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Gibson, Stephen ORCID logoORCID:
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5648-7669> and Hamilton, Lorna G.
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RUNNING HEAD: Constructions of polity membership

The rhetorical construction of polity membership: Identity, culture and citizenship in
young people's discussions of immigration in northern England.

Stephen Gibson (York St John University)

&

Lorna Hamilton (University of York)

Address for correspondence: Stephen Gibson, Faculty of Health & Life Sciences,
York St John University, Lord Mayor's Walk, York, YO31 7EX, UK. Tel.: +44 (0)
1904 876581; e-mail: s.gibson@yorksja.ac.uk

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Abstract

In this paper we argue for a social psychological approach to citizenship which focuses on how social actors define competent and legitimate polity membership, together with the associated rights and responsibilities that this entails. A perspective based on the principles of rhetorical psychology is adopted in order to explore these issues in an analysis of a sample of young people's talk about issues of immigration to the UK. Analysis considers how matters of 'race', national identity and culture were oriented to and constructed during the interviews. We then explore how rights and responsibilities concerning cultural expression, interpersonal civility/courtesy and (implicitly acultural) legal frameworks were articulated as practical criteria for judgements about competent and legitimate polity membership. These findings are discussed in relation to existing social psychological work on issues such as racism and national identity, with a view to situating these matters within an overarching concern for the construction of polity membership. We conclude by briefly considering the implications of these findings for contemporary debates concerning citizenship education in the UK.

KEYWORDS: Citizenship; Culture; Discourse; Diversity; Multiculturalism; National identity; Prejudice; Racism; Rhetorical Psychology; Social identity

The rhetorical construction of polity membership: Identity, culture and citizenship in young people's discussions of immigration in northern England.

Despite being the subject of longstanding concern in other social science disciplines, social psychologists have tended to eschew an explicit focus on citizenship, preferring instead to focus on related concepts such as social identity. Although some recent work has begun to redress this, the prospect of citizenship joining concepts such as attitudes, prejudice and stereotypes as core social psychological concerns seems remote. This situation is perhaps surprising given the direct relevance of many social psychological concepts and theories to issues of citizenship (Condor & Gibson, 2007), and the present paper will seek to outline the possibilities afforded by a Rhetorical Psychological approach (Billig, 1996) to the analysis of citizenship.

Isin and Wood's (1999, p. 4, italics in original) description of citizenship as '*both* a set of practices (cultural, symbolic and economic) and a bundle of rights and duties (civil, political and social) that define an individual's membership in a polity' is instructive here insofar as membership may be seen as being defined by an interaction between formal legal status and more informal social processes. Isin and Wood (*ibid.*) go on to suggest that although 'citizenship can be defined as a legal and political status, from a sociological point of view it can be defined as competent membership in a polity'. We would suggest that what constitutes 'competent membership in a polity' will not be self-evident, but will instead be a matter for debate. In the present paper it is therefore argued that, in addition, a specifically social psychological perspective needs to consider the ways in which social actors *themselves* construct the memberships, rights and responsibilities associated with

citizenship, and, above all, what they treat as competent and legitimate polity membership. In order to illustrate this approach, the paper draws on data from a project designed to explore young people's conceptions of citizenship in northern England, with a specific focus upon the ways in which participants mobilized various rights and responsibilities in order to negotiate issues of polity membership in discussions of immigration.

Although citizenship has rarely been a focus of sustained social psychological concern, there is of course a well-established tradition of theory and research exploring social identity, intergroup relations and group membership (e.g. Tajfel, 1978), which has frequently been used to address issues of nationalism and national identity (e.g. Mummendey, Klink & Brown, 2001; Salazar, 1998). However, Condor (2006a) has recently argued that the representation of polity membership in terms of social identity may be only one of a range of ways of constructing polity membership, and that social psychology would benefit from treating the construction of political community as a matter for analytic attention, rather than *a priori* definition.

