

## THE SLOW SHIFT IN ORTHODOXY: (RE)FORMULATIONS OF ‘INTEGRATION’ IN BELGIUM

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### 1. Introduction

In the introduction to their volume on *Natural histories of discourse*, Silverstein & Urban argue that “[p]olitics can be seen (...) as the struggle to entextualize authoritatively, and hence, in one relevant move, to fix certain metadiscursive perspectives on texts and discourse practices” (1996: 11). Metadiscursive entextualization—inserting texts into a chosen metadiscursive context and hence indicating the preferred way(s) of ‘reading’ these texts—is then a strategic practice often aimed at the “acceptance of a metadiscourse by a community”, a process that may be “at the very center of a community’s organizing social categories and their relationship, including political hierarchies” (1996: 12).<sup>1</sup> In the same volume, Hugh Mehan inserts these ideas in the more general problematic of the ‘politics of representation’:

“Proponents of various positions in conflicts waged in and through discourse attempt to capture or dominate modes of representation (...). This competition over the meaning of ambiguous events, people, and objects in the world has been called the ‘politics of representation’. (...) Indeed, the process of lexical labeling is itself an entextualization process. Complex, contextually nuanced discussions get summed up in (and, hence, are entextualized through) a single word” (Mehan 1996: 253).

In what follows, I want to document this process of metadiscursive entextualization in the context of political struggle with material drawn from political discourse on the integration of immigrants in Belgium.<sup>2</sup> More in particular, I want to focus on the discourse on the term ‘integration’ itself (i.e. the term defining the relationship between immigrants and the local majority). Integration is the kind of single word, referred to by Mehan, which summes up complex and contextually nuanced discussions. It catches and expresses the power balance between the autochthonous Belgian majority and groups of immigrants, and (re)shapes this

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to the participants of the panel on *Violence and social struggle in discourse* (5<sup>th</sup> International Pragmatics Conference, Mexico City July 1996), and in particular its convenor Charles Briggs and discussants Allen Grimshaw and Michael Silverstein, for helpful comments on a previous version of this paper. The data for this paper were collected in the context of a wider research program on ideologies related to intercultural matters in Belgium and in Europe, carried out jointly with Jef Verschueren, whose intellectual input is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

<sup>2</sup> See Blommaert & Verschueren 1991, 1994 for a general *aperçu* of this kind of discourse.

balance every time it is used, because integration is one of those ‘over-arching concepts’ whose poly-entextualizability has become a handy instrument in the management of power. As Noel Thompson (1996: 37) notes:

“Over-arching concepts (...) have their value both in determining the ground upon which political debate takes place and broadening the basis of support for the party which successfully employs them. There is considerable electoral virtue in a concept open to disparate interpretations and satisfying a variety of political tastes”.

I will situate the struggle for entextualization in a descriptive political, communicative and historical unit, the debate. Section 2 will provide some reflections on the notion of ‘debate’ as well as on the role of metadiscourse in debates. Section 3 will then discuss a series of mechanisms observable in the debate on integration in Belgium. Section 4 concludes and summarizes the argument.

## 2. Metadiscourse and the ‘debate’

In the field of politics, struggle and contestation are generically captured under the label of ‘debate’. The political process develops through a series of debates involving a variety of social actors: Politicians and policy-makers themselves, experts, interested members of the public, the media. Debates are, political-ideologically, the points of entrance for civil society into policy making: They are (seen as) the historical moments during which the polity gets involved in shaping policies. And for our purpose here, it is crucial to note that this shaping process is mainly a process of shaping textual tools captured under terms such as ‘public opinion’: Interpretations of policies, illustrative applications of policy statements to various areas of social life and social experience—a variety of forms of entextualization of policy texts.

Though there may be a prototypical perception of ‘political debates’, it is hard to provide conclusive criteria for identifying them, both in terms of discourse event-type (identities of participants, genres, time span, setting, etc.) as in terms of their relation to the outcome of decision-making procedures. In the light of the textual nature of the process, it would be accurate to characterize debates as historical episodes of textualization, as histories of texts in which a struggle is waged between various texts and metatexts. This struggle is characterized by an asymmetry in textual authority, which distinguishes ‘policy-makers’ from ‘non-policy-makers’, and which is expressed in attempts at redefining by the latter and control over a (constructed) ‘space of allowed interpretations’ by the former. The policy-makers ultimately define which attempt at redefining by other parties will be considered a ‘legitimate’, acceptable amendment, and it is them who assign metatextual labels to the other parties’ interventions. They can qualify them as ‘left’ or ‘right’, associate them with particular pressure groups or interest groups, downplay the general validity of the position taken by particular actors and so forth, and so determine which entextualizations offered during the debate will result in a ‘revision’ or an ‘update’ of the policy proposal.

Underlying is an ideology of *fixed text*, controlled and manipulated by the policy-makers but widely shared by the other participants in the debate, and culturally anchored in a widespread belief in “the fixity of text, the transparency of language, and the

universality of shared, available meaning”—what Collins defines as the ideology of ‘textualism’ (Collins 1996: 204). Collins shows how textualism alongside schooled literacy and the conversational asymmetry which characterized the ‘normal order’ of classroom interaction between teachers and pupils “can be seen as important elements of a complex ideological and institutional substratum that underlies early literacy training in our society” (1996: 206). What Collins thus identifies belongs to a well-known complex of language ideologies in which singularity is preferred over diversity (*the* language), in which the abstract and denotational is preferred over the contextual and indexical, in which varieties of language are hierarchically ranked and each accompanied by qualitative, social, cultural and cognitive evaluations. It is the complex of ideas about language that is in fact, to paraphrase Hymes (1996: 26), one of the big “problems to be overcome with regard to language”. It is the locus and instrument of power, of inequality, of permanent struggles between those who control it and those who (believe they) need it.

