

Chapter 2: Culture, communication, context, and power

Adrian Holliday, published (2020). Culture, communication, context and power. In Jackson, J. (Ed.), Routledge handbook of language and intercultural communication, 2nd ed., 39-52. Routledge.

1. INTRODUCTION/DEFINITIONS

This chapter reviews a struggle between two sociological paradigms which govern the way we think about and research the intercultural. Table 2.1 summarises these. On the one hand, postpositivism leads to neo-essentialism and a postpositivist research methodology. On the other, postmodernism leads to a critical cosmopolitan approach and a constructivist ethnography. I argue that the postpositivist paradigm fails because of its neo-essentialist inability to escape from Centre methodological nationalism and structural-functionalism, whereas the success of the postmodern paradigm is its engagement with a deCentred small culture formation on the go (middle left and right of the table). (See also the discussion of the recidivist, neoliberal nature of postpositivism in Holliday and MacDonald (2019).) Throughout, I use large cultures to refer to the bounded, essentially separate, homogenous, national, continental, ethnic, religious or other entities that, I argue, are falsely constructed by the postpositivist paradigm as defining the cultural behaviour of people who reside 'within' them.

I use Kuhn's (1970) concept of paradigm as scientific revolution. This means that postpositivism and postmodernism do not stand side-by-side as choices but that the latter is an advancement of the first. It needs however to be acknowledged that Kuhn himself is postmodern in that he sees the career politics and ideological positioning in science, which contributes to the difficulties that old paradigms have with adopting the new. It also therefore needs to be acknowledged that Table 2.1 is written from the

Table 2.1: Two paradigms

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Postpositivist paradigm</p> <p>A belief in diverse social realities</p> <p>But weakened by maintaining a positivist belief in an objectivist structural-functional sociology</p> | <p>Postmodern paradigm</p> <p>Realising that so-called objective social realities are ideological grand narratives</p> |
| <p>Neo-essentialist approach to the intercultural</p> <p>Claiming attention to cultural diversity</p> <p>But weakened by a methodological nationalism that always begins and finishes with behaviour-defining large cultures as the default entities</p> <p>Maintaining Centre structures that define and reduce the Other</p> <p>Interculturality tolerates the cultural Other</p> | <p>Critical cosmopolitan approach to the intercultural</p> <p>Believing in deCentred realities that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are hidden, unrecognised and therefore marginalised by Centre structures - possess creative agency that transcends and dissolves Centre structures <p>The centrality of small culture formation on the go underlying universal cultural processes and personal cultural trajectories</p> <p>Interculturality is a messy exploration of Self in Other and Other in Self</p> |

| Postpositivist methodology | Constructivist ethnography |
|--|--|
| Qualitative But weakened by a perceived need to minimise subjectivity with researcher distance and <i>a priori</i> 'mixing' with quantitative methods | Treating the realities of all parties including the researcher as socially and subjectively constructed Juxtaposition of subjective instances through thick description Applying disciplines to manage the subjectivity of the researcher Allowing multiple methods to emerge in response to the research setting |

postmodern perspective in the right hand-column, therefore framing postpositivism in the left-hand column as 'weakened' by different aspects of a pull back to positivism. It may also be argued that, in Kuhn's terms, postpositivism is not a paradigm but an unsuccessful break from positivism, or positivism pretending to be something else. The implications of this anomaly are discussed below. **[page 39 ends here]**

2. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

To place these paradigms within a historical context it is necessary to go back to some of the basics of sociological theory.

Positivism and structural-functionalism

The postpositivist paradigm can be traced back to the positivist sociological tradition of structural-functionalism of Emile Durkheim (e.g. 1933), which presented society as an organic system which achieves equilibrium through the functioning of its parts. Derived from biological science, this gave the impression of a society as a solid object, and enabled the development of social theory based on detailed descriptions of how the parts of society, such as the institutions of education, the military, the family and politics contributed to the whole. Talcott Parsons' *The social system* (1951) develops this notion and provides a detailed description of all the interconnected parts of society, and contributed greatly to our understanding of the way in which society works.

However, problems arise when these descriptions are used to explain and indeed predict cultural behaviour and values as though they are contained within the system, giving the impression that individual behaviour is determined rather than autonomous. Therefore, if a large culture is deemed collectivist, any behaviour within it can be explained as contributing to (or as an exception to) its collectivism. Each large culture is also considered to be a differentiated unit between which precise comparisons can be made. This approach underpins the influential work of Hofstede, who draws on Talcott Parsons to gain support for the notion of a culture as a 'complete' social system which is 'characterised by the highest level of self-sufficiency in relation to its environments' (Hofstede 2001: 10). There is also a strong normative sense to this thinking, which enables the evaluation of behaviour and values depending on whether they are functional or dysfunctional (or deviant) to the equilibrium of the whole. **[page 40 ends here]**

Postmodernism and social action theory

Postmodernism within the social sciences might be traced to Lyotard's (1979) *The postmodern condition* and Berger and Luckmann's (1979) *Social construction of reality*, both of which make it clear that the idea of a confining and defining social system can be no more than a construction for the political purpose of instilling social cohesion. There is also an important contribution to this thinking from Max Weber's (1964) social action theory. This maintains that the precise nature of human behaviour can never be determined. Part of his strategy against pinning things down was remembering that coherent ideas about societies should be regarded as 'ideal types' - imagined models or heuristic devices (i.e. for the purpose of investigation) - which might be used to imagine what society might be like but which should never be taken as descriptions of how things actually are (Weber 1968a: 23). While Weber did much to describe the social structures of Protestantism and Confucianism, it was made very clear that the social action of individuals could be expressed in dialogue with them (Weber 1968b). While political and other circumstances may severely reduce the degree to which individual social action can be acted out, this does not mean that the potential is not there. The example of critical thinking, which has become a common focus in intercultural communication studies, can be used to clarify the difference of the two sociological approaches:

- **The structural-functionalist view:** If a society is structured in such a way that students are not allowed to express critical views in the classroom, they will lack critical thinking everywhere.
- **The social action view:** Not being allowed to express critical views in classrooms in one particular social system does not mean that students do not think critically in private or that they cannot express critical views when moving to other social systems.

