A psychoanalytic investigation of the hostile environment discourse in Britain: A case study of Suella Braverman

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A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Refugee Care

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2nd of October 2024

"History is not the past. It is the present. We carry our history with us. We are our history. If we pretend otherwise, we literally are criminals. I attest to this: the world is not white; it never was white, cannot be white. White is a metaphor for power"

James Baldwin

I Am Not Your Negro, p.107

Dedicated to Teta and Boutchy, I love and miss you

Acknowledgments

I am very grateful to Prof. Colin J. Samson for his guidance and kindness throughout the whole writing process. His unwavering support and understanding of how I work helped me regain my excitement for the work after a very difficult first few years. Without him I would not have been able to produce the work presented in this thesis. I look forward to further exchanging ideas and books after my graduation.

I want to thank my friends, Natalia, Ümit, Cherif F. & Cherif C. who have stood by me through this time. Thank you for your patience, for all the birthdays and gatherings I've missed, I promise I will make it up to you.

I especially want to thank Omar and Vera for their help with this work. Vera, thank you for being there for me, encouraging me, and for sharing your knowledge of group psychoanalysis. Omar, thank you for teaching me LaTeX and fixing my errors whenever it stopped compiling, and for being a great friend.

I would like to thank my parents, Nawal and Ehssan, for bearing with me through the whole PhD process, I think you were more eager for it to finish than I was at the end.

To my sister, Salma, thank you for being cool and planning all the post-PhD things that I can look forward to.

Finally, I would like to thank my partner, Ekin, for being there and for loving and supporting me through all the tantrums and the stress.

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Abstract

Why does the hostile environment, a set of public policies designed to make life more difficult for immigrants, exist in Britain, a country which relies on immigration culturally and economically? Since the official announcement of the hostile environment by Theresa May in 2012, a feedback loop of increasing hostility has taken over the British large group psyche leading to punitive policies such as the recent Rwanda scheme, and more panic about immigration among a large segment of the public. Following an interdisciplinary approach that combines psychoanalysis, political discourse analysis, and colonial studies, I investigate some of the psychological mechanisms that motivate the official hostility towards immigrants and allows for the existence of the hostile environment. I posit that the current official hostility towards immigration is connected to the repression of the violent and coercive sides of the British empire by imperial representatives, the collective meaning and identity vacuums left in the wake of the end of the British Empire, and to the government's subsequent disavowal of the connection between modern immigration and the British Empire. Since whatever is repressed always returns in the form of symptoms; I conceive of the hostile environment as a symptom of repressed colonial violence, triggered by the multicultural reality of modern Britain, the 'return of the oppressed', and by the decline in Britain's politico-economic relevance over the past decades. Finally, for my case study, using Norman and Isabella Fairclough's framework of political discourse analysis, I analyze a speech made by former Home Secretary Suella Braverman. I illustrate what an argument for the hostile environment looks like and provide a reconstruction and evaluation of it and contextualize it within my analysis.

Key Words: Hostile Environment – Suella Braverman – British Empire – Colonialism – Immigration – Repression – Disavowal - Large Group - Psychoanalysis

Introduction

The Hostile Environment

This dissertation is a psychoanalytic investigation of the British government's stance on immigration, as summed up in the hostile environment. Before I address why and how I will investigate the hostile environment, it is important to define it. While I give a more comprehensive overview in Chapter 1, succinctly, the hostile environment is a set of policy and legislative anti-immigration measures which were introduced by Theresa May during her tenure as Home Secretary in 2012. The objective of these measures was to reduce 'net migration', discourage 'illegal' migrants from coming into Britain, and encourage those already here to leave voluntarily "at little to no cost to the government" (Webber, 2019; Griffiths and Yeo, 2021).

The government's plan to achieve this goal was through the control and restriction of undocumented migrants' access to basic public services like, housing, education, employment and healthcare. Another main feature of the hostile environment is what Griffiths and Yeo (2021) called the deputization of civilians and third parties as internal border control. The hostile environment has seen landlords, teachers, healthcare providers, travel companies, and employers being coerced into acting as agents of the immigration system, checking and confirming the immigration status of those they employ and provide services to, ultimately rejecting those who do not have appropriate documentation.

The hostile environment has had significant implications on the lives of immigrants and asylum seekers in Britain who have been deprived of essential living needs, health-

care, shelter, education, and employment. Additionally, the hostile environment discourse — which includes anti-immigration policies and legislation, political and media rhetoric that justifies the government's anti-immigration measures, and the fact that the hostile environment policies demand the British public to collude in the state's hostility — presents a danger that has significant implications on British society as a whole.

Since the announcement of the hostile environment measures by Theresa May in 2012, Britain has become stuck in a feedback loop of increasing hostility which has seen politicians and the media using more hostile rhetoric to justify the government's hostile measures, leading to panic in the public, and ultimately leading politicians to vote for even harsher policies. This feedback loop of hostility has most recently culminated in the legislation of the 2023 Illegal Migration Act which effectively removes the possibility of asylum seekers[1] who arrive irregularly to make an asylum claim or enter the asylum system at all.

The Hostile environment has also had a great impact on social cohesion. I believe the following quote from the British government's own report on, what became officially known as, the 2024 Summer Riots succinctly illustrates why a study of the hostile environment discourse, a complex sociopolitical phenomenon, is necessary:

> "Between 30 July and 7 August 2024, an estimated 29 anti-immigration demonstrations and riots took place across 27 towns and cities in the UK. Many of these were violent, with participants attacking mosques and hotels housing asylum seekers. Known far-right activists promoted and attended the riots".
>
> (Downs, 2024)

The riots, referred to above, did not occur in a vacuum, instead they were a direct result of years of hostile government policies and anti-migrant rhetoric which constantly blames migrants for the state's failure's and leads to increasing public panic. A YouGov survey

[1] An asylum seeker, according to Refugee Action (2024), is "Someone who has arrived in a country and asked for asylum. Until they receive a decision as to whether or not they are a refugee, they are known as an asylum seeker. In the UK, this means they do not have the same rights as a refugee or a British citizen would". Additionally, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2024) "Not all asylum-seekers will be found to be refugees, but all refugees were once asylum-seekers".

in August of 2024, examined the public's attitudes towards the anti-immigration protests and riots that took place earlier in the month, showed that while 85% of Britons were opposed to the riots and the violence, one-third of Britons supported the protests (Difford and Smith, 2024).

In addition to its devastating effects on the lives of undocumented migrants and on social cohesion, the hostile environment's introduction of immigration controls in all walks of life has come at a great cost to the lives of racialized British citizens and even affected poor white Britons who could not easily apply for identification documents such as a passport. For example, documented migrants and racialized citizens were refused housing because of their names or skin colour by landlords who found it safer to rent to tenants with British sounding names (Griffiths and Yeo, 2021; Goodfellow, 2020). Additionally, the hostile environment emboldened racists and xenophobes across all sectors, according to a UN report by Fifth Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (between 2017-2022) Tendayi Achiumi, after the hostile environment was first announced, Britain saw a rise in hate crime (Bulman, 2017).

The Windrush scandal in 2018 is a famous example of the hostile environment measures having devastating results on the lives of racialized Britons. In 2018 it was discovered that hundreds of British residents were suddenly losing their jobs, being evicted from their homes, and even facing deportation, because they did not have the documents to prove their status. Most of those affected had arrived to Britain lawfully decades ago as colonial subjects, were allowed to reside and work in Britain, and were invited by the British government after WWII to help fill labor shortages (Gentleman, 2019). The Windrush scandal, named after one of the first large ships to carry British colonial subjects into Britain, the HMT Empire Windrush, highlighted the scale of the damage of the hostile environment measures and made it difficult to ignore (Gentleman, 2019).

What further makes the hostile environment a complex sociopolitical phenomenon is its persistence despite not meeting any of its material goals. The hostile environment has

succeeded in making the lives of undocumented immigrants difficult, but over a decade of increasingly hostile measures has showed that it has failed to discourage asylum seekers from coming into Britain or to encourage undocumented migrants to leave voluntarily at no or little cost to the government. In fact, since its inception, the hostile environment measures have put a large financial burden on the government and the taxpayer. In the year between 2023-2024, the Home Office expected to spend £482 million on immigration enforcement, excluding spending on Border Control (Home Office, 2024).

Aim of Research

If the hostile environment is failing by its own measure, then this begs the question– What is actually motivating the hostile environment? And why does it feel inevitable?