The main textual tool for policy-makers is a text-artefact perceived as a stable, clear and precise semantic unit. Texts are ‘adopted’, ‘confirmed’, ‘revised’, ‘submitted’, ‘voted on’ and so on, and the ‘adoption’ of a text suggests the creation of maximum semantic transparency (‘literal’ meaning), clear-cut applicability to a variety of (assumedly well-defined) social practices, ideological and social alignment (reflecting the ‘consensus’ over these matters), and finally also coherence (or, at least, continuity) with previous policy actions and policy actions in other domains (the policy of *this* government). The actions of opposing actors in the debates are, consequently, inspired by a *reading* of the text-artefact,<sup>3</sup> and aimed at a *re-writing* of certain parts of the original text-artefact. The anchor points in the debate are often text-technical elements: Clauses, phrases, particular wording patterns, particular terms. This ideology of fixed text underlies the construction of a space of allowed interpretations. It is assumed that the text itself is clear and transparent, and that the limits of its meaning can only be stretched so far. It also allows metatextual qualifications such as ‘left’ or ‘right’ on the basis of perceived traditions of intertextuality, in which particular groups in society are seen as systematically ‘reading certain things into’ clear, transparent texts. The Left and the Right are, in this context, seen as traditions of semantic ‘curbing’: the ‘neutral’ texts produced by policy-makers are systematically ‘curbed’ into a particular (‘ideologically biased’) direction. In turn, the various actors in the debate boomerang metatextual qualifications onto the policy text, denying its neutrality and adding intertextual associations to the text (‘another right wing decision from a right wing government’; ‘another anti free trade decision’).

At this point, the importance of metadiscourse in the whole process should have become clear. The debate is a struggle over entextualizations with a strong undertone of textual dogmatism. It uses metadiscursive hierarchies, in which a draft ranks lower than a final version, the written word higher than the spoken one, the collective voice higher than

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<sup>3</sup> Note that the public debate usually often starts as soon as a text-artefact (e.g. a policy paper, a draft bill) has been *made public*. The ideology of ‘fixed text’ in politics includes a view in which the text only exists when it is made public (i.e. publication transforms the text from a personal, ‘unofficial’ statement into a statement with societal, hence ‘political’ dimensions). Leaks about opinions circulating during the preparatory phases, i.e. before the publication *strictu sensu* of the text-artefact are therefore also seen as ‘publications’ and may trigger pre-emptive actions from actors in the debate.

the individual, general statements higher than particular or local ones, and so on.<sup>4</sup> The end result is not one authoritative entextualization, but a space of possible entextualizations which can be sanctioned as 'valid'. The issue, for debaters, is thus to insert their entextualizations into that space. In the next section, it will appear that the term integration is constantly 'colonized' and inserted into a variety of discourse strategies, both of a strictly 'defining' nature as well as of an argumentative nature. We thus arrive at a whole set of formulations and reformulations, anchored into an idea of coherence with the fixed text which serves as its source and from which the (re)formulations derive their authority.

### 3. Fragments from the debate on 'integration'

Let us take a look at some of the semantic adventures of the term 'integration'. I will discuss three sets of phenomena: (i) the dogmatization of the concept by the government authorities in dealing with criticism, compared to reformulations of the concept in public discourse by the same officials; (ii) right-wing appropriation of the term; (iii) the use of 'integration' as a side-argument in implementation measures. But before that, we need to take a look at the text-artefact which functions as the 'source text' of the debate -- the 'official' text associated with maximum clarity, social consensus and so on.

The Belgian 'integration policies' (i.e. explicit policies aimed at treating what was seen as the problems caused by the presence of sizeable groups of permanent immigrants) took shape in the period 1989-1993, when a Royal Commissariat for Migrant Policies (henceforth KCM) headed by the former Christian-Democrat Minister Mrs. Paula D'Hondt and supervised by Prime Minister Wilfried Martens produced report upon report littered with scientific facts and analyses and invariably ending with dozens of policy proposals. The most crucial document defining integration policies is the first KCM report (KCM 1989): A monumental three-volume oeuvre, in which the blueprint for what was to become the official Belgian approach to migrant affairs was sketched and in which a plethora of demographic, administrative, social-economic and other basic facts were presented.<sup>5</sup>

In this crucial report, the most crucial fragment is the definition of the 'concept of integration' (KCM 1989: 38-39):

The proposals (...) that will follow, will be inspired by a concept of integration, which simultaneously

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<sup>4</sup> The following (typical) quote may be illustrative, both of the centrality of textual tools and of the salience of metadiscursive hierarchies. When interviewed about a set of proposed policy changes in the Department of Justice, the Belgian Prime Minister Dehaene commented on the procedure to follow (the interview was given in Dutch on the Belgian-Flemish radio, 7 December 1996; here, as well as with all other examples given in this paper, I provided a literal English translation): "We have texts here that are not to be taken as they are, but on which we want an extensive debate in Parliament. That is the reason why we work with memoranda rather than with draft bills, so as to reflect opinions."

<sup>5</sup> It may be interesting to note how the 'pure' political dimension of the KCM activities was constantly downplayed by insisting on an 'academic' style and format of writing. The KCM reports are not only seen as policy papers, they are also seen (and were presented) as *scientific* analyses of the 'migrant problem'. A Royal Commissariat is, in the Belgian context, also a non-political institution more or less comparable to a technical department in a ministry.

1. Starts from the notion of 'insertion', using the following criteria:
  - a) assimilation where the public order so demands
  - b) a consistent promotion of an optimal insertion according to the guiding social principles that are the basis of the culture of the host country and that revolve around 'modernity', 'emancipation' and 'full-fledged pluralism'—in the sense given by a modern western state.
  - c) unambiguous respect for cultural diversity-as-mutual-enrichment in the other domains;
2. And which is accompanied by a promotion of the structural involvement of minorities in the activities and the objectives of the authorities.

This text obviously has a textual history of its own (one which has been effectively blackboxed: Very little is known of the genesis of this formula). But it is this text which became the source text for an intense debate on its meaning and its range of applicability. The text is authoritative: The formula was adopted by the various governments following 1989, as the basis of 'migrant policies' of these governments. It has never been officially revised or revoked.

### 3.1. *Dogmatization versus reformulation: Manipulating the interpretational space*

Officials responsible for the production of the concept of integration have given proof of significant flexibility in using the concept they authored in a variety of contexts. Two main strategies can be distinguished: (a) whenever the concept of integration was attacked, in particular whenever *parts* of the concept were criticized or whenever the *practice* of integration policies was attacked, the concept was dogmatized; (b) in a variety of other contexts, mostly in public speeches, vulgarizing writings or intervention during public debates, the concept was lexically or argumentatively reformulated. Both strategies form a dynamic of entextualization, which causes a *variety of authoritative versions* of the concept of integration to float around in the debate. The versions are authoritative because they were produced by people strongly involved in the production of the source text. The effect is vagueness: Despite the suggested clarity of the concept of integration (there is only one 'original' version, accepted by the Belgian government and sanctioned by Parliament), the central actors in the field of migration policies create other, different versions of the same concept, thus adding new authoritative entextualizations of the concept. The concept of integration thus becomes a user-friendly concept, open to manipulation by groups or individuals who want to impose their own agenda on it, and who find ammunition in the reformulations of the concept given by authoritative actors.

