive of it as two-way, as a process involving mutual accommodation on the side of the host society as well as minority group members. Moreover, Ager and Strang’s (2004) concept of integration is not exclusive to migrants, and can be applied to general members of the host community. Such variation not only impacts on how integration is researched, but also the conclusions that may be drawn regarding policy and practice.

In relation to political discourse in the UK, Mulvey (2010) has illustrated that the recent focus on ‘community cohesion’ places responsibility for integration on refugees, while reinforcing a negative view of minority groups that makes it more difficult for them to

integrate. This type of discourse allows politicians to argue for greater restrictions on the number of asylum seekers on the grounds that their mere presence causes problems within the community (Goodman, 2008). In this regard, McPherson (2010) argued that integration discourse focuses on the extent to which migrants are required to fit in with the majority group and instead advocated that research should investigate critical and empowering responses to integration discourse. Similarly, Farrugia (2009) suggests that research should be critical of the extent to which integration may be a form of 'forced assimilation' (p. 51) and should not assume that 'integration' is inherently good. This suggests that research should not simply ask whether migrants are becoming integrated, but also how the notion of 'integration' itself becomes manifest and is used to legitimate particular social policies.

For this reason, we adopt a discursive approach (e.g., Potter & Wetherell, 1987; McKinlay & McVittie, 2008) to this topic in order to explore how the various constructions of integration function. Much previous research has focused on refugees and asylum seekers and on arguments for and against their presence (e.g., Every & Augoustinos, 2008a, 2008b; Capdevila & Callaghan, 2008; Goodman & Speer, 2007; Kirkwood, McKinlay & McVittie, in press b; Leudar, Hayes, Nekvapil & Baker, 2008; Lynn & Lea, 2003), issues of racism (e.g., Every & Augoustinos, 2007; Goodman, 2010; Goodman & Burke, 2010; Hanson-Easey & Augoustinos, 2010; Kirkwood, McKinlay & McVittie, in press a) and the criticism and legitimisation of asylum policies (e.g., Goodman, 2007, 2008). This research has often found that asylum seekers and refugees are discursively constructed in ways that associate them with criminality, disease and other negative characteristics that support arguments against their presence in the host society and / or justify the use of harsh asylum policies (e.g., Capdevila & Callaghan, 2008; Goodman, 2007; Lynn & Lea, 2003). However, this research has largely neglected the role that notions of integration play in such discussions. In this regard, Dixon and Durrheim (2000; Durrheim & Dixon, 2004, 2005) argued that research on intercultural contact processes, such as integration, needs to pay more attention to the functions of rhetoric, in particular how discursive constructions attribute responsibility in relation to problems relating to intercultural relations.

Drawing on this approach, Bowskill, Lyons and Coyle (2007) analysed how the notion of 'integration' functioned in newspaper discussions related to faith schools. In line with other researchers (e.g., McPherson, 2010; Farrugia, 2009), they suggested that common conceptions of integration focus on how minority groups ought to change to be more like the majority group, missing both the responsibilities of the majority group and potential for contesting such conceptions. Their analysis illustrated that integration is often portrayed as an

assumed good, yet it can be constructed in a variety of ways that imply a variety of related actions and responsibilities, often placing responsibility for integration on ethnic minority groups, implying assimilation.

Similarly, Horner and Weber (2011) analysed the use of the term 'integration' in policy documents, media materials and academic publications. Their analysis illustrated that even 'liberal' texts on integration incorporated illiberal assumptions, such as portraying migrants as 'the problem', relying on a 'deficit model' that positions migrants as being inferior, and ultimately placing the 'blame' for any alleged lack of integration on the migrants themselves. A subsequent study by Scuzzarello (2012) highlighted how integration can be treated as relating to political participation or intercultural contact, with these different discourses supporting different political agendas.

The notion of integration is a central concept in terms of the settlement of asylum seekers and refugees and therefore deserves further investigation. In particular, research has yet to explore how concepts of integration function at the 'community' level and are therefore used to support or challenge particular policies, practices and forms of social relations. This study seeks to address this gap by analysing the discourse of those who are involved in organisations that support the integration of refugees and asylum seekers, specifically the types of social relations made available and related attributions of agency and responsibility.

