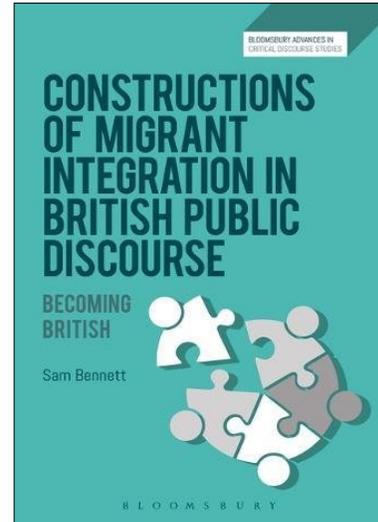


Sam Bennett, **Constructions of Migrant Integration in British Public Discourse: Becoming British**, London, UK: Bloomsbury, 2018, 243 pp., \$127.23 (hardcover).

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As an outgrowth of his doctoral thesis completed in 2015, Sam Bennett's latest book, **Constructions of Migrant Integration in British Public Discourse: Becoming British**, is an insightful volume among the series *Bloomsbury Advances in Critical Discourse Studies*. It comes to the fore as a thought-provoking response to the "immigration crisis," which has been continuously perplexing the majority of European communities, for instance, France, Greece, and Italy. From a diachronic perspective and within the framework of discourse-historical approach (DHA)—one model of critical discourse analysis (CDA)—this book, in Bennett's words, aims to explore the dynamics of the public discourse on integration in the United Kingdom.



In comparison with previous publications in this field, readers no doubt will find that Bennett does much more, not only in large-scale corpora selection but also in his in-depth analysis of migrant experiences.

### Structure and Content

The book is composed of eight chapters, followed by four appendixes and six pages of notes. Chapter 1 serves as an introduction. Roughly, it can be divided into five sections, in which Bennett goes into detail about theoretical framework (sections 1.2, 1.6, and 1.7), research purpose (section 1.5), research methods (section 1.8), and data collection (section 1.9) and provides an overview of this book (section 1.10). Also covered is an array of concepts pertinent to discourse analysis, for instance, discourse, text, context, public sphere, and intertextuality. Of note is public sphere, which is indeed dominated not so much by nonelites, like ethnic minorities and incoming non-nationals, as by elites in politics and the media.

Chapters 2 and 3 jointly review literature on fundamental but vital topics of race, racism, racialization, xenophobia, citizenship, integration and multiculturalism, which are concerned with political discourse. While Bennett's outline of four functions of racism in present-day society is noteworthy in chapter 2, I particularly liked his redefinition of *race*. It is characterized by ethnocultural phenomena—lifestyle, habits, culture, and traditions—rather than biological differences. Central to chapter 3 is the interrelation of citizenship and integration—that is, citizenship is an important part of integration and is almost synonymous with it. They allude to "good" migrant membership with performative acts, such as economic sufficiency.

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Chapter 4 proceeds with a cohesive thread, namely, investigation of (responses to) migrants from historical and sociopolitical perspectives. Bennett first offers a holistic picture of global immigration patterns with five key periods. Subsequently, he turns to spotlighting three phrases of European immigration, and explicating European migration policies within four periods. Last in this chapter is an in-depth discussion of Britain's migration policies, with Brighton as a good case in point. Although embedded in changing historical contexts, they are, by and large, race-relations policies that problematize racial or cultural differences.

Early in chapter 5, Bennett adds an interesting twist to political discourse analysis: community cohesion and integration, including similarities and differences. Drawing on 10-year governmental texts (2000–10), he explores (1) the discursive construction of integration and (2) the discursive performances of new immigrants. As to the first, Bennett considers integration as problems like burdens and tensions, and as normative phenomena, by scrutinizing attributive adjectives, mental process, modal verbs, British values, metaphors of movement, and transitivity. An important argument made concerning the second point is that "more is expected of migrants than of existing citizens" (p. 95).

Chapter 6 is an exemplification of corpus techniques, such as word frequency and concordance, for media discourse analysis. Bennett looks at media representations of migrant integration, with emphasis on such topics as discursive community and British values (e.g., tolerance and democracy), along with "good/bad" migrants (e.g., their financial matters and cultural actions). Readers may be surprised at Bennett's finding—a direct intertextuality between policy discourse and media discourse.

Chapter 7 elaborates on the words, thoughts, feelings, and experiences of three focus groups (interviewees)—an Oromo group, an Iranian group, and an EU nationals group—toward integration. To do this, Bennett first examines the so-called primary and secondary discourse topics related to their integrating lives. For instance, for EU nationals, language is less important than culture. Accommodation, like public housing, is not only a sense of belonging and attachment, but also a matter of life and death. And social attachment is unlikely to be achieved without education. What appeals to me is that Bennett highlights interviewees' attitudes toward the media coverage of integration, categorized as *negative*, *ambivalent*, *sympathetic*, etc. Their opinions on integration have also been detailed and contrasted, which leads into Bennett's articulation of integration as mixing diversity for the Oromo group, respect for human rights for the Iranian group, and a process of adaptation for the EU group.

At the outset, chapter 8 briefly summarizes the contents discussed in chapters 5 through 7. What follows subsequently is Bennett's intensive exploration of integration, community, and discourses of integration, which particularly resonate with chapter 5. The final account of socioprognostic implications for policy makers and researchers is a unique innovation of this chapter.

### **Evaluation and Recommendation**

To conclude, Bennett's monograph succeeds on three fronts. First, drawing on DHA, the text features a variety of key issues, ranging from immigration to racism, ethics, identity, ideology, and nationalism. It is an encapsulation of the authentic "stories" migrants live by. Second, the volume adopts

a range of discursive research methods, including statistics, a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis, and interview and corpus techniques. Doing so makes the research less subjective and arbitrary. It also should be mentioned that the monograph does, to a certain extent, illuminate policy makers and the public, the “now,” and perhaps the “yet to be” of continuing immigration. Herein arises a serious question to answer: How can migrants become potential citizens and political actors, rather than merely British residents?

Apart from its strengths, a few critical points deserve attention. Were I the author, I would rearrange the sections of chapter 1. For example, sections 1.2, 1.3, and 1.7 could be grouped into a broader section on theoretical foundations, as the contents are concerned with CDA. A further drawback of the volume is its lower numbers (just 15) of participants interviewed as third-country nationals, but this is justified by Bennett on the grounds that “it was immensely difficult to reach informants from such communities and with such legal status” (p. 22). In addition, non-European readers would be pleased to see more discussion of right-wing populist politics and parties. Such readers are suggested to refer to Ruth Wodak (2015) or Tjitske Akkerman, Sarah L. de Lange, and Matthijs Rooduijn (2016) for a comprehensive understanding.

In summary, the book is a worthwhile read for scholars and general audiences interested in CDA, communication, conversation analysis, politics, and sociology, particularly identity studies.

### References

Akkerman, T., de Lange, S. L., & Rooduijn, M. (Eds.). (2016). *Radical right-wing populist parties in Western Europe: Into the mainstream?* Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

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