#### a) Dogmatization

In line with the ideology of fixed text, one of the consistent elements in reactions to criticisms was to refer to the original text of the 1989 KCM report. In it, so it was suggested, were the only true meanings of the key terms and concepts. Further on, we will see that often these references to the original concept of integration display important textual and semantic differences with the source text. But the process is clear: Criticism to the concept is countered by a dogmatized reading of the concept, in other words, by a retreat behind the ideology of fixed text.

When in the Winter of 1992-1993, some controversy arose about the validity of the

concept of integration, fueled by an analysis made by Jef Verschueren and myself (Blommaert & Verschueren 1992) on the contextual semantics of the concept (the *way of speaking* of integration, in Hymesian terminology), the KCM Chief of Staff Johan Leman emerged as the main defender of the concept. One of the central arguments of our analysis, in which pragmatic aspects of language such as presuppositions and implicatures were central, was that the 'structural involvement' part of the concept of integration was *in the realities of the usage of the concept* made conditional by the aspects of cultural adaptation. In a published attack against our analysis, Leman (1993) emphatically stressed the importance of reading the text 'as it is', in its full integrity, devoid of innuendos, implications or other forms of guesswork. Leman quotes the full text of the original concept, italicizing the phrase 'and which is accompanied by', which initiates part 2 of the concept, to underscore the non-conditionality of structural involvement by cultural adaptation. He then adds, in a passage which could qualify as a stereotype of textual dogmatism because of the concatenation of metapragmatic qualifications such as 'in extenso', 'literally', 'in its totality', 'precisely rendered', 'literal quotation' and 'what is on the lines' (1993: 133):

"By the way: Why couldn't this passage, a key passage in the November report of 1989 and printed in bold face, not be quoted *in extenso* and *literally*? Why can this passage be found *nowhere* in its totality and *precisely* rendered? In a 250-page book, which aims primarily at criticizing the policy aspect of the concepts used, a literal quotation of what is 'on the lines' surely wouldn't have constituted a crime against linguistic pragmatics?" (emphasis in original)

The line of argument is clear: A faithful quotation of the dogmatic version of the concept of integration would have thrown a different light on our critique. It would prove how wrong we were in suggesting that full involvement of migrants was conditioned by cultural adaptation. Put simply: We used the wrong *text*, or we wronged the right text, we went beyond the limits of allowed interpretation. The original (fixed, source) text is far better than the ones we used, and consequently, our critique was misguided.. It is a highly suggestive argument, which involves elements of intellectual honesty, integrity and methodological correctness. The ideology of fixed text is projected onto critics as a normative frame defining truthfulness, fairness and correctness, thus sketching a moral code for conducting the debate -- at least, when developments in the debate call for such a projection. Note how our interpretation is metadiscursively qualified as illegitimate largely on textual grounds: We did not pay enough attention to the (pure, transparent, literal) source text, and hence, what we say can be qualified as beyond the boundaries of allowed interpretation.

## b) Reformulations

We have seen above how Leman returned our critique against the unilateral character of the integration concept by pointing towards the fact that, in the source text, the first part (the demands made to migrants) was complemented by a second part on structural involvement from migrants in official matters. The crucial text-structural element was that of conditionality. In our view, structural involvement was conditioned by the demands of 'insertion', i.e. migrants could only gain access to socially desirable functions if they gave

proof of 'integration'. Leman rebutted this claim, saying that 'insertion' and 'involvement' went side by side. The textual anchor for his argument is the nonlinear ordering of the various parts of the concept of integration: Part 1 is subdivided into three subparts, and then followed by part 2. Our claim was that, in effect, the four elements (i.e. the three elements of part 1 and the one element of part 2) were seen as one single, linear package, in which structural involvement was conditioned by the other elements.

However, in a variety of contexts in which the concept of integration was presented to the public, the original two-part structure was forgotten and the four elements were indeed juxtaposed linearly. Let us have a look at two reformulations given by the Royal Commissioner, Mrs. Paula D'Hondt, herself. In an opinion article in the daily newspaper *De Standaard* (1-2 February 1992, p.7), she wrote:

- (1) Integration of migrants in our society has been defined as *insertion* by us. We have concretized this concept in four points. One can find these four points in our first report of November 1989: In the first two points, we demand things from migrants, in the other two, we are open to them.
1. We demand assimilation where the public order is concerned. That means that migrants have to respect the Belgian laws, with no exception, all of them, just like any Belgian.
  2. We demand that the fundamental social principles of our society be respected by everyone, so also by migrants: The emancipation of women, as we understand it; mutual tolerance; our language, and so forth.
  3. Apart from these two very important things that we demand from migrants—and more cannot be demanded from people in a law-abiding society, regardless of whether they are migrants or Belgians—we are open to what those people can contribute: In the artistic, culinary, linguistic, cultural and other domains. There, we assume that mutual enrichment is not only possible but even desirable, a condition for progress.
  4. We also say that sufficiently competent people from migrant circles should be involved in the objectives and the activities of the authorities, because this is the only road to emancipation, just like it was for women.

The version of the concept of integration given during a speech on youth work (*Jeugdwerk in intercultureel perspectief*, Leuven 23 October 1992) reads:

- (2) Therefore, 'insertion', for migrants, means:
1. A complete assimilation to the Belgian law. The Belgian law is everybody's law on our territory, regardless of whether he [sic] is a migrant or a Belgian.
  2. A complete respect for the orienting, fundamental ideas of our western society. And that means that my [sic] concept of integration is not neutral! It includes, for instance, the knowledge of the regional language. Also, the separation between Church and State, as it has been shaped here, remains primordial. Also, the emancipation of women, as we understand it; and the reciprocity among people as we understand it.
- But it also means—and that is the proposed respect for minorities:
3. that, once the two first conditions have been met, there will be openness, and even promotion, of mutual cultural enrichment.
  4. that there will be a promotion for people from the minority groups who have complied in exemplary fashion with the first three criteria, in the sense that they would fulfill exemplary functions in important societal niches.

