Controlled conditions—an analysis of the positioning of migration during the prime ministerial debates for the 2010 UK general election

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Introduction

In 2010 for the first time in a UK general election, the candidates for Prime Minster of the three major parties, Gordon Brown for Labour, David Cameron for the Conservatives and Nick Clegg for the Liberal-Democrats, faced each other in a series of three television debates in front of a carefully selected audience supposed to represent the British electorate. After opening statements by each of the candidates—again—carefully selected members of the audience posed—again—carefully selected questions to the panel. This aspect of selection represents the link through which the debates can be defined as the outcome of a journalistic production process. This chapter will start out with a consideration of the rules that governed the debate to establish the role journalists played in shaping its content. The actual content in relation to migration will then be analysed in relation to Britain as a nation state. The chapter concludes by returning to the role of journalists, this time by analysing a particular exchange within the debates. Though Britain's status as a multi*cultural* and multi*national* state raises specific issues, the argument illustrates a dynamic of wider applicability: current discourses of nation state and migration render the latter as permanent source of crisis for the former.

The rules of the debate

So how does journalism fit into what was overtly presented as a series of exchanges between members of the public and the candidates as well as between the candidates? A closer look at the processes that led to these exchanges highlights the pivotal role journalistic activity played in them. As highlighted above the interaction between members of the public and the three politicians underwent several stages of selection. The composition of the audience and the question schedule were negotiated and codified before the

debate. The result was a 76-point document called *Prime Ministerial Debates—Programme Format* (All Parties, 2010) that addressed the following issues: audience selection (points 1 to 13); audience role (14–40); structure of the programme (41–57); role of the moderator (58–64); themes (65.1–65.3); set (66–68); audience cutaways (69–76). Rather than going through all the points I want to highlight a few because they are indicative of the journalistic component in the debate.

First of all, although well-established journalists served as moderators in all three debates—Alastair Stewart in the first debate on ITV 1 (Gardiner, 2010), Adam Boulton in the second debate on Sky News (McAndrew, 2010) and David Dimbleby (Pearl, 2010) in the final debate on BBC 1—their role during the broadcast was restricted to ensuring that the candidates stuck to the rules and to calling on members of the audience to pose their questions. As outlined above, the latter aspect was the result of a carefully calibrated pre-production process of selection, the first step of which was audience composition. Recruiting conducted by ICM, had to follow a strict weighting in terms of voting preference. Broadcasters were only allowed to recruit a small number of additional audience members. The overall objective in terms of the role of the audience, as set out in rule 14, was "to ensure maximum debate between the party leaders—the distinctive characteristic of these programmes—while allowing the audience's voices to be heard directly posing questions." However, being included in the audience did not automatically confer a right or even the opportunity to be heard. Being heard was dependent on a screening process conducted by an editorial panel—staffed by the respective broadcaster for each debate—and ruled by a number of aspects addressed in points from the audience role, structure of the programme and themes sections of the *Programme Format*. Whilst editorial independence was explicitly assured (rule 33), the selection process was closely determined by the rules. The first section of each debate was to focus on a particular main theme: domestic affairs in the first, international affairs in the second, economic affairs in the third. The second, un-themed section rule 30 stated that "a maximum of two questions will be selected on a single subject." For both sections the editorial panel had various elements to consider, for which rule 32 provides an interesting insight. Among the considerations listed there "voters' interest" is the only one that indicates the public's point of view as an unqualified starting point of question selection. "Prominence of certain issues", "parties' policies on election issues" and prime ministerial issues, on the other hand, represent selection criteria that start with

party programmes and political institutions, thus the relevance and "selectability" of a question depends on the extent it reflects these programmes and institutions. The topic of migration was selected by each panel.

Incidentally, the audience question of concern here is the very first from the very first debate broadcast live on ITV 1 on 15 April 2010. In the two subsequent debates it featured in the un-themed sections, both of which I will look at briefly after examining in more details this Q & A exchange of the first debate. Through a close analysis of it, I intend to argue that migration in this context is discursively positioned not as a momentary crisis in the face of a specific challenge but as a permanent and existential crisis for the nation state.