To answer these questions and to enrich our understanding of the complex socio-political phenomenon that is the hostile environment, I employ an interdisciplinary method which combines psychoanalysis, discourse studies, and colonial studies.

Contemporary British immigration discourse including the hostile environment cannot be understood or explored without taking into account Britain's colonial and imperial history. To this end, this dissertation will contribute to the body of work which attempts to further understand the hostile environment through its connection to Britain's Colonial history. Other scholars have used socio-historical methods (Goodfellow, 2020; Mayblin, 2017), post-colonial cultural analyses (Gilroy, 2005; Arif, 2018; Lopes Heimer, 2020), and historical re-readings of British law (El-Enany, 2020; Mulvey, 2010), yet, little attention has been given to the implications of Britain's colonial history on the British psyche and identity formation.

The British Empire represents an important juncture in modern British history, which no doubt contributed to the formation of the conscious and unconscious aspects of the British Identity. In this context, I connect British government's current hostility towards immigration to, first, its past repression of the violence and coercion involved in the ex-

pansion and maintenance of the British Empire, and, second, to the collective meaning and identity vacuums left in the wake of the loss of empire.

The loss of empire affected the group's meaning-making and ability to mourn, and created a regression within the group which required a new 'second-skin' to unite the group and provide it with solace and meaning. This led the group to hold on to the fantasy of the 'greatness' of empire which required a splitting off and repression of the violent aspects of empire and the erasure of the connection between modern immigration and the British Empire. In this context, migrants, many of whom hailing from former colonies, came to symbolize a feared 'return of the repressed' violence of empire, which led the large group to project its aggression on them and subsequently reject them.

This is why I conceive of the hostile environment as a symptom; a sign of an internal dissonance, created by the British large group's compounded repression of the knowledge of the violence and coercion of the British Empire, and the post-imperial general repression of the memory of empire. In psychoanalysis symptoms are often understood as a compromise between the wish fulfillment and that which must be forgotten/repressed. In this case, a compromise between fantasies of omnipotence and moral superiority, and the reality of both the loss of empire and the past brutality of it.

Interrogating a symptom psychoanalytically involves contextualizing it and exploring the psychic reality at its core. This allows us to understand and address the underlying large group psychological mechanisms that have motivated and continue to sustain the hostile environment.

In order to demonstrate my argument in action, I apply Norman and Isabella Fairclough's framework of Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) in a case study of a speech made by one of the most outspoken anti-immigration political figures, former Home Secretary Suella Braverman. In doing so, I illustrate the logic of the hostile environment and examine its internal consistency. My choice of Suella Braverman is motivated by the fact that her tenure as Home Secretary saw the introduction of one of the most hostile anti-immigration legislation to date, the 2023 Illegal Migrants Act. In addition, she gained

notoriety for her inflammatory anti-immigration rhetoric; in one such instance, Braverman made the news for saying that it was her "dream and obsession" to see flights taking off and removing migrants from Britain (Dearden, 2022).

In this particular speech, Braverman uses her heritage, as the daughter of immigrants from former colonies to warn the British public against modern immigration saying, "The wind of change that carried my own parents across the globe in the 20th century was a mere gust compared to the hurricane that is coming" (Braverman, 2023). Through locating the dissonance between Braverman and her parents' reality as migrants, and her rhetoric and policies regarding modern migration, I identify the compounded repression of Britain's colonial violence underlying the hostile environment, as it is reflected in Braverman's speech.

Self Disclosure

I believe that I occupy a unique position, as a 'familiar outsider' who is, through no choice of mine, connected to Britain through colonization. I believe that my position, as well as, my training as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist have allowed me to be more sensitive to certain large group dynamics in British society, and to interrogate the hostile environment in the particular way I have demonstrated in this thesis.

As a migrant from the global South, I have experienced the hostile environment first-hand. My experience is, of course, not comparable to that of asylum seekers and irregularized migrants whose lives are made impossible by the hostile environment, yet the hostile environment still colours my whole experience of living in Britain. For example, as I am submitting this dissertation, my sister's visa application to come visit me has been rejected. The Home Office civil servant who wrote her rejection letter stated that his reason for rejection was that he had 'no reason to believe' that she would return home after the trip.

In addition to my first-hand experience of the hostile environment, I was also im-

mersed in it from 2020 to 2023, when I worked as a psychotherapist in a refugee charity in South London. If I were to summarize my experience of the hostile environment in that period in one word, that word would be 'helplessness'. As a therapist I often felt helpless and sad at all the unnecessary suffering that was being endured by my patients.

I witnessed what the psychic damage that being put in limbo with no outlooks can do to a young person. I recall once, two of my patients—two young men—tell me on the same day, in separate sessions, that they thought that dogs in this country are treated better than they are. Neither was speaking metaphorically; I do believe that the current way asylum seekers, especially, are viewed and treated in Britain affords them very little humanity.

My experience of writing this dissertation has also been difficult since being exposed to large amounts of hostile environment discourse often made me feel frustrated, sometimes enraged, it was also technically difficult because it was history happening in real time which made it challenging to keep up with and to decide where to stop.

That being said, I believe it is an ethical obligation for academics and clinicians to produce and utilize frameworks that, as (Said, 1978) stressed, can dismantle or at least complicate the reductive formulae perpetuated by the prevailing authorities, which is what I'm hoping to achieve with this research.

Thesis Overview

Below, I will give a brief overview of structure of the thesis and a summary of chapters.

Chapter One: The Hostile Environment

In Chapter 1 *The Hostile Environment*, I give an overview of the historical and political context out of which the hostile environment was introduced by then Home Secretary Theresa May in 2012 as a remedy to irregular migration and a way to "reduce net migration to the tens of thousands" (Kirkup et al., 2012), to discourage all future migrants

from coming to the UK, and to encourage irregular migrants to leave the UK of their own accord "at little to no cost to the government" (Webber, 2019; Griffiths and Yeo, 2021).

I illustrate the development of the term within the British government, starting with its earlier uses in reference to war zones and terrorism, and ending with its current application in reference to unwanted immigration. Additionally, I provide examples of British hostile immigration policies and legislation preceding the inception of the hostile environment, starting with the 1960s, a period which coincided withe the decline of the British Empire and the government's efforts of revoke black and brown British subjects and commonwealth citizens' right to enter and live in Britain.

I also attempt elucidate the logic of the hostile environment which postulates that, if undocumented migrants are deprived of living necessities, such as, education, healthcare, housing and employment, then they would choose to leave Britain of their own accord, and prospective migrants would be dissuaded from coming into Britain, ultimately,'reducing migration to the tens of thousands'. To this end, I give an overview of the main feature of the hostile environment, which is extending immigration controls into civil society and deputizing of border control to third parties. This feature extends immigration policing into all walks of life and ensures the implementation of the punitive immigration laws and legislation in all walks of life.

Finally, I trace the latest development in the hostile environment, which sees a shift from the prior discourse which criminalized irregular immigration to a new trend of criminalizing irregular migrants themselves as manifested in the The Nationality and Borders Act 2022, The Illegal Migration Act 2023, and the Rwanda scheme.

Chapter Two: Methodological Reflections

In Chapter 2 *Methodological Reflections*, I give an overview of the interdisciplinary conceptual methodology that will be employed in my analysis. The chapter is divided into three sections: psychoanalysis, discourse analysis, and colonial studies.

In the *psychoanalytic* section, I give an overview of the conception of psychoanalysis and of relevant psychoanalytic concepts: the unconscious, the topographic model, the structural model, psychopathology and defense mechanisms. Additionally, I suggest that psychoanalytic theory can be useful for social research, citing examples of how it has long been used as a tool for social critique by thinkers like Frantz Fanon. Finally, I explore the works of Freud, Wilfred Bion, Vamik Volkan and Otto Kernberg on large group dynamics and how to analyze and theorize them.

In the *discourse analysis* section, I introduce critical discourse analysis (CDA), a socio-politically motivated school of discourse analysis which seeks to shed light on hidden social coercion and elucidate the ideologies concealed in prominent discourses. I then outline political discourse analysis (PDA), the framework I will be using in my case study. I also illustrate how the framework can be used to analyze different kinds of political discourse e.g. campaign slogans, parliamentary debates, and speeches.

In the last section, *colonial studies*, I contextualize my research in the colonial studies tradition which focuses on theorizing the West.

Chapter Three: Analytic Reflections

In Chapter 3, I will interrogate the hostile environment as a symptom, link it to its historical roots and the large group dynamic, and, finally, present my analysis of its root causes and mechanisms.