Unlike the neat layering depicted by structural-functionalism, social action theory indicates a messy, shifting, and uncertain complexity of cultural reality which is ideologically dependent on the perspectives of the people concerned. One must however avoid projecting too neat a case for Weber's social action theory. It has been argued that he was still preoccupied with nation to the degree that he failed completely 'to treat it as problematic social and historical construction' (Schudson 1994: 21).

The centrality of ideology

The key to the postmodern critique of positivism and postpositivism is the positioning of ideology. Whereas structural-functionalism positions ideology as a feature of the structure of the culture being investigated, postmodernism places ideology within the domain of the investigator and therefore maintains that the descriptions of culture are themselves ideological, and that the structural-functionalists' claim to scientific neutrality and objectivity comprise a naïve denial of ideology.

However, of more concern here, related to the false, objectivist notion of large cultures, ideology can be defined as a system of ideas which are 'systematically distorted' or 'bent out of shape' (Wallace 2003: 23, citing Eagleton, and Habermas) to promote the interests of a particular group of people (Spears 1999: 19). Mannheim

explains that 'these distortions range all the way from conscious lies to half-conscious and unwitting disguises' (1936: 49). In this sense we need to be wary even of what he describes as the other, 'more inclusive' notion of 'the ideology of an age or of a concrete historico-social group' (ibid.: 49). **[page 41 ends here]**

Of particular relevance to how we think about the intercultural is the role of ideology in perceptions of the Centre and the deCentred. Here, Stuart Hall is helpful in explaining the importance of the deCentred where he refers to 'the de-centred cultural' as the basis of a 'most profound cultural revolution' in which the 'margins' can 'reclaim some form of representation for themselves' and threaten 'the discourses of the dominant régimes'. He states that 'by, as it were, recovering their own hidden mysteries. They have to try to retell the story from the bottom up, instead of from the top down' (1991a: 34-35). I use a capital 'c' to emphasise the reality and importance of the Centre. The Centre can take different forms. Within the current historical climate, it is placed very much within a global politics where the power of 'the West' defines the Periphery 'non-West' (Hannerz 1991) within a Centre image of globalisation which is driven by global markets (e.g. Homi Bhabha 1994: xiv; Fairclough 2006: 40). The Centre could however also be other dominant structural forces such as patriarchy, the neoliberalism that encourages the quantification of the intercultural within the postpositivist paradigm (Collins 2018) or the ideology of native-speakerism that encourages the positivist equating of English and a false notion of large Western cultures (Holliday 2018a).

The problem with neo-essentialism, on the left of Table 2.1, is that it takes Centre-constructed images of cultural diversity as a sufficient truth and works with them rather than appreciating that they are ideological and hiding other deCentred representations. A recent example of neo-essentialism is Lindholm and Mednick Miles's book on the intercultural classroom. On the one hand, it appears to support immense cultural diversity, even to the extent of referring to the highly critical notion of intersectionality (2017: vii, 4). However, on the other hand, much of their text is based on Centre essentialist large culture definitions and stereotypes following Hofstede and others that divide the world into separate cultural blocks (ibid.: 6). Diversity therefore remains locked within essentialist large culture boundaries.

3. CRITICAL ISSUES AND TOPICS

The second row in Table 2.1 indicates the approach to thinking about and researching the intercultural that gives rise to critical issues and topics.

Critical Cosmopolitanism

Critical cosmopolitanism is the sociological approach that develops from postmodernism and can be employed as the basis for a powerful critique of the positivist and postpositivist views of the intercultural. The critical cosmopolitan argument (Delanty, Wodak and Jones 2008b), supported by critical and postcolonial sociology (Homi Bhabha 1994; Stuart Hall 1991b; Edward Said 1978), claims that it is a Centre Western grand narrative that has falsely defined and marginalised non-Western cultural realities. It therefore recognises that in the hidden, marginal world, there is unrecognised complexity and fluidity in social processes and multiple ways through which the social world is constructed in different contexts with different modernities (Delanty 2006), and

acknowledges that cultural realities are built at an individual level around personal circumstances that dissolve structural and spacial boundaries (Beck and Sznaider 2006: 383; Holliday 2011: 61). **[page 42 ends here]**

Methodological nationalism and neoliberal accounting

On the left of Table 2.1, methodological nationalism is referred to as the basis for the neo-essentialist adherence to large cultures as the primary category. This is attributed to the politics of 19th Century European nationalism and is considered by the critical cosmopolitan position and others to be the major ideological force that presents large cultures as the default starting place in social science (Beck and Sznaider 2006; Crane 1994; Delanty 2006; Grande 2006; Rajagopalan 1999; Schudson 1994). Its support for structural-functionalism feeds the requirement within the academy for accountability, especially marked during the Reagan and Thatcher era of the 1980s (Moon 2008: 15). This requirement has developed with the increased neoliberal desire to show quantifiable success in 'adding value' in intercultural learning (Collins 2018; Holliday and MacDonald 2019), Shuter (2008: 38) argues that the need for quantification encourages tightly specialist concepts such as 'uncertainty reduction', 'initial interaction', 'intercultural communication competence', 'communication apprehension', 'intercultural adaptation' and 'relationship development'. Kumaravadivelu (2007: 68) makes a similar point about the proliferation of technical terms such as 'accommodation, acculturation, adaptation, adoption, assimilation, enculturation, integration'.

An individualist versus collectivist imagery

A particularly influential example of such postpositivist concepts that falsely attempts to categorise and define large cultures is the so-called collectivism-individualism distinction. This is most commonly associated with Triandis, who maintains that 'people from individualist cultures' - 'North Americans of European backgrounds, North and West Europeans, Australians, New Zealanders' - are associated with autonomy, personal goals, improvement, achievement, assertiveness, self-reliance, consistency, openness to change, fun, equality, and choice. In contrast, 'people from collectivist cultures' - 'Latin Americans, Southern Europeans, East and South Asians, Africans' - are associated with group and family membership and loyalty, interdependence, circular thinking, stability, conservatism, circular thinking, silence, and few choices (Triandis 2004: x-xi). These false large culture 'prototypes' have taken on a disproportionately powerful reality that sustains in different ways into current literature and practice, as can be seen in Lindholm and Mednick Miles (op. cit.).