The first and third debate

One of the regular presenters of ITV 1 *News*, Alastair Stewart, moderated this historic programme—the first ever such General Election debate. To begin the candidate-audience interaction, Stewart called on one Gerard Oliver. Oliver, according to the moderator a retired toxicologist from Cheshire, asked the candidates: "Good evening. What key elements for a fair, workable immigration policy need to be put in place to actually make it work effectively?"

The obvious point of connection between Oliver's question and the themes of this book can of course be found in the fact that both are about migration. However, this is merely a starting point and the relevance runs much deeper than surface-level. Oliver does more than mention migration. The way he phrases his question indicates a set of assumptions that begins to discursively position the phenomenon of the movement of people across space—*begins*, because it is only in the responses from the candidates that the discursive framework of this phenomenon is more fully revealed. To start with Oliver's question, it is the term "immigration" that begins to define the phenomenon by determining the characteristics of the space and thus producing this space, to use Lefebvre's term (1991 [1974]), through which people move not as *open* space, as the term "migration" would suggest, but as *bounded* spaces, as territories. When migrants cross these boundaries they become *im*-migrants. These bounded spaces are defined further, as "immigration" denotes a specific direction of movement: from a space that is defined as outside to a bounded space that is defined as inside. Combining the terms "immigration" and "policy" introduces another definitional degree. Now, the inside space is defined not only as bounded but also as controlled. It is turned into an administrative unit within which policy is to be enforced. The aspect of

enforcement, of the legitimate application of force within it, allows defining this territory as a state in Weberian terms:

> a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory. … The state is considered the sole source of the 'right' to use violence. (Weber, 1948 [1918], p. 78 original emphasis)

To reiterate: Oliver defines the phenomenon of migration as a movement from a generic outside space to a specific bounded and controlled inside space, a state territory. Considering the addressees of the question suggests that Oliver assigns *sole* responsibility for policy implementation to the British Prime Minister and his government, this allows for the conclusion that Oliver's question produces a specific space, the British state. It would be premature to make further inferences about the nature of the British state, if for instance it could be characterised as national. As Agnew and Corbridge (1995, p. 83) point out, a territorial state is not necessarily a nation state. There is little in Oliver's question that goes beyond the territorial. Further definition of the state will have to wait until the analysis of the candidates' responses. Instead, the next analytical step turns towards the overt content of Oliver's query.

By posing the question, Oliver suggests that the current immigration policy does not work effectively. His expectation that the future Prime Minister should do something about it, also suggests that Oliver considers this state of affairs to be problematic. In other words, he offers a set of definitions: migration as immigration and space as divided into a generic outside space in difference to a specific inside state territory; he also offers a diagnosis of a situation: immigration policy as problematic, and asks the candidates for a solution, a remedy to the situation. However, it is important to note here that he casts the situation and not the phenomenon as problematic. This is an important distinction that I will come back to later in the chapter. Oliver defines migration as immigration, but does not offer a value judgement on immigration itself. The problem he diagnoses is not with immigration, but with immigration policy, i.e., the way government handles immigration. His suggestions that there should be a "fair, workable immigration policy" that "work[s] effectively" do not in themselves allow for conclusions to be drawn as to his opinion about immigration. "Fair" to whom or to what? "Effective" in achieving what outcome? If Oliver had given an indication as to how these questions could be answered, how fairness and effectiveness could be judged, the situation would be different. However, he does not supply any such points of reference. Once

Oliver had posed the question, the terms and targets of fairness and effectiveness were open to the interpretation of the three candidates.

