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Introduction

Prompted by the integration of Europe, Derrida recently posed the following questions. 'Indeed, to what concept, to what real individual, to what singular entity should this name be assigned today? Who will draw up its borders?'[1] While this question speaks of the political entity called Europe, it has much broader resonance. It echoes concerns about identity, boundaries, and the relationship between the inside and the outside of political entities, concerns that have not escaped the attention of critical International Relations scholars. Nor are these necessarily new concerns. The situation in post-World War II Britain prompted the same questions Derrida raises about Europe in 1992.[2] To what real individuals, to what singular entity the terms 'British' and 'Britain' should be assigned was a question that prompted debate, political violence, and a series of increasingly restrictive and, some would suggest, racist immigration policies. The transformation of Britain from an empire to a nation-state was accompanied by a crisis of identity whereby early post-war proclamations that Britain 'imposed no colour bar restrictions making it difficult for them when they come here' and that 'there must be freedom of movement within the British Empire and the Commonwealth' were, rather quickly, to give way to exclusionary practices and a retreat to 'little England'.[3]

Through an examination of the British case, this article explores the questions of political community and national identity and the practices that are implicated in

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[1] Jacques Derrida, *The Other Heading—Reflections on Today's Europe* (Bloomington, 1992), p. 5.

[2] Derrida is, of course, not the only one to have raised these questions. See also Anthony D. Smith, 'National Identity and the Idea of European Unity', *International Affairs*, 68:1 (1992), pp. 55–76, and Ole Waever et al., *Identity, Migration, and the New Security Agenda in Europe* (London, 1993).

[3] Quotes are from Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, leading Tory opponent of the 1948 British Nationality Act (453 *H.C. Deb.*, 405, 7 July 1948).

their construction. It speaks directly to issues that have recently been raised by critical International Relations theorists regarding problems of identity and internal/external boundaries. I suggest that considerable light can be shed on these questions by focusing on the ways in which national identity is constructed *vis-à-vis* the representation of the 'other'. I examine Great Britain during a period of global transformation and national crisis, when British identity was in question and who was to be considered on the inside and who on the outside was a highly ambiguous and controversial issue.

This case and Derrida's question point to three issues of significance to contemporary international relations. First, they highlight the issue of borders that separate the inside of a political entity from the outside. Second, attention is called to the nature of the entities whose internal realm must be distinguished from the external realm. In International Relations these units are generally presumed to be states. However, this is not always the case, as the example of the European Union illustrates. Third, we can infer from this case that the criteria by which the inside of a political entity is distinguished from the outside are not always unambiguous and well defined. Indeed, one could argue that the effective construction of meanings that enable the inside to be differentiated from the outside must contain an element of ambiguity. Who the 'we' are can be a flexible, mobilizable resource, adaptable to changing circumstances and new crises.[4] All of these were at issue in the British case and continue to be important concerns more generally.[5] Global migration is one of the significant contemporary phenomena that challenge dominant spatial images of homogeneous nation-states with clearly defined insides and outsides.[6] A study of immigration and national identity presents us with the opportunity to examine an instance of how boundaries that separate the inside from the outside get constructed, however provisionally.

In a sense Britain might be thought a least likely case. One might think that Britain, of all states, is one whose identity is stable, simply given, and in need of no active production of it. One might expect to find crises involving national identity and the boundaries of the political community in less stable countries where state and nation do not coincide, e.g. regions of the Third World where territorial bound-

[4] My thoughts on this have benefited immensely from conversations with Richard Ashley, though I certainly cannot claim here to represent his thoughts accurately and without distortion.

[5] Zig Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Race In Britain* (London, 1984), pp. 25–7, points out that migration from the South occurred earlier in Britain than in Europe. Initially, Britain experienced more hostility to immigrants because they were entitled to full social and welfare benefits and were entitled to participate in the political process. However, as recent evidence suggests, many of the original 'guest workers' and their families and subsequent generations have stayed in European countries, raising questions similar to the ones that arose in post-World War II Britain. While being cautious about making generalizations, we can, perhaps, nonetheless gain important insights from this particular case. I discuss this in the conclusion.

[6] For literature that highlights this, see Abadan-Unat, Nermin, 'Summary of Main Results of Conference of OECD Working Party on Migration', *The Future of Migration* (Paris, 1987); William Rogers Brubaker, *Immigration and the Politics of Citizenship in Europe and North America* (London, 1989); idem, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, 1992); Martin O. Heisler, 'Migration, International Relations and the New Europe: Theoretical Perspectives from Institutional Political Sociology', *International Migration Review*, 26:2 (1992), pp. 596–622; Roger Rouse, 'Mexican Migration and the Social Space of Postmodernism', *Diaspora* (Spring 1991), pp. 8–23. Waever et al., *Identity*, p. 5, suggest that Europe is undergoing a socio-political revolution involving the migration of peoples and the forging of new social identities that has potentially threatening implications for the process of governance both domestic and international.

aries were drawn by colonial powers.[7] Britain, on the other hand, is many centuries old, one might contend, as is the British people. Such a seemingly stable state and political community would, on the surface, appear to be an unlikely place to study the activities that work to *produce* a stable basis of national identity.

Yet, precisely what the terms 'British' and 'Britain' signified was not entirely clear and was indeed the subject of much controversy. Dummett and Nicol point out that despite the fact that there is no historical consistency about Britishness, the term has a strong political meaning and the distinction between British identity and the identities of other nations is taken for granted.[8] If one begins analysis with the presumption that boundaries, identities, insides vs outsides, are not fixed and stable but are rather always in the process of being constructed and reconstructed, then no case is really a least likely one. The question becomes one of *how,* in the face of ambiguity and uncertainty, boundaries, identities, insides vs outsides do become relatively fixed and stable.

This question goes to the heart of the concerns critical International Relations scholars have recently raised. If we are to gain a better understanding of the practices which impose the kinds of identities and inside/outside distinctions upon which the discipline of International Relations depends, we must engage in concrete empirical studies of those situations in which just these things are put in doubt. In the British case these were precisely the issues that were in question: (1) the boundaries of the political community, what was to be considered on the inside and what was to be considered on the outside, and (2) the identity of the British people, who was to be considered 'truly' British. Who would be understood as owing allegiance to and willing to sacrifice for Britain? What precisely would Britain as a sovereign entity be, something called a Commonwealth or something more appropriately called 'Little England'?