The critical cosmopolitanism critique is that the collectivist-individualist distinction is an ideological construction that represents a veiled demonisation of a non-Western Other by an idealised Western Self, and that the collectivist attributes thus represent cultural deficiency (Kim 2005: 108; Kumaravadivelu 2007: 15; Moon 2008: 16). The outcome is therefore essentialist Othering - the defining of a particular group of people or a person by means of negative characteristics - so that the behaviour of someone from a so-called 'collectivist culture' is explained entirely according to these imagined and negative collectivist characteristics. That the collectivism description relates more to a generalised notion of low-achievement, rather than what might be attributed to large cultures, is

evidenced by the use of the same descriptions for low-achieving mainstream American school children (Kubota 2001). Triandis himself (2006: 29) gives away how he associates collectivism with characteristics that seem to be framed as deficient - 'poverty', societies with 'only one normative system' (my emphasis), which are 'not cosmopolitan', and with the 'lower social classes of any society' or among people who 'have not travelled', not 'been socially mobile' or who 'have not been exposed to the modern mass media'.

Neo-racism

This characterisation of a particular cultural group as culturally deficient amounts to what has been termed by some writers as neo-racist. This is where race is hidden and denied under the 'nice' heading of culture (Delanty, Wodak and Jones 2008a: 1; Hervik 2013; Spears 1999). At a macro level, the self-perception of a democratic West as 'de facto anti-racist' leads to a 'depoliticisation' which 'masks the embeddedness of the idea of "race"' (Lentin 2008: 102-3). At a micro level there are everyday 'disclaimer' statements of denial - "I have nothing against [...], but", "my best friends are [...], but", "we are tolerant, but", "we would like to help, but" (Wodak 2008: 65).

There is also an implicit ethos of a deeply patronising 'tolerant' 'helping' of the non-Western Other (Delanty et al. 2008a: 9) which can be connected with a modernistic desire to tie down identities and to hide aggression beneath education, progress and civilisation (Latour 2006). I have framed this process of Othering as an apparently well-wishing, and therefore easily sustained, though in reality deeply patronising West as steward discourse (e.g. Holliday 2016a: 32ff). It is this schizophrenia that in many ways underpins the neo-essentialist mixing of care for diversity and desire for large culture definition while denying the neo-racist implications. **[page 43 ends here]**

The struggle for deCentred cultural recognition

It is therefore part of this West as steward discourse to argue that the collectivism-individualism distinction preserves the integrity of non-Western large cultures in their resistance of Western values. The critical cosmopolitan response is that the distinction itself is constructed by Western academia - that definitions of the Other which are produced by the West are so powerful that they obliterate any recognition of non-Western realities - and that a 'West versus the rest' discourse that bases its resistance on essentialist categories such as collectivism is also essentialist. This gives rise to a complex debate around the detrimental nature of self-Othering (Kumaravadivelu 2012), while appreciating that 'strategic essentialism' (Danus and Jonsson 1993), in the form of an apparent buying into imposed stereotypes, is a means of resistance against powerful symbolic violence (Flam and Bauzamy 2008; Sawyer and Jones 2008: 245).

Here it is also important to note the difference between critical cosmopolitanism and a Centre picture of a cosmopolitan world which has been variously termed 'global cosmopolitanism', 'globalism' and 'global mass culture' (Bhabha 1994: xiv; Canagarajah 1999: 207-209; Fairclough 2006: 40; Hall 1991a: 20) which falsely suggests an attractive, liberalisation and integration of markets which serves progress, democracy and prosperity, global villages and silicon valleys, all of which serve Western economies - the 'nice world' that ignores inequality and needs to be protected by the 'war on terror'.

The critical cosmopolitan viewpoint counters this picture of harmony with a purposefully uncomfortable picture of global inequality (e.g. Hannerz 1991). It presents a hidden, alternative, 'vernacular', local cosmopolitanism which struggles for recognition (Bhabha 1994: xv-xvi), but which 'has always been there in non-Western communities' with villagers dealing easily across small linguistic boundaries, but which has largely been destroyed by colonial powers which have 'divided these communities arbitrarily into nation-states for their convenience' (Canagarajah 1999: 207-9). Various theorists are relatively optimistic about a revolutionary reclaiming of cultural space from the margins - a deCentred globalisation from below (Fairclough 2006: 121; Hall 1991a: 34). **[page 44 ends here]**

Competing views of multiculturalism, third space and hybridity

The reclaiming of deCentred cultural space from Centre definitions pivots around what these spaces are like. Three concepts play an important role here: multiculturalism (how we can acknowledge cultural diversity); the third space (where we can step out of Centre definitions); and hybridity (how we can be ourselves especially in the search for postcolonial spaces). However, they have taken on both essentialist Centre as well as deCentred definitions in different places in the literature. MacDonald (2019) provides an excellent analysis of how third space has shifted in meaning as it has become routinised in the literature. The deCentred definitions, which I argue are the original intention behind the terms, should therefore be recovered.

A Centre interpretation of multiculturalism has been accused of reducing 'other cultures' to an essentialised and packaged spectacle of festivals, food and costumes (Cantle 2012; Delanty et al. 2008a; Kubota 2004; Kumaravadivelu 2007: 104-106, 109), and has been responsible for essentialist representations in school textbooks (Hahl, Longfor, Neimi and Dervin 2015) and the 'shopping for difference', exoticist ethos of tourism (Jordan and Weedon 1995: 150; Urry 2002: 2, 5, 10). However, a deCentred multiculturalism appreciates the diversity of cultural realities without recourse to large culture stereotypes - as 'critical multiculturalism' (Kubota 2004) and as the modern reality of 'progressive multiculturalism' that avoids 'assimilationist' and 'separationist' tendencies through 'collaboration and identification with others' (Cantle 2012: 53, 63-4).

Similarly, the Centre interpretation of the third space has been accused of being a limited intermediate space between bounded large cultures (Kumaravadivelu 2007: 5). In contrast, a deCentred third space is a creative space within which all people at all times can work out intercultural identity 'without an assumed or imposed hierarchy', eluding 'the politics of polarity', so that we can 'emerge as others out of selves' and avoid the 'fixity' of colonial discourse (Homi Bhabha 1994: 5, 56, 94). However, as part of the struggle for deCentred recognition, it needs to be an uncomfortable space.