The format of the debate allowed for each candidate to give a response to an audience question first, before they could engage with each other. The candidates responded in the following order: Brown, Cameron, Clegg (see transcripts available online for details.) It is worth considering these initial responses in some detail here, as they not only indicate the candidates' lines of interpretation of Oliver's question but also further develop the definitional layers of space and state. In their responses all three accept Oliver's definition of immigration and the definition of space this entails. Although, Cameron and Clegg acknowledge that migration can occur in the opposite direction, too, i.e., from the inside to the outside, this does not question the underlying division of space into bounded territories. In this context Clegg's reference to exit controls implies an emphasis on boundaries, an aspect that will be picked up later. It is important to mention here though that boundaries play an important role in the context of state formation. They are "social and political constructs…whose establishment is a manifestation of power" (Paasi, 2001, p. 17). Moreover, Brown and Clegg explicitly evoke the inside space that is only implied in the questioner's use of the term "immigration" by first calling it "the country" and later in Brown's case "Britain". All three also accept the responsibility Oliver charged them with and suggest that they have the power to do something about the problem—although it is worth pointing out that both Brown and Cameron reference another administrative, quasi-state space, the European Union (EU). In terms of spatial definition the EU indicates that the outside space can be differentiated three spatial categories: EU space, "new countries joining the EU" and outside-EU space. It can also be read as an implied acknowledgement of the limits of their power. Their own responses suggest the tension, which they have to negotiate throughout the debate, between their projection of themselves as "unrestrained" leaders of the nation state and their actual far more restrained position—the result of the difference between the presumed and actual degree of sovereignty of the contemporary nation state, more of which later. Overall, the three candidates share a similar understanding of space and migration with Oliver. However, they differ from Oliver in another important aspect: their definition of what actually constitutes the problem.

All three, but Brown and Cameron more so than Clegg, shift the focus of Oliver's diagnosis from immigration policy to immigration itself. Also, all three decide to interpret the measurement of fairness and effectiveness, left open by

Oliver, in a single direction. The "pressure" Brown and Cameron mention towards the beginning of their respective responses is in their view directly caused by immigration not by immigration policy. They do return to the policy aspect, but only after asserting immigration as the actual problem. Clegg's response, on the other hand, remains focussed on policy. In fact, he even challenges Brown's and Cameron's shifts in focus. Their responses could be taken as exactly the kinds of "tough talking on immigration" Clegg has in mind. However, though Clegg avoids joining in their tough talk, he too interprets Oliver's question along the same lines as his colleagues: fairness and effectiveness of policy are to be measured by their impact on an Us evoked by the use of We by all three. Brown's response merits a closer look in this respect.

For one, by being the first to respond Brown sets the parameters against which the other two can be measured. As Clegg's response indicates, his co-debaters could have challenged Brown immediately had they wanted to do so, even within the constricted format of the debate. Also, in his response Brown moves beyond an unspecified We and explicitly relates the pronoun to Britain as well as a specific set of people. Finally, the relationship between these two elements—Britain and these people—as presented by Brown, hints at a further characteristic of the state space introduced by Oliver. These people are defined in difference to another set of people. On the one hand, *these* people are the people that Brown listened to and who feel the pressure caused by immigration. On the other hand, there are *those* people who "come from abroad". One set is present and established on the inside; the other kind is coming in from abroad, the outside. Yet again, the outside space is not defined with any more specificity. The inside, however, is and not just in name.

As already discussed, Brown evokes the space as Britain and he evokes an established set of people that are located within it. In the final sentence of his statement he moves beyond locating these people within space to redefining the space through them. When Brown says "We are a tolerant, we are a diverse country…" not only does he position himself as part of these people through the use of the first person plural, he also equates these people with this space he calls a country. These people do more than live *in* this space; these people *are* this space; these people *are* the state prescribed by this space. In Brown's words these people *are* Britain. The twofold definition of Britain as a state as well as a people suggests that Brown conceives of it as a particular kind of state, a nation state. A number of definitions of nation exist, but I want to draw on one by Renan:

> No, it is no more the land than the race that makes a nation. Man is everything in the formation of that sacred thing which we call the people. Nothing of a material nature suffices for it. A nation is a spiritual principle, the result of profound historical complications, a spiritual family, not a group determined by the configuration of the soil. (Renan, 2001 [1882], p. 174)