These were no small matters. They involved the reinvention of the 'imagined community' and they entailed two very different understandings of political community and British national identity. One understanding, 'Little England', implied a narrow conception of political community and national identity that did not include the Commonwealth as a whole. The Commonwealth ideal envisioned a multiracial community cooperating on equal terms in political, economic, and cultural matters. This ideal coincided with the professed ideology of *Civis Britannicus sum* that had legitimated Britain's imperial rule. This ideology had not been a totally meaningless facade. The whole Empire had been committed to the British war effort, perhaps the ultimate assertion of sovereignty, in 1914 and again in 1939.[9] After World War II the Commonwealth ideal provided a way of resolving Britain's dilemma of either becoming reduced to the status of a mere European power or accepting some form of American hegemony. It gave Britain a power base which was independent of the

[7] Indeed much of the literature on nation-building implicitly recognizes this as a perpetual problem in the Third World, in its aim of 'understanding the current problems of political development in the new nations'. See Lucian W. Pye, Foreword, in Charles Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, 1975). The value of studying nation-building in the West during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has, in large part, been for the purpose of comparing these processes to the tasks faced by countries in the South. See also Reinhard Bendix, *Nation-Building and Citizenship-Studies of our Changing Social Order* (New York and London, 1964).

[8] Ann Dummett and Andrew Nicol, *Subjects, Citizens, Aliens and Others: Nationality and Immigration* (London, 1990), p. 53.

[9] See Layton-Henry, *Politics of Race*, pp. 33–5.

USA and Europe and which enabled Britain to maintain its position as the world's foremost commercial and financial centre. It became the foundation of Churchill's doctrine of 'three circles', which consisted of (1) the British Commonwealth, (2) the English-speaking world, and (3) a United Europe, with Britain as the only country which had a part in all three circles. This, it was thought, would permit Britain to play a world role commensurate with that of the superpowers even though she could not match their capabilities.[10] 'If we can preserve a comradeship among all the diverse races who are now in the British Commonwealth and who, during the next few years, will increasingly become independent nations, we shall be able to act as a unified force in the world'.[11] However, the Commonwealth ideal required good relations with member countries and especially those countries in Asia and Africa that would increasingly form a majority of the membership.[12] Free movement thus played an important part in sustaining this ideal. Imposition of immigration controls, especially if seen as racist, would jeopardize any sense of 'we-ness' among the Commonwealth countries. It was just this issue, however, that brought questions of the political community and national identity to the fore and that necessitated the articulation of that which had hitherto gone without saying, been taken as natural and in no need of elaboration.

Theoretical framework

Many of the leading theorists of nations and nationalism have noted the absence of fixed and unchanging foundations, stressing instead the elements of invention and artefact.[13] Hobsbawm suggests that attempts to establish objective criteria for nationhood have failed because they try to fit historically novel, emerging, changing, and far from universal entities into a framework of permanence and universality. Even criteria such as ethnicity, cultural traits, a common history are 'themselves fuzzy, shifting and ambiguous'. Subjective definitions are equally questionable. Defining a nation by its members' consciousness of belonging to it is tautological.[14] Others, such as Waever, have noted similar problems with both objective and subjective definitions.[15]

These problems point to a certain conceptual ambivalence regarding the nation and national identity. There is a general acknowledgement of both the power that inheres in invocations of the nation and national identity and the slipperiness involved in attempts to previously define these things. Bhabha has suggested that we think of the identity of 'the people', who constitute the inside of nations and to whom national identities are attached, in a conceptual 'double-time'. The people are,

[10] Stephen Blank, 'Britain: The Politics of Foreign Economic Policy, Economic Policy, the Domestic Economy, and the Problem of Pluralistic Stagnation', in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *Between Power and Plenty: Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrialized States* (Madison, WI, 1978); Joseph Frankel, *British Foreign Policy 1945–1973* (London, 1975), pp. 96, 157, 222.

[11] Chuter Ede, 653 *H.C. Deb.*, 273, 6 February 1962.

[12] Layton-Henry, *Politics of Race*, p. 33.

[13] See for example Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1991); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (London, 1983); Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, 1992).

[14] Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, pp. 5–6, 8.

[15] Waever et al., *Identity*.

on the one hand, the pre-given parts of a body politic, the historical objects that give nationalist discourse its power and authority. On the other hand, the people are the effect of a complex rhetorical strategy of social reference where the claim to be representative provokes a crisis within the process of signification.[16] In other words, the people must be presumed as given and at the same time be continually reproduced. This understanding fits well with recent arguments by critical International Relations scholars regarding the inherently unstable and contingent nature of identity and the boundaries separating the inside from the outside.[17] Patterns of inclusion and exclusion, the fixing of unity and diversity, which alternatively distinguish the internal from the external are the result of numerous and multifaceted practices, including practices identified with the concept of the state. They are the result of practices that work to fix unity on the inside and that shift diversity, disruptions, and dangers to the outside.[18]

To say this is to suggest that the grounds that states would represent (i.e. the inside), far from being fixed, are socially, politically, and discursively constructed. The construction of foundational grounds occurs through discursive practices that attempt to fix meanings which enable the differentiation between the inside and the outside to be made. It is not possible to say a priori what these meanings are, especially when it comes to differentiating the inside of the nation from the outside, because they are, as Hobsbawm suggests, often historically novel and changing.

It is useful to conceptualize the inside, in contrast to the outside, as a *discourse*, i.e. a relational totality which constitutes and organizes social relations around a particular structure of meanings.[19] A discourse may refer to a specific group of texts, but also importantly to the social practices those texts are linked to. The linguistic and behavioural aspects of social practices form a complex and inextricably connected whole which is a discourse. The discursive practices that construct a discourse include writing and speaking as well as practices often considered 'behavioural'. Discourses generally work towards closure, creating the effect of an inside that is clearly distinguishable from an outside, but ultimately fail to escape the irresoluble tension between the interior and the exterior, the inside and the outside.[20] It is here at the margins that the attempts to fix meaning, to institute closure, are often most evident. This suggests that instead of conceiving of the inside and outside as dichotomous oppositions, it is more useful to think of them as both mutually constitutive and, at least potentially, mutually undermining. This is particularly evident when it comes to the constitution of the inside of nations, especially in times of massive population movements when elements from the outside are constantly raising questions as to who should be considered the people.

In this study then, I am conceptualizing the political community and the identity that is attached to it as a discourse. To suggest that national identity be thought of as a kind of discourse does not assume an *a priori* definition. Rather this is left open to emerge from specific empirical analysis. Waever has also recently suggested a

[16] Homi K. Bhabha, 'DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation', in Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (London, 1990), pp. 297–8.

[17] R. B. J. Walker has written extensively about the problematic nature of the inside/outside dichotomy. See especially Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge, 1993), ch. 8.

[18] Ibid., pp. 179–80.

[19] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy—Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London and New York, 1985), p. 96.