A Centre notion of hybridity suggests that cultural values and identities remain mixed-up between uncrossable large culture boundaries (Fairclough 2006: 25; Kumaravadivelu 2007: 5). However, a deCentred hybridity is present in all our identities and cultural realities as the normal nature of culture and the intercultural - where 'new identities of hybridity' are replacing 'national identities' for all of us (Stuart Hall 1996: 619), it is the nature of culture per se and how we all are (Homi Bhabha 1994: 56), it is

the nature of the cosmopolitan (Delanty 2006: 33), and it represents an 'upsurge of new forms of life' (Guilherme 2002: 128).

The essentialist forms of multiculturalism, third space and hybridity however remain powerful in the academy and in everyday discourse. That they lead to an appearance of support for diversity but in effect do the opposite fits well the schizophrenic nature of neo-essentialism. Hence, what appears to be an inclusive, celebratory recognition remains in effect an Othering of non-Western groups by a Centre Western definition of who they are. The example that whatever any 'Asian' says or does is 'interpreted with stunning regularity as a consequence of their "Asianness", their "ethnic identity", or the "culture" of their "community"' (Baumann 1996: 1) is thus still resonant. **[page 45 ends here]**

4. CURRENT CONTRIBUTIONS AND RESEARCH

The persistence of Centre imagery which continues to marginalise deCentred realities requires research which can at least try to put aside Centre structural lines.

Focusing on the small and messy

This can be achieved by taking the focus away from large cultures to discourses or small culture formation on the go. Small cultures could be a wide range of social groupings from neighbourhoods or communities to work, friendship or leisure groups (e.g. Beales, Spindler and Spindler 1967: 8; Holliday 1999). They are built from the micro basics of how individuals manage image within the group (e.g. Goffman 1972) to how groups are formed and routinised. They represent the 'intermediate level of social structuring' in which there are identifiable discourses (Fairclough 1995: 37); and it is at the level of discursal strategies that we see the individual's ability to acquire the social competence to move through a multiplicity of cultural experiences within the complexity of society (e.g. Lankshear, Gee, Knobel and Searle 1997). It is at this level that we can see the detail of the building of 'normal' thinking through social construction, normalisation and reification (Berger and Luckmann 1979; Gergen 2001) - in the formation of 'imaginary representations of how the world will be or should be within strategies for change which, if they achieve hegemony, can be operationalised to transform these imaginaries into realities' (Fairclough 2006: 26). These are the bases for the social action which is in dialogue with and not confined by social structure within the Weberian social action view of society described above.

Small culture formation *on the go* moves a step further in the sense that it concerns the fluid process through which we all engage with the intercultural on a daily basis from an early age. This is different to the more common view of communities of practice (Wenger 2000) in that it is not a normative process of building cultural unity, but instead represents possibly transient relationships which can be culturally discordant and therefore far from the Centre expectation of 'success'. This possibility of messy discordance resonates with Dervin's (2016: 103-6) picture of interculturality as a reflexive and uncertain digging beneath the surface of discourses and politics - as an elusive quality to be searched for and researched rather than to be achieved as a result of staged intercultural learning.

Finding more complex, hidden realities

This messier picture of the intercultural can be seen in Baumann's (1996) ethnographic study of how people in the multicultural London borough of Southall construct different narratives of culture in different ways at different times depending on who and what they are relating to, and also in schoolchildren from diverse backgrounds showing unexpected agency in working creatively with cultural identities in urban classrooms (Baraldi and Iervese 2017; Rampton et al. 2008), and similarly with study abroad university students (Amadasi and Holliday 2018; Borghetti and Beaven 2018; Caruana 2014).

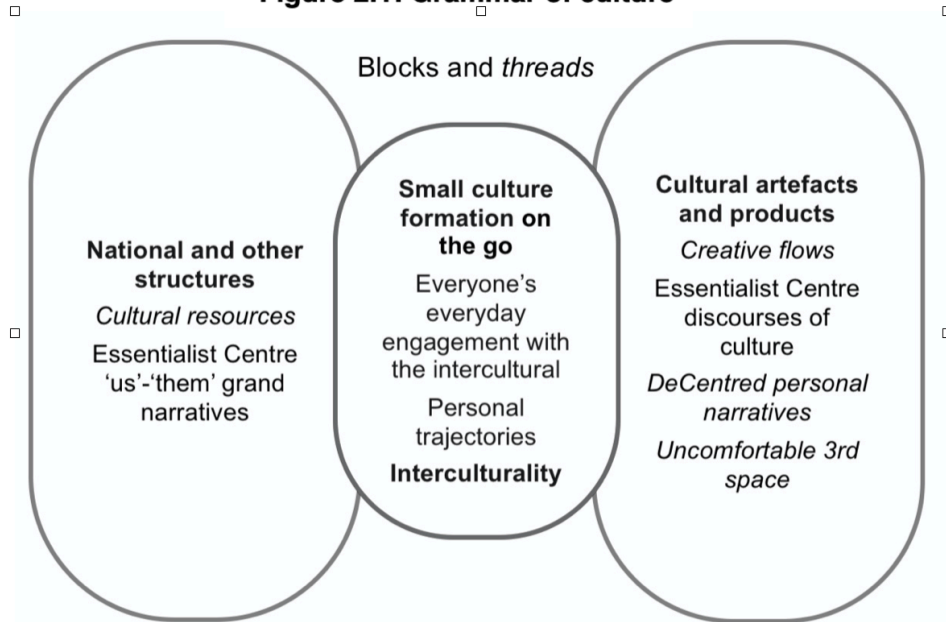
Political positioning, as discussed by the critical cosmopolitanists above, can make the difference here. Where cultural struggle is underpinned by the intense desire to throw off the stereotypes imposed by a Centre Western order, the emphasis on the ability to dissolve cultural lines and take ownership of the foreign becomes all important. Implicit in this struggle is the dissatisfaction with the Western monopoly of key concepts of cultural proficiency such as modernity and self-determination. An interesting text on this subject is Honarbin-Holliday's (2009) ethnography of Iranian women claiming all of the modern world as their own cultural heritage and tracing it back to the deep indigenous modernity implicit in their grandmothers' generation.