Renan emphasises the importance of people in the make-up of a nation without resorting to notions of an essentialised, biologically determined race. Also, when it comes to what constitutes a people, Renan emphasises the historicity of this unit, which allows for change in the make-up of a people over time. These are important points, as debates of nationhood beyond the racial definition often centre on a national culture as the element that brings a people together and how such a culture may have come about. While scholars in the primordialist (cf. Smith, 1989) tradition accept that national cultures are ultimately constructed, they argue that nations are founded on pre-existing cultures, which are often described as ethnic cultures. Modernist scholars, on the other hand, (cf. Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990) argue that even if there are pre-existing elements within a national culture, its composition is not the result of a continuous, gradual development but the outcome of a comparatively abrupt introduction in the interests of a particular class (cf. Pecora, 2001 for a discussion of the different approaches). Either way, culture can be seen in Renan's terms as the outcome of "profound historical complications". Returning to Brown, he, too, explicitly rejects a racially constituted "We the people" when he describes it as tolerant and diverse. Initially, these characteristics might suggest a rejection of a unifying culture and a national definition of Britishness and instead an avowal of multiple cultures. However, such an avowal conforms with a particular contemporary formation of nationalism, what Fortier (2005, pp. 560-561) calls with specific reference to Britain a "multiculturalist nationalism":

> that is, the reworking of the nation as inherently multicultural. Multiculturalism is generally considered in relation to specific national settings, but the predominant theory is that diversity is a disruptive, extraneous element causing a crisis of the nation, conceived as founded on monoculturalism. But in multiculturalist nationalism, there is a shift away from linear narratives of nations moving from monoculture to multiculture…

It is important to note that "multiculturalist nationalism" does not necessarily result in the inclusion of everyone, as Brown clearly highlights. Though he evokes Britain as a multicultural nation, he also establishes limits to its diversity and tolerance straight away through his setting up of two kinds of

people. Neither Cameron nor Clegg challenge Brown's claim, which is not to say that they repeat it. Cameron's use of the term "people", for instance, is more generic in that it refers to a number of persons. But in phrases such as "we should have transitional controls so they can't all come here at once" and "So that we only send immigrants to those places where they can be coped" made by Cameron and Clegg respectively, they evoke a similar categories of inclusion and exclusion, of a resident populace, a nation, on the inside and immigrants who remain excluded.

More will be said later on about British multiculturalism and challenges to conceiving of Britain as a nation state. However, at this point the focus is on the specific content of the candidates' responses to Oliver. Drawing on Renan allows reading Brown's evocation of We as an evocation of a nation. Drawing on Fortier explains the politicians' definition of diversity and tolerance as national characteristics. However, it is important to remember Weber's definition of state before concluding that Brown conceives of Britain as a nation state. As mentioned above, Brown accepts Oliver's definition of space and by accepting responsibility to regulate immigration into this space he claims the right to legitimate violence within this territory. It is the overlap of these two elements under the auspices of a nation, territory and state sovereignty that define the modern nation state, a status Brown claims for Britain. While it might not be surprising that the Prime Minister of a state would make such a claim, it is important to highlight how migration is appropriated in the process.

When migration reappears in the second and third debates, it does so in a similar discursive framework. In the second debate migration was raised in a question by Bethlehem Negessi, who asked: "I'm an immigrant, and I have been in the UK for 13 years. I recognise that immigration is becoming a problem in the country. What new measures would you introduce in order to make the system more fair?"

In the third debate Radley Russell raised the issue when he asked: "Are the politicians aware that they have become removed from the concerns of the real people, especially on immigration, and why don't you remember that you are there to serve us, not ignore us?"

Both questions raise some interesting points about the way they are worded as well as how they came to be selected. Though second in actual sequence, it is Russell's question I will briefly address, to conclude this section, as it is more closely related to what has been said so far. To explain the inclusion of Russell's question, I suggest, one has to consider a particular event during the campaign

in the week preceding the final debate. During that week Gordon Brown was caught out calling Gillian Duffy, a woman he had met in a regular-voter-on-the-street encounter, a bigot because of her views on immigration. That he did not do so to her face but after their conversation as he was being driven away added to the media outrage that followed. The issue dominated the election news for several days. Russell's question reflects both elements of the coverage: politicians out of touch with the electorate in general and on the issue of migration in particular. Compared to the first debate the question is more overtly critical of migration, but this is couched in a concern about politicians' common touch. The criticism is directed at the politicians rather than immigrants. It implies an "us real people" vs. immigration dichotomy, although the second dichotomy between "us real people" vs. "you ignorant politicians" is much stronger and the focus of the question. However, in their initial responses to the question, all three candidates focussed very much on the migration issue itself (see transcripts). Rather than addressing the question whether they were in fact out of touch, they try to realign themselves with the "us real people" of the first dichotomy by emphasising it over the second.