[20] Ibid., ch. 3.

discursive articulation approach for understanding national identity.[21] Benedict Anderson proposed that the nation as a community is something of a modern text and nationalism a form of political discourse.[22]

The analytic question that needs to be addressed by such a conceptualization is how discourses get constructed. How does the inside, however provisional and permeable, get partially fixed? If, as theorists have suggested, national identity cannot be reduced to a single dimension, then how does it get constructed?[23] It stands to reason that there must be certain focal points of meaning around which various dimensions converge to form national identity. Postmodern theorists have suggested that certain privileged discursive points are essential to the partial fixing of meanings and identities. Laclau and Mouffe refer to these as 'nodal points', others such as Lacan as privileged signifiers, Derrida as dominant signifiers. One can examine discursive practices to locate these nodal points that act as privileged signifiers and, at least temporarily and provisionally, work to fix meaning, in this case the meaning of national identity.[24]

This study suggests that it is at the margins that we can find the privileged discursive points that constitute national identity. However, somewhat paradoxically it is also at the margins that the meaning of national identity is subverted, hence the continual need for production and reproduction. The international movement of peoples is one concrete site where the interior/exterior tension is particularly evident. The question of who is inside and who is outside the political community arises, as well as the criteria by which this distinction can be made. Human migration highlights the salience as well as the ambiguities of national identity.

State practices and national identity

National identity is arguably one of the more problematic constitutive elements of contemporary nation-states. It is also one of the things that states would like to have naturalized, to take as given and unproblematic. This is not always, or even usually, the case though. 'Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, as an inherent political destiny, are a myth.'[25] Hobsbawm suggests an element of social engineering that enters into the making of nations. Nations do not make states, but

[21] Waever et al., *Identity*, ch. 2.

[22] Anderson, *Imagined Communities.* Conceptualizing the nation as a discourse is consistent with Hobsbawm's proposal (*Nations and Nationalism since 1780,* p. 8) that agnosticism is the best initial posture for students of national identity. See also Anthony D. Smith, 'The Nation: Invested, Imagined, Reconstructed?', *Millennium* 20:3 (1991), pp. 353–68. Smith critiques Anderson's understanding on the grounds that it cannot give us a causal explanation for the rise, timing, and scope of a given nation nor does it address the question, 'Who is the nation?'. While this study does not seek to give a causal explanation, it does seek to address the question, 'Who is the nation?', in the case of Britain. I do not provide a definitive answer to this question, because the theoretical framework taken here suggests that there is no definitive answer. The issue is, rather, the practices that are implicated in the production of ostensibly definitive answers regarding the identity of the nation.

[23] Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, pp. 8–11; Smith, 'National Identity'.

[24] It might be helpful here to give a brief illustration of a 'nodal point'. We can, for example, imagine a discourse on democracy in which capitalist market principles serve as nodal points. In such a discourse the meaning of democracy becomes fixed around these nodal points so that democracy and capitalism are inextricably linked and we cannot imagine democracy where these principles are absent.

[25] See Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, pp. 48–9.

rather states make nations.[26] In a similar vein Breuilly suggests that 'the identity of the nation will be related to "tradition" and to existing cultural practices, but the decisions as to what is relevant and how it should be used in establishing the national identity will rest with the state'.[27] Smith suggests that if the narratives and imagery of the nation created by the intelligentsia are to assume concrete shape and be turned into institutions the organs of the state are required.[28] While a multitude of practices no doubt go into constructing national identities, the literature suggests that the state plays a particularly significant role in producing and reproducing national identities. It thus makes sense to focus on practices generally associated with the concept of the state. A more complete analysis would, of course, show how cultural and symbolic resources are important in their own right in constituting national identities, as well as how these resources are drawn upon by government officials. My goal in this study is more limited. I am looking at the hegemonic articulations of a formal/official nature which create the kind of privileged discursive points discussed earlier.

A useful place to look for these is in the legal realm. The law is both an important instrument of the state and an arena of debate: the formation of valid legal commands constitutes the highest manifestation of sovereignty.[29] Gramsci stressed the importance of the law, along with other institutions, as an instrument of the state in creating and maintaining a certain type of society and citizen. Gilroy notes the importance of the law's ability to express and represent the nation-state and national identity, and indeed to articulate the very core of national identity.[30] One of the fundamental ways a state can do this is by exercising its legal prerogative to control entry into its territory and concomitantly regulate those permitted to enter. While immigration control is not necessarily an essential element of a state's sovereignty, the issue of the states' ability to control their borders is one of widespread contemporary concern which frequently gets linked up with the issue of sovereignty. This takes on especially significant symbolic importance in an era of increasing interdependence and globalization. Ironically perhaps, in such an era some states are in fact abolishing border controls (e.g. members of the Schengen Agreement: Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, and the three Benelux countries). While this does not mean they are also experiencing a loss of sovereignty, it does suggest that important elements of sovereignty are being transferred to another entity (i.e. the European Union). The reluctance of some states to become part of Schengen (notably Britain) attests to the at least symbolic importance of controlling immigration. I am not suggesting that Britain's physical or legal ability to control entry into its territory was ever in question. What was important was the fact that in controlling entry significant issues concerning the definitions of political community

[26] See Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p. 10.

[27] See John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (New York, 1982), p. 374.

[28] Smith, 'The Nation', p. 240. Smith also suggests that 'in many parts of Africa and Asia, it is the state itself, through its economic policies, its political patronage and mass education systems, that seeks, with varying success, to create and narrate the emergent nation'. I would not argue with this, but would add that it is not only in Africa and Asia that this takes place.

[29] Gianfranco Poggi, *The State: Its Nature, Development and Prospects* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 30.

[30] Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack—The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (Chicago, 1987), p. 74; Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and tr. Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York, 1987), p. 246.

and national identity were raised.[31] It was these issues that debates on British immigration laws revolved around.

In focusing on immigration laws and the debates surrounding them, I emphasize Foucault's conceptualization of the dual nature of power: the juridical and the productive. The juridical function of power is manifested in law. Its function is to regulate political life in generally negative terms, e.g. through limitations, prohibition, regulation, and control. One might think of this as analogous to the coercive aspect of hegemony in the Gramscian sense. The other function of power, however, is productive. Subjects, by virtue of being subjected to the juridical function, are themselves constructed, defined as particular kinds of subjects, given particular identities.

As Foucault notes, the law does not fade into the background when power functions in its productive aspect. Rather, it operates more and more as a norm. The juridical institution is increasingly incorporated into a continuum of apparatuses whose functions are for the most part to regulate and discipline.[32] Law, and the state in whose name it acts, does not exist independently of society. Thus, the power of the law is not solely due to the fact that it is ultimately backed up by the sword, i.e. the coercive power of the state. It is, therefore, not only the discursive practices manifested in legal statutes that creates identities, but also the way that these practices are infused with societal norms and values. In examining the discursive production of national identity, then, one needs to examine not only laws *per se*, but the debates, interpretations, and professed needs and interests that surround legal statutes and the social practices these are linked to.