Two points can be noted with regard to these two reformulations. First, the complexity of the original concept has been reduced, both lexically and structurally. Lexically, the whole concept is now called 'insertion', whereas in the original formulation, 'insertion' only pertained to the first part of the concept. Structurally, the four elements have indeed be

linearly ordered, and the two-part and subordinate structure of the original concept has given way to a much simpler version, propagated, it should be recalled, by the Royal Commissioner herself. Secondly, and contrary to Leman's dogmatized reading, there is a clear and explicit conditionality for the structural involvement of migrants in these reformulations. In example 1, this conditionality remains hidden in the phrase 'sufficiently competent people'—competence, in effect, being equated to 'integration'—but in example 2, it is made topical in the third and fourth points D'Hondt mentions.

But these text-structural operations do not exhaust the repertoire by means of which sociopolitical power asymmetries can be discursively articulated. It may be interesting to note how, in example 2, a peculiar and strongly reductionist concept of 'culture' is being used: The culture of migrants is reduced to art, cuisine, music and other surface domains covered by a restricted use of the term 'culture' (one that obviously does not include 'deeper' societal values, likely to clash with 'our' orienting fundamental principles). Also, in both examples some emphasis is put on 'our language', Dutch. This emphasis on language proficiency was absent from the original formulation, but it fits into the normalization of Herderian 'one language, one culture' perceptions in an increasingly nationalist climate in Belgian-Flemish politics, in which the use of Dutch is commonly perceived as the main index of cultural adaptation. In both examples also, some stress is laid on the phrase 'as we understand it', in relation to the meaning and the practice of some of the so-called fundamental societal principles. In connection with the emphasis on language as a salient criterium of cultural adaptation, and on a superficial filling of the 'culture' of migrants, this creates an impression of cultural closure: Our culture is a closed unit, which should not undergo any transformations due to the presence and the 'insertion' of migrants. The condition for accepting migrants, and for respecting their culture, is that our own culture should remain untouched.

The important point in these two examples is the way in which a concept which, on the one hand, is used in a very dogmatic way, can become reformulated in other circumstances in ways that are far from innocent. The conditional relation between cultural adaptation and structural participation, as can be judged from D'Hondt's reformulations, was certainly part of the reproduction of the source text by its main architects, even if it was emphatically denied in other contexts. The fact is that the existence of multiple versions of the concept, apparently only differing in details and degrees of transparency, creates a potential for power in a wide variety of contexts. For one thing, it allows fractions in society who would tend not to agree to a 'soft' reading of the concept of integration to rally behind a 'harder' reading of the concept, offered not by dissidents, but by the policy makers themselves, as if it were one and the same thing. (That is why the KCM could claim, in its final report, that "The concept of integration developed by the KCM has been accepted by almost everyone, be it in a different formulation": 1993: 15.) By reformulating the concept, D'Hondt (and others) create new parameters for allowed interpretations of the concept. The identity of the producers—here, the Royal Commissioner herself—simultaneously entextualizes these reformulations as mere re-enactments of the source text. In other words, despite the clear difference in textual structure and possible lines of actions contained in the various formulations, they can still be presented as the 'true' authoritative text-meaning of 'integration'.

Another point of critique against the concept of integration was the intrinsic culturalization involved in the 'insertion' process sketched in the concept. This point is, I



believe, amply vindicated by the reformulations given above, in which the emphasis on culture and the avoidance of harder, material relations are quite clearly articulated. Yet, officials have repeatedly tried to indicate that, in contrast to their own preference for 'culturalist' usages, the concept of integration should in fact be seen as a primarily socio-economic, rather than a cultural notion. Such reformulations are often guided by motives of rhetorical alignment, i.e. they are dependent on the particular audience or participant framework in which they are being produced. Again, two examples can be given. The examples are taken from notes made during public debates in which I participated together with officials in charge of migrant policies. Example (3) is a paraphrase of a statement by CGKR-director Johan Leman during a debate in Antwerp (14 June 1995):

- (3) "One has to read the concept of integration in the context of a policy document made in 1989. Today, we'd rather speak of a concept of emancipation. I don't care about the name; the point is: We had to obtain a parliamentary majority for our policy, and the concept proved to be a handy mobilizing instrument. The original concept contained four parts. For as far as the 'orienting fundamental principles' goes, I myself was upset by the kind of referents given to this. And I wouldn't use a term such as 'modernity' anymore. In general, this element was too vaguely put."

Example (4) is a paraphrase of the definition of the concept of integration as given by one of Leman's senior CGKR-collaborators H. Boukhriss during a debate in Roeselare (23 September 1993):

- (4)
1. Assimilation to the public order
  2. stimulate (not force) the acceptance of emancipation, pluralism etc., because these values generate social opportunities
  3. Accept that others are different, including in the domain of religion (Islam)
  4. Participation to power.

Note, in these examples, how the emphasis is drawn away from culture or culture-related domains, and placed on power and socio-economic upward mobility. Leman speaks of 'emancipation' instead of 'integration', adding that, to him, both terms do not make a lot of difference. They do, of course: Emancipation is a term nested in the semantic-rhetorical tradition of the labor movement, the trade unions and feminism, in which it acquired a distinct socio-economic and power orientation. It is, of course, highly questionable whether the feminist movement would agree to the kind of 'emancipation' concept offered to them by Leman. But the debate was organized by a section of the socialist trade union, and the term 'emancipation' certainly had a positive appeal to the audience, because of its recognizability in terms of the union's own history. Also, Leman now rejects the term 'modernity', saying that it was too vague, and—implicitly—that terms such as 'modernity' allowed for unwarranted interpretations. Modernity, in the sense used in the concept of integration, primarily pertains to values and social norms (pluralism, tolerance, equality for women, Church-State separation...), and the concept was given a distinct evolutionist and culturalist dimension in reformulations such as those of D'Hondt quoted above. So if there were 'unwarranted' interpretations, the government itself had arguably offered some space for them in reformulations of the concept.

In example (4), the 'softness' of the concept stands in sharp contrast to the versions given by D'Hondt in examples (1) and (2). Whereas D'Hondt was unambiguous with regard to the unilateral nature of 'insertion', Boukhriss here talks of 'stimulating (not

forcing)’ the acceptance of the basic principles of the host society, and of the need to ‘accept that others are different’, adding a reference to Islam. Islam, to D’Hondt was rather less the object of acceptance of difference. Repeatedly during her career, she referred to Islam in stigmatizing terms. In the speech from which example (2) was taken, she for instance states (after having noted that her concept of integration allows for the development of cultural life among migrants):

“But conversely, it is the case that a fundamentalist variant of Islam cannot be accepted, at least not here. An Islam that integrates [itself] can.”