While Russell's question as well as the candidates' responses provides further evidence for the evocations of the nation in the context of migration, it is Negressi's question that allows for a closer analysis of the role of journalism in this process. I will return to Negressi's in the conclusion to this chapter. Right now I will further examine the notion of *a* nation in relation to Britain. Above I have introduced the concept of the nation state by citing Lefebvre in relation to space and state territoriality, Weber in relation to state, and Renan, Gellner and Smith in relation to nation. I have also begun to relate their respective concepts to the specifics of the British state. However, as its full name, the United Kingdom of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland suggests, it is a state comprised of a set of distinct components generating a dynamic that cannot be explained by reference to multiculturalism alone.

To be British–National identity in a multinational and multicultural state

All three candidates develop their arguments about immigration and immigration policy on the basis of a shared understanding of space and people as defined by the national. They not only add the specificity of the national in response to Oliver's question, they also recast immigration as the problem. The political elites in the UK as represented by the prime ministerial candidates from the three major parties see themselves as part of a British nation that is faced

with this problem. In fact, I would suggest that they recast immigration not merely as a problem for the nation but as a challenge to its cohesion. However, they implicitly assume the existence of cohesion among the non-immigrant populace—something which is debateable.

Colley (1992, p. 5) calls Great Britain and British nationalism "an invention forged above all by war". For her it was war with France that shaped this nation from the late 17th century to the mid 19th century. Before that time, though already under the control of the same ruler the Irish, English, Scots and Welsh had not developed into a British nation. Putting the confrontations and conflicts of the era at the centre of British national identity formation, Colley concludes that the peoples inhabiting the British Isles "came to define themselves as a single people not because of any political or cultural consensus at home, but rather in reaction to the Other beyond their shores." (p. 6) Of course, it would be remiss to deny that others have reached different conclusions about the formation of British nationalism. Nairn (1981), for instance, in his influential collection of essays that make up *The Break-up of Britain* defines nationalism in general as "the joint product of external pressures and an internal balance of class forces"(p. 41). In relation to the development of British nationalism, he suggests that it "suffered far less from external pressures and threats than any other" (p. 42). Though placing the emphasis on the internal dimension in his analysis, Nairn still considers the external dimension important and cites warfare as of particular relevance in the formation of British nationalism (p. 42). Both Nairn and Colley with their arguments about the past, the origin and development of British nationalism intend to illuminate the present. Nairn, identifies an overall backwardness and uneven development within Britain as the reason behind the "territorial disintegration" and "threat of secession" (1981, p. 14), the break-up of Britain. Colley explains "a revival of internal divisions" (1992, p. 7) and a subsequent, though gradual unravelling of Britishness with the fact that former points of external conflict have disappeared or at least diminished well below the level of large scale warfare threatening the integrity of British territory. While I believe an internal dimension to be important—whether necessarily in Nairn's terms of class struggle is another matter—it is Colley's argument about the external dimension that I want to pursue here further.

First of all, however, it has to be noted the British state still exists, as does a sense of Britishness. Survey data provides evidence for the latter, though it also shows an increasing importance of other, disaggregated British national

identities, i.e., English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish, and a complex set of attitudes towards Britishness (Bechhofer & McCrone, 2007, 2008). To Kumar (2010, p. 475) this indicates that:

> one may still think of oneself as British, but with a decreasing sense of its salience in one's life and a diminishing commitment to the political entity of Britain. It is almost as if, for significant sections of the population, Britishness is becoming a residual legacy of the glory days of British power and prestige.