From empire to nation-state: global transformation and national identity

> Our renunciation of imperial power has produced a vacuum of motivation which remains to be filled. This crisis of purposes has produced the equally acute crisis of self-confidence. The loss of empire, following two major wars, has left our country exhausted.[33]

It should be added to the above quotation that the crisis of purpose and self-confidence was accompanied by a crisis of identity for Britain. The period following World War II was one of massive global changes ranging from the reconfiguration of global power to rapid decolonization and the creation of new nation-states in Asia and Africa. These transformations converged upon Great Britain and precipitated a crisis of identity that some would suggest has not been resolved to this day. Great Britain *was* the British Empire. Decolonization shook that identity to the core. The colonial mission and all that it had entailed could no longer serve as the foundation for British identity. The imperial legacy was not just significant for Britain's elite and policy makers. The Empire was an important reality at all social levels.[34] It was a matter of great pride to belong to a country which ruled an Empire spanning the globe. The impact of Empire was felt through literature, education, film, and

[31] See Martin O. Heisler and Zig Layton-Henry, 'Migration and the Links Between Social and Societal Security', in Waever et al., *Identity*, pp. 148–66. They suggest that this issue is one of current relevance to Europe and North America. States are not losing the ability to control their borders in a physical sense. The important issues revolve around the social and moral costs of doing so.

[32] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 (New York, 1980), p. 144.

[33] Rabbi Jacobovits, 'Discovering a New National Purpose', *The Times*, 17 January 1968, p. 11.

[34] Frankel, *British Foreign Policy*, pp. 221–2; Layton-Henry, *Politics of Race*, pp. 7–9.

other cultural media. Literary figures such as Stevenson and Kipling glorified Britain's imperial adventures and enjoyed tremendous popularity. Not to be overlooked is the fact that many Britons also had direct experience of the Empire through government and missionary service.

The collapse of the Empire was accompanied by a fall from the circle of leading economic powers, further exacerbating the crisis of identity.[35] International immigration complicated the relationship between Britain's transformation from an imperial power, its economic decline, and its ensuing crisis of identity. The post-World War II period witnessed massive immigration from what became known as the 'Third World' into advanced industrialized countries in the 'First World'. Much of this immigration was in response to labour shortages. So, in an important sense, immigration was necessary for the economic recovery that was also important to British identity.[36] However, immigrant labour is attached to flesh-and-blood human beings, a fact which led to inherent tensions and had social and political ramifications. In the British case, labour was attached to former colonial subjects, subjects who were considered British. When immigrants started coming in sufficient numbers, it led to debates on who should be permitted entry, who was a citizen, and who should enjoy what rights and privileges; in other words, who was 'really' British, and who should be included on the inside of the nation-state. Post-World War II debates on immigration control can be located within this context of concern with British identity.

Britain and Commonwealth immigration

> Immigration is the most important subject facing this country but I cannot get any of my ministers to take any notice.[37]

Like many other European countries, Britain experienced a shortage of labour after World War II. Also as in many other countries, the solution lay with immigrant labour. In Britain this took three forms: (1) the recruitment of Polish workers, (2) European Volunteer Workers, and (3) immigration from the 'new' Commonwealth territories of the Caribbean, the Indian subcontinent, the Mediterranean, the Far East, and Africa. This third form was by far the largest, the most significant and the one that precipitated the debates and controversy that led to a series of legislative acts that placed increasingly strict controls on immigration.[38]

[35] Gary P. Freeman, *Immigrant Labor and Racial Conflict in Industrial Societies. The French and British Experiences 1945–1975* (Princeton, 1979), p. 290.

[36] Former colonies provided much of the post-World War II immigration into Western industrialized countries. This was especially the case with the Netherlands, France, and Britain. See Tomas Hammar, *European Immigration Policy* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 5. Charles P. Kindleberger, *Europe's Postwar Growth—The Role of Labor Supply* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 172, also suggests a 'special relation' between these countries and their former colonies, in which labour from former colonies was a major factor shaping postwar economic growth in Europe.

[37] Winston Churchill, 1954. Quoted in Layton-Henry, *Politics of Race*, p. 32.

[38] See Paul Gordon, *Policing Immigration* (London, 1985), p. 14. It should, however, be noted that Britain did not actively recruit 'New Commonwealth' immigrants for the purpose of providing labour, though they ended up providing needed labour nonetheless. Freeman, *Immigrant Labor*, ch. 6, points out that, while some (notably *The Economist* and the Liberal Party) favoured open immigration for economic reasons, in general the immigration issue in Britain was not discussed in economic terms at all. 'In general, neither the leaders of the Tory or Labour parties showed any appreciation or interest in the economic side of immigration' (p. 183).

Prior to 1962, the relationship between citizenship and immigration in Britain was relatively straightforward. British subjects, including anyone born in the Empire, were free from immigration control. In 1948 Britain reaffirmed the right of all Commonwealth citizens to enter the UK without restriction. The British Nationality Act of 1948 arose from the perceived necessity to clarify and codify the status of persons in the newly independent countries that were creating their own citizenship laws, especially the European settlers there. This Act created two primary categories of British citizenship: (1) citizenship of former colonies which were now independent Commonwealth countries, and (2) citizenship of the 'United Kingdom and Colonies' (UKC), i.e. of all the rest of what had been the British Empire.[39]

Underlying this legislation was an ideology consisting of two nineteenth-century ideals: (1) the Commonwealth ideal, whereby every Commonwealth citizen was considered a British subject and thus assured free entry into the mother country, and (2) liberal *laissez-faire* economic principles which required a free market in labour.[40] As noted above, with the ending of Empire, the Commonwealth idea became an important element in British national identity. It helped the British to assuage a 'sense of personal loss—almost an amputation' which occurred whenever a part of it was granted independence.[41] It also was regarded as a source of moral leadership. The Commonwealth ideology held that all citizens of the British Empire were equal subjects of the Crown and no distinctions of race or colour could be admitted. Free movement posed no problem for the doctrine of solidarity and universal brotherhood as long as this was predominantly from the 'old' Dominions (i.e. Australia, Canada, and New Zealand), also referred to as the 'white' Dominions. Things began to change, however, with the change in composition of immigration. The 'rising tide' of 'coloured' immigration led to increasing social unease about immigration, and political agitation for its control. Riots in Nottingham and Notting Hill in 1958 brought the issue of Commonwealth immigration to the attention of the national press, politicians, and the public in general. They also highlighted the apparent hostility to continued Commonwealth immigration. The two immediate reactions to the riots were condemnation of the violence and assumption that immigration control was the answer. Thus began a steady move towards an ever more restrictive position on immigration which was accompanied by an exposure of the uncertainty of British national identity. Hostile reactions to immigration from the 'New Commonwealth' forced an articulation of the criteria for belonging to the British nation and at the same time revealed the ambiguity of these criteria.

Subsequent legislation placed strict limitations on non-white, non-European immigration from the New Commonwealth (i.e. former colonies other than Australia, New Zealand and Canada). The first controls on Commonwealth immigration were imposed by the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962, passed by a Conservative government. This Act broke with the ideals attached to the Commonwealth idea of unity, brotherhood, and equality and served as the precedent for further restrictive legislation. Under the 1962 Act, those with Commonwealth passports had to apply for a work voucher. Three categories of work voucher were created: category A for employers with a specific job for a Commonwealth citizen, category B for skilled applicants, and category C for all

[39] Ibid., pp. 37, 46; Vaughan Bevan, *The Development of British Immigration Law* (London, 1986), p. 77.
[40] Sheila Patterson, *Immigration and Race Relations in Britain 1960–1967* (London, 1969), p. 17.
[41] Frankel, *British Foreign Policy*, p. 225; John Strachey, *The End of Empire* (New York, 1959), p. 204.

others. In addition, for the first time, Commonwealth citizens could be deported, though only after a court recommendation.