Implicit in this assertion that people are not what they appear to be is a stand against the Orientalist trope that the non-West is characterised as culturally deficient (Edward Said 1978), as associated with the false image of collectivist cultures described above. One example is the ongoing stand against negative and indeed neo-racist constructions of so-called 'non-native speakers' (Holliday 2005; Kubota and Lin 2006; Kumaravadivelu 2016; Nayar 2002) and against the collectivist stereotyping of East Asian students and their imagined cultural inability to take part in educational activities (e.g. Clark and Gieve 2006; Dervin 2011; Grimshaw 2007). **[page 46 ends here]**

Blocks, threads and uncomfortable third spaces

My own attempt to resolve this relationship between deCentred reality and the Centre illusion is in my grammar of culture (Holliday 2018b), of which there is a simplified representation in Figure 2.1. 'Grammar' here is as used by C Wright Mills (1970: 235) to mean the basic work of the social scientist to make sense of society. Small culture formation on the go is positioned as the core domain of the intercultural in which we share the underlying universal cultural processes that begin in childhood and enable us to engage with the intercultural wherever we find it. There is therefore immediately a blurring of the distinction between the cultural and the intercultural. The particularities of national and other structures and cultural artefacts and products on the right and left, rather than defining us, as with the Centre perception, provide the resources and influences that populate the substance of the intercultural with which we engage and the discourses and narratives that we produce. There are also, at the core of the grammar, very personal cultural trajectories which themselves defy national structures in their connections with family, ancestry, peers and profession (Holliday 2010: 41-66; 2011: 41-66).

However, as this personal engagement with the intercultural in small culture formation on the go struggles to make sense of the politics of Self and Other, it can result in both essentialist and non-essentialist outcomes which I refer to as blocks which

Figure 2.1: Grammar of culture

separate us through essentialist references and threads (marked in italics in the figure) which connect us through shared experience respectively (Holliday and Amadasi 2020). Both of these forces can be found in all parts of the grammar. **[page 47 ends here]**

The national and other structures on the left of the grammar govern the way in which we are brought up differently with different education systems, economies, political systems and media influences. They can provide valuable resources than we can carry with us into other social settings and help us to forge threads. They can also produce the Centre grand narratives about large culture difference that create blocks by placing us in opposition to each other. The cultural artefact and products domain, on the right of the grammar concern the physical, visible aspects of society. As well as art, music, architecture, cuisine and so on, they might include everyday aspects of the appearance of a society and what people do in it, from how buses and streets look to how animals are killed and where screws are sold. All of these elements are present in the global cultural flows that provide the substance of threads that bring us together. On the other hand, they can be the superficial focus of the essentialist multiculturalism discussed above, and can become the basis ideologically driven statements about culture that may confirm Centre structures. These blocks are common in statements about culture. These are what people say or otherwise project consciously about their 'culture'. These are not descriptions of what their cultural group is actually like. They are cultural acts - artefacts produced by the culture. Thus when people state that their culture is individualist and is marked by self-determination, it does not necessarily mean that self-determination is a defining characteristic of their group, but that this is the ideal with which they wish to be associated. This ideal then feeds the Centre 'us'-'them' grand narratives on the left of the figure.

In contrast to a constructed certainty about blocking, essentialist statements about culture, creating threads about personal cultural identity might not be a straight-forward process in that it requires us to search for who we are in perhaps unexpected places.

Hence, as indicated on the right of the figure, it takes us into perhaps a necessarily uncomfortable third space, which fits with the messy, deep-digging nature of interculturality as defined by Dervin above.

The defined or undefined non-Western Other

What has become a classic preoccupation within English language education and the internationalisation agenda in universities - of students from outside the West (whatever that may be) being quiet in Western educational settings - can be used to illustrate the contrast between the neo-essentialist and critical cosmopolitan views:

- **The dominant neo-essentialist view:** Silence derives from collectivist national cultures in which loyalty to the group inhibits individual expression, which in turn reflects a lack of self-determination. This therefore reflects different values which have to be appreciated and understood. Western teachers (from individualist cultures) need to be sensitive and to adjust their expectations.
- **The critical cosmopolitan view:** Silence may well be influenced by national traditions and educational practices; but the students do not have to be confined by them. The behaviour reflects the employment of universal discursal strategies within small culture formation on the go to deal with unfamiliar cultural practice (different structures of power and authority). Silence may be a form of resistance which involves strategic withdrawal. The particular deCentred cultural experience and criticality that students bring with them may enable them to bring new, innovative behaviour and successfully change the dynamics of the classroom.

[page 48 ends here]

The critical cosmopolitan view is partly informed by doctoral and masters dissertations in which Japanese language students who are noisy in Japan go quiet in front of British teachers who demand controlled talk (Hayagoshi 1996), and Taiwanese language students who are quiet because they do not understand task instructions and then get what they need outside the classroom (Chang 2000) - both discussed in Holliday (2005: 100). More recently, current 'non-Western' PhD students are researching their own positionality and that of their peers with regard to resilience, Othering, constructions of 'Britishness', how they are constructed as 'foreign', and radical personal cultural change. To do this, they employ auto-ethnographic methods and include themselves as participants to investigate their own personal cultural trajectories. In all cases, they take great care not to use any cultural stereotypes of themselves or others, in an attempt to deCentre who they are.

There is also the important factor that when people are newcomers in a particular cultural domain, they must not be seen negatively as deficient in the foreign practices they find, but as people with enhanced cultural skills because they have travelled, building positively on their cultural experience as they go - hence the very real possibility that 'international' students who have the opportunity to rationalise more than one educational institutional experience are in a better position to contribute creatively than 'home' students who have not travelled (Holliday 2011: 174). In contrast, the neo-essentialist reading, while pretending sensitivity and understanding, in effect represents

the patronising Othering implicit in the essentialist multiculturalism described above by positioning the foreign in another place from which it is not able to contribute.