In Section 3.3, *Repression at the Heart of Empire*, I illustrate how the British Empire understood itself at the peak of its power and its subsequent decline. I will consider this in the context of the large group psychic conflict that rose from a combination of the realities of coercion and violence, and the British character's aspiration of moral superiority. Through this lens, I posit that the large group's response to the contradictory wishes was to repress and omit the knowledge of the violence and coercion inherent to colonialism, and to reinforce the narrative of British identity as morally superior and the British

Empire as the 'bringer of civilisation'. I also illustrate how this repression informed the efforts of imperial administrators to suppress and destroy evidence as part of empire's withdrawal from its colonies.

Building on the links between the hostile environment and colonial heritage, in Section 3.4, *The Loss of Empire*, I will demonstrate the links that exist between the colonial logic of racism and differential rights present in the hostile environment, and the British large group tendencies towards colonial amnesia and imperial nostalgia. I will then show that this colonial amnesia leads to an 'un-linking' of Britain's colonial history from modern immigration, presenting present-day immigration as being an ahistorical phenomenon. I show how this 'un-linking' manifests in a variety of ways, in the fields of history, media studies, and migration and refugee studies. I also show how the hostility towards migrants post-empire was bolstered by the pathological defense mechanism of splitting and projection, which saw the unwanted parts of the British large group split off and projected onto the figure of the migrant and with it the group's aggression and negative feelings.

In Section 3.5, *The Hostile Environment & Colonial Heritage*, I will explore the influence of Britain's colonial and imperial heritage, and how it creates and recreates the dynamics of the hostile environment through the logic of differential rights in colonialism, the colonial hierarchies, and Orientalist conceptions of the 'other'.

In Section 3.6, *The Dysfunction of the Hostile Environment*, I will give an overview of the hostile environment and its dysfunction, by looking at the inconsistencies, both in its implementation and its internal logic, and the cognitive dissonance that enables it to exist.

Finally, I will present my interpretation of the ways in which the British large group handled the trauma of the loss of empire, illustrating how the loss created a regression within the group, and brought with it the need for a new 'second-skin' to provide unity. I further address how the projection of the large group's aggression onto and their subsequent rejection of migrants was due to the migrant representing the feared 'return of the repressed' violence of empire. I conclude the section by locating the hostile environment within this dynamic as well as identifying the symptomal knot in the 'compound

repression' within the British Empire and post-imperial large group identity.

Chapter Four: Suella Braverman: A Case Study

In this chapter I apply Norman and Isabella Fairclough's framework of political discourse analysis (PDA) to analyze former Home Secretary Suella Braverman's anti-immigration argument in her 2023 speech at The Conservative Party Conference in Manchester. In my analysis I illustrate how an argument for the hostile environment is constructed, then I evaluate the logical validity of argument and its premises. Finally, contextualizing her discourse within my central argument, I locate the symptomatic repressed colonial violence motivating the hostile environment in Braverman's discourse.

Chapter 1

The Hostile Environment

1.1 Introduction

The 'Hostile Environment', in the context of migration, is a set of legislative and policy measures, introduced by the government in 2012, that has two objectives, first, to deter migrants from entering Britain, and second, to encourage undocumented migrants to leave. Despite net migration being an inadequate measure for undocumented migration, the hostile environment's two objectives were reduced by then Home Secretary, Theresa May, to the general aim of "reducing net migration to the tens of thousands" (Kirkup et al., 2012), which is an aim that has continued to be echoed by other politicians as a means of justifying increasing hostility (Yeo, 2020).

The logic of the hostile environment is that if undocumented migrants' access to basic needs such as housing, employment, education and healthcare is restricted, then they are less inclined to want to come or stay in Britain. Government encouragement and enforcement of citizen-on-citizen immigration policing sees landlords, employers, and community and healthcare workers acting as on the ground border control, running immigration checks, and being forced by laws to refuse services to those deemed ineligible. More than a decade after the introduction of the hostile environment, it is clear that its main aim of reducing net migration has not been achieved. It is instead causing suffering

to countless migrants, asylum seekers, and British ethnic minorities, as well as, costing the government significant human and financial resources. Yet, it seems that what was triggered into motion at the inception of the hostile environment might be too powerful a tide to turn, and the general premise that immigration is 'bad', too rigid a belief to shake.

In this thesis, when I refer to the 'hostile environment discourse', I am referring to the material legislative and policy outcomes mentioned earlier, as well as, the knowledge and rhetoric that is produced and which creates, maintains, and legitimates the logic of hostility. The hostile environment discourse has dominated policy, public, and media opinions on immigration and continues to increase in hostility. It is the aim of this work to contribute to the knowledge of why this is the case and how this outcome came to be. In order to do so, I attempt to understand the hostile environment in the context of Britain's history, specifically its Imperial history, from a psychoanalytic perspective.

Before delving into the body of this work, I wish to give a cohesive summary of hostile immigration policies predating the hostile environment, how the hostile environment has manifested over the years in its different areas of influence, and how it operates in general.

The first section, *Theresa May: The Inception of the Hostile Environment*, traces back the first use of the term Hostile Environment, both outside of the context of immigration, and in relation to immigration, and how it was integrated into government through new laws, while providing a brief context of the state of government at the time.

The second section, *Hostile Legislation 1960-2012*, contains highlights of past hostile government legislation and policies beginning with the 1960s, and ending right before Theresa May's interview in 2012, where she ushered in the hostile environment era.

The third section, *Hostile Environment 2012-2020*, expounds upon the logic of the hostile environment; highlights the most significant policies and laws that were created as a result of it, i.e. the immigration Acts of 2014 and 2016; and gives an overview of how they have affected different aspects of migrants lives, like healthcare, housing, employment, and education. This section also highlights the main feature of the hostile environment, which is the citizen-on-citizen immigration policing, and the deputizing of border control

to third parties (Griffiths, 2017; Yeo, 2018), ultimately extending immigration controls into general society and making Britain a 'hostile environment'.

The fourth and final section, *Hostile Environment 2020-present*, traces the evolution of the hostile environment as the discourse shifted from criminalizing irregular immigration, to criminalizing irregular migrants themselves. I will highlight how this shift is represented in government policy, i.e. The Nationality and Borders Act 2022, The Illegal Migration Act 2023, and the Rwanda scheme.

1.2 Theresa May: The Inception of the Hostile Environment

Due to the power the hostile environment discourse has today, it is difficult to think of it as originating outside of the immigration context we are familiar with, or untie it from former Prime Minister, Theresa May. In this section, I provide a brief historical context of the inception of the term hostile environment. My hope, is that providing context can help ground the hostile environment discourse in reality, and help resist the sense of timelessness and inevitability that comes with powerful discourses.

The term hostile environment had a different use in the Home Office, the police, and security services years before it became widely used in reference to unwanted immigration. Whittle (2023), Griffiths (2017), and Yeo (2020) trace its origins back, first in reference to war zones and other dangerous locations, and later in relation to the post 9/11 UK-US "War on Terror" when the Home Office announced new policies that would make Britain a hostile environment for terrorists; a departure from what they called the earlier 'safe' and 'soft' environment.

Less than a decade later, the term was used in context of immigration, when it was first introduced by, then New Labour Immigration Minister, Liam Byrn in 2007 (Goodfellow, 2020), and re-introduced by Theresa May during her time as Home Secretary in 2012. The

conceptual jump from using a term to refer to crime, terrorism and danger to using it in relation to immigration, is a foreshadowing to the hostile discourse and legislation which were to come.

In 2012, May had pledged to reduce Britain's net migration to the 'tens of thousands', deterring foreign nationals who, according to her, believe 'that they can come here and overstay because they're able to access everything they need' (Griffiths and Yeo, 2021, p.522). She later announced she had a plan to create a 'really hostile environment for illegal migration', in the hopes of discouraging all future migrants from coming to the UK, while encouraging irregular migrants to leave the UK of their own accord 'at little to no cost to the government' (Webber, 2019; Griffiths and Yeo, 2021).

For context, at the time of May's announcement, the Conservative party was in a tight spot, they were implementing austerity and cutting public services, which drastically decreased living standards. Unemployment was rising and wages declining, and something needed to be done to avoid public backlash (Goodfellow, 2020). Conveniently, migrants were blamed for the toll conservative policies took on access to services and on infrastructure. On multiple occasions May insinuated that migrants were making the British poorer, sicker and more miserable. According to Goodfellow (2020), "former business secretary Vince Cable revealed that, while in Coalition with the Tories, he witnessed Theresa May's Home Office suppress nine reports which showed that migration was not having a negative impact on wages," (p. 123) which indicates that the truth of what was actually happening, had, in this case, become irrelevant.