The degree of difference that should be accepted on the basis of the concept of integration apparently differs in the versions of D’Hondt and Boukhriss. Boukhriss also uses the phrase ‘participation to power’, a left-wing, benevolent reformulation of the original ‘structural involvement in the objectives and activities of the authorities’, and he adds a rational, functionalist rationale to the second element of his concept of integration: Migrants should adapt to the guiding principles of our society, because that would create better opportunities for them. In other words, and note the colonialist twist in this argument, cultural adaptation will generate prosperity, absence of cultural adaptation will keep people in underprivileged positions.

What we see in all this, is how central actors in the process of ideological production and reproduction themselves construct a sort of semantic harmonica with regard to the key concept they promote. But all these reformulations are seen and presented as mere *replications* of the fixed text. Thus, the reformulations offer a potential for alignment to other social actors, who can pick up the directions hidden in any one of the various versions of the concept of integration produced by the authoritative voices in that field, and transform them into ingredients of their own vision on the question of migration. The authoritative reformulations so determine—dialogically and through the various mechanisms of alignment—the space of allowed interpretation in the debate. As such, it is not surprising that D’Hondt’s doctrine was acclaimed both by the right wing and by the left wing, be it on very different grounds, and embedded in very different views of society (the way in which the right wing used the concept of integration will be discussed below). The vagueness created by the various authoritative reformulations of the concept thus became—intentionally or not—a very fine instrument for creating a political consensus and, at a deeper level, hegemony for the dogma of integration.

### 3.2. *Right-wing appropriation*

The Belgian integration policies started from the acceptance of the lasting presence of groups of immigrants in Belgium. The concept of integration was meant to define the conditions under which their presence would be accepted and managed. The basic assumption is not shared by parts of the Belgian right wing, who view the presence of immigrants as undesirable *per se* or acceptable only under very strict conditions. Yet, even these right wing groups have adopted the term integration, and have inserted their entextualizations into the space of allowed interpretations. Note that I do not want to suggest that left-wing appropriation of the concept would be less relevant or worthy of comment, nor that right-wing appropriations of the term are ‘worse’ than any other form of discourse

manipulation. I will focus my attention exclusively on right-wing appropriation only for reasons of expository clarity and space, hoping that I shall have the occasion to discuss similar mechanisms more fully and in greater detail elsewhere.

The next example documents a case in which integration is used in an apology of what can at best be called a very biased decision taken by a local politician. The setting is the town of Sint Truiden in 1994. Sint Truiden lies in the heart of a horticulture area which attracts groups of foreign workers for the harvest season. This time, a group of Sikhs from India had settled in Sint Truiden, and they had become the object of racist aggression. In the summer of 1993, a molotov-cocktail was thrown at a house populated by Sikhs. In the winter of 1993-1994, the social welfare service of the Sint Truiden town council decided to reduce the benefit allowance to Sikhs, on the grounds that they lived with seven or eight in one house and that 'they don't eat meat anyway' (*ergo*, they don't need much money). The mayor of Sint Truiden, a flamboyant Christian Democrat named Jef Cleeren, was invited to a TV talkshow to explain that decision. At a given moment during the talkshow, the following sequence occurred:

(5) *Interviewer*: I'd like to discuss the argument you used, that they live with so many in a house and need less...

*Cleeren*: THEY have to be able to *integrate themselves* like our people; when there are ten people living in a house [owned] by the local population then there is a regulation for asylum seekers, for the foreigners, they have to adapt to OUR culture, to our regulation and to our norms and not the other way round.

Apart from the incoherence of the (heated) argument, what strikes the observer is that Cleeren refers to integration as his source of legitimacy. But what does integration here legitimize? A measure taken on the grounds of two racial stereotypes: (a) Sikhs can live with less money than Belgians, because they don't eat meat; in other words, whereas the law dictates that every human being residing on Belgian soil is entitled to an equal degree of welfare support from local authorities, Cleeren decides that the cultural and religious traditions of one group of inhabitants makes them eligible to a privileged treatment in the negative sense; (b) Sikhs create ghetto's, and ghetto's are a source of danger and annoyance. He does recognize that his council's measure is a form of punishment, but the punishment is intended to do well: It should encourage Sikhs to adapt to our (= the Belgians') customs and norms, and it should encourage them to either leave Sint Truiden or to break up their ghetto's. Apparently, to Cleeren's mind, these are two goals that are compatible with 'integration'.

Let us take a closer look at how Cleeren structures his 'integration' case, for it documents the way in which integration is inserted in a completely different rhetoric using different registers and frames than the ones used by more immigrant-friendly actors. Not surprisingly, the whole utterance is structured around an opposition between 'us' and 'them', intonationally marked by heavy stress on 'they' and 'our'. 'They' are qualified by negative statements: They have to integrate themselves and adapt themselves to our culture, norms etc. (implication: They are *not* integrating and adapting themselves); they cause overpopulation and they violate the regulations of the city council. The 'us' is qualified neutrally, in terms of norms and regulations. 'Us' is the seemingly unquestionable yardstick, by means of which others' behavior is evaluated. The relationship thus defined between the majority and the Sikhs is completely unilateral: We are the providers of norms

and regulations, to which they have to adapt. If they don't, there is a problem of integration.

Also striking is the grammatical perspective in which 'integration' is put: It is made reflexive (integrate *themselves*), so that the full responsibility for the process lies with those who have to undergo it, and so that an element of volition is introduced in the semantics of the term (if they are not integrated, that means that they don't *want* to integrate themselves). The reflexive use of integration appears over and over again in the rhetoric of the moderate right-wing, each time with the implicit elements of responsibility and volition heavily stressed. It is a perfect lexical-semantic frame for a strategy of blaming and reproaching: Migrant problems are *their* problems, they cause them and they should solve them. Secondly, integration is explicitly synonymized with unilateral 'adaptation' to our culture, norms and regulations, 'not the other way round'. This is one of the standard entextualizations of integration, one that has gained currency among the right-wing participants to the debate. It is exegetically justified, but only partially: It selects the first part of the KCM 1989 definition of 'integration', and forgets the rest. A partial acceptance of the source text (in the form of echoes, quotations or other forms of replication) can suffice as a strategy, for it suggest full acceptance of the source text. Note how this connects to the ideology of fixed text: In the eyes of its promoters, reformulations of the concept of integration are *per se* innocent, as long as the 'gist', 'essence' or 'core' of the text appears to have been adopted. The point is, however, that integration can be used as a defensive weapon in cases such as these ones, where racism underlies the political decisions taken by Cleeren's council, and where a history of racial violence further creates an intertextual pattern of racist framings. Cleeren's decision and public statements were of course denounced by government officials (saying that they were 'ill advised' and 'less than careful', referring to Cleeren's style and timing), but no one challenged the connection he made between the discriminatory treatment of Sikhs and the argument of integration.