The Labour Party was vehemently opposed to this Act, citing the obvious, though not explicit, racial content. In the debate preceding its passage, Labour MP Patrick Gordon Walker referred to the bill as 'bare-faced, open race discrimination' which 'would do irreparable damage to the Commonwealth'.[42] Though the bill was to apply to all Commonwealth immigrants, Gordon Walker pointed out that 'the net effect of the Bill is that a negligible number of white people will be kept out and almost all those kept out by the Bill will be coloured people'.[43] Despite the lack of official reference to race, the coded language was recognized by the Labour Opposition. 'To use the words we hear so often, "the social strains and stresses", in simpler and rather cruder language, that phrase really means colour prejudice'.[44]

Despite this strong opposition and Labour's pledge to repeal the Act when and if it took office, by 1965 the Labour position on immigration tended to converge with the Conservative position. By 1965 the Labour Party had fully accepted the Conservative case for controls on non-white immigration and had implemented even greater controls by eliminating category C work vouchers.[45] British government now presented a united face in favour of strict immigration control. The Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1968 placed further restrictions on non-white immigration. The 1962 Act did not affect UKCs, the second category of citizen created by the 1948 Nationality Act, provided their passports had been issued by the UK and not on behalf of it by a Governor. Prompted by the crisis in Kenya revolving around the expulsion of Asians holding British passports and the fear of massive Asian immigration, the 1968 Act stripped such persons in East Africa of the automatic right to enter and settle in Britain unless they had a connection to Britain by birth, naturalization, or descent.[46] The effect of this Act was to create a new class of citizens who were, in effect, stateless.

Further restrictions were introduced in the Immigration Act of 1971, which ended the distinction between the category of 'alien', which had been created by earlier immigration acts, and Commonwealth citizens. The aim of this legislation was to maintain strict control over New Commonwealth immigration, but permit the entry of those persons living in Commonwealth countries who were of British descent. This legislation introduced the now infamous concept/category of 'patrial'. A patrial was someone whose parent or grandparent was born in the UK. Those in this category enjoyed the right of free entry and indefinite stay. Patrials could settle and apply for UK passports. They were not liable to deportation and were entitled to vote, run for office, work in nationalized industries, and enlist in the armed forces. The category of patrial was important not just in relation to immigration into the UK but because patrials constituted a class of citizens entitled under the 1972 Treaty of Accession between the UK and the EEC to the benefits of EC membership as UK nationals. The vast majority who fell into this category were white.[47]

[42] 649 *H.C. Deb.*, 706, 16 November 1961.
[43] Ibid., 709.
[44] Nigel Fisher, ibid., 780.
[45] Gordon, *Policing Immigration*, p. 16; Freeman, *Immigrant Labor*, p. 55; Bevan, *Development of British Immigration Law*, p. 79; 1965 White Paper, Command Paper 2739, *Immigration from the Commonwealth.*
[46] Bevan, *Development of British Immigration Law*, pp. 80–1.
[47] Ibid., p. 83.

The only major legislation that has altered immigration since 1971 is the British Nationality Act of 1981. Three categories of citizenship were created by this Act: (1) British citizens (those with a close personal connection with the UK, either because their parents or grandparents were born, adopted, naturalized, or registered as citizens of the UK or through permanent settlement in the UK); (2) citizens of British Dependent Territories (those who are British citizens because of their own or their parents' or grandparents' birth, naturalization, or registration, or registration in an existing dependency or associated state); and (3) British Overseas Citizenship, a largely formal category with few privileges and no automatic right of entry. The effect of this law was to significantly modify the doctrine of *ius soli* (acquisition of nationality by birth). Birthplace alone would no longer be sufficient to show that one was British. Any child born in the UK on or after 1 January 1983 would be a British citizen only if it had a parent who was either a British citizen or 'settled' in terms of the Act.[48]

Analysis

There are several important analytic points that can be made regarding this case. It has been suggested that the migration and settlement of hundreds of thousands of people from the New Commonwealth was one of the most important social and political developments in postwar Britain.[49] In one sense, this issue can be viewed as a 'domestic' one involving state/society relations. This had important implications for the legitimacy of the British state and its institutions in terms of its claim to represent and act on behalf of the British 'people'. This case is also relevant to understanding processes of state expansion. The presence of Commonwealth immigrants led to the creation of new state agencies. Even before the 1971 Act went into effect, a new national police unit concerned with immigration was set up within the Metropolitan Police, the Illegal Immigration Intelligence Unit. This unit worked in close connection with the Central Drugs Intelligence Unit. The 1971 Act also gave police wide powers of arrest without a warrant in cases of suspected illegal entry, breach of conditions of entry, and harbouring of an illegal entrant. The effect of this was an expansion of the state into areas previously considered part of the 'private' realm, e.g. the implementation of various race relations acts and the surveillance and control of the immigrant population, as illustrated in the 'passport raids', and investigation into 'marriages of convenience'.[50]

This case also had an international dimension, illustrating linkages across domestic and international levels of analysis. Britain was attempting to carve out for itself a position within an international system undergoing significant changes. Britain's own domestic transformations affected this position. This period of time

[48] The term 'settled' refers to those who have ordinary residence without a time limit on their stay (ibid., p. 115). This excluded from the birthplace rule children of illegal entrants and all others whose residence was not permanent, e.g. persons admitted for asylum but not yet permanently, work-permit holders, students, and other legal but temporary residents. See Dummett and Nicol, *Subjects, Citizens, Aliens*, p. 244.

[49] Layton-Henry, *Politics of Race*, p. 86.

[50] Gordon, *Policing Immigration*, pp. 14–24.

was marked by new conceptualizations of the world. It was the beginning of conceptualizing international relations not only along an East/West axis, but also along a North/South axis. Changes in international arrangements, norms, and basis of legitimation were linked to domestic conflict and fears of decline and social disorder in Britain.

Such claims are undoubtedly true. Yet, they unwittingly defer an important question. To point to the domestic and international relevance of this issue assumes an unproblematic domestic/international, inside/outside dichotomy, and thus defers the question of the construction of this dichotomy itself. This replicates what policy-makers themselves were doing. This can best be illustrated by examining the specifics of the discourses in this case. The discussions and debates revolving around immigration control during the period examined above reveal two major discourses: (1) the Commonwealth discourse of inclusion, and (2) a right-wing, anti-immigrant discourse of exclusion. These two discourses were mutually subversive, each had the potential to destabilize the other. Yet, as suggested earlier, discourses are never fully closed. There exists an irresoluble tension between the interior and exterior of a discourse. It is thus possible to find points where the interior and exterior of a particular discourse blurs and overlaps with another discourse. The overlap in these two discourses created a space for the articulation of several themes by which meanings were fixed and which created a new discourse, the immigration discourse. It was within this new discourse that the identity of the British 'people' was constructed/reconstructed.