Methods

The study was conducted in 2010, primarily in Glasgow, Scotland's largest city, in which a large proportion of UK asylum seekers are housed (Home Office, 2010). Purposive sampling (de Vaus, 1996) was used to recruit participants who worked in organisations that support asylum seekers and refugees (N = 17). Interviewees were from a total of 13 organisations and networks, representing many of the key agencies that work with asylum seekers and refugees; a further three organisations did not respond to requests to participate and one was not pursued due to the lengthy ethics procedures involved. Seven of the organisations focused on integration (e.g., facilitating contact between asylum seekers and other members of the community), four provided support and advocacy for asylum seekers and refugees, and two focused on employability. Ten of the interviewees were men, seven were women, thirteen were British and four were African; two of the interviewees were refugees. This participant group was chosen because its members are directly involved in developing and implementing policies and practices related to integration and their discourse should be informed and

closely related to such work. The interview material is treated as illustrative and should not be taken as representative of all the ways in which individuals and organisations may construct the notion of 'integration'. All participants were contacted through their organisations (voluntary and public sector) and interviews took place on the organisations' premises. Participation was voluntary and confidential.

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data. Interviewees were asked about the nature of the work they undertook with asylum seekers and refugees, difficulties that they faced, contact with members of the local population and the extent to which they were able to engage with employment and education. The interviews ranged in length from 26 to 87 minutes, lasting approximately 55 minutes on average. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed using a shortened form of Jeffersonian notation (Jefferson, 2004) widely used in discursive social psychology. Interviewees were assigned participant numbers and identifying details removed. In order to identify relevant passages, the transcripts were searched for the words 'integration', 'integrated' and 'integrating'. The interviewer avoided introducing the term 'integration' to the interviews, using it only if the interviewees used it first, allowing interviewees to formulate such notions in their own ways. All passages in which participants introduced the notion of integration were selected for fine-grained analysis and read several times to establish familiarity with the details of the talk. They were then analysed using discourse analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; McKinlay & McVittie, 2008), paying close attention to the discursive and rhetorical detail and the action-orientations of the participants' descriptions. Analysis focused on examining how participants constructed and deployed notions of community and communities, how these deployments were used to mobilise particular versions of integration, and how these versions functioned to attribute or claim agency for advancing integration and to attribute blame for current problems of integration.

Analysis

In the extracts that follow, we see the interviewees providing somewhat divergent descriptions of integration. These are closely interlinked with their descriptions of communities, and indeed the range of communities involved, either one or several. Furthermore, each set of descriptions invokes particular attributions of responsibility and agency for the promotion of integration as proposed.

Combining agency with attributions of responsibility

Here, we see one way in which agency and attribution can be introduced when explaining the ‘problem’ of integration. Separating relevant actors into ‘them’ and ‘us’ opens up potential attribution slots in which agency and responsibility for change can be made out - potential difficulties with integration can be attributed either to those inside or those outside the community. However as the two extracts below demonstrate, speakers attend to potential interactional difficulties in levelling blame in this way. Previous research shows how speakers deal with such potential difficulties by delimiting the targets of blame attribution (e.g., ‘some people’, ‘some members’; Durrheim & Dixon, 2005) and explanations for their problematic actions are couched in terms of mistaken understanding, rather than in terms of personal or political motivations (Kirkwood, McKinlay & McVittie, in press a).

Extract 1 comments on refugees who may be reluctant to integrate. This constitutes part of the interviewee’s response to the question ‘what um (.) issues are most important or difficult for asylum seekers or refugees?’ Extract 2 comes from the interviewee’s response to the question: ‘how well do: asylum seekers and refugees adjust to life in Scotland?’ The extract comes about halfway through their response and is in the context of a discussion about access to employment.