In contrast, there is a growing empirical literature on citizenship in other social science disciplines. Whilst there is insufficient space in the present paper to review this literature fully, it is nevertheless worth noting that, as Lister et al (2003) have pointed out, the empirical literature on citizenship is relatively underdeveloped when compared with the depth and breadth of theoretical treatises on citizenship. Specifically, as noted by Gibson (in press), there is a tendency in much of this work to reify accounts, and to treat apparently contrary assertions as evidence of inconsistency in human thinking rather than as contextually bound social action. Similarly, some research has been less concerned with exploring participants' own constructions of citizenship-related issues than with assessing their competence and/or knowledge in

certain pre-defined domains. This is especially notable when surveying recent literature on young people's conceptions of citizenship in England. Work in this area has tended to follow the definition of citizenship articulated in the report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship (1998; known informally as 'The Crick Report', after the chair of the Advisory Group, Bernard Crick), which laid the foundations for the introduction of compulsory Citizenship Education in England from 2002. In aiming to 'change ... the political culture of this country' (Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998, p. 7), the Crick Report sought to present a challenge to normative Anglo-British understandings of relatively passive liberal citizenship. In so doing, citizenship was defined in terms of three related concepts: social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy. However, such definitions of citizenship have been criticised for covering a relatively restricted range of issues, with some authors highlighting the importance of ensuring definitions are sufficiently broad to incorporate a wider array of non-traditional participatory activities (e.g. Riley, Morey & Griffin, 2010; Weller, 2007), and others noting in particular the need to place additional emphasis on issues of diversity (e.g. Olssen, 2004; Osler, 2000; see also Ajegbo, Kiwan & Sharma, 2007).

In this paper we report findings from a project designed to explore young people's conceptions of citizenship and related concepts in northern England. For the purposes of the present analysis we focus on the issue of immigration (see Gibson, in press, and Gibson & Hamilton, forthcoming, for other analyses deriving from this project). This is of central relevance to citizenship insofar as it constitutes an area which potentially foregrounds a range of issues regarding the rights and responsibilities of UK citizens in contrast to those seeking residency, asylum or employment in, and/or citizenship of, the UK. Moreover, it may allow for an

exploration of a range of normally tacit commonsense assumptions regarding what constitutes ‘competent membership in a polity’ (Isin & Wood, 1999, p. 4).

Social psychological research on immigration tends not to foreground explicitly the concept of citizenship, often preferring instead to focus on group membership and social identity (e.g. Deaux, 2000; Dovidio & Esses, 2001) and/or prejudice/racism (e.g. Capdevila & Callaghan, 2008; Goodman & Burke, 2010). Whilst not eschewing these important issues, the present study aims specifically to explore the ways in which they are bound up with the invocation, attribution and denial of the rights and responsibilities associated with polity membership. In so doing, the analysis aims to address one of the frequently neglected implications of social psychological work on intergroup relations, social identity and prejudice – that arguments concerning groups and social identities have important implications for citizenship, and specifically for the rights and responsibilities accorded to those deemed to be citizens and non-citizens.

In order to explore these issues, the present paper adopts a rhetorical psychological approach (Billig, 1996). Adopting this perspective has a number of advantages, notably that it enables an analysis of the construction and mobilization of rhetorical strategies in participants’ own terms. This also means that, as far as possible, *a priori* definitions of citizenship as being concerned with, for example, a certain constellation of civil, political and social rights and responsibilities need not be imposed on participants. Instead, the way in which participants mobilise and orient to various entitlements and obligations in the course of discussing immigration can be explored. This also avoids a similar problem associated with the definition of polity membership. The technical and legal definitions of nationality and citizenship in the UK are complex and multi-faceted, with varying levels and types of

‘membership’ being available (see UK Border Agency, 2010). However, there is no guarantee that participants will orient to membership issues in this way. The key issue is that, in exploring participants’ own conceptions, we are treating this as a matter for empirical analysis rather than *a priori* definition.

Method

Participants

A total of 174 young people (103 females; 71 males) took part in the research. The participants were all in UK school years 10 (N = 117) and 11 (N = 57), and ranged from 14 years 3 months to 17 years 3 months of age (M = 15 years 6 months).ⁱ The participants attended one of eight schools in the north of England, six of which were state-funded (N = 120), with the remaining two being private schools (N = 54). Whilst the sample was diverse in terms of gender, socio-economic background and the type of school attended, it was relatively homogeneous in terms of ethnicity, with all but four participants indicating their ethnic background as ‘White British’ on a standard tick-box ethnicity monitoring form. Two participants indicated their ethnic background as ‘White British and other white background’, one selected ‘Chinese’ and one selected ‘other mixed background’.