Following May's announcement, an inter-ministerial working group named 'The Hostile Environment Working Group' was formed in order to find a way of turning her proposal into law. The group consisted of "Ministers of State for Immigration, Government Policy, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Justice, Employment, Housing and Local Government, Schools, Care Services, Universities and Science, as well as the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of States for Health and for Transport, and the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury" (Griffiths and Yeo, 2021, p. 523). As the government's hope was to in-

crease the removal of illegal migrants and decrease the arrivals of all migrants, the group's goal was to work together to devise measures that would create a hostile environment for migrants and asylum seekers who do not have permission to live in the UK, e.g. through prohibiting them from accessing employment and basic services (Griffiths and Yeo, 2021). As the number of contributing government departments suggests, the range of the measures taken was wide; they were incorporated into Immigration Acts, Home Office operational measures, secondary legislation and guidance documents (Webber, 2019).

1.3 Hostile Legislation 1960-2012

In this section, I will present an overview of immigration policies, legislation, and measures taken by the British Government in the fifty years leading up to the introduction of the hostile environment, in 2012. I will specifically highlight policies and legislation that follow the same logic of the hostile environment, i.e. making the lives of immigrants more difficult.

The coercive and violent nature of colonialism means that Britain's history of hostility towards migrants did not start in the 1960s. The British Empire was no stranger to policies aimed at limiting migration and implementing scales of desirability for who can enter Britain. Those already existing policies, combined with the decline of the British Empire strongly influenced the 1960s 'post-Imperial' Britain's response and attitudes towards immigration. Thus the 1960s presents a natural starting point from where I can capture the connection between the hostile environment and Britain's Imperial history.

As I will illustrate below, in the decades between 1960 and 1990, the government's focus was on rewriting immigration laws to exclude former colonial and Commonwealth subjects from British citizenship rights. In the late 1980s and early 1990s the focus shifted to the topic of asylum, who should and shouldn't be granted asylum, and what can be done to deter asylum seekers from choosing to submit their claims in Britain.

1.3.1 The 1960s

In 1962, the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill was legislated, stating that British subjects, who were not born in or had their passport issued inside the United Kingdom, were officially subject to immigration controls, and were not free to enter or live in the United Kingdom, their country of citizenship. The introduction of this bill was in direct response to the number of black and Asian immigrants arriving to the United Kingdom from British colonies and the Commonwealth, which saw a boom during the early 1960s.

In 1960, immigrants from British colonies and the Commonwealth represented 0.25% of the British population, that number doubled over the next two years, and by 1962 it was around 500,000 (Spencer, 2002; El-Enany, 2020). This boom, which was initially encouraged by the British government to fill labour shortages after WWII (El-Enany, 2020), combined with the decline of the British Empire, caused a panic, first in the political, and subsequently in the public sphere, that the new immigration movement will eventually overwhelm Britain.

The 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act was followed by the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, which came as an attempt to fix a loophole in the 1962 Act that allowed previous subjects from newly independent countries like Kenya and Hong Kong to enter and live in the United Kingdom. The new Act stated that citizens of The United Kingdom born in a former colony and those registered in newly independent Commonwealth countries will also be subject to Immigration controls. Before the loophole was fixed, a large migration of the descendants of British Indians who were living in newly independent East African countries, like Kenya and Uganda, had already taken place; the Act was an attempt to deter any further arrivals.

On a rhetorical level, the 1960s witnessed a shift in the language used to describe those arriving from the Commonwealth and the colonies; where they were once spoken of by the British Empire as British subjects, they became immigrants (El-Enany, 2020). The government dubbing them immigrants, was more than a semantic choice, it was a physical

and a psychological distancing that, on the one hand absolved Britain of its responsibility towards former and current subjects, while on the other hand maintained the moral leverage of then receiving immigrants out of kindness rather than obligation.

1.3.2 The 1970s

The 1970s, saw the legislation of the 1971 Immigration Act, which replaced and added to the 1962 and the 1968 Acts. The 1971 Immigration Act stated that only those who had a parent who was born in The United Kingdom or were born there themselves had the right to freely enter and live in the United Kingdom, with the exception of those who had already been residing in the United Kingdom for more than 5 years.

This meant that the new immigration controls "definitively ended the right of colony and Commonwealth citizens to enter Britain"(El-Enany, 2020, p.117), extending to all nationalities, ending the entry of unskilled workers from outside the Europe, and preventing temporary workers of the right to settlement (Webber, 2019).

The 1971 Immigration Act also introduced the first criminal offenses for coming or staying unlawfully in the UK (Yeo, 2018). Asylum seekers were banned from working while waiting for the status of their applications and, according to Bowling (2013), the institutional procedures aimed at controlling, punishing and criminalizing migrants in the 1970s set the groundwork for what he termed the 'crimmigration control system' industry, built on criminalizing immigration, that still exists today.

Despite the tougher policies introduced, by the end of the 1970s around 45,000 to 50,000 immigrants were entering Britain annually, and the Conservative party was already discussing introducing a new immigration policy, which they dubbed the 'get-tough' policy.

1.3.3 The 1980s

The 1981 British Nationality Act, which passed during Margaret Thatcher's time in office, served to further distance persons belonging to the Commonwealth and the colonies

from Britain. The Act limited the definition of citizenship to a "territorially defined" United Kingdom. The old classification 'citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies' did not exist anymore (El-Enany, 2020).

According to Mayblin (2017), the 1980s were also the time when politicians started viewing 'asylum' as a topic of political concern and interest. This was reflected in the 1987 Immigration Act which focused on making it more difficult for asylum seekers to use common modes of transport for travel into Britain, and furthering restrictions on who can stay. The 1987 Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, fined airlines, train, and ferry companies if any of their passengers arrived without a valid right of entry or transit in Britain. Before then, immigration monitoring was solely carried out by immigration officers, which makes this Act a clear precursor for the privatisation of immigration controls that has now permeated educational institutions, businesses, and the housing sector.

The end of the 1980s brought a new Act, the 1988 Immigration Act, which bolstered deportation criteria, added new restrictions on appeals, and sanctions on overstaying past granted periods of stay.

1.3.4 The 1990s

As I summarized above, immigration policies in the decades following Britain's withdrawal from its former colonies were more focused on redefining citizenship to exclude Commonwealth and former colonial citizens. In the 1990s, the focus shifted to curbing the asylum claims that were beginning to increase. Although the policies and legislation reflect this shift, the government was bound by EU human rights and International refugee protection agreements, thus a lot of the anti-immigration efforts of the 1990s were discursive in nature, with a focus on creating a categorical separation between deserving refugees and undeserving 'bogus' asylum seekers through linguistic and rhetorical means.

In the early 1990s, under the Conservative party, Britain saw a spike in the number of

asylum claims filed from 9000 applications per annum in 1980 to 44,840 in 1990 (Smith, 2013). In turn, this influenced both the rhetoric and policies that followed. Smith (2013) points out the linguistic and rhetorical distinction that was starting to emerge in the immigration discourse at the time, between 'genuine' refugees and 'bogus' asylum seekers. The former being refugees 'deserving' to seek asylum for fear of persecution, and the latter, 'economic migrants' who seek asylum in order to access the British welfare system.

Suddenly, the phrase 'bogus' asylum seekers was used widely in relation to immigration. It is unclear whether it was first used by the press or the government, but tabloid newspapers were frequently publishing articles about 'bogus' asylum seekers who were trying to trick the government into giving them benefits that they don't deserve, consequently raising panic in the public and leading to harsher policies in order to appease them (Smith, 2013). Smith (2013) also cites Fletcher (2006) and her research which shows that parliamentary debates on immigration in the first half of the 1990s, especially those preceding the 1993 and 1996 Immigration Acts, were hugely focused on dealing with 'bogus' asylum seekers, "calculating that in Parliamentary debates on the 1993 Act, the word 'bogus' was used 53 times and 122 times in the debate on the 1996 Act" (Smith, 2013).

Whether it was the government, or the tabloids that set off the panic about immigration, or if they both simply reacted to the populist panic of the people; one thing is certain, the factors that contributed to Britain's social and economic decline were conveniently ignored by the media and the government, and replaced with a focus on 'bogus' asylum seekers who were draining the welfare state (Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022).