Extract 1 (male, African, refugee)

- 1 P14 uh most sometime um (1.1) some people (.) it’s very difficult to trust (0.8) and
 2 other people [trustful]
 3 INT [oh]
 4 P14 so
 5 INT oh right=
 6 P14 =somebody say oh (0.6) I don’t want to be integrated (0.8) because maybe
 7 they feel wrong about me about about them so I don’t want to be part of their
 8 society=
 9 INT =I see
 10 P14 so (.) sometimes if they can see (.) um (.) all the issues printed (.) in
 11 newspapers (.) or in the local community and say (.) no I don’t want to be
 12 integrated (.) so that could be also a barrier

Extract 2 (male, African)

- 1 P2 I think the success rate could be a lot higher if the attitude (1.0) of some
 2 members of the community change (.)
 3 INT mmm
 4 P2 and if people have to understand that (1.0) um (3.0) these people are already
 5 here, whether they like it or not, under international law, Britain are signed up
 6 (1.0) and they have to honour its obligation (0.8) and if they can understand
 7 that (1.5) they should rather be promoting integration (1.2) and that (1.0)
 8 integration is a two way process
 9 INT mm-hmm
 10 P2 it's not (0.6) th- th- th- the majority culture (1.2) recolonising the minority
 11 culture by forcing its meals its language its way of life on people

In Extract 1, the speaker sets out a potential explanation for lack of integration at lines 6 to 8 and again at lines 11 to 12. Responsibility for integration difficulties is made out in terms of the desires of refugees and asylum-seekers. An individual indicated via the referents 'somebody' (line 6) and 'they' (line 10) is reported as saying 'I don't want to be integrated'. This explanation for lack of integration, in terms of the desires and motivations of this individual, in line with 'one way' models of integration (Castles et al., 2002), provides a clear account of agency. It is because this individual has just this motivational state that 'a barrier' (line 12) potentially exists.

These descriptions of agency and attribution of responsibility are associated with a specific version of the relationship between a society or community and its immigrants. At lines 7 to 8, the individual's expressed desire is reformulated as 'I don't want to be part of their society'. This explicitly introduces the society in question as belonging to someone other than the individual in question, in that it is 'their society', while the individual is portrayed as characterising himself or herself as not currently, and with no desire to become, 'part of their society'.

However, no specific individual or group is picked out as attribution target, only vague referring terms being employed. Moreover, descriptions of motivations are interwoven with possible explanations for such desires. One candidate explanation appears at lines 1 to 2 where people who are 'very difficult to trust' are distinguished from 'trustful' people. A second candidate explanation is provided at lines 6 to 7, where a formulation of the relationship between society and its immigrants is spelled out in terms of what 'they' think –

‘maybe they feel wrong about me’ – and what, in consequence, the individual picked out via ‘I’ does or does not desire. An alternative explanation comes at lines 10 to 11 where the desires of this specific individual are described as a response to what happens elsewhere – specifically ‘issues’ that the individual can ‘see’, rather than predispositions. In reflecting events occurring in the host society, this desire becomes an understandable response, rather than an unreasonable position held by people who do not desire involvement with the host society.

In Extract 2, the ‘problem’ of integration is introduced in terms of potential for improvement (‘the success rate could be a lot higher’). Attribution of responsibility for this current relative lack of success is again related to people’s dispositions (‘attitude’, line 1). The problematic status of such attitudes is stressed in lines 10 to 11. References to ‘recolonising’ at line 10 and to ‘forcing’ at line 11 indicate the extent of force involved in such a process, while the three part listing at line 11 of ‘its meals its language its way of life’ indicates the scope of such potential force. Together, these features emphasise the extent of the unacceptability of this form of integration.