Interviews

Sixty-two interviews were conducted with participants in groups of 2-4. Each participant took part in only one interview, with 17 interviews involving two participants, 40 involving groups of three participants, and 5 involving groups of four participants. Interviews were conducted between March 2006 and November 2007, and lasted between 19 minutes and 1 hour 22 minutes (M = 43 minutes). Nine

different interviewers were involved in data collection, with each interview conducted by a single interviewer. The interviews were semi-structured around a series of questions presented on laminated cards, which were presented in turn during the interviews. Participants were invited to discuss each question, and the interviewer prompted discussion as appropriate with improvised follow-up questions. The question cards covered a series of topics broadly related to citizenship, such as political participation, military service, European integration, employment, social inequality, immigration and the environment. Issues around immigration tended to arise in discussions following the presentation of the following questions cards in particular: ‘Is social inequality a problem today?’ and ‘Some people have suggested that people who move to this country should take a test to see how British they are. Do you think that this is a good idea?’ⁱⁱ Interviews were transcribed using a form of Jefferson-lite notation (see Appendix).

Analytic framework and procedure

As part of the wider family of discourse analytic methods (see Potter, 2007), rhetorical psychology draws from a number of related approaches. Although not explicitly located within a social constructionist epistemology, as part of the ‘turn to language’ in social psychology, rhetorical psychology can be located within the relativist and constructionist strain of thought in discourse analysis (see e.g. Potter, 1996). Consequently, our analysis did not seek to identify underlying psychological states or constructs such as ‘attitudes’ or ‘opinions’ in our participants’ talk. Instead, the focus was on the construction of the rhetorical strategies themselves, the local functions that they performed, and what they might suggest about the patterning of cultural commonsense.

Initial selection of data involved the extraction of all interview material in which issues of immigration were discussed. The analysis subsequently proceeded with the preliminary identification of argumentative commonplaces. This involved careful reading and re-reading of the data, with particular emphasis being placed on ensuring that extracts were not read in isolation but instead placed within the context of the interview from which they were taken. Rhetorical strategies were categorized initially according to content, although all such categorizations were treated as provisional. At this point, instances of rhetorical strategies were compared with each other, and with instances of different rhetorical strategies (both between and within interviews). A useful technique at this stage was deviant case analysis (Wiggins & Potter, 2008), which allowed for the analytic narrative to be modified in the face of apparently contradictory data. Subsequent stages of the analysis moved from the broad identification of rhetorical strategies to a microanalysis of their construction and function. This part of the analysis drew on a range of discourse analytic techniques with a focus on explicating the way in which particular rhetorical strategies were constructed, and the ideological functions of these constructions. Ideological function was conceptualized as those performative aspects of rhetorical strategies which – over and above their local pragmatic function in the context of the interview – may be oriented towards particular ideological actions such as blaming a particular social group for some problem or other, defending the pre-eminent status of one's own social group or institution, denying rights or access to others, or a range of similar actions (see also Gibson, in press).

It is worth noting at this point that the status of our data as the product of a specific social setting (i.e. the research interview) was central to our analysis. We are thus not suggesting that the rhetorical strategies constructed by participants in the

present research are acontextual discursive resources which infuse talk irrespective of the local pragmatic occasion. Instead, we view the interviews as an ideal site for the study of precisely how these young people worked up these particular rhetorical strategies for the demands of a particular context. In other contexts their constructions may vary (indeed we would expect them to), but equally we would argue, following Wetherell (2003, p. 13), that although '[t]he interview is a highly specific social production, ... it also draws on routine and highly consensual (cultural/normative) resources that carry beyond the immediate local context, connecting local talk with discursive history'. We therefore sought not only to attend to matters of local pragmatic function in the context of the interview, but also to the potential of the interview talk to reflect and *re-instantiate* the dilemmatic themes of ideology.