Even the radical right wing has appropriated integration, and uses it as an ironic strategy to criticize measures taken in the context of integration policies. The radical right wing, and most prominently the Vlaams Blok party, provides a coherent but radically different entextualization of integration, mobilizing a genuine *theory* of intercultural relations as its basic textual and intertextual frame. In the view of the Vlaams Blok, integration is basically impossible, and the most desirable solution for the 'migrant problems' would consist of sending foreigners back to their home lands. Simultaneously, however, they sustain this view with a cultural theory which can best be described as a radical version of relativism. All cultures are equal; but all cultures function perfectly only within the confines of their historical region of origin. Transgression of cultural boundaries, for instance through migration or intermarriage, leads to the distortion of a natural order and hence to conflicts. Consequently, there is no problem with the culture of the Turkish and Moroccan migrants in Belgium outside the sheer fact that they are in Belgium. Their culture is not inferior to that of the local majority, it is just not the culture that belongs in Belgium. This sophisticated line of argument allows the Vlaams Blok to avoid charges of racism (usually based on extremely narrow interpretations of racism as a theory of racial superiority). They are very conspicuous in avoiding references to cultural superiority and inferiority, and they motivate all their negative statements vis-à-vis migrants in terms of the elaborated cultural theory sketched above.

Given this basic rejection of the possibilities of coexistence of cultures within one region, the way in which the Vlaams Blok uses integration in skirmishes with the

government is essentially ironic, and aimed at exposing the fundamental weaknesses of various authoritative entextualizations of the concept of integration and the (presumedly multiculturalist) philosophy behind it. Consider this extract of a debate in the Flemish Parliament (*Vlaamse Raad, Beknopt Verslag, 17 februari 1993*, p.8). The Vlaams Blok spokesman Filip Dewinter questions the Flemish Minister of Education on a recent decision which allowed muslim girls to wear a scarf in State schools:

- (6) "Of course this matter touches on more than just wearing the scarf. The Flemish Government with this new approach plays in the hands of the Islamic fundamentalists. This is an obstacle for the integration of second- and third-generation migrants. Even in certain North-African countries, the scarf is only worn among very traditional groups of the population. Allowing the scarf impedes integration. By allowing the scarf, the Minister in fact admits that integration is an illusion. In that sense he comes close to the views of the Vlaams Blok. Only, we are much more consistent, and we conclude from this that only a policy of repatriation makes sense. The Vlaams Blok advocates the reintegration of foreigners in their own community. In view of this we want to build a separate education system for them, which could prepare them for their repatriation."

This is a very clever piece of political rhetoric, in which Dewinter appropriates arguments used in authoritative versions of integration (viz. the rejection of fundamentalism, see above), associates these arguments with the concrete case at hand (viz. wearing the scarf as a sign of fundamentalism), then jumps to conclusions which highlight the virtues of the Vlaams Blok's view (viz. the illusion of integration and the greater coherence of their repatriation policy), and inserts the Minister's decision into the Vlaams Blok logic. It is an embarrassing piece of rhetoric: Many politicians find it very hard to react against objections such as these, in which their own doctrine is ironically turned against them. Quite a few of them, moreover, would agree to Dewinter's starting point: That wearing a scarf signifies sympathy for Islamic fundamentalism, and that fundamentalism is an obstacle to the integration of Muslim migrants in Belgium. As we have seen above, the authors of the concept of integration themselves were less than clear with regard to how Islam fitted into the picture of integration, and how they themselves raised (and thus legitimated) doubts about the 'integration-enhancing' potential of Islam. The right wing exploits this element in the space of allowed interpretations and uses it to construct its own coherent, but radically different, concept of integration. The irony can be constructed around a 'colonization' of the mainstream trope 'scarf wearing = Islamic fundamentalism = anti-integration'; this trope is entextualized in another set of arguments, it is made to signify other things, and so the dispute appears to be one of *consequences* rather than one of diagnosis.

### 3.3. *Integration as an argument*

Integration also appears as an argument supporting or undermining policy options or decisions, either directly or indirectly related to migrant policies. The policy options or decisions may be said to be 'integration-enhancing' or, contrarily, 'an obstacle to integration'. Mostly, integration is used in an unspecified, decontextualized way in arguments of this kind. Its content is taken for granted, and its connotations are invariably positive. In arguments such as these, 'integration' takes a role more or less comparable to

'democracy' in other contexts. Measures are 'pro-democracy' and hence good, regardless of the specific contribution they are supposed to bring to (what kind of) democracy. In quite a few cases, however, the references to integration are indirect, vague, or oblique. Other terms are selected from the field which is generally perceived to be related to 'integration'. One may mention 'migrant/migration policies' or 'insertion' as synonyms for integration policies, or one may refer to specific sub-themes contained under the general heading of integration: The fight against racism, the promotion of tolerance, multiculturalism, and so on.

It is through such indirect references that we can get yet another glimpse of the space of allowed interpretation for integration. We can see how integration has come to stand at the taxonomic top of a semantic field which includes all kinds of positive, humanist political terms used for referring to an harmonious society in which minorities live together with the majority.

Let us examine two cases in which integration emerges as an argument supporting particular measures with regard to foreigners. The first case is the development of a more restrictive asylum policy; the second one is that of the introduction of a 'non-discrimination agreement' in the Flemish education system.

#### (a) Asylum policy

One of the basic elements of the integration policy developed by the KCM was that, in order to give maximum chances for integration of the migrants residing in Belgium, the influx of new migrants should be reduced to a minimum. It was argued that new 'migration waves' should be 'humanely controlled', so that all the available means could be used for improving the life conditions and the social opportunities of the migrants who had settled in Belgium a long time ago.