5. MAIN RESEARCH METHODS

The critical cosmopolitan approach suggests a research methodology which seeks to allow meanings to emerge from the non-aligned, deCentred piecing together of what is found, rather than imposing the a priori narratives implicit in a neo-essentialist approach. If deCentred cultural realities are to be revealed, the aim must therefore be (a) to put aside established descriptions, (b) to seek a broader picture, and (c) to look for the hidden and the unexpressed. This is a difficult aim to achieve within the ideological and politicised domain which critical cosmopolitanism attributes to culture. It is also difficult because it must not take at face value statements about culture as described in the right of Figure 1, and must dig deeper to fathom the messiness and politics of interculturality.

Constructivist ethnography

I therefore recommend a broadly constructivist ethnographic approach which acknowledges the subjective implicatedness of researchers as interactants in the research event (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 15; Holliday 2016b). Research sites are thus places where all parties co-construct meaning and make sense of the world. This relates especially to the interview (e.g Block 2000; Miller 2011; Talmy 2011), which is 'a potentially creative space between people' (Merrill and West 2009: 114). Researchers themselves 'cannot, in a sense, write stories of others without reflecting' on their 'own histories, social and cultural locations as well as subjectivities and values' (ibid.: 5). As with the PhD researchers mentioned in the previous section, they have no choice but to employ themselves as participants in the research, which becomes a prime example of small culture formation on the go in which all parties are struggling to make sense of each other's social constructions within a third space interculturality. **[page 49 ends here]**

Cultural studies

It is also important to think of all participants in the intercultural as researchers. Moving away from the postpositivist paradigm necessitates no longer thinking of intercultural newcomers as people who have to achieve a new 'intercultural competence' through an initiation into being tolerant of a large culture which is separate to where they come from. Small culture formation on the go implies that they are instead developing an interculturality brought from childhood. Again, ethnography is relevant here, as already seen in young people using narrative and autobiography to develop their intercultural awareness (Byram 2008: 115ff). However, it must move away from the dominant neo-essentialist discourse, where it can easily remain framed around large culture differences and can lack the constructivist element.

One good example of not focusing on large culture difference is in the materials produced by IEREST (Intercultural education resources for Erasmus students and their teachers). Their aim is to help the students to co-construct who they are in interaction with others beyond national identities (Beaven and Borghetti 2015: 8-14). This resonates strongly with a cultural studies pedagogy in which there is a radical project to re-

interrogate 'self among others' through a reflexive critique of Centre structures and 'a critical understanding of lived cultures and a consideration of people's experience and struggles and the forms of consciousness which established them as people' (Blackman 2000: 62).

The section in the IEREST materials on racism and anti-discrimination (Beaven and Borghetti 2015: 25) addresses directly the dark side of the cultural resources that we all have from the national structures within which are brought up on the left of Figure 2.1 - the grand narratives of nation and history that create blocks that position us against each other. The cultural studies approach, driven by the work of Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams, seeks to 'rescue' education from Centre forces that oppress or alienate cultural creativity (Blackman 2000: 62-3). The focus of the 'radical project' on class, ethnicity and gender and the importance of diverse membership as a crucial point of focus in the classroom 'to alter forms of consciousness' (ibid. 64) implies a two-way process. In the case of intercultural education, this approach would encourage all parties to become conscious of the hitherto unrecognised cultural contribution of the newcomer, and an understanding of how Centre structures have acted to conceal this. This would not be to enable the non-West to behave well in the West. It would instead be to follow a deCentring agenda of opening the West to understand the non-West - by removing the 'non' of the West's imagined 'collectivist' Other, and understanding the politics of how the collectivist label has been imagined in the first place.

6. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

A predominant theme running through the discussion in this chapter has been that of a global inequality which underpins the manner in which a Centre image of culture and cultural difference has been projected both in the academy and in everyday life. The result has been a sustained and profound cultural disbelief with regard to an imagined non-Western Other. Adding to this issue has been the denial of this inequality in the dominant approach to the intercultural, where it has been falsely believed that cultural descriptions such as those of falsely labelled collectivist and individualist societies, though possibly overgeneralised, are technically neutral.

Future directions therefore need to be in two areas. Research into cultural difference and education towards cultural awareness both need to focus on cultural belief rather than disbelief. This very subtle change in gear suggests that we focus on what the cultural Other can do and contribute - that the Centre-constructed line between large cultures can be dissolved by means of a deCentred, third-space understanding. An important aspect of this focus is the concept of small culture formation on the go, which provides the potential for a deCentred interculturality that is not located within any particular culturality. These underlying, common processes need to be observed and understood as the basis for threads that bring us together and enable us to read critically both what is going on between us and what fuels the ideologies of the blocks that keeps us apart. **[page 50 ends here]**

Related topics

cosmopolitanism, culture, hybridity, research methodology, stereotyping,

Further reading

Baumann, G. (1996) *Contesting culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
This is an ethnography of the London Borough of Southall, and is an excellent and detailed example of how individuals express different cultural identities at different times depending on the particular social event.

Delanty, G, Wodak, R. and Jones, P. (eds) (2008) *Identity, belonging and migration*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
This edited collection contains a range of applications of the critical cosmopolitan discourse of culture to how the West needs to seriously rethink how it constructs the Other.

Holliday, A. R. (2018) *Understanding intercultural communication: negotiating a grammar of culture*, 2nd edn, London: Routledge.
This is Holliday's most recent description of the everyday workings of the grammar of culture and small culture formation on the go through the medium of reconstructed ethnographic narratives.

King, A. D. (ed.) (1991) *Culture, globalisation and the world-system*, New York: Palgrave.
This edited collection contains a variety of discussions based on a critical sociology of culture, including work by Stuart Hall, which provide immense, deCentred guidance on how to think about the politics of the intercultural in current times.

References

- Amadasi, S. and Holliday, A.R. (2018) 'I already have a culture.' Negotiating competing grand and personal narratives in interview conversations with new study abroad arrivals', *Language & Intercultural Communication* 18(12): 241-56.
- Baraldi, C. and Iervese, V. (2017) 'Narratives of memories and dialogue in multicultural classrooms: Analysis of workshops based on the use of photography', *Narrative Inquiry* 27(2): 398-417.
- Baumann, G. (1996) *Contesting culture*, Cambridge University Press.
- Beales, A.R., Spindler, G. and Spindler, L. (1967) *Culture in process*, New York: Holt, Rinehart.
- Beaven, A. and Borghetti, C. (2015) *Intercultural education resources for Erasmus students and their teachers*, Koper: University of Primorska, Annales University Press.
- Beck, U. and Sznaider, N. (2006) 'Unpacking cosmopolitanism for the social sciences: a research agenda', *British Journal of Sociology*, 57(1): 1-23.
- Berger, P. and Luckmann, T. (1979) *The social construction of reality*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994) *The location of culture*, London: Routledge.
- Blackman, S. J. (2000) 'Decanonised knowledge' and the radical project: towards an understanding of cultural studies in British universities', *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 8, (1): 43-67.
- Block, D. (2000) 'Interview research in TESOL: problematising interview data: voices in the mind's machine?', *TESOL Quarterly* 34(4): 757-63.