The resurgence of these nationalities that for a time were, though never entirely subsumed into but 'nested' (Miller, 2001) within a British nation, highlights not only that contemporary Britain needs to be understood as a multinational state, but also that the idea of the multicultural nation state already needs further attention. As mentioned above "multicultural nationalism" attempts to accommodate one dimension of multiplicity specific to the British context that challenges the notion of a British nation. However, the acceptance of diversity under the auspices of multiculturalism does not mean that minority and majority communities are on an equal footing in the national We; as "minorities' ethnicity is understood as otherness, foreignness, from 'mainstream' British culture" (Fortier, 2005, p. 371). This limitation echoes New Labour's move away from an unqualified support for multiculturalism to an increasing emphasis on social cohesion, based on "belonging given by loyalty and adherence to central hegemonic, so called British, values" (Yuval-Davis, Anthias, & Kofman, 2005, p. 528). A similar line has been pursued by the Conservative Liberal-Democrat coalition government since the election, as evidenced Prime Minister David Cameron's claim in a speech in February 2011 that state multiculturalism had failed. So while diversity is accepted, "in order to be welcomed in the national fold, [members of ethnic minorities] must deracinate themselves" (Fortier, 2005, p. 571) and conform to these "British values." As Yuval-Davis et al (2005, p. 521) point out multicultural policies are, "aimed almost exclusively towards communities of immigrants from ex-New Commonwealth and Pakistan countries" established before the 1981 Nationality Act further restricted "privileged rights of settlement of non-patrial ex-colonial settlers." Diversity and tolerance are not aims pursued for their own sake nor is multicultural nationalism, but rather they are the outcome of "historical complications"; they are a consequence of Britain's imperial past.

In targeting the level of what are defined as ethnic communities, this kind of multiculturalism sets Britain up as a nation comprised of a number of specific

immigrant ethnic minority communities and a settled majority community. The latter is supposed to embody the "British values" the minority groups ultimately have to accept to become more or less fully recognised. The exact nature of these values, however, is unclear and attempts by New Labour and in particular Gordon Brown to establish a coherent and normative set of British characteristics remain contested (Bechhofer & McCrone, 2007, p. 251). Partly, this difficulty stems from the achievements of multiculturalism as a challenge to a dominant mono-culture; at least equally important, though, is another dynamic already mentioned above: the challenge to this mono-culture from within. Whereas in the context of multiculturalism the majority culture is considered as one coherent unit, outside this context it is considered to be comprised of at least four parts: England, Scotland, Wales and (Northern) Ireland. While the political debate over challenges to the *social* cohesion of the British nation tends to focus on multiculturalism (see for instance Cameron's speech on the alleged failure of state multiculturalism mentioned above), it is the resurgence of these nations that may actually challenge the very cohesion of the UK as a unitary state unit, because, as Miller (2001, p. 307) points out:

> the component nationalities have most of the properties of independent nations,…the Scots in Britain have a claim to self-determination which Muslims, say, in Britain do not,…

Considering the twofold dynamics of multiculturalism and multinationalism, it appears difficult to sustain a contemporary and mutually re-enforcing British identity/British nation state pairing. In light of the challenge of multinationalism but also relevant in relation to multiculturalism, Aughey (2010, p. 350) suggests foregrounding a sense of allegiance to the British state as a multinational democracy over a sense of allegiance demanding a "common identity (a sort of British nationalism) and identities demanding exclusive allegiance (varieties of sub-British nationalism)." However, considering the political discourse as evidenced in the responses from the prime ministerial debate, a common identity with "a sort of British nationalism" seems to remain the goal. Clearly, this evidence is selective and narrow, but especially in Gordon Brown's response it highlights an underlying understanding of Britain as a nation state.

To (re)forge the nation, to come back to Colley's argument, a new outside threat has to be defined: immigration. As Cohen (2000, p. 576) argues in *The Incredible Vagueness of Being British/English*: "Migration policy remains a national function (who is included and who is excluded here takes a literal form)."

Cohen's argument rests on a specific understanding of identity and how it is constructed:

> A method for analysing an identity cannot start from the crease and move the boundary or migrate from the core to the periphery, as there is no kernel and no core. Instead, the fuzzy edges of an identity are where the action is and where the answers lie. We know who we are by agreeing who we are not. Others judge us as we judge others. The Other cannot be separated from the Self.

To engage here fully in a discussion of collective identity formation on a state-level would lead too far from the focus of this chapter, instead I only want to pick up on the aspect of boundary to highlight the special predicament of the contemporary nation state and the almost reflexive response to migration in engenders.