In practice, the control of migration waves took on a new dynamic during the late 1980s, when gradually higher numbers of third world (and later, East-European) people arrived in Belgium and other West-European countries as refugees or asylum seekers. In Belgium, the 'asylum problem' was born as soon as the issue of 'new' migrants (asylum seekers) became caught up with that of the integration of 'old' migrants, and the debate on migrants became poisoned by an even more inflated category 'migrant' (now covering both resident migrants, including members of the second and third generation, together with newly arrived refugees). Stereotypical associations such as that between migrants and crime gained more and more currency, and features of one group were projected onto the other. Eventually, a new and very restrictive asylum policy was developed by the consecutive social-democratic Ministers of the Interior, Louis Tobback and Johan Van de Lanotte, based on (a) a restricted interpretation of the concept of 'refugee' as defined in the Geneva Convention; (b) an emphasis on control and repression of (real or perceived) abuses of the right to asylum; (c) a policy of repatriation for illegal aliens or asylum seekers whose application had been turned down. The policy hinges on a very weak intake procedure, in which applications are sometimes arbitrarily rejected, and the totality of the policy certainly looks repressive and is demonstrably not free of racist or *real-politik* undertones.<sup>6</sup> As a

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<sup>6</sup> Which goes to show, in combination with the examples of Cleeren (a Christian-Democrat) and Dewinter (Vlaams Blok), that 'left' and 'right' in Belgium as elsewhere cannot be associated with particular political actors or parties. The socialist party is not necessarily the source of left-wing rhetoric, when interpreted in the

consequence, a lot of criticism was voiced against this policy, mainly from the left wing.

This is where integration comes in. The advocates of the new policy set up a pattern of argumentation, partly based on an apocalyptic image of criminal gangs invading the country and millions of paupers marching towards us. Partly, however, it was based on a rational line of reasoning, which runs as follows. The uncontrolled influx of foreigners causes problems to our own society. First, it strains our budget because of the heavy pressure it put on the police and the juridicial system. Second, it jeopardizes the integration of the resident migrants: The illegal aliens who roam around our cities spoil the climate for the migrants who have been living here for some time, because they stimulate racism and xenophobia. There is a significant degree of consensus on this pattern of argumentation among politicians, and direct or oblique references pointing towards the connection between the need for a controlled asylum policy and the chances of success for the integration of the resident migrants can be noted both at the right and at the left of the political spectrum. Consider the following examples. In example (7), the then (1991) Minister of the Interior Louis Tobback (now the chairman of the Flemish Social Democrats) scorns the illegal aliens because they stimulate negative perceptions of migrants (in an interview with *Fuga*, October/November 1991: 20)

- (7) "And yet this group [illegal aliens] spoils the situation for the minority, who *are* indeed genuine refugees, and they jeopardize the whole of the migrant policy. The population does not make a lot of difference between a rejected applicant who dissappears into illegality and an ordinary migrant."

To the right of the political spectrum, the same argument is echoed by the Flemish Liberal MP Ward Beysen (*Fuga*, October/November 1991: 16)

- (8) "An efficient repatriation policy is the first priority. As long as the population notices that the wave of asylum seekers grows in size, and that the rejected applicants go underground, one will get sharp reactions such as in Lint [where the population protested against the opening of a refugee center]. This also jeopardizes the migrant policy."

In these examples, the success of integration is linked to (and apparently conditioned by) a rigid control on the influx of new migrants. And as always, there is a world of implicit suggestions buried in the vague or indirect references to the connection between the two issues. One very powerful and pervasive suggestion is that the *numbers* of migrants are a directly related to the nature and intensity of 'migrant problems'. More migrants, more problems, less migrants, less problems. This suggestion also underlies discussions on ghetto-ization and (as we will see below) on the concentration of migrant children in schools. Too many migrants create racism among the Belgians, and their concentration would also prevent them from learning the language and the culture of the host country, would stimulate the reproduction of all kinds of foreign values and traditions (including Islamic fundamentalism), and would so present a formidable obstacle to integration. The new asylum policy has adopted this frame, which was never explicitly stated but often implicitly used in various domains of migrant policies, and has moved it to the center of its

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light of semantic and discursive political traditions which may be a better angle to distinguish 'left' from 'right'.

legitimation strategy.

b) The non-discrimination agreement

In the summer of 1993, the different education systems in Flanders (Catholic, Provincial, Local and State Schools) agreed on a 'joint declaration regarding a non-discrimination policy in education'. This came as a surprise to many observers, because despite the fact that education had been defined as a major target for integration policies by the KCM, there had previously been very little display of willingness to consider the introduction of intercultural or antiracist measures in education. The text of the declaration defines a two-tier approach, consisting of (a) a 'more conscious attitude towards non-discrimination in schools', and (b) a 'policy of admission'. The first track is phrased vaguely as an 'appeal' to all those concerned to develop a 'pedagogical project' which takes interculturality into account, and to develop a 'non-discrimination code' for its schools. The second track, in contrast, is very specific in its formulations. It defines a target group of pupils on the basis of two criteria, one ethnic and one social-intellectual: (i) the mother's grandmother should not be born in Belgium and should not be a Belgian or Dutch citizen by birth; (ii) the mother should not have received an education beyond the age of 18. It also specifies a number of phases for the implementation of a dispersion plan, in which target group pupils would be evenly dispersed across all the schools in a region or a town. Also, the rules for dealing with children who are refused enrollment in one school are specified, as well as the structure of the committee in charge of supervising the implementation of this plan and dealing with potential complaints from parents, and sanctions foreseen for schools who would refuse to implement the plan. The rationale for this dispersion plan is to do away with 'concentration schools': Schools with a high percentage of target group pupils, where particular pedagogical (and 'integration') problems are noticed.

The two parts of the agreement are not only structurally and informationally asymmetrical. They are also chronologically asymmetrical. Whereas there is no specific timing for the first part, the second part is proposed to start in 1993 in the shape of a pilot project. Full implementation of the dispersion plan was scheduled for 1994 onwards. For as far as the first part goes, and more specifically the intercultural dimension of education, no specific plans have so far been offered, and there is very little prospect for a far-reaching transformation of the education system. For all practical purposes, therefore, the first track of the non-discrimination agreement is a paper tiger, and the policy boils down to an eagerly executed dispersion program. Consequently, and just like the new asylum policy, the plan received a lot of criticism from the left as well as from migrants, and here also, the advocates of the agreement set up a defensive line of argumentation in which reference is made to objectives (supposed to be) contained in the concept of integration. The joint declaration inscribes itself in the general objectives of migrant policies:

- (9) [Considering] "that the Flemish migrant policy is aimed at 'insertion' of migrants in society; that the tasks of the education system in the context of the concept of insertion have been delineated in the educational priority policy for migrants."

But immediately, a connection is made between these general objectives (as laid out in the educational section of the integration policy, the 'educational priority policy for migrants')



and the specific emphasis of the agreement. The connection is made textually: First, a statement on dispersion is given, followed by one on the 'quality of education', and then again followed by one on the problem of concentration of migrants:

- (10) “- [considering] that schools have so far given too little attention to a dispersion policy despite the fact that it is a necessary condition to attain a number of goals of the educational priority policy,  
- that the notion of 'quality of education' in a multicultural society presupposes that the intercultural aspect should be part and parcel of the pedagogical project,  
- that schools and locations with too high a percentage of target group pupils experience significantly more difficulties in attaining the general educational goals.”