Unlike Extract 1, however, attribution of responsibility is not directed towards immigrants themselves but instead towards ‘some members of the community’. The agentic basis underlying this attribution is stated at line 7, where an unspecified group of people are described as having the capacity to ‘promote integration’. As was the case in Extract 1, this claim is grounded in a particular formulation of the relationship between society and its immigrants, here characterised as ‘the majority culture’ and ‘the minority culture’ (lines 10 to 11). This amplifies the prior distinction, drawn at lines 1 to 5, between ‘members of the community’ and ‘people already here’. Here the formulation of the relationship between society and its immigrants as a case of ‘us’ and ‘them’ again provides the speaker with a readily accessible target for attribution, although here the attributional target has been reversed, locating this within the host community in a way that is consistent with ‘two-way’ models of integration (Castles et al., 2002).

This interviewee also attributes responsibility carefully – his assertions take the form of reasoned argument rather than personal or subject accusation, in that responsibility is made out using a conditional formulation. In stating that ‘the success rate could be a lot higher’, the speaker indicates via the modal verb ‘could’ that the condition for achieving such success is to follow. Initially expressed in terms of ‘the attitude’ that must change, this condition is reformulated as people coming ‘to understand’ something that they previously had failed to understand – switching description from talk of individual dispositional states to matters of

fact. In presenting that which is to be understood as something Britain has to ‘honour’ (l. 6), it becomes an ethical national responsibility, suggesting that it is in the national interests and should be supported (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001), as well as implying that not meeting this ‘obligation’ may risk Britain’s national pride in providing protection to those who need it (Pirouet, 2001).

In addition, two factual claims are introduced: ‘people are already here’ and ‘Britain are signed up’, making relevant both the presence of asylum-seekers and refugees in the UK and the legal obligations held towards them. The statement at lines 4 to 5 that ‘these people are already here whether they like it or not’ proposes that individual preferences should give way to the prevailing state of affairs, in the form of the presence of ‘these people’. The interviewee continues at lines 5 to 6 by referring to ‘international law’, stating that the UK ‘signed up’ to this law and thereby agreed to be bound by the ‘obligation’ that results. Here, the juxtaposition of this description with the interviewee’s immediately prior description of ‘people already here’ suggests that it is the presence of asylum-seekers and refugees that inevitably makes relevant the obligation in question.

The interviewee’s description at lines 8 to 11 concludes with a contrast between what integration is and what it is not. Thus, at line 8 he states that ‘integration is a two way process’, treating this description as self-evident and implying that when there is contact between cultural groups, there is a responsibility on the host culture to change in some ways and/or that this contact will result in some change among the host culture.

The analysis of these two extracts highlights how notions of integration can be constructed, complementing and extending the findings of Bowskill et al. (2007). They found that integration was presented as having an unchallenged positivity and yet held implicit links with assimilation. In contrast, Extract 1 presented integration as a notion that contained some problematic aspects in the views of some asylum seekers and refugees. Furthermore, the construction of integration in Extract 2 explicitly challenged assimilationist notions by portraying integration as something other than a process by which refugees are ‘forced’ to become more like members of the host society. This demonstrates the flexibility with which concepts of ‘integration’ are deployed within local contexts of discussions of integration to allocate responsibility for integration ‘failures’. Both accounts utilise a conception of integration whereby individual migrants become part of the host society, although they illustrate how agency and responsibility may be attributed to either side of the equation.

Separating out agency from attributions of responsibility

In the preceding extracts, we observed descriptions of integration involving a single community and those outside it. Agency for change and attributions of responsibility were located either with the outsider or with the community. However, the present participants work with organizations whose stated aims are to improve the lives of community members and refugees. And so, at other points in talk, participants produce descriptions in which they, and the organizations they represent, are agents for change. In this quite different interactional context, speakers separate out agency for change from attribution of responsibility for current problems. Rather than attribute responsibility to those who are agents of change, responsibility for current problems is more vaguely attributed to general problems or barriers that exist within society. These accounts involve formulations of the relationship between refugees and communities that differ from those in extracts 1 and 2.

Extract 3 is taken from near the end of the speaker's response to the question 'what could be done better to um in order to help asylum seekers and refugees here?' and deals with the issue of funding for voluntary organisations.