The Commonwealth discourse

The Commonwealth discourse was one of inclusion, expressing universalistic aspirations of an 'international brotherhood of man' and common citizenship for all peoples of the Commonwealth. One could locate within this discourse the potential for the construction of a new social and political identity not based on national territorial boundaries. While it was often associated predominantly with the Labour Party, members of both the Conservative and Labour Parties participated in the Commonwealth discourse.[51] Public opinion in Britain was in agreement with British leaders on the value of the Commonwealth idea.[52]

One of the most important and consequential ideals of the Commonwealth was manifested in the fact that there was no distinction between the citizenship status of Britons at home or overseas. They all shared a common allegiance to Britain which involved obligations and duties such as obedience to established authority and English law, as well as commitments such as service in wars. As discussed above, the privilege of free entry for all citizens was reaffirmed in the 1948 Act. This Act did not *create* the right of the subject to come and go; it merely left existing rights established by law unchanged.[53] The Conservative Party had opposed this Act, not

[51] Paul Foot, *Immigration and Race in British Politics* (London, 1965); Frank Reeves, *British Racial Discourse* (Cambridge, 1983).
[52] Frankel, *British Foreign Policy*, p. 223.
[53] Dummett and Nicol, *Subjects, Citizens, Aliens*, p. 140.

because it opposed equal status or free entry for Commonwealth immigrants, but because it thought the Act was unnecessary. Conservatives were opposed to the creation of two categories of citizens, even though these two categories were equal, because they thought this would create the potential for giving primacy to local citizenship and undermining Commonwealth unity.

While ostensibly a discourse of inclusion, equality, and univeralism, the Commonwealth discourse nonetheless contained its own inherent limitation. Derrida's notion of *exemplarity* is useful here in clarifying the relationship between the universal and the particular found within this discourse. Derrida suggests that the value of universality is always 'linked to the value of exemplarity that inscribes the universal in the proper body of a singularity, of an idiom or a culture, whether this singularity be individual, social, national, state, federal, confederal'.[54] In the Commonwealth discourse, Britain itself was the embodiment of exemplarity. The Commonwealth, while embracing universalistic ideals, was a singularly British idea and a British achievement.

> The Empire and Commonwealth is the supreme achievement of the British people and the most successful experiment in international relations that the world has ever known.[55]

As the 'mother country', Britain was the advanced point of exemplarity. One of the major themes in this discourse was that of *national* greatness, which coexisted uneasily with the theme of international brotherhood. The Commonwealth ideal was a successor to the ideal of the Empire and shared some of its most important features, particularly its moralistic paternalism. This is evident in the words of one of its most ardent supporters.

> *We* are responsible for *them*, and they think of themselves, as anybody who has been there knows, as British people. Oh yes they do. It is rather moving. I found when I was there that *they* look on us as the Mother Country in a very real sense.[56]

We/they, us/them presumes a difference that at the same time is denied by the Commonwealth ideal. Here we find a tension between universalism and particularism, identity and difference that involves, on the one hand, the claim that 'we' and 'they' are the same, one universal brotherhood of man, and, on the other hand, the claim of difference that is implicit in these terms. This tension could be held at bay and the question of what this difference was could be deferred as long as most of 'them' stayed 'there'. But when 'they' came to the 'mother country' in large enough numbers the tension approached its limit.

The relationship between this discourse of inclusion and the presence of Commonwealth immigrants illustrates the kind of relationship between the inside and the outside outlined earlier, where each is simultaneously mutually constitutive and mutually undermining of the other. Laclau and Mouffe define this relationship as one of antagonism, i.e. a situation in which 'the presence of the "other" prevents me from being totally myself'.[57] Antagonism entails the notion of a constitutive outside, which blocks the identity of the inside but is nonetheless the prerequisite for its constitution.[58] Such was the situation in Britain. The universalism of the

[54] Derrida, *Other Heading*, p. xxvi.
[55] Conservative Central Office, June 1949, in Layton-Henry, *Politics of Race*, p. 14.
[56] 649 *H.C. Deb.*, 16 November 1961. Emphasis mine.
[57] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, p. 125.
[58] Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (London, 1990), p. 17.

Commonwealth ideal was itself constituted by the particularism that was evident in the presumptions made regarding the essence of the British national character, the British people, the British nation. At the same time, these presumptions prevented universalism, in the form of the Commonwealth ideal, from fully constituting itself, because it depended upon a 'we/them' opposition. Indeed these presumptions were shared by the anti-immigrant, right-wing discourse and created the openings by which this latter discourse became hegemonic and was able to articulate the basic points, the nodal points, around which the immigration issue was framed.

Right-wing anti-immigrant discourse

This discourse was a particularistic, exclusionary, nationalist one which stressed the originary essence of the British people who were threatened by an 'invasion' of immigrants from the Commonwealth. This was exemplified by Conservative back-bencher Cyril Osborne (and later by the prominent right-wing extremist Enoch Powell).

I do not like to regard the Irish as immigrants. I regard them as British as I am.[59]

The less extremist were also party to this discourse.

The objective here is to except from control—and therefore, to guarantee their continued unrestricted entry into their own country—persons who in *common parlance belong to the U.K.*[60]

Members of the Labour Party also participated in this discourse.

The coloured races will exceed the white races in a few years' time by no less than five to one. This will be a formidable problem for the diminishing numbers of the white races throughout the world. There is a constant dread of the people that the immigrants are seemingly better served than the indigenous population. These are facts which we can ignore only at our own peril.[61]

In general the anti-immigrant discourse focused on three aspects of immigration: the numbers involved, health, and crime. The use of numbers was prevalent throughout as illustrated in the following.

Because of the sheer weight of these numbers something must be done quickly or there will be such tragedies as will frighten most of us. Difficult and frightening as are the figures of immigrants from West Indies they pale in significance compared with the figures for the first six months from India and Pakistan. They are really terrifying in their significance.[62]

Explicit in this playing of the 'numbers game' was the idea that fewer Commonwealth immigrants would make for better race relations in Britain. The crux of the problem could then be defined in terms of the presence of non-white people rather than the responses of the white population. Numbers were used as scare tactics. They served to signify the breakdown of unity and identity rather than

[59] Sir C. Osborne, 709 *H.C. Deb.*, 402, 23 March, 1965.
[60] R. A. Butler, Conservative Home Secretary, 649 *H.C. Deb.*, 695, 16 November 1961. Emphasis mine.
[61] Frank Tomney, 596 *H.C. Deb.*, 1589, 5 December 1958.
[62] Sir C. Osborne, 645 *H.C. Deb.*, 1320–1, 1 August 1961.

any concrete situation. For example, immigrants from Ireland totalled approximately 60,000–70,000 annually while Commonwealth immigrants totalled only 43,000 in 1955 and 21,000 in 1959.[63] The 'sheer weight of numbers' thus had no concrete referent. Similarly, phrases such as 'keep the flow within reasonable bounds', 'uncontrolled immigration', 'flood of immigrants', 'people pour into this country', 'necessity to control the tide' did not point to any concrete reality but were metaphors that summoned up images of chaos, disorder, and the loss of control.