The government's social and economic shortcomings, like the privatization and deregulation that led to the selling-off of social housing under Thatcher's neoliberal government, the industrial decline since the 1960s and the decrease in employment opportunities, and the subsequent increase in inequality and poverty, were still felt by the people but now given a new meaning (Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022). The figurative migrants were not only taking the blame for the government's failings, they were also used as proof that despite the increasing hardships, Britain was still great, so great that migrants were trying

to access its welfare system by any means (Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022).

The persistent talk of bogus asylum seekers and illegal immigrants, and the populist anxiety it created was eventually translated into policy through the Asylum and Immigration Act of 1993, which gave the government the power to fingerprint all asylum applicants with the goal of stopping multiple applications. While it gave further rights of appeal for unsuccessful applicants before deportation, it also decreased the government's housing obligations towards asylum seekers. Three years later, the introduction of the 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act criminalized the employment of persons with no permission to work in Britain, and employers found to be in breach, were penalized (Webber, 2019; Griffiths, 2017).

The years following 1997, under New Labour, saw a change in the language used to speak about asylum seekers, the language used was softer and the word 'bogus' was used less frequently than it had been under the Conservative party, although the separation between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' was still persistent (Smith, 2013). That period also saw harsher policies, with an outpour of immigration legislation focused mainly on enforcement and policing. In 1998, 'end-to-end' detention was introduced, a process where asylum seekers were detained upon arrival to the UK and held in detention until they receive their status or get deported. End-to-end detention lasted from 1998 to 2009 when it was deemed illegal, at which point there were 4000 detainees at any given time (Mulvey, 2010)

Finally, the 1999 Immigration Act, introduced the power of administrative arrest, meaning arrests without warrants "for the purpose of detention and removal of persons including illegal entrants, over-stayers and persons in breach of conditions, or persons suspected of being in those categories" (Bowling and Westenra, 2020, p.169). It also saw state benefits, including social housing and homeless persons' housing, denied to undocumented migrants, asylum seekers, and residents on work, study, family reunion, and tourism visas. After the cutting of state benefits, a separate 'less generous' social security system was introduced through the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) in order to

support asylum seekers with matters such as accommodation, and food vouchers. The Home Office was also given the power to request information from other government departments and agencies such as local authorities, marriage registrars, and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) for the purpose of finding immigration breaches (Webber, 2019; Mulvey, 2010).

1.3.5 The 2000s

Despite the harsh policies and even harsher rhetoric of the 1990s, the number of asylum applicants doubled from 40,840 to 80,315 between 1990 and 2000, reaching its peak of 84,130 in 2002 before dropping to 23,430 in 2007 (Smith, 2013). With the panic and Islamophobia following 9/11, the early 2000s were a time of increasing public concern over immigration.

The 2000s saw many mainstream media outlets heavily publishing stories about dangerous asylum seekers that frequently included inaccurate information, and by 2005, 34% of the public was voting on immigration and race relations as one of the most pressing political issues in Britain (Mulvey, 2010). The 'deserving' and 'undeserving' rhetoric continued to shape the discourse on immigration, and the government operated on the unproven logic that if they created policies geared towards making Britain less appealing and more hostile for all asylum seekers, then 'undeserving' bogus asylum seekers and economic migrants who are arriving to access British jobs and benefits would be deterred (Mulvey, 2010; Robinson and Segrott, 2002). Consequently, the 2000s saw more legislation and immigration acts, focused on 'reducing numbers' and making life more difficult for migrants, than in the previous 40 years combined.

The Nationality, Asylum & Immigration Act 2002 introduced new restrictions, such as removing the 'right to work', preventing asylum seekers from working or receiving vocational training, and adding the category 'non-suspensive appeals' which enabled immigration officials to classify certain asylum requests as 'clearly unfounded' and to deny

their applicants' any appeals before deportation. The Act also introduced new limitations on how, and to whom, the already decreased social support was given. For example support was to be 'denied' to asylum seekers who have been in the country without seeking asylum for longer than three days, making access to the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) dependant on the speed at which the claim was made and "on applicant's co-operation with authorities" (Mulvey, 2010, p.461). Asylum seekers also became required to periodically report to immigration and offered Voluntary Assisted Returns to encourage migrants to return to their home country (Mulvey, 2010).

Two years later, the 2004 Asylum and Immigration Act was introduced. Most notably, it introduced electronic monitoring, 'tagging', for asylum seekers under specific circumstances such as residence restriction, and introduced arrest without warrant for asylum seekers who failed to provide sufficient asylum documentation during asylum interviews. It also created new 'trafficking' penalties for individuals suspected of facilitating transport and settlement for undocumented immigrants (Girvan, 2018).

Another Act was introduced in the same year, the Asylum & Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Act 2004, where entering the UK without travel documents and not co-operating with removal both became criminal offences. The Act also, controversially, removed support from asylum seeking families as an incentive for them to leave (Mulvey, 2010). Another piece of legislation was passed in 2004 which allowed the 'removal' of refugees from Britain into third countries that Britain deemed safe and humane (Girvan, 2018).

Another two years later, the Immigration Asylum, and Nationality Act 2006 was introduced, and it saw the redefinition of what an 'asylum claim' was, and under the new definition it became, "a claim made by a person that to remove him from or require him to leave the United Kingdom would breach the United Kingdom's obligations under the Refugee Convention" (Girvan, 2018). While Yeo (2018), refers to the Immigration Act 1988 as the beginning of the 'modern hostile environment', he refers to the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 as its prototype, because it was then that civil penalties

related to immigration began to emerge; for example, financial penalties of up to £10,000 per employee were introduced for employing someone with no legal right to work, which was backed by a new criminal offence and subsequent prison sentence of 'knowingly' employing someone with no legal right to work. As a result, small businesses, especially those in ethnic-minority areas, saw an increase in raids (Webber, 2019).

The discursive tone of that period was also prototypical of the hostile environment. In a Guardian statement in February 2007, John Reid, Labour Home Secretary between 2006-2007, said that the government has not been tough enough with its deterrence measures and that the answer was 'a package of measures' designed to bar access to services and benefits, which would make life uncomfortable and constrained for 'illegal' migrants (Mulvey, 2010).

Reid's and the Labour Government's vision was reflected in the UK Borders Act 2007, where 'crime partnerships' with various government agencies and public services were created in order to produce the 'increasingly uncomfortable environment' he spoke of earlier in the year (Griffiths and Yeo, 2021). The uncomfortable environment wasn't limited to 'illegal' migrants, as the Act also further restricted how and when, migrants who had leave-to-remain were to report to the Home Office. Finally, the Act also gave more powers to immigration officers at ports, and introduced new identification technology of biometric registration which became mandatory for anyone who typically requires a visa to enter Britain (Girvan, 2018; Mulvey, 2010).

In 2008, new Immigration Rules were introduced through secondary legislation, such as the Points-Based system and the idea of sponsorship. The Points-Based system brought back the older colonial scales of desirability, admitting migrants based on their academic worth and potential benefit to Britain (Girvan, 2018). The sponsorship rules, also a part of the Points-Based system, focused on labour and education migration, and under them, employers and education providers who wish to employ and educate migrants were considered 'sponsors' and have to adhere to sponsorship duties and regulations. In order to acquire a 'sponsor licence', prospective sponsors have to first pay a fee to the Home

Office. Once they secure their licences, these institutions have to monitor their foreign employees/students and regularly report their conduct to the Home Office. In case employees/students exhibit any irregular conduct, e.g. taking unauthorised leave or missing lectures, the sponsor has to swiftly report it to the Home Office and dismiss them (Yeo, 2020; Griffiths and Yeo, 2021). The intra-government data sharing powers given to the Home Office in the 90s were extended to external institutions such as private schools and universities in 2008/2009. Non-EU students and staff had their data shared with the Home Office, and if the institutions failed to comply, they risked having their sponsor licences revoked (Webber, 2019).

The Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 was a short document which focused on bolstering immigration enforcement, and on updating naturalisation regulations. The number of enforcement officials increased from 120 in 1993 to 7,500 in 2009, which saw "thousands of aggressive raids on ethnic businesses and homes" (Webber, 2019, p. 84). The updated naturalisation regulations increased the needed number of years of residency in Britain from five years to eight years, with no more than 90 days spent outside of the country, and added new English language and professional skill requirements (Girvan, 2018).