Extract 3 (female, British)

- 1 P5 I think (0.8) probably if we weren't here (1.8) then people would find it very
 2 difficult
 3 INT right sure
 4 P5 (1.0) so probably that question would be (0.7) that they they'd still continue to
 5 fund (1.3) grassroots organisations that [deliver]
 6 INT [sure]
 7 P5 that deliver em (1.0) vital services for (.) em the community
 8 INT yeah (.) okay
 9 P5 (.) because it is about integration, it's no just about asylum and refugees it's
 10 also about
 11 INT right
 12 P5 coz in the communities we live in we (.) we have (.) high deprivation and
 13 unemployment (.) drugs and alcohol misuse
 14 INT right
 15 P5 so (1.0) it's not one lot of people you're trying to integrate, we have (.) whole

- 16 communities (.)
 17 INT yeah
 18 P5 that we're trying to integrate

At lines 1 to 7, the speaker produces a description of agency in which potential problems are described as following consequentially from the organization's absence and supports this with an emphasis on the importance of the 'services' involved, in that they are 'vital', and by the agentic role of the organizations involved, in that it is those organizations that 'deliver'. However, unlike previous extracts, here attribution of responsibility for difficulties that might be faced is not made until lines 9 to 13. The vital nature of the work of 'grassroots organizations' is causally explained in two ways. First, the speaker suggests 'because it is about integration' (line 9). Second, the speaker lists societal problems which are to be heard as playing a causal role: 'high deprivation and unemployment (.) drugs and alcohol misuse' (lines 12 to 13). Thus the potential problems introduced at lines 1 and 2, 'then people would find it very difficult', are here described as general features of communal life rather than the motivations or dispositions of those living within, or outside, such communities.

Within these accounts of agency and attribution, a version of the integrative relationship between society and its immigrants emerges that is also quite different from the 'them' and 'us' formulations seen earlier. This is prefaced at line 1, where those who face potential difficulties are picked out by the vague referent 'people'. The indeterminate focus of such efforts is further emphasized at lines 7 and 12 where 'the community' (line 7) is reformulated as 'the communities we live in' (line 12) and 'we have (.) whole communities' (lines 15 to 16). The complexity of such a multiplicity of whole communities is heightened through explicit rejection of one candidate definition of 'integration': 'it is about integration, it's not just about asylum and refugees' (line 9). This rejection of characterizations of integration as involving one group of non-community members integrating into the host community is amplified at line 15, where the speaker states 'it's not one lot of people you're trying to integrate'. This is emphasized where integrating 'whole communities' is presented as something that the organization as yet is only trying to achieve.

Crucially, this account constructs 'integration' as a desired goal whereby all members of the 'community' are assisted to reach levels of well being and social inclusion in a number of realms, such as employment and health, consistent with Ager and Strang's (2004) model of

‘indicators of integration’. Thus it avoids those uses of integration that hold assimilationist undertones (Bowskill et al., 2007) while legitimising the organisation’s role in working to address issues of integration. In this account, agency for achieving integration is placed on the organisation, yet blame for the existing lack of integration is placed neither on the organisation nor on elements of the community, and is instead placed on abstract issues, such as ‘deprivation and unemployment’.

Extract 4 occurs in the middle of an interview following a discussion of the role of the speaker’s organization in the local community and relates to contact between asylum seekers, refugees and others.

Extract 4 (male, African, refugee)

- 1 INT what amount of contact do um asylum seekers and refugees have with other
 2 communitie:s or with other people from the same nationality and that sort of
 3 thing?
 4 P3 eh (.) hhh that’s why I’m here (.) that’s why my organisation come to life (1.8)
 5 we are going to make integration to the community
 6 INT okay
 7 P3 there must be still barriers and (2.0) I mean, are things and obstacles which is
 8 preventing the community to integrate with other people including the culture
 9 (.) the religion and things like that
 10 INT sure
 11 P3 but (1.0) to be honest with you, when two communities or three communities
 12 or four communities come together (1.0) they will, what’s it called? e:em (.)
 13 reconciling each other (0.8) if a community is learning from the other
 14 community their good side (0.6) they will draw- they clean out the other
 15 community’s their bad- (.) bad culture or bad behaviour