There were also extensive references to the health situation, carrying with them implications of dirt, contamination, and even moral decay. Suggestions were made that Commonwealth immigrants did 'not always conform to our ideas of sanitation'.[64]

Similarly, the theme of crime was prevalent throughout. Even those opposed to strict immigration control focused on this theme:

> . . . certain types of immigrants possess a propensity to live on the immoral earnings of women and to traffic in dangerous drugs.

And:

> For example, colonial and Commonwealth immigrants are responsible for practically the whole of the drug traffic in this country.[65]

Immigrants were also tied to criminality through the creation and linking together of the Illegal Immigration Intelligence Unit and the Central Drugs Unit.

These two mutually subversive discourses are indicative of ostensibly opposed understandings of British national identity: one a universalist, inclusive one, the other an exclusionary, particularistic one. As suggested above, however, the relationship was not one of pure opposition but rather a mutually constitutive relationship. The invocation of the concept of the British nation and British national character by all parties to the debates created a space for the rearticulation of British national identity. As noted earlier, the anti-immigrant discourse was able to articulate the basic points around which the immigration issue became framed. How this was possible, given the fierce opposition to the 1962 Bill and the recognition of it as blatantly (if silently) racist, can be understood in terms of the way meanings were fixed around the nodal points of nation and race. Nation and race were made the framework for a discourse of order and security. Insecurity and disorder, including national economic decline and decline as a world power, became linked with a dilution of Britishness which was associated with Commonwealth immigration.[66]

While the Commonwealth ideal, to all intents and purposes, died by 1965, it would be too simplistic to suggest that the right-wing, anti-immigrant discourse simply 'won'. For example, immigrants were not repatriated *en masse*. Some pro-immigrant legislation came about, e.g. the Race Relations Act of 1965 and another one in 1976. The overall result was the turning of boundaries between the inside and the outside into what Bhabha refers to as 'in-between spaces through which the

[63] Robert Miles and Annie Phizacklea, *White Man's Country—Racism in British Politics* (London, 1984), p. 41.

[64] Sir J. Smyth, 634 *H.C. Deb.*, 1955, 17 February, 1961.

[65] Quotes are respectively Patricia Hornsby-Smith, Joint Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, 585 *H.C. Deb.*, 1422, 3 April, 1958, and Norman Pannell, 634, *H.C. Deb.*, 1967, 17 February, 1961.

[66] Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black*, supports this notion.

meanings of cultural and political authority are negotiated'.[67] This is discussed in more detail in the next subsection.

The immigration discourse

> Surely it is not illiberal for people to be concerned with preserving their own national character and continuity. A question which affects the future of our own race and breed is not one that we should leave merely to chance.[68]

While the right-wing discourse was hegemonic in the sense that it was able to frame the terms in which the immigration issue would be discussed, debated, and acted upon, it was by no means fully closed, fixed, and immune from its exterior. Rather, as suggested above, the result was more akin to a constant process of negotiation.

Immigration had raised the issue of who was to count as a British citizen and what this meant. It was presumed by participants in both discourses that there were some discoverable criteria by which one could unproblematically represent what was internal to British identity and what was external to it. It was possible to distinguish the 'authentic' British from the 'inauthentic'. The categorizations explicit in the Immigration Acts, along with the societal norms and values with which they were linked, were attempts to get at this foundation, this essence of British national identity. The continual reworking of the laws was indicative of the difficulties inherent in this endeavour, yet the assumption was that it was ultimately possible to discover such a foundation.

The immigration discourse is illustrative of the attempt to construct/reconstruct that foundation. The theme of *national* greatness at the heart of the Commonwealth discourse overlapped with the right-wing discourse in its presumption of an essential, eternal (and great) British nation. It thus created an opening within which certain themes could be articulated and linked together in response to the uncertainty of that identity created by the decline of Empire, economic decline, and the increasing presence of 'others' within. Commonwealth immigrants became linked with disorder, loss of authority and control, national decline, dilution of the British national character and living standards, and the decline of Britain as a world power.

What occurred simultaneously however, with the process of exclusion associated with the increasingly restrictive immigration laws, was a process of incorporation of those Commonwealth immigrants who were already in Britain. Integration of Commonwealth immigrants became a prime concern. This was accompanied by an increasing concern with race relations and discrimination against immigrants. Several statutory agencies—a Race Relations Board, a Community Relations Commission, as well as local committees—were set up by the Race Relations Acts of 1965, 1968 and 1976. The rhetoric revolving around these Acts was also framed in terms of public order and security. Order and security tended to be related inversely to large amounts of non-white people. Dispersal then became regarded as a necessity for improved race relations:

[67] Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration*, p. 4.
[68] *The Tablet*, Catholic publication. Quoted in 596 *H.C. Deb.*, 1563, 5 December 1958.

> . . . social strains tend to develop, as the House knows, where there are large concentrations of coloured people in large towns and cities, and so far as possible coloured immigrants should be enabled to disperse themselves throughout the community instead of congregating together.[69]

> Therefore, I would say that we should be selective in our attitude towards the immigrants whom we take in and to welcome, in particular, those who seek dispersal, that is to say those who do not seek or do not wish to live, for social or cultural or religious reasons, in their own community.[70]

The immigration discourse exemplifies what Bhabha refers to as a process of hybridity, which is the problem of the relationship between the inside and the outside. At the same time that stable foundations, identifying the 'authentic' British, were being constructed, elements from the outside were being incorporated into the inside. This suggests that perhaps the power of national identity derives not from the existence of a foundational centre, but rather from the lack of a centre which permits a continual process of definition and redefinition, of both exclusion and incorporation. The desire for a foundation, illustrated in the continual attempt to specify what that foundation was through the construction of categories such as 'patrial', coupled with the ultimate impossibility of arriving at that centre, created the space which enabled the construction/reconstruction of British national identity. It was in this marginal space where the uncertainty of national identity was most clearly displayed that British identity was constructed/reconstructed. This space consisted of the articulation of meaning around the nodal points of 'race' and 'nation', themselves somewhat ambiguous concepts.

Bhabha has suggested that 'the demand for a holistic, representative vision of society could only be represented in a discourse that was at the same time obsessively fixed upon and uncertain of the boundaries of society'.[71] This was certainly the case with Britain. The 'immigrant' was deployed as a site for the reconstruction of British identity, for Britain's retrieval of greatness, which was only possible *vis-à-vis* its 'other'. 'People with a different culture' became the site upon which fears of national decline, loss of empire, and internal disorder could be articulated. This is only too evident in Thatcher's famous 'swamping' remark.