Analysis & Discussion

Following Isin and Wood's (1999, p.4) approach to citizenship as 'competent membership in a polity', our analysis was concerned with social actors' rhetorical constructions of criteria for legitimate and competent polity membership. The analysis thus explored the ways in which respondents discussed the movement of people into 'this country', and articulated criteria for polity membership. Speakers frequently sought to present their positions as being based on rational criteria whilst simultaneously distancing themselves from the implication that they would judge matters of immigration purely in terms of categories of race, nation or ethnicity. This frequently led to various forms of identity management work, many of which will be explored below. However, some recent work has pointed to the persistence of more 'old-fashioned' forms of racism (e.g. Condor, 2006b; Leach, 2005), and in some

interviews participants did explicitly base their arguments for limitations on the movement of people into the UK on criteria of ‘race’. Even here, however, the participants oriented to the use of such criteria as contravening social strictures against racism. For example, extract 1 follows a stretch of talk during which the participants had been formulating a series of complaints about Polish and Muslim people in the UK:

Extract 1ⁱⁱⁱ

- 1 Rick Seriously you can’t go down one street- there’s
2 more- you go down the street right and you see
3 more coloured than you do English.
- 4 Adam: Yeah it’s cos they come over a small minority but
5 they reproduce in their millions ((laughs)) or
6 something stupid like that.
- 7 Rick: Yeah they do yeah.
- 8 I: But is that really a problem? I mean is it –
- 9 Rick: Course it is yeah.
- 10 I: Why?
- 11 Adam: Well they’ll still have British – they’ll still be British.
- 12 Si: They’re replacing our [((inaudible))]
- 13 Rick: [There] ain’t no black in
14 the Union Jack.
- 15 Si: ((laughs)) ((inaudible))
- 16 Rick: What?
- 17 Si: ((inaudible))

- 18 Rick: What have you never heard it? There ain't no
19 black in the Union Jack so send that Paki back.
20 Si: ((Laughs))
21 Adam: And you're not a racist?
22 Rick: No.
23 Si: ((laughs))

Rick's initial construction of 'coloured people' outnumbering the 'English' not only conflates Englishness with whiteness, but also treats the presence of 'coloured people' as self-evidently problematic. Adam's subsequent extreme case formulation (ECF; Pomerantz, 1986) 'reproduce in millions', carries with it echoes of animalistic metaphors of the racial other as dangerously sexual, impulsive and instinctual (cf. Fanon, 1967/1952). At this point, the position of the interviewer is particularly important, and specifically it is notable how the attempt to question the way in which the participants construct 'coloured' immigration as a problem (l. 8-10) in fact occasions an escalation in Rick's use of derogatory racial categorizations (ll. 13-14; 18-19). The way in which these utterances occasion laughter from Si (ll. 15, 20, 23), is suggestive of an orientation to the contravention of liberal social strictures against racism in the face of a university-employed social science researcher (see also Condor, 2006b). As Billig (2002, 2005) has pointed out, it is often the case that such taboo-breaking is accompanied by laughter as speakers display their awareness of the status of what they are saying as subverting liberal values of tolerance. In contrast, Adam, who does not laugh, challenges Rick with a rhetorical question implying that his remarks suggest he is racist (l. 21). Rick's bald denial occasions more laughter from Si. Even in this rather extreme example, we nevertheless therefore see

participant orientations to the normatively opprobrious nature of articulating polity membership in terms of overtly racist criteria.

However, as indicated above, arguments which made straightforward links between movement into the UK and ‘race’ or ethnic/national identity were relatively rare. In most interviews, the orientation to such issues as being potentially racist or xenophobic led to them being treated as illegitimate criteria upon which to base decisions about migration to the UK. Indeed, one of the question card prompts that we used to stimulate discussion of issues of national identity and immigration led in many interviews to participants explicitly distancing themselves from the assumption that residency in the UK should be contingent upon sharing some essential quality of ‘Britishness’, for example:

Extract 2 (a)

- 1 Lilly: ((reading card)) ‘Some people have suggested that
- 2 people who move to this country should take a test
- 3 to see how British they are. Do you think this is a
- 4 good idea?’
- 5 Henry: Rubbish.
- 6 Deb: No.
- 7 Lilly: I think [that’s really stupid.]
- 8 Henry: [Stupid idea.]
- 9 Deb: Yeah.
- 10 Lilly: I don’t think you should have to be, British to live here.