Here we again see the speaker claim agentic status for his own organization: ‘we are going to make integration to the community’. The role as agent for change is portrayed in terms of fundamental existential claims that relate not just to the organization but to the speaker himself. Again, this agentic claim is separated out from attributions of responsibility for the current lack of integration. The ‘barriers’ and ‘things and obstacles’ preventing

integration are specified at lines 8 to 9 via a three-part listing of general social features: ‘the culture (.) the religion and things like that’. So here too claims about being an agent for change are independent of attributions of responsibility for the current problematic status of integration, which are described as resting in abstract features of social life. However, in the first part of this extract, unlike Extract 3, we see these claims made out in terms of ‘the community’ (lines 5 and 8) and ‘other people’ (line 8). Initially, then, the formulation on offer of the integrative relationship between community and those outside it bears striking similarity to those seen in extracts 1 and 2 rather than to the social inclusion version in play in extract 3. This becomes more evident in the directional constructions describing how integration will occur: ‘integration to the community’ (line 5) and ‘the community to integrate with other people’ (line 8). These formulations indicate the ontological status of ‘the community’ as independent from ‘other people’ and the direction of action that integration represents, with integration ‘to’ the community being specified as the desirable outcome.

However, we saw in extract 1 and 2 that formulations of society and those outside it which are described in terms of ‘them’ and ‘us’ are readily associated with quite different sorts of attribution, in which either ‘them’ or ‘us’ can be readily identified as attributional targets rather than vaguely specified societal issues such as ‘the culture’. It is therefore interesting that the speaker then problematises his initial account of community by stating ‘but (1.0) to be honest with you’ (line 11), implying that what follows is more veridical than what has gone before (Edwards & Fasulo, 2006). From line 11 onwards, the speaker produces an alternative formulation of society and its immigrants that has some similarities to that produced in Extract 3. The notion of ‘the community’ is supplanted by an enumeration of different ‘communities’, with the potential extensiveness of such enumeration heightened by the list-like way in which it is introduced. However, rather than emphasising the social inclusion of individuals, this account focuses on processes of group-level intercultural contact. The nature of future change associated with this multiplicity of communities is also described as of more indeterminate status, in that the speaker indicates an uncertainty over how this process should be characterized: ‘what’s it called? e:em (.) reconciling each other’. In unpacking that in which such reconciling consists, it is further described as ‘learning’ where good social features ‘clean out’ more negative features.

In this extract, neither ‘their good side’ (line 13) nor ‘bad culture or bad behaviour’ (line 15) is located within a particular community. Agency is left unclear and, instead, is described in respect of some unspecified persons or group: ‘they will draw- they clean out’. The reference to potential barriers initially provided at lines 8 to 9, ‘including the culture (.)

the religion and things like that', is reformulated in a more restricted manner through reference to 'bad culture or bad behaviour'. It is therefore not culture or religion in general that is now presented as problematic but merely negative cultural or behavioural elements. Thus, the speaker moves from stating something that might be undermined as requiring argument or warrant, that either 'the community' or 'the others' have a religion or a culture that causes problems, to the rhetorically self-sufficient claim that bad culture and bad behaviour are problematic.

So the interviewee begins by setting out a version of society, its outsiders, and how they might be integrated that is in some respects similar to that seen in extracts 1 and 2. However, this gives way to a competing account involving multiple communities, in which who is to integrate, what that means, and the consequences for agency involved are presented more equivocally. Taken together, these two accounts allow the speaker to claim agency for his organization, in that it exists to promote integration, while not specifying how they will seek to achieve that. The transition from an account that relies upon the notion of a single community to one that is formulated in terms of multiple communities dissipates the accountability for taking steps to enact change. Instead of placing accountability on those either within or outside a particular community, and the actions that his organisation might take in relation to them, accountability is placed onto vague unspecified groups and directed away from the speaker and his organization.