Despite the harsh measures focused on "reducing numbers" in the 2000s, the number of labour immigrants and asylum seekers continued to rise, and this, according to Mulvey (2010), created a situation were the public both wondered about the legitimacy of the system, and felt rising panic at the increasing number of immigrants coming into the country. By the arrival of the 2010s, it was clear that anti-immigration sentiments had become entrenched in the government, media and public discourse. Hostile policies were no longer tied to a specific political party or orientation, and the belief that immigration was bad, found at the heart of policy making, was not questioned (Mulvey, 2010).

1.4 Hostile Environment 2012-2020

In this section, I will present an overview of how the hostile environment logic manifested in policies, secondary legislation, and rules and regulations in the period between 2012 and 2020. I specifically focus on the key aspects of the Immigration Acts 2014 & 2016, and how they solidified the hostile environment's vision and made much of it law, affecting almost every aspect of a migrant's life.

As mentioned earlier, the main premise of the hostile environment is that immigration is bad and there is too much of it in Britain, and accordingly the goal is to deter migrants from coming into the country and to encourage those who are already there to return to their home countries. This logic is encapsulated in the goal of reducing net migration to the tens of thousands.

Decades of discourse around migrants who go 'welfare shopping' and choose to live in Britain to access, and consequently drain its welfare system, had a strong influence on the how the government decided to achieve its net migration goal. The goal was to be achieved through blocking undocumented residents from access to basic services.

In order to exert this wide net of influence and to ban undocumented migrants from accessing basic services, the hostile environment policies demanded the British public to collude in the state's hostility; With no regard for the implications on individuals and society as a whole. Griffiths and Yeo (2021) Explains it as the 'deputisation' of border enforcement to third parties, restricting access to public services and having individuals act as agents for the immigration system.

Below I will outline how the Immigration Acts 2014 and 2016, and other civil exclusion measures have affected the areas of banking and driving, travel, employment, housing, healthcare, and education.

1.4.1 Early initiatives: Operations Nexus & Vaken

Following May's announcement of the hostile environment, and before the hostile environment was solidified in law through the Immigration Acts 2014 & 2016, the then Home Secretary spearheaded a few initiatives that were aimed at returning undocumented migrants to their home countries. In this section, I give an overview of two of these initiatives, Nexus and Vaken, as they are the precursors to the measures that followed, and are relevant to understanding the logic and reasoning of the hostile environment.

Operation Nexus

Operation Nexus, introduced in London in 2012, was a joint police-immigration enforcement operation that combined immigration and police intelligence in order to identify and remove 'high-harm' individuals, such as criminals and gang members, who were also foreign nationals, regardless of their immigration status. Since the burden of proof is lower for deportation than it is for criminal conviction, the idea was that if the police and the Home Office joined forces, it would make it easier and quicker to get criminals deported, and off the streets (Griffiths, 2017; Yeo, 2018, 2020).

After the pilot scheme proved to be a 'success' in London, it was modified and extended to the rest of Britain (Yeo, 2018). The new modification expanded the target group to include immigration offenders and 'all suspected unlawful residents'. Depending on the location, the operational goals were achieved differently; in some cases, immigration officials were embedded in police stations, and in others, police officers ran immigration checks on people themselves or provided intelligence to help build deportation cases (Griffiths, 2017; Yeo, 2018).

The targets of the operation were not just offenders, suspects and criminals; personal information on victims and witnesses of crimes were also collected and shared with the Home Office, either by police officials or through the embedded immigration offi-

cials (Yeo, 2020). According to Yeo (2018), "In November 2017 it was reported that a victim of kidnap and rape was arrested for immigration offences when she sought help and then referred by the police to immigration officials for removal".

Operation Vaken

A year later, in July 2013, the pilot scheme, Operation Vaken, took place. The idea behind the operation was to scare undocumented migrants into voluntarily leaving Britain through the threat of imminent arrest. This was achieved through 'Go Home' billboard vans that say, "In the UK illegally? Go home or face arrest" with the number of arrests made in the area, that were sent out to drive around six London boroughs known to be predominantly populated by ethnic-minority groups (Hattenstone, 2018; Webber, 2019).

The scheme was met with a lot of outrage - especially given that 'go home' was a common far-right slogan in the 1970s - and was abandoned a month later (Hattenstone, 2018). Not only did this scheme elicit fear in undocumented migrants, it also made the public fearful, believing migration to be a threat to their livelihood (Goodfellow, 2020).

1.4.2 Banking and Driving

In this section, I go through the measures introduced in the Immigration Acts 2014 & 2016 that make it so residents have to prove their immigration status to private entities such as banks, building societies, and vehicle and driver license agencies. I begin with these measures, because not only are they different from past immigration legislation, they are also a good representation of the citizen-on-citizen immigration control which characterises the hostile environment.

With regards to banking, blocking access to financial services was key in Theresa May's hostile environment vision (Yeo, 2018). The Immigration Act 2014 made it so that undocumented residents could no longer open bank accounts, and it became mandatory for banks and building societies to check the immigration status of anyone requesting to open

a bank account, and to decline anyone without permission to live in Britain (Griffiths and Yeo, 2021).

The Immigration Act 2016, built on the 2014 Act, made it so that checks were also requested on existing bank accounts, consequently closing accounts of those deemed unqualified and possibly sending their data to the Secretary of State (Bowling and Westenra, 2020; Yeo, 2018; Griffiths and Yeo, 2021). This meant that many people suddenly discovered that their accounts were closed, and could not access their paycheques or pay for necessities of life like rent, food and childcare.

Due to bureaucracy, and the Home Office sending incorrect records, some British citizens and documented migrants had their bank accounts accidentally closed. In May 2018, in light of the Windrush scandal, which saw hundreds of racialized lawful residents wrongly deported, refused housing and employment, the then Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, put a halt to checks on existing accounts.

Five years later, in April 2023, the closure of current accounts was resumed under former Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak. The reason, according to former Immigration Minister, Robert Jenrick, was that, "Access to key banking services, including current accounts, is crucial in aiding those here unlawfully to gain a foothold in British society" (Home Office, 2023). This time around, banks and building societies are no longer required to perform the checks themselves, instead they have to check their records against lists of 'disqualified' people sent to them by the Home Office.

Similar to measures devised for banks and building societies, as a result of the Immigration Act 2014, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) could no longer issue driving licenses to anyone without leave to remain or who could not prove their immigration status, and they were also given the power to retroactively revoke any licenses they had previously issued to 'unqualified individuals' (Yeo, 2018; Bowling and Westenra, 2020). Furthermore, the DVLA was not obligated to inform individuals that their licenses were revoked, often leading to individuals finding out when stopped by the police. Even after receiving their papers, individuals have no route to appeal the revocation

on the basis of their entitlement to live in Britain (Yeo, 2018).

The Immigration Act 2016 saw harsher penalties for driving without permission to live in Britain. Law enforcement was given the power to carry out searches for driving licenses if they had reasonable grounds to believe the person they are searching is not in Britain lawfully. This power allowed them to search both premises and individuals, and to detain the offender and the vehicle if necessary (Yeo, 2018).

1.4.3 Travel

Similar to the 1987 Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, the Immigration Act 2014 introduced legislation that gave powers to airlines, rail, and port operators to check their passengers' immigration status through pre-boarding checks (Border Force and Home Office, 2015).

The legislation also gave the government the power to 'compel' those carriers to perform said checks, mostly through fines and operational licence revocations. For example, the fine for carrying a passenger who has no permission to be in the UK, is £2000 per 'unqualified' passenger (Border Force and Home Office, 2015).

In 2015, exit checks were introduced and added to the already existing pre-boarding checks airlines, rail, and port operators had to perform. As part of pre-boarding and exit checks, Advance Passenger Information (API) is collected by rail and boat operators, or airline staff from passengers entering and exiting the UK, the checks include most of the information found on a passport, such as nationality, date of birth, travel document number, full name, gender, type and country of issue (Border Force and Home Office, 2015).

The Advance Passenger Information is shared with the Home Office and is key in providing immigration data through which they could determine those overstaying after their permission/visa expired, or staying on after asylum claims were rejected. This information helps 'target' individuals through adding them to lists and data-bases like

the ones sent to banks, building societies and the DVLA (Border Force and Home Office, 2015).

1.4.4 Employment

While employing undocumented migrants was banned and criminalised decades before the introduction of the hostile environment, the severity of the penalties and the extent of enforcement increased significantly after its introduction.