Here not only is the idea of a ‘test to see how British’ someone is dismissed as ‘a stupid idea’, but the use of nationality as a criterion for residency is challenged. Such lines of argument were typical of the majority of our interviews, but this did not mean that participants adopted a generally laissez-faire approach to immigration. Denials of the appropriateness of using nationality, ethnicity or ‘race’ as grounds on which to make judgements about immigration were usually accompanied by the mobilization of alternative criteria and the general assumption that immigration was indeed a ‘problem’ that had to be ‘controlled’. For example, shortly after extract 2 (a), the following exchange occurred:

Extract 2 (b)

- 21 Henry: [No, but it is a] bit different here isn’t it because,
22 er, refugees and, asylum seekers are all, coming,
23 [over to this country.]
- 24 Lilly: [Yeah but I don’t think] that everything else should
25 be like, erm, that shouldn’t everything be equal to
26 everybody? I mean you’re entitled to live wherever
27 you want really.
- 28 Henry: Yeah but I think – I agree with that but I think
29 there’s got to be some sort of, stop-off point
30 because I mean this, country’s already holding
31 [over 60 million.]

Despite the respondents’ joint dismissal of ‘Britishness’ as a criterion for residency in extract 2 (a), Henry nevertheless constructs the movement of ‘refugees’ and ‘asylum

seekers' to 'this country' as a problem. In response to Lilly's assertion of a universal right to reside in a place of one's choosing (ll. 24-27), Henry goes on to to acknowledge the in principle desirability of such an entitlement, whilst suggesting that in practice this is problematic (ll. 28-31). He suggests that a limit should be placed and predicates this on a container metaphor (Charteris-Black, 2006) whereby 'this country's already holding over 60 million' (ll. 30-31). Thus, whilst basing immigration decisions explicitly on a criterion of national identity is treated as inappropriate, the practical demands imposed by global migration patterns are worked up in such a way as to construct limits on immigration as necessary, rational and legitimate. In the same way that immigration talk was often de-racialized (Reeves, 1983), extracts 3a and 3b show how immigration talk was also frequently de-nationalized such that decisions over inclusion/exclusion were divorced from concerns over category membership or identity.

A similar tendency was evident in the way in which 'culture' was invoked in the interviews. Numerous researchers have drawn attention to the use of 'culture' in 'race' talk in modern 'Western' societies (e.g. Durrheim & Dixon, 2000; Wetherell & Potter, 1992), and in our interviews participants did indeed frame their discussions more readily in terms of 'culture' than in explicitly 'racial' terms. Participants typically treated straightforward cultural assimilation of incomers as illegitimate and potentially racist. Instead, they oriented to the value of multiculturalism, but often qualified this by stressing the importance of preserving 'British' or 'English' culture. Broadly speaking, the value of diversity was therefore seen to be in the presence of other cultures within 'this country', rather than those cultures necessarily having an influence on majority 'British' culture (whatever this might be understood to entail). For example:

Extract 3

- 1 Sue: You still want like- because you don't want
2 everyone here to be, I mean you want different
3 cultures.
- 4 Jess: Yeah.
- 5 Sue: You don't just want a British culture. So you do
6 want – I mean, like the question, you don't want
7 them to be British, culture wise. But you – I mean,
8 like I was saying, it helps if they can read but, you
9 want different cultures to be brought in to make this
10 country more interesting. And just not, I don't
11 know, just -
- 12 Jess: Yeah, you don't want British culture to disappear
13 because it's mixed with so many other cultures.
14 You want – Britain wants to stay, [as Britain]=
- 15 Sue: [British], yeah.
- 16 Jess: =and then, you know have other cultures in the
17 country but not so it becomes a – another culture
18 itself.

It is notable that Sue's argument essentially positions multiculturalism as a celebration of the exotic which treats the value of the presence of diverse cultures as being primarily to pique the 'interest' (l. 10) of the majority population (Said, 1978). Jess follows on by asserting that this should not mean that these 'interesting' cultures result in a change to 'British culture'. The gist of her argument is summed up on lines

16-17 when she says that it is desirable to ‘have other cultures in the country but not so it becomes ... another culture itself.’ Such arguments assume a reified version of ‘culture’ as a property of identifiable groups, and can be understood as involving the resolution of an ideological dilemma (cf. Billig et al, 1988) between values of cultural pluralism and the preservation of ‘British’ culture. This was apparent to the extent that the defence of the pre-eminence of ‘British’ culture in the UK polity was frequently followed swiftly from the articulation of positive sentiments towards the presence of cultural diversity:

Extract 4

- 1 Julia: if they’re gonna move here so, the-, they don’t really
2 need to be British they can, th- like, I don’t think
3 it’s fair to, want them to learn about it, it’s like
4 their own culture as long as they’re, like happy
5 with what goes on here.
- 6 Nigel: Mm I think everyone should have their, individual
7 culture and, they sh- they should be able to, bring
8 their own culture, to, like Brit-
- 9 I: Yeah?
- 10 Nigel: Britain and just (0.5) kind of new things really.
- 11 I: So d’you not need to be British to, live in Britain
12 then d’you think?
- 13 Mary: [No]
- 14 Julia: [I don’t] think so
- 15 Nigel: No.