- Borghetti, C. and Beaven, A. (2018) 'Monitoring class interaction to maximise intercultural learning in mobility contexts', in J. Jackson and S. Oguro (eds) *Intercultural interventions in study abroad*, London: Routledge, pp. 53-77.
- Byram, M. (2008) *From foreign language education to education for intercultural citizenship: essays and reflections*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Canagarajah, A.S. (1999) 'On EFL teachers, awareness and agency', *ELT Journal*, 53(3): 207-14.
- Cantle, T. (2012) *Interculturalism: the new era of cohesion and diversity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Caruana, V. (2014) 'Re-thinking global citizenship in Higher Education: from cosmopolitanism and international mobility to cosmopolitanisation, resilience and resilient thinking', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 68(1): 85-104.
- Chang, C. F. (2000). 'The conflicting perceptions between British teachers and Taiwanese students connected with a study skills course', unpublished masters dissertation, Canterbury Christ Church University, Canterbury, UK.
- Clark, R. and Gieve, S.N. (2006) 'On the discursive construction of 'the Chinese learner'', *Language, Culture & Curriculum* 19(1): 54-73.
- Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. E. (Eds.) (1986) *Writing Culture: The Poetics of Politics of Ethnography*. Berkely, CA: University of California Press.
- Collins, H. (2018) 'Interculturality from above and below: navigating uneven discourses in a neoliberal university system', *Language & Intercultural Communication*, 18(2): 167-83.
- Crane, D. (ed.) (1994) *The sociology of culture*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Danius, S. and Jonsson, S. (1993) 'An interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak', *Boundary* 20(2): 24-50.
- Delanty, G. (2006) 'The cosmopolitan imagination: critical cosmopolitanism and social theory', *British Journal of Sociology*, 57(1): 25-47.
- Delanty, G., Wodak, R. and Jones, P. (2008a) 'Introduction: migration, discrimination and belonging in Europe', in G. Delanty, R. Wodak and P. Jones (eds) *Identity, belonging and migration*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp. 1-20.
- (eds) (2008b) *Identity, belonging and migration*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Dervin, F. (2011) 'A plea for change in research on intercultural discourses: A 'liquid' approach to the study of the acculturation of Chinese students', *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 6(1): 37-52.
- (2016) *Interculturality in education*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Durkheim, E. (1933) *The division of labour in society*, New York, Free Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1995) *Critical discourse analysis: the critical study of language*. London: Addison Wesley Longman.
- (2006). *Language and globalization*. London: Routledge.
- Flam, H. and Bauzamy, B. (2008) 'Symbolic violence', in G. Delanty, R. Wodak and P. Jones (eds) *Identity, belonging and migration*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp. 221-40.
- Gergen, K. J. (2001) *Social construction in context*, London: Sage.
- Goffman, E. (1972) *Relations in public*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Grande, E. (2006) 'Cosmopolitan political science', *British Journal of Sociology*, 57(1): 87-111.
- Grimshaw, T. (2007) 'Problematising the construct of 'the Chinese learner': insights from ethnographic research', *Educational Studies*, 33: 299-311.

- Guilherme, M. (2002) *Critical citizens for an intercultural world: foreign language education as cultural politics*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Hahl, K., Longfor, R. J., Neimi, P.-M. and Dervin, F. (eds) (2015) *Diversities and interculturality in textbooks: Finland as an example*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Hall, S. (1991a) 'The local and the global: globalisation and ethnicity', in King, A.D. (ed.) *Culture, globalisation and the world-system*, New York: Palgrave, pp. 19-39.
- (1991b) 'Old and new identities, old and new ethnicities' in A.D. King (ed.) *Culture, globalisation and the world-system*, New York: Palgrave, pp. 40-68.
- (1996). 'The question of cultural identity', in S. Hall, D. Held, D. Hubert and K. Thompson (eds) *Modernity: an introduction to modern societies*, London: Blackwell, pp. 595-634.
- Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography: principles in practice*. 3rd edn, London: Routledge.
- Hannerz, U. (1991) 'Scenarios of peripheral cultures', in King, A.D. (ed.) *Culture, globalization and the world-system*, New York: Palgrave, pp. 107-128.
- Hayagoshi, H. (1996) 'British teachers' perceptions of Japanese students in contrast with Japanese students' perceptions of their own needs and wants', unpublished master's dissertation, Canterbury Christ Church University, Canterbury, UK.
- Hervik, P. (2013) 'Racism, neo-racism', in ENAR (ed.) *Recycling hatred: racism(s) in Europe today: a dialogue between academics, equality experts and civil society activists*, The Brussels: European Network Against Racism, pp. 43-52.
- Hofstede, G. (2001) *Culture's consequences: comparing values, behaviours, institutions and organizations across cultures*, London: Sage.
- Holliday, A.R. (1999) 'Small cultures', *Applied Linguistics*, 20(2): 237-64.
- (2005) *The struggle to teach English as an international language*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- (2010) 'Complexity in cultural identity', *Language & Intercultural Communication*, 10(2): 165-77.
- (2011) *Intercultural communication and ideology*, London: Sage.
- (2016a) 'Cultural travel and cultural prejudice', in M.B. Aquino and S. Frota (eds), *Identities: representation and practices*, Coimbra: CELGA-ILTEC, University of Coimbra, pp. 25-44.
- (2016b) *Doing and writing qualitative research*, 3rd edn, London: Sage.
- (2018a) 'Native-speakerism', in J. Lontas (ed.) *TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching*, Bognor Regis: Wiley.
- (2018b) *Understanding intercultural communication: negotiating a grammar of culture*, 2nd edn, London: Routledge.
- Holliday, A.R. and Amadasi, S. (2020) *Making sense of the intercultural: searching for deCentred threads*. London: Routledge.
- Holliday, A.R. and MacDonald, M.N. (2019) 'Researching the intercultural: intersubjectivity and the problem with postpositivism', *Applied Linguistics*, amz006: 1-20.
- Honarbin-Holliday, M. (2009) *Becoming visible in Iran: women in contemporary Iranian society*, London: I.B. Tauris.
- Jordan, G. and Weedon, C. (1995) 'The celebration of difference and the cultural politics of racism', in B., Adam and S. Allan (eds) *Theorizing culture: an interdisciplinary critique after postmodernism*, London: UCL Press., pp.149-164.