> People are really rather afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture, and, you know, the British character has done so much for democracy, for law and done so much throughout the world.[72]

Conclusion

This study raises a number of important issues some of which would need at least another article in order to address them adequately. In this conclusion I would like to briefly elaborate, in a very preliminary fashion, on some of these issues. One

[69] Frank Soskice, Secretary of State for the Home Department, 711 *H.C. Deb.*, 934, 3 May 1965.
[70] J. Vaughan-Morgan, 709 *H.C. Deb.*, 359, 23 March, 1965.
[71] Bhabha, 'DissemiNation', p. 296.
[72] Margaret Thatcher, in a television interview with Gordon Burns on Granada Television's *World in Action*, 30 January 1978. Quoted in 943 *H.C. Deb.*, 240, 31 January 1978.

concern regards the issue of generalizability. Immigration is increasingly being recognized as an important global issue, particularly immigration from the poor countries of the South to the rich industrialized countries of the North. Can this study inform other cases? This question obviously cannot be addressed fully without actually examining other cases in detail. I do believe however, that this case is quite suggestive. For example, while there are numerous differences between the two cases, one can note some important parallels with France. Like the Commonwealth ideal which drew upon ideas of universality, French colonial philosophy was marked by the universalism of Enlightenment thinking.[73] France and its colonies were meant to form an indissoluble unity. With the onset of immigration from its former colonies (especially Algeria), France also experienced outbreaks of racist, anti-immigrant violence. By 1975, like Britain, France had instituted a tightly regulated, racially discriminatory immigration system that involved making distinctions about the desirability of particular nationality and racial groups as immigrants.[74] In both Britain and France the immigration of non-white, non-European workers and their families, mostly uncontrolled in the beginning, eventually became severely restricted, repudiating the lofty ideals of the Commonwealth and universalism. Currently France, like Britain, continues to experience racial turmoil which is linked to the issue of immigration.[75]

Immigration is also a significant issue for the European Union. Can the argument presented in this study inform this case? Ostensibly, with the European Union we find the opposite tendency, i.e. member countries willingly giving up sovereign control over their national borders and potentially creating a more inclusive kind of identity. This is illustrated in the Schengen Agreement which abolishes internal border controls among the signatories, i.e. Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, and the three Benelux countries. However, this is only among members of the Agreement, and the eventual situation that is imagined is one of free movement throughout the community. Moves toward freer movement within the European Union have been accompanied by moves toward increased restrictions for non-European Union members.

A related issue which is raised by this case is that of the construction of identity, specifically the identity of the internal 'self' and the external 'other'. If one accepts, even provisionally, that the self is constituted *vis-à-vis* an other, then immigration raises the question of the relationship between the 'external other' and the 'internal other'. The British case illustrates the ambiguity of the lines of distinction between these two. The idea of a nation and national identity presumes a clear distinction between the self that is part of the nation and the external other which belongs to another nation. In this case, the problematic nature of this presumption was exposed, because the external other, i.e. former colonial subjects, became internal.

[73] See Freeman, *Immigrant Labor*, ch. 3; and Cathie Lloyd and Hazel Waters, 'France: One Culture, One People?', *Race and Class*, 32:3 (1991).

[74] Freeman, *Immigrant Labor*, p. 308.

[75] For example, see 'Anti-Immigrant Platform Helps French Right', *Migration News*, 2, no. 5 (May 1995). This article reports that Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the National Front, received about 15 per cent of all votes cast in the first round of the French Presidential elections on 23 April. Jacques Chirac, newly elected French President, appealed for votes from Le Pen supporters by playing upon their fears of immigrants. Germany also continues to struggle with racial tensions revolving around its immigrant populations, especially those from Turkey. See 'Turkey and Germany Struggle with Racial Tensions', *Migration News*, 2, no. 4 (April 1995).

Further complicating the issue was the fact that, according to existing British laws, this internal other was presumed to be the same as the self, at least in terms of the right to freedom from immigration control. The ensuing discourses, in seeking to make visible and clearly defined the criteria for the unified British self, exposed the contingent, arbitrary, and unstable nature of British national identity. The result was the racialization of immigration as an issue and an appeal to some essential, though unspoken, cultural differences between white and non-white. In terms of the identity of the British people the consequences were, as noted earlier, what Bhabha refers to as a process of hybridity whereby the inside itself is continually being constituted through the incorporation of elements from the outside. For Britain, the external other became the internal other and in the process raised the issue of defining the internal self.

The broader issue that is raised by both the issue of generalizability and the ambiguity of national identity itself is the idea of the nation. It has been suggested that the history of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries will be written as 'the history of a world which can no longer be contained within the limits of "nations" and "nation-states", as these used to be defined either politically, or economically, or culturally'.[76] I do not interpret this to imply that the idea of the nation will disappear. Rather, it suggests that there are global forces which give rise to uncertainties and transformations, which elicit responses in the form of practices that attempt to fix meanings and social/political identities. Immigration in post-World War II Britain was just such an issue, the result of which was a 'politics of identity' whereby attempts were made to reaffirm the basis of belonging to one group as opposed to another and to exclude those represented as 'other'.

It is during times when it becomes more difficult to signify unambiguously something like a national identity that practices seeking to do so seem to proliferate. These practices are, of course, not without consequence. For example, xenophobia and a kind of racism inextricably linked with national identity appear to be on the rise today.[77] This inevitably draws in the apparatuses of the state, as this study clearly shows, because in an important sense what is at issue is what is to be considered the inside of nation-states and what is to be considered the outside. Regarding this, what this study alerts us to is the importance of posing alternative kinds of questions which focus on the mechanisms of *how* practices construct the inside vs the outside. I have argued that discursive practices work to fix meanings in relatively stable ways so as to enable the distinction between the inside, the self, and the outside, the other(s), to be made. The way this works is through the transformation of certain themes into nodal points which work to fix meaning. One way that these nodal points can gain consensus has to do with the nature of discourses. As noted above discourses work towards closure, but ultimately fail to reach final closure or to escape the tension between the interior and the exterior of the discourse. Nodal points in one discourse may be found in another discourse, which is ostensibly its opposite. This was the case with the universalist Commonwealth discourse's presumption that there was an essence to British national identity. This presumption was shared by the right-wing anti-immigrant discourse and created the

[76] Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p. 191.

[77] See, for example, Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class—Ambiguous Identities* (London, 1988). Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p. 170, suggests that xenophobia has become the most widespread mass ideology in the world.

openings for consensus to develop. However, a close reading of the discourses suggests that precisely what this essence of British national identity was, was a question that was continually deferred. This prompts us to consider the possibility that the stability of national identity results not from the identifiability of a centre, a solid foundation, but rather in the continual movement of meaning, i.e. the successful deferral of any essence that would once and for all define a particular national identity. The most dangerous and unstable times may be those when we are called upon to define ourselves and thereby to define the 'other(s)' whom 'we' are not.