Conclusions

These analyses have added to previous discursive research on integration (e.g., Durrheim & Dixon, 2005; Bowskill et al., 2007) by illustrating some ways in which this notion may be constructed and the various functions performed. These results expand on the ideas set out in the introduction, that the notion of 'integration' is one that is discursively worked up in local contexts of production. Here we see people at the 'sharp end' of government integration policies constructing their own specific versions of integration. For instance, the first two extracts draw on a 'them' and 'us' formulation, with the attribution for agency and responsibility for integration being located either with the refugees or the host community. Alternatively, the third extract utilised a social inclusion model of integration that could be applied to all individuals, migrant or otherwise, allocating agency to the speaker's organisation while attributing responsibility for integration failures to abstract barriers (e.g., unemployment, deprivation). The fourth extract presented a group-level intercultural contact

model of integration that relied on a vaguer attribution of agency and responsibility to processes of ‘reconciliation’.

What does such talk achieve? Perhaps surprisingly, these accounts do not set out a prescriptive list of actions and events that must arise if some specifically described social outcome that could be called ‘integration’ is to be achieved. Conversely, what is made out here is that whatever is to be accomplished has yet to happen and that until such change is brought about, the relationship between refugees and host society continues to constitute a problem that only integration, however construed, will address. However, there are a variety of ways to set out this claim, involving differing versions of what integration is, who is involved, what their agentic status is and how such agency is, or is not, caught up with attributions of responsibility for current problems

This helps us to understand two pervasive features of integration as it appears in the broader research and policy environment. On the one hand, as we saw earlier, talk of integration is deployed by some researchers as an obvious social good (e.g., Berry, 1997; Ager & Strang, 2004), and yet other researchers seek to problematise such claims (e.g., Bowskill et al., 2007; Farrugia, 2009). Here, we see integration presented as an obvious good, but what is required to accomplish integration is set out in somewhat vague and yet socially all-inclusive grounds (Bowskill et al., 2007). So one potential reason for the contentious status of ‘integration’ as a term in broader social theorising may stem not from a dispute over whether integration is or is not a good thing but rather from the fact that integration is everywhere worked up in local contexts for specific purposes, and positive (or negative) evaluations are built up around such locally-sensitive constructions. On the other hand, within the broader policy perspective, we see indications of why policy initiatives in this area may not always be successful. Policy of course requires policy-makers to develop their own understandings of what integration is, and is not. As these data have shown, integration organisations generate their own local understandings of what integration is all about as part and parcel of how they see themselves and their work. This helps to explain why it is that Castles et al. (2002) identified that many policy agendas and lay conceptions treat integration as being a one-way process whereas ‘experts’ treat it as a two-way process. That is, different people, groups and organisations will construct integration differently depending on the specific contexts in which they are engaging as well as the goals they are seeking to achieve.

As we have seen here, such understandings are developed in ways that present integration as desirable in itself. That is unsurprising. But, at the same time, all such arguments for integration and accounts of integration failure rely upon forms of talk that have

a self-sufficient quality: no warrant is needed for example as to why barriers prevent integration. To this extent, talk about integration can be seen to resemble other forms of race talk that rely upon self-sufficient arguments. For example, in their study of race talk in New Zealand, Wetherell and Potter (1992) note that speakers commonly relied upon ten recurring formulations or 'commonplaces' (1992, p. 177) that invoked common-sense understandings of community relations. Speakers however could draw upon any of these 'commonplaces' to warrant any argument for or against inclusion. In the case of integration, arguably, we are seeing a similar process at work: local understandings can invoke a range of widely divergent notions of integration towards different and competing ends. The current study illustrates how research may explore the relationships between social psychology and political science, in the sense identified by Scuzzarello (2012), by analysing how politically important notions, such as 'integration', are negotiated within social interaction. Overall these analyses suggest that researchers, policy makers and practitioners would benefit from being alive to the rhetorical implications of integration typologies as well as the typological implications of integration rhetoric. In local settings, it might be more useful for local organisations to specify what is sought in terms of social actors and interactions instead of relying upon a concept that is so open to multiple uses and outcomes.

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