- 16 Julia: But I think you need to accept, what, British culture's
17 like and what British tradit-, tradition's like.
- 18 I: Okay
- 19 Julia: Like this whole, not wanting to celebrate, Christmas
20 [in,]=
- 21 I: [Mm]
- 22 Julia: =like, public pla- places but=
- 23 I: Yeah
- 24 Julia: =that's a British thing, [so I think]=
- 25 I: [Yeah yeah]
- 26 Julia: =people should accept that.

In response to Julia and Nigel's construction of a non-assimilationist position, the interviewer asks explicitly about the relationship between being British and residency in Britain (ll. 11-12). Julia follows up the immediate denials by articulating a requirement to 'accept' British culture and tradition, and then illustrates this by working up an apocryphal example of the non-celebration of Christmas in public places. It is notable that this is constructed as a wide ranging problem (l. 19: 'this whole'), with Christmas being glossed as an explicitly 'British thing', something which implicitly positions the problem in this case as arising as a result of immigration from places where public festivals are not based around Christianity. Later on in the interview, Julia sums up her position when she says 'I don't think, your culture really comes into it too much as long as you're not, upsetting anybody else and, doing anything, that would harm anybody else or anything like that.' The basic principle is essentially the classic liberal injunction to live-and-let-live, but it is

of course underscored with the implicit assumption of the in-principle desirability of a model of multiculturalism based around separate and discrete ‘cultures’ co-existing within the same polity, but with different rights to public cultural display. This draws our attention to a further distinction that could be drawn by the participants between majority ‘British’ culture as public and ‘immigrant’ culture as essentially private. This was particularly evident when issues of language were discussed, for example:

Extract 5

- 1 Katy: I think it’s a bit rude when people come from different
2 countries and like (1) say like [talk a different language
3 in front of everyone]
- 4 Claire: [Unless they’re coming on holiday it doesn’t matter
5 does it?]
- 6 Katy: It’s like, yeah you’re in England.
- 7 I: Yeah.
- 8 Mark: Mm.
- 9 Katy: Talk British.
- 10 Mark: Like there’s about six (0.5) Polish in, in this school and
11 they’re all like blabbing on to each other and you’re like,
12 what you on about?
- 13 Katy: Yeah and like you walk by and then they’ll, burst
14 out laughing.

This exchange can be understood as an instance of the ‘abnormalization’ (Verkuyten, 2001) of a particular national group insofar as they are constructed as being engaged

in wilful disruptions of everyday civility. Katy frames the speaking of ‘different’ languages in terms of politeness (l. 1: ‘a bit rude’) and public civility (l. 3: ‘in front of everyone’). Mark goes on to construct an exemplification based around a group of Polish pupils at his school who are ‘all like blabbing on to each other’ (l. 11). The incivility of this state of affairs is worked up through the construction of lack of linguistic comprehension on the part of the English-speaking majority (‘what you on about?’), and then by Katy through the implication that they may be sharing jokes at one’s expense (ll. 13-14: ‘you walk by and then they’ll, burst out laughing’). The incongruity of the mundane action of ‘walk[ing] by’ and the response of ‘burst[ing] out’ in laughter functions to construct this as an archetypal disruption of the social order in which an innocent party engaged in routine behaviour is positioned as blameless, and those who are bursting out in laughter are engaged in an inappropriate action. The impression created is of a group of people marked by common nationality who wilfully taunt others by exploiting their ability to converse in a different language. The requirement to ‘talk British’ (l. 12) is thus treated not simply as a matter of competency, but of public courtesy.