In a very subtle way, the general purposes of integration (here: 'Insertion') are localized, so to speak, in the challenge to solve the problem of concentration of migrant children in certain schools. This is the immediate concern; the interculturalization of the education eventually offered to children is placed somewhere in the future, and the authors of the document can restrict themselves to repeating its general importance.

Other direct references to 'integration' are made when it comes to motivating the unpleasant sides of the dispersion plan. 'Integration' is then used in a decontextualized way as a societal ideal, for which certain sacrifices should be made. Consider this statement by Paul Salmon, the head of the Integration Service in the town of Genk (in a PR magazine of the Provincial Authority of Limburg, *Limburg Mozaiek* 22, March 1994: 6). Salmon, who is also involved in implementing the dispersion plan in his region (Genk was one of the towns which implemented the pilot project) says that he does not intend to act as a policeman towards school directors who refuse enrollment to migrant children:

- (11) “I cannot file a charge against a school director because he refuses migrant children *and* sit around a table with that same director one week later to discuss a school promotion project with him. Our target is integration, and because of strategic considerations one sometimes has to let a few things pass.”

Apart from direct references to integration (or insertion), two elements are frequently used in defending the usefulness of the dispersion plan: (a) multiculturalism and (b) the quality of education, related to the pupils' knowledge of Dutch. Both are supposed to be justifiable implications of the concept of 'integration'. Multiculturalism (here usually standing for 'mixing' populations in such a way as to preserve the wider societal majority-minority balance) should be both the starting point and the desired societal result of the integration policy. The quality of education is an ambiguous argument: On the one hand, it is used as one of the instruments for 'integrating' migrants (and hence, concentration schools are seen as obstacles to integration); on the other hand, the lack of knowledge of Dutch is seen as an alarming sign of non-integration, contaminating Belgian children through the effect it has on the general educational performance in schools. The latter argument is used, for instance, in explaining the reasons for refusal to migrant parents. Example (12) is the text of a standard letter to parents whose child had been refused enrollment in schools. It was drafted by a local integration center in Gent and sent to all local schools in the summer of 1993:

(12) To: All migrant-parents whose child has been refused enrollment:

Dear...,

We regret that we cannot enroll your child in our school.

Experience has taught us that a school can only accept a limited number of pupils speaking another language.

We fear that all our pupils will obtain worse results if our school would accept too many pupils who still have problems speaking Dutch.

Therefore we have decided to enroll not more than 20% pupils who speak another language per class. This way, we will be able to continue to guarantee the good quality of our education.

But we will gladly assist you in looking for a school where your child can be placed. Enclosed you will find a list of other Independent schools [i.e. Catholic schools] in our area.

We also provide you with a leaflet explaining this decision.

We apologize for the inconvenience this causes you. Nevertheless, we trust you will understand this.

Sincerely, The School Board

Of particular interest is the emphasis on the connection between numbers of migrant children and the quality of education. There seems to be a linear relation between both issues, one which we encountered also in the discourse on asylum seekers. Also striking is the emphasis on the use of a particular medium, Dutch, as a crucial instrument for general intellectual performance in schools, a point which was absent from the official text of the agreement, but which had been frequently used in discussing the problem of concentration schools.

In the case of the asylum policy as well as in the case of the non-discrimination agreement in the education system, we see how a decontextualized version of integration — integration as a sociopolitical ideal — can serve to contextualize and legitimize actions in more or less related domains. The positive frame in which intergration is caught neutralizes the local negative (discriminatory) effects of the actions by allowing them to be entextualized as necessary measures in view of a general improvement of majority-minority relations in Belgian society.

#### **4. Conclusions: The slow shift in orthodoxy**

The crucial point in the discussion of the various examples given in section 3 is the interplay between an ideology of fixed text and a set of discourse practices which extend or alter the source text or create paradoxes and contradictions in entextualizations of integration. The lexical label ‘integration’ is inserted and re-entextualized in various discourses, but the ideology of fixed text (strongly associated with the use of a particular lexicon) creates an impression of coherence and allows for the recuperation of various entextualizations in new ones (for instance, the recuperation of a labor-movement entextualization into the policy-makers’). Note that the ideology of fixed text seems to be shared by all the participants in the debate. It allows the right wing to produce legitimate entextualizations based on a partial adoption of the source text, notably by quoting the lexical frame (the term integration itself) as well as by borrowing certain stock arguments produced by authoritative actors (in particular, by the authors of the source text

themselves).

It is this impression of stability and closedness, created mainly by the lexical re-enactment of a fixed text, which allows for a gradual and hardly unnoticed shift in political orthodoxy. The debate goes on, and at first glance (i.e. adopting the ideological grids used in the debate) the parties do not change their minds or policies. Looked at from a perspective of entextualization, however, the doctrinary semantic core is left as soon as it was entered into the debate. From that moment onwards, it becomes a mere trope or argument in the debate, and the 'original' text moves on and takes on new shapes all the time. Depending on time, cause and audience, new arguments may be incorporated, registers may be adopted, terms or arguments can be borrowed. As long as some ingredients of the source text can be maintained, a closure of topic and a streamlining of the debate can be effected. Utterances can be metadiscursively qualified as part of the debate, as constructive or oppositional contributions to the debate, as legitimate or illegitimate interpretations of the meanings contained in the source text. Power may reside in this interplay between an ideology of fixedness and practices of re-entextualization, for it is precisely through this interplay that authority in the domain of interpretation of texts can be managed and channeled.

As an afterthought, I want to point towards the particular advantages of the anthropologically-informed notion of text and textualization which has been used in this analysis. An 'open' notion of text which allows for a departure of linguistically-based qualities of text (illustrated in Collins' definition of 'textualism') offers better possibilities for investigating the conjoint activities of actors, voices, instruments and contexts, crucial in understanding the ways in which rhetorical practices and tools construct and sustain social power processes (as argued in Silverstein & Urban 1996, complemented by Hymes [1996, chapter 3] forceful apology for an ethnography-based understanding of inequality). Present-day pragmatics, and especially its critical branches, may be well served by an exploration of approaches to text and political processes which do not necessarily see both components in terms of text-context relations, but in which (linguistic) text and context are blended into acts of social semiosis.

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