- Kim, M.-S. (2005) 'Culture-based conversational constraints theory', in W. B. Gudykunst (ed.) *Theorizing about intercultural communication*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 93-117.
- Kubota, R. (2001) 'Discursive construction of the images of US classrooms', *TESOL Quarterly*, 35(1): 9-37.
- (2004) 'Critical multiculturalism and second language education', in B. Norton and K. Toohey (eds) *Critical pedagogies and language learning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 30-52.
- Kubota, R. and Lin, A.M.Y. (2006) 'Race and TESOL: introduction to concepts and theories', *TESOL Quarterly* 40(3): 471-93.
- Kuhn, T. (1970) *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2007) 'Cultural globalisation & language education', Yale, CT: Yale University Press.
- (2012) Individual identity, cultural globalisation, and teaching English as an international language: the case for an epistemic break. in L. Alsagof, W. Renandya, G. Hu and S. McKay (eds) *Principles and practices for teaching English as an international language*, London: Routledge, pp. 9-27.
- (2016). The decolonial option in English teaching: can the subaltern act? *TESOL Quarterly* 50, 1, 66-85.
- Lankshear, C., Gee, J.P., Knobel, M. and Searle, C. (1997) *Changing literacies*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Latour, B. (2006) *War of the worlds - what about peace?* Matrix, Bridge The Gap. Online. Available: <http://www.btgjapan.org/catalysts/bruno.html> (accessed 19 August 2006).
- Lentin, A. (2008). 'Racism, anti-racism and the Western state', in G. Delanty, R. Wodak and P. Jones (eds) *Identity, belonging and migration*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press., pp. 101-19.
- Lindholm, T. and Mednick Myles, J. (2017) *Navigating the intercultural classroom*, Alexandria, VA: TESOL Press.
- Lyotard, J.-F. (1979) *The postmodern condition: a report on knowledge*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- MacDonald, M.N. (2019) 'The discourse of 'thirdness' in intercultural studies', *Language & Intercultural Communication*, 19(1): 93-109.
- Mannheim, K. (1936) *Ideology and utopia*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company.
- Merrill, B. and West, L. (2009) *Using biographical methods in social research*, London: Sage.
- Miller, E.R. (2011) 'Indeterminacy and interview research: co-constructing ambiguity and clarity in interviews with an adult immigrant learner of English', *Applied Linguistics* 32(1): 43-59.
- Mills, C.W. (1970) *The sociological imagination*, Harmondsworth: Pelican.
- Moon, D.G. (2008) 'Concepts of 'culture': implications for intercultural communication research', in M.K., Asante, Y. Miike and J., Yin (eds) *The global intercultural communication reader*, New York: Routledge, pp.11-26.
- Nayar, B. (2002) 'Ideological binarism in the identities of native and non-native English speakers', in A. Duszac (ed.) *Us and Others: social identities across languages, discourse and cultures*, Amsterdam, John Benjamin, pp. 463-80.
- Parsons, T. (1951) *The social system*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Rajagopalan, K. (1999) 'Of EFL teachers, conscience and cowardice', *ELT Journal*, 53(3): 200-6.

- Rampton, B., Harris, R., Georgakopoulou, A., Leung, C., Small, L. and Dover, C. (2008) 'Urban classroom culture and interaction: end-of-project report', unpublished Working Papers in Urban Language and Literacies. King's College, London University. London.
- Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Sawyer, L. and Jones, P. (2008) 'Voices of migrants: solidarity and resistance', in G. Delanty, R. Wodak and P. Jones (eds) *Identity, belonging and migration*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 241-60.
- Schudson, M. (1994) 'Culture and the integration of national societies', in D. Crane (ed.) *The sociology of culture*, Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 21-43.
- Shuter, R. (2008) 'The centrality of culture', in M.K. Asante, Y. Miike and J. Yin (eds) *The global intercultural communication reader*, New York: Routledge, pp. 37-43.
- Spears, A. K. (1999) 'Race and ideology: an introduction', in A.K. Spears (ed.) *Race and ideology; language, symbolism, and popular culture*, Detroit, IL: Wayne State University Press, pp. 11-58.
- Talmy, S. (2011) 'The interview as collaborative achievement: interaction, identity, and ideology in a speech event', *Applied Linguistics* 32(1): 25-42.
- Triandis, H.C. (2004) 'Forward', in D. Landis, J.M. Bennett and M.J. Bennett (eds) *Handbook of intercultural training*, 3rd edn, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. ix-xii.
- (2006) 'Culture and conflict', in L.A. Samovar and R.E. Porter (eds) *Intercultural communication: a reader*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, pp. 22-31.
- Urry, J. (2002) *The tourist gaze*, 2nd edn, London: Sage.
- Wallace, C. (2003) *Critical reading in language education*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Weber, M. (1964) *The theory of social and economic organization*, New York: The Free Press.
- (1968a) 'Ideal types and theory construction', in M. Brodbeck (ed.) *Readings in the philosophy of the social sciences*, London: Macmillan, pp. 496-507.
- (1968b). 'The interpretive understanding of social action', in M. Brodbeck (ed.) *Readings in the philosophy of the social sciences*, London: Macmillan, pp. 19-33.
- Wenger, E. (2000) 'Communities of practice and social learning systems', *Organization*, 7(2): 225-46.
- Wodak, R. (2008) 'Us and them': inclusion and exclusion', in G. Delanty, R. Wodak and P. Jones (eds) *Identity, belonging and migration*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp. 54-77.