In addition to the public-private distinction, values of pluralism and diversity could sometimes also be limited by a distinction between, broadly speaking, civic and legal spheres, in which the latter could be treated as effectively acultural. Cultural diversity could therefore be construed as a problem to the extent that the values of some groups may come into conflict with UK law. This effectively involved a rhetorical manoeuvre whereby concerns regarding immigration and multicultural citizenship were framed not as matters of culture or identity, but as matters of legality. Whereas cultural diversity could be tolerated, or even welcomed, the normative appropriateness of a single legal system within a state went unchallenged:^{iv}

Extract 6

1 Fiona: But, they are in Britain don't forget you are now,
2 having to er, adhere to, British, laws British rules
3 and stuff seeing as you are in Britain=

4 I: Mm

5 Fiona: =so, therefore if you're carrying on what you were
6 doing in your own country and it's not, going along
7 with British rules then it's kind of, you are in Britain
8 now you're gonna have to start following some of
9 the things that we do you know?

10 I: Mm hm

11 Fiona: I mean, they're gonna have to merge in, with us I
12 mean if we ev-, went over to their country, and
13 started, portraying all this British, everything that
14 we do they're gonna be hang on a minute you came
15 to our country and you're still acting like you're in
16 your country=

17 I: Mm

18 Fiona: =shouldn't you be kind of, getting in with our
19 country you know?

Fiona's invocation of 'laws' and 'rules' (l. 2) echoes and reinforces long-standing linkages between immigration and criminality (see e.g. Capdevila & Callaghan, 2008). It is notable that this is not framed initially as a concern to ensure that those

moving to the UK assimilate aspects of ‘British’ culture, although the generalized list-completer (Jefferson, 1990) ‘and stuff’ (l. 3) leaves open the possibility that extra-legal concerns may also be relevant. Fiona then begins a gradual elision of the legal with the more ambiguously cultural. Fiona elaborates this rule-based requirement for some level of assimilation by suggesting that ‘you’re gonna have to start following some of the things that we do’ (ll. 8-9). She then frames her argument more explicitly in terms of the necessity of some level of assimilation by suggesting that ‘they’re gonna have to merge in with us’ and then orients to a norm of fairness whereby ‘we’ could (and should) expect to be subject to similar requirements if ‘we ... went over to their country’ (l. 12). This of course assumes a symmetrical model of migration patterns whereby the rights and responsibilities of migrants are treated as constituting a universal standard regardless of status or place of origin. The emphasis on ‘laws’ and ‘rules’ is much less pronounced by this point, with more general references to the way one ‘act[s]’ (l. 15) and ‘getting in with our country’ (ll. 18-19) being used instead.

Although it was difficult to argue with the principle of cultural diversity explicitly, the desirability of the multicultural state could, in effect, be challenged through an appeal to the normative requirement of a mono-legal state. It is notable that such arguments perhaps represent a re-enactment and perpetuation of a tension in liberal ideology between ‘[o]n the one hand tolerance of a certain degree of diversity, and on the other a tendency to impose a hegemonic normalizing regime which subordinates and disciplines minorities’ (Lewis, 2005, p. 540; cf. Young, 1989). In this sense we can suggest that the participants are orienting to a fundamental ideological dilemma (Billig et al, 1988) concerning the accommodation of diversity in the polity, and its associated implications for rights and responsibilities.

Concluding Remarks

In the present study, participants oriented to explicitly racial, national or cultural criteria for residency in the UK as problematic. However, the fact that in many cases these young people can be seen to be '[d]odging the identity of prejudice' (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 211) is only part of the story. The specific manner in which they did this involves a series of assumptions concerning appropriate polity membership, including rights to public cultural display, interpersonal civility and the responsibility to abide by a single (and implicitly acultural) legal system. In this concluding section, we will briefly discuss the implications of these findings for the social psychological, and broader social scientific, study of citizenship.

Limits on multiculturalism based explicitly on national identity or 'race' were treated as illegitimate, a status which could be oriented to even by those who framed matters of inclusion and exclusion in terms of categories of 'race' (see extract 1). In itself, this is hardly surprising given the volume of literature pointing to the normative opprobrium attached to racism in contemporary 'Western' liberal society (see Augoustinos & Every, 2007, for a review), and to national identity in England (Condor, 2000, 2006a, in press a). However, it is notable that exclusion per se was not typically treated as similarly problematic. Rather, exclusion was typically framed in terms of rational criteria, all of which revolved around a banal assumption (Billig, 1995) that members of a polity automatically have greater rights to residency, cultural expression and definition of legal frameworks than non-members or those seeking membership. Thus, the UK polity was constructed as being able to accommodate multiple cultures, but only a single legal system. Similarly, there was a commonsense assumption that public culture should be 'British', with 'other' cultural practices