Migration and Territoriality in the Era of Globalisation

Barth (1998 [1969], p. 15) based on his analysis of how communities come to understand themselves as ethnic groups has called for a focus on "the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses". His emphasis is on social boundaries, though he acknowledges that, "they may have territorial counterparts". In fact, a claim to territory, a "territorial homeland" as Miller describes it, with territorial boundaries, is a key aspect of the discourse that turns an ethnic group into a nation. In the case of a nation state the boundary is turned into a fixed, administrative border, the territorial homeland into a territory, which allows for nations to assert power within it. Taylor (2003, p. 101) calls this spatial assertion of the nation *territoriality*: "a form of behaviour that uses a bounded space, a territory, as the instrument for securing a particular outcome." For Taylor (2003, p. 102) modern states have four main functions: "states wage war, they manage the economy, they give national identity, and they provide social services", all of which the state tries to achieve through "strategies of territoriality". Taylor's argument is similar to Giddens' (1987, p. 120) concept of the modern state as "a bordered power-container", but with an even stronger focus on territory and boundary, as he returns to boundary as *the* strategy of territoriality (Taylor, 2003, p. 101): "By controlling access to a territory through boundary restrictions, the content of a territory can be manipulated and its character designed." However, and this is where territoriality turns into a predicament, absolute sovereign control over what is perceived to be national territory and thus over what is going on within its

boundaries is an illusion. To mistake this illusion for fact means to fall into what Agnew (1994) calls a "territorial trap". Together with Corbridge, Agnew (1995, p. 100) argues that "Social, economic and political life cannot be contained within the territorial boundaries of states through the methodological assumption of 'timeless space'." Far from eternally fixed in time and space "the territorial state and its power" is "dependent on the interaction between global and local (including state-territorial) processes of political economic structuration" (p. 91), which produces a) changing territorial formations but more importantly b) entirely non-territorial-based power structures over time. So while this interaction between the global and the local may have been conducive to the territorial nation state there is not guarantee that it will remain so. In fact Hurrelmann et al. (2007) speak of a golden age of the territorial nation state between the late 19th century and the 1970s. Since then aspects of power the territorial nation state used to control have been transferred to private actors and international institutions. At the same time as power is escaping from the nation state container, the container in terms of territory itself appears to remain intact. It *appears* intact because a closer look reveals that, as Lefebvre (2003 [1978], p. 92) points out, the apparent physical inviolability of territory hides its increasing hollowness, as "Flows traverse borders with the impetuosity of rivers." This phenomenon of deterritorialisation, of course, has been defined as an integral part of the process of contemporary globalisation (cf. Bauman, 2007, p. 2). And yet, as Calhoun (2007, p. 171) asserts "Globalization has not put an end to nationalism…Nationalism still matters, still troubles many of us, but still organizes something considerable in who we are." In fact, as Calhoun acknowledges, nationalism often reasserts itself in reaction to the process of globalisation. Calhoun (2008) explicitly positions himself in opposition to the likes of Ulrich Beck. In the face of the same dynamic Beck (2005, p. 115) calls for a "cosmopolitan realism", because

> the points at which domestic state power struggles, inter-state power struggles and non-state power struggles dovetail with one another can no longer be located within the frame of reference of either 'national' or 'international' arenas.

To Calhoun (2008, p. 443), however, this cosmopolitan perspective remains based on "class position and privileged citizenship" and ignores the necessity of other forms of belonging—often national—as a basis of democracy and of "actual social action" for most.

Returning to Cohen's suggestion of migration policy as a "national function", I also draw on Bauman's (2007, p. 14) argument about a shift in what the territorial nation state can provide its citizens in response to the challenges of globalisation and in the hope to maintain its legitimacy: "The spectre of social degradation against which the social state swore to insure its citizens is being replaced in the political formula of the 'personal safety state'…" Bauman lists a number of threats against which the "personal safety state" appears to defend its citizens. And yet in his view migration has a special role to play. Parallel to Barth's focus on the boundary in relation to ethnic group formation, Cohen's similar focus in relation to national identity formation and finally Colley's analysis of British identity formation in relation to an external threat, Bauman (2007, p. 85) suggests that:

> The latent function of the barriers at the border, ostensibly erected against 'false asylum seekers' and 'merely economic' migrants, is to fortify the shaky, erratic and unpredictable existence of the insiders.