As a result of the Immigration Act 2014, the 'Right to Work' scheme was created, introducing new severe sanctions to make it difficult for undocumented residents to find or stay in employment in Britain. Under the Act, employing an undocumented migrant, a criminal offence, resulted in at least one of the following: civil fines, forfeited sponsorship licenses, and/or criminal charges. The civil fines also increased from £10,000 to £20,000 per employee with the possibility for imprisonment for both employee and employer (Griffiths and Yeo, 2021).

In what (Webber, 2019, p.79) called, the "perfected...process of criminalisation of migrants' work", the Immigration Act 2016 increased the burden of proof on employers, expanding the criminal offence of knowingly hiring an undocumented migrant to 'having reasonable cause to believe' the employee is not permitted to work. The prison sentences associated with employing undocumented migrants were also made longer at 5 years (Griffiths and Yeo, 2021). The Act also introduced new powers for enforcement officials, like the power to confiscate motor vehicles and wages as 'proceeds of crime' (Bowling and Westenra, 2020).

The new sanctions brought a renewed focus on enforcement, e.g. raids on ethnic minority businesses and an increase in penalties and fines. According to Yeo (2020), "The number of these raids soon increased sharply, with the number of penalties recorded almost trebling between 2012 and 2016. Over the same period, the total value of fines handed out multiplied by around five times to almost £50 million" (p.34).

Unsurprisingly, the result was confusion. The policies were confusing, employers were not legally required to run immigration checks, but they were heavily penalized for employing undocumented migrants, which caused them to err on the side of caution, and led to higher discrimination against foreign nationals and racialized residents, and worse working conditions and exploitation of undocumented workers (Yeo, 2018).

1.4.5 Housing

The pilot of 'the Right to Rent' (RTR) was introduced in the Immigration Act 2014, and it aimed to make it difficult for undocumented residents to find or continue to have housing. The RTR involved landlords in citizen-on-citizen policing, in a system of sanctions similar to the one created for employers, mentioned above (Yeo, 2020). The Act made way for policies that required landlords to run immigration checks on prospective tenants and anyone else who would live with them, making sure they had right to stay in Britain. Failing to do so meant they could be fined up to £3,000 in civil penalties for every tenant who has no permission to rent in the UK (Webber, 2019; Griffiths and Yeo, 2021).

Despite organizations, like The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI), warning the Home Office that the scheme could encourage discrimination and racism towards tenants (Ali, 2023), the application of the RTR moved from its pilot phase and was enforced nationwide under the Immigration Act 2016. The 2016 Act actually took sanctions one step further, making it illegal for private landlords and housing agents to rent to anyone they know or 'believe' has no permission to stay in Britain, raising the civil penalties to criminal sanctions including a possible 5 year prison sentence (Griffiths and Yeo, 2021; Ali, 2023).

As was warned, the Acts soon proved not to work, and instead led to an increase in discrimination, racism, and xenophobia in the housing rental market (Goodfellow, 2020). Griffiths and Yeo (2021) cite two polls done in 2015 and 2016 that found that about 50% of landlords said that they would not rent to people who "appear as immigrants",

who were foreign nationals, and to ethnic minorities who do not hold a British Passport. The Right to Rent, combined with eviction provisions that, in certain cases, allow landlords to evict with no court order, saw undocumented individuals and families become homeless and street homeless, many of whom were not new immigrants but pensioners who had lived in Britain since they were young (Webber, 2019).

1.4.6 Access to Healthcare

The discourse around 'healthcare tourists' who come to access Britain's free healthcare, and the abuse of the National Health Service (NHS) by the 'undeserving', was already emerging in the 1990s (Essex et al., 2022). The hostile environment era saw this discourse get a strong revival, especially since years of government reforms and privatization had put great pressure on the NHS; waiting times were getting longer and access to services more difficult and it was convenient to blame this pressure on the figure of the migrant.

The measures taken to stop undocumented residents from accessing NHS services focused on two avenues: data sharing and restrictions on access. These measures manifest differently from the ones I summarized in the sections above, e.g. banking, the right to work, and The Right to Rent. One difference was that the execution of the hostile measures in the previous areas focused on the deputization and coercion of private entities and individuals into acting as immigration control, through sanctions and criminal charges. Another difference, is that they were mainly outlined in primary legislation, through the Immigration Acts 2014 & 2016.

The first reason for the differences is that the NHS is by definition a public funded good and is 'free at the point of delivery' which makes a full ban on access through primary legislation impossible, and the second reason is that the same incentives and coercion to run immigration checks that landlords and employers face, cannot apply to NHS workers due to the nature of what they do and how they deliver their service (Ali, 2023; Yeo, 2018).

In the following two sections, I will give an overview of the data sharing and the re-

strictions to access measures, adopted by the government under the hostile environment.

Data Sharing

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 included some clauses that allowed the NHS to share patient details with the Home Office. Prior to the Act, the NHS was not allowed to share patient information except in cases of criminal investigations (Travis, 2017). The Act merely opened the door for data sharing, as it did not include any measures on scope or enforcement.

Under this Act, the NHS did not volunteer information about patients, but they responded to Home Office requests to share details about specific patients who were being tracked by immigration enforcement. The number of requests rose steadily from 2012 onwards, and by 2016, the Home Office was making about nine thousand requests a year (Travis, 2017; Griffiths, 2017).

In 2017, a data sharing agreement 'the new memorandum of understanding' (MoU) between the Home Office, NHS Digital, and the Department of Health and Social Care was formalized. Although the document was not "legally binding", it was a shared agreement between its participants that the NHS was to share non-clinical patient information such as address, GP details, and dates of birth, about individuals suspected of being undocumented (Yeo, 2018). The agreement was met with a massive backlash from many directions such as the parliament's select committee on health, medical charities like Doctors of the World, the British Medical Association (BMA), and campaign groups such as Docs not Cops. This led to, first, a partial suspension, and later, a total scrapping of the agreement in November 2018 (Webber, 2019).

Restrictions on Access to the NHS

In 2015 new restrictions were applied to free hospital treatment of undocumented migrants, which was only allowed for 'urgent and immediately necessary treatment'. To

enforce the restrictions, new regulations were introduced the same year which required hospital healthcare staff to run immigration checks on patients coming in, who 'seem to be undocumented', and to decide who qualified as needing urgent and necessary free treatment (Yeo, 2020). This period unfortunately saw many undocumented migrants being denied treatment (Bowling and Westenra, 2020). With no clear description of what is an 'urgent and immediately necessary treatment', many vulnerable people who needed urgent care were delayed in receiving it or denied treatment.

2017 saw new stronger regulations banning all free treatment for unregistered residents. Hospital, health-center, and community-center healthcare staff were now required to run routine immigration checks on patients, as well as check the immigration status of all incoming service users, except for those seeking emergency services. Individuals who were unable to provide their immigration status were required to pay 150% of the estimated cost for their treatments prior to receiving them, or face being turned away (Webber, 2019; Griffiths and Yeo, 2021). In cases of emergency or urgent treatments, the NHS billed people after receiving their treatment.

The overall result of the data sharing and restriction measures mentioned above has been negative, people were targeted at their most vulnerable and helpless moments, many were too scared to seek treatment for fear of deportation and debt (Essex et al., 2022). I recall hearing a story in 2021 from a service user, at the refugee charity where I worked, about a friend of his who had a seizure during a gathering. The group of friends felt so helpless and torn between contacting emergency services, and worrying that it could lead to him getting deported, given that he was in the middle of an asylum appeal. The measures were also overall unsuccessful, as thousands of people have been wrongly denied treatment due to the bureaucracy and complication the system created (Essex et al., 2022).

Finally, it is worth noting that the ending of free medical treatment extended to incoming migrants, who have to pay an increasingly prohibitive health surcharge during their visa application process (Webber, 2019). When the surcharge was first announced it was

£200 per annum, in 2018 it became £400, in 2023 it rose to £620, and as of August 2024 it has now increased by 66% to £1,035. The surcharge is to be paid in advance for the full duration of the leave to stay; so if an individual applies for a three year visa now they would have to pay around £3000, excluding application fees.

1.4.7 Education

In the field of education, similar to healthcare, the government could not enact clear bans through primary legislation. Instead, in June of 2015, after receiving a Freedom of Information request, the Department for Education (DfE) signed a secret data sharing agreement with the Home Office allowing them to share details of around 1500 students a month in order to trace families who were 'immigration offenders' and deport them. The details shared included the names, school and attendance records, and addresses of students. Around that time, in a proposal that was quickly rejected by government, the home secretary proposed that children of undocumented migrants should not be allowed to attend school or to be de-prioritized in the assignment of school places (Webber, 2019).