being treated as essentially a private matter (Verkuyten, 2005), the display of which might in some instances be of ‘interest’ to the majority, but which in others may constitute a discourtesy. Ultimately, the limits placed on multiculturalism are treated less as an explicit matter of identity or culture, than of the behavioural norms associated with residency within the state, and of the primacy accorded to ‘British’ culture in defining the official values and norms of the state (e.g. through the legal system). Ideologically, such rhetorical commonplaces function to legitimate a set of criteria for polity membership which explicitly downplays the relevance of identity, ‘race’ and culture, whilst simultaneously constructing a series of ‘rational’ criteria which may nevertheless have the net effect of according priority based on precisely these grounds. Ideologies of assimilation are thus subtly reinforced at the same time as being explicitly downplayed (see also Bowskill, Lyons & Coyle, 2007).

It is worth considering some limitations of the present analysis. The location of the sample in a region of northern England which, whilst heterogeneous in several respects, is relatively homogeneous in terms of ethnicity, means that we should not presume that the patterns of argumentation and commonsense rhetorical assumptions identified in the present study would necessarily be present amongst samples drawn from more ethnically diverse areas. A similar point can be made regarding the topical focus of the present analysis, immigration. Clearly, whilst this issue is one of importance to any study of citizenship, we should not be surprised to find that accounting practices may differ when discussing different issues, such as European integration (e.g. Condor, 2006a) or devolution (e.g. Condor, in press c). Again, we are not suggesting that the present analysis represents *the* way that rhetorical concerns surrounding citizenship, identity and culture are enacted in England. Rather, we should see these assumptions and lines of argument as being intimately tied to their

context of articulation. In other contexts participants may challenge the rights of fellow citizens (Gibson, in press), but once state borders are rhetorically drawn the citizenry take precedence over non-citizens.

Finally, it is worth reflecting on the implications of the present findings for ongoing debates surrounding Citizenship Education. In a number of respects, these young people can be seen to be wrestling with the dualisms (Faulks, 2000) or dilemmas (Billig, et al, 1988) of liberal citizenship. On the one hand, diversity is welcomed, but on the other, the integrity and primacy of majority culture (whatever that might be understood to entail) is asserted under the auspices of a series rational, practical criteria for polity membership. The liberal injunction to tolerance, embodied in the sentiment of ‘live and let live’, could therefore be rhetorically inverted such that the presence of diversity should be limited in order to protect ‘British’ culture, something which relied on both the reification of ‘culture’ and its attachment to clearly definable (though sometimes unspecified) social groups. Equally, the presence of diversity could be constructed as a potential challenge to the idea of equality before the law (Young, 1989), and thereby used to place limits on the acceptable levels of diversity within the polity. Ultimately, then, the presence of diversity was to be welcomed unless that diversity came into conflict with these non-negotiable principles of liberalism.

Insofar as these young people can be seen to be re-enacting the normative assumptions of liberal citizenship, we might suggest that they are already well on the way to being inducted into the commonplaces of liberal citizenship, and that their ‘Citizenship Education’ has been a resounding success. If, however, the aim of any such educational programme is to ‘change ... the political culture of this country’

(Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998, p. 7), then it may be necessary to widen its purview to encompass a critique of these very commonplaces.

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Appendix: Transcription notation

- [yeah] Square brackets indicates overlapping talk
- ((inaudible)) Double parentheses encloses a transcriber's gloss or comment
- (5) Numerals in single parentheses indicate a timed pause in seconds
- ,
- A comma marks a short pause of less than 0.5 seconds
- bu-
- A dash indicates a curtailment of the preceding word or sound
- =
- An equals sign marks latching talk in which one turn follows immediately from a preceding one.

ⁱ One participant who was aged 17 years 3 months was older than the standard school leaving age in the UK, but was completing year 11 following some time out due to personal circumstances.

ⁱⁱ In 2005 the UK Labour Government introduced the ‘Life in the UK’ test to be taken by people seeking British citizenship or the right to reside in the UK (see <http://www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk>). At the time of its launch the Government explicitly distinguished it from a test of ‘Britishness’ (see http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4391710.stm).

ⁱⁱⁱ All participant names reported are pseudonyms.

^{iv} This was despite the existence of three different legal systems in the UK (see http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/crimejusticeandthelaw/thejudicialsystem/dg_4003097).