This strategy only works while the border is still intact not just as an imagined line around a territory but also as an actual barrier. In this context it is worth remembering Clegg's emphasis on border controls in his response to Oliver's question. It is also worth pointing to an immediate limitation of this strategy acknowledged by Brown as well as Cameron in their responses. By virtue of being part of the EU the barrier has already become fairly easy to cross for most EU citizens. Though Brown's and Cameron's rhetoric starts to unravel from the inside, overall all three politicians still follow an argumentative line that traces the strategies and dynamics outlined by Barth, Bauman, Cohen and Colley. In their one-sided emphasis on fairness and effectiveness of immigration policy to the benefit of the UK none of the three responses addresses global inequalities, thus are positioned well beyond Calhoun's reformulation, towards a reactionary nationalism. However, it is interesting to note that at the same time of evoking the nation through immigration, the candidates highlight the nation's contingency. If the nation is so easily threatened in its essence by immigration, as their comments suggest, it cannot be particularly sturdy. Playing the populist move of talking tough on immigration turns out to be predicated on emphasising the fragility of the national construct. As pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, though Britain's status as a multi*cultural* and multi*national* state raises specific issues, the argument illustrates a dynamic of

wider applicability: current discourses of nation state and migration render the latter as permanent source of crisis for the former.

Conclusion

After having analysed how the three candidates talked about migration and how this relates to wider issues of migration and the British nation, I will conclude this chapter by returning to the role journalists played in shaping this content by looking at the way migration was raised as an issue in the second debate. As mentioned above, in this debate Negessi asked:

> I'm an immigrant, and I have been in the UK for 13 years. I recognise that immigration is becoming a problem in the country. What new measures would you introduce in order to make the system more fair?

In difference to Russell's, there is no timely event that would explain the inclusion of this question in the debate. This is the more surprising, as in essence Negessi's question is a repeat of Oliver's question in the first debate. Only this time, the questioner already frames migration as a problem for the candidates. The reason for repeating the question can be interpreted in several ways: not all viewers watch all three debates hence a certain overlap is justified; migration is an issue that voters are concerned about; migration is an issue that features in the parties' election manifestos; the candidates need a second chance to clarify their positions about migration; migration is an issue the editorial panel judged to be important. There are probably several reasons more. Still, it is striking that the two questions so closely resemble each other and yet also differ from each other at the same time. What is also striking is who the election panel selected to deliver it. Choosing a self-identified immigrant in the role of the-one-who-puts-his-finger-on-the-problem avoids suspicions of anti-immigrant bias. I do not suggest that there is anti-immigrant bias. But considering the question selection process and the fact that audience members have to stick to the agreed question, I do suggest that all information contained in the question can be considered important and that strategic decisions were made by the panel as to who would ask a specific question and how the question would be phrased. The fact that Negessi identifies himself as an immigrant adds nothing to the question itself, i.e., the candidates should be able to respond to it in exactly the same way without this additional piece of information—in fact parts of their initial responses closely resemble those from the first debate (see transcript)—so why let him add it?

The reason I raise this question, is not to suggest that these issues might not be of genuine concern to the audience and this particular audience member, but to emphasise that (1) the audience present at the debate was a highly constructed representation of the British public, and (2) the questions individual audience members asked had undergone a journalistic process of selection. Though they may have been authors and originators in Goffman's terms (1981) of their submitted questions, at the point of delivery during the debate, the members of the audience had been reduced to mere animators, a role embodied in rule 38: "The audience members will be restricted to asking the selected questions." The questions are meant to be if not representative in quantitative terms then at least illustrative in qualitative terms of the British public, as judged by the editorial panel. Through this process of journalistic filtering audience members in general and those who ask a question in particular turn into parts within a script fit for the emerging dramaturgy of a prime ministerial debate in which everybody has their role play. The audience's role is to be the British public, the British nation. It is cast in this role by the journalists—the panel behind the scenes represented on stage by the moderator. The latter acts out his own role: a conduit between the nation and its leaders; apparently not in charge of either but making sure that both keep to the rules. However, considering the influence journalists had over the selection process, I would argue that not only were they in control of the audience on the night, they were in control of this representation of the British nation in preparation for the night and to a substantial degree consequently shaped the positioning of migration during these debates.