In 2016, an official Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the DfE and the Home Office was announced. The DfE would officially share individual children's school census information with the Home Office, while adding extra questions that would help determine the immigration status of their parents, such as nationality, country of birth, and English proficiency. It was during that time that the 2015 data sharing agreement with the Home Office, which had previously been secret, came to light (Webber, 2019; Griffiths and Yeo, 2021). It received immediate backlash from parents, teachers and organisations that organized public campaigns like Against Borders for Children, which caused the DfE to announce that it would remove the questions of country of birth and nationality from the school census in 2018 (Webber, 2019; Yeo, 2018).

Although the government responded to the people's outrage and reversed the changes to the census, the data sharing agreement remains, and as a result many undocumented

families, whether migrants or not, have become weary of sending their children to school (Webber, 2019; Yeo, 2020).

1.5 The Hostile Environment 2020-Present

In an attempt to enhance its public image, in 2017, the Home Office re-branded the hostile environment as the 'compliant environment' and the inter-ministerial working group previously named the 'Hostile Environment Working Group' became the 'Inter-Ministerial Group on Migrants' Access to Benefits and Public Services' (Griffiths and Yeo, 2021). This re-branding was the extent of the government's attempts at less hostility. Over the years, the hostile environment has become ingrained in how Britain relates and interacts with migrants; it has also continued to expand and increase in hostility.

I chose to demarcate two periods of the hostile environment 2012-2020 and 2020-present because, while the 'citizen-on-citizen' immigration policing has continued, in the past 4 years the hostile environment discourse saw some marked changes. Most significantly, the shift towards referring to individuals rather than actions as illegal, leading to more hostile and restrictive legislation that seeks to criminalize all irregular migrants and outlaw the act of asylum seeking itself, outside of the handful of pre-approved routes Britain was committed to.

To illustrate the changes that took place since 2020, I give an overview of The Nationality and Borders Act 2022, The Illegal Migration Act 2023, and the Rwanda Scheme. This overview aims to help understand the recent past of the hostile environment, and provide insight into the direction Britain is headed when it comes to the topic of immigration.

1.5.1 The Nationality and Borders Act 2022

A new 'regime' for illegal migrants, The Nationality and Borders Act 2022 (NABA) was introduced by former Home Secretary, Priti Patel. The NABA Act had multiple aims, most notable were: changing the thresholds for granting asylum claims, raising the threshold

for modern slavery claims, giving the home office more liberties to remove immigrants, and applying further measures to criminalize and therefore discourage illegal entry. The Home Secretary is also given unprecedented power to remove illegal migrants from the country and to revoke citizenship at their own discretion.

It is important to note that the Act was passed despite the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), raising concerns that the Act undermined the rights of asylum seekers and disregarded international law (Ali, 2023).

The language use on human rights and modern slavery claims also changed, where the focus used to be on who is allowed to make claims, or how and when claims ought to be made, e.g. how late claims may lose validity, in this Act the language changed to statements such as ”People arriving illegally will have their ability to exploit human rights laws constrained” (Home Office, 2023b). Such language insinuates that irregular migrants arrive to exploit human rights and modern slavery laws, and therefore are disqualified from claiming asylum within Britain at all.

Some of the measures used to criminalize and discourage illegal entry, were penalizing tardiness in making claims and appeals, and extending detention to twenty-one days prior to removal, in order to accelerate appeals. Human rights claims are expected to be made immediately upon irregular arrival and the evidence for the claims is expected within a set timescale, and failure to do so in time without a ’good reason’ results in damage to the credibility of the claim. Appeals are discouraged and made less accessible, especially for late claims made after removal notices. Detention bail is also only possible if the detainee has a removal date set.

The theme which persists throughout this Act and the next, is the focus on the ’inadmissibility’ of the British asylum system. This is a major shift from the previous Acts discussed earlier, which mainly focused on ’deterrence’ and served to create obstacles and inconveniences for undocumented migrants, in the hopes that they would be discouraged from coming or from staying in Britain. In this new era of the hostile environment, irregular arrivals seem to have have no way of entering the asylum system.

1.5.2 The Rwanda Scheme

The Rwanda Scheme started during Patel's tenure and was taken over by Braverman when she became Home Secretary in 2019. In April 2022 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Priti Patel on behalf of the United Kingdom and Vincent Biruta foreign minister of Rwanda on behalf of Rwanda.

The Rwanda Scheme was designed with the aim of relocating 'illegal' migrants who arrive to the UK and cannot be deported back to their countries. Initially, it was presented as a temporary relocation or a transitional one while asylum claims were being processed, but it was soon clarified that the plan was for migrants to permanently relocate to Rwanda "To build a new and prosperous life there" (Patel, 2022). Asylum seekers would be expected to apply for asylum in Rwanda upon arrival and it would be up to Rwandan immigration authorities to either grant them refugee status or reject their claims, and deport them back to their home country.

The government was sending a confusing message, saying that Rwanda is a safe country that upholds human rights, while at the same time claiming that sending asylum seekers to Rwanda would set an example and deter migrants from seeking asylum in Britain (Yeo, 2022). Aside from the moral and ethical issues of the Rwanda plan, as it has been called, there are many practical issues, one of which is that Rwanda has a finite amount of asylum seekers it can host, contrary to how it is being advertised as having infinite capacity. Another is that deportation of failed asylum seekers is an expensive and difficult process and even if Britain succeeds in making deportations to Rwanda, what would most likely happen is that asylum seekers would try to get back to Europe, endangering their lives and being at the mercy of people smugglers and traffickers (Yeo, 2022).

Between April and June of 2022, asylum seekers started receiving removal notices. Among those given the Rwanda removal notices were Iranian, Afghan, and Syrian asylum seekers, most of whom would have been considered genuine refugees and granted

asylum according to UK law (Yeo, 2022). The first flight scheduled to fly to Rwanda in June 2022 was cancelled after many appeals to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and courts of London. In response to backlash over the Rwanda plan, Priti Patel accused those who opposed the memorandum as xenophobic, racist, and ignorant (Malnick, 2022).

With the Rwanda plan on hold, Braverman took over the post of Home Secretary and it was in relation to the plan that she first developed her notoriety by saying that it was her 'dream' and 'obsession' to see planes of asylum seekers taking off to Rwanda (Dearden, 2022).

On the 15th of November 2023, the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom ruled the Rwanda plan unlawful and dismissed a previous appeal made by the Government in April of the same year. In July 2024, the new Labour government announced that it would scrap the Rwanda plan, despite the UK having paid Rwanda a nonrefundable £240 million.

1.5.3 The Illegal Migration Act 2023

One year after NABA was introduced, in an unprecedented short interval between similar legislation, The Illegal Migration Act 2023 was introduced by Suella Braverman in March 2023 and approved in July of the same year. On the gov.uk the aim of the Act was summarized as follows:

"The Illegal Migration Bill will change the law to make it unambiguously clear that, if you enter the UK illegally, you should not be able to remain here. Instead, you will be detained and promptly removed either to your home country or to a safe country where any asylum claim will be considered." (Home Office, 2023a).

The government argued that the introduction of the 2023 Act was an appropriate reaction to continued abuse of the modern slavery system and the rising number of small boat arrivals since the passing of NABA in 2022. The 2023 ACT is marketed as an experimental

'novel and ambitious' answer to a problem that incremental reforms such as NABA and past immigration legislation have failed at solving (Home Office, 2023a).

According to the Illegal Migration Bill, all irregular migrants are to be detained upon arrival, with no possibility of bail from the Immigration Tribunal or of judicial review for up to 28 days. Next, they are to be assessed within days of their arrival, and if they are found to have traveled via a safe country their claims will not be admissible to the asylum system. Additionally, all irregular migrants who would have previously been referred into the modern slavery system will now be disqualified and will be removed to a safe third country or their home country within days of arrival. Those who would have previously lodged human rights claims will also be removed and have their claims dealt with out of country, even Judicial reviews would not delay removal in this case.

Up until NABA, all appeals were made within the UK, that changed with the 2023 Act where the aim was to reduce the possibility of appeals or Judicial reviews. According to the Act, no appeals are to be accepted in the UK except for those made by immigrants who face "real and imminent risk of serious and irreversible harm" in the country they are to be removed to, and no appeals or Judicial reviews are to be made out of country.

One of the differences between the two acts is that while NABA's language had already introduced the concept of 'inadmissibility', legally it was still mostly relying on discouraging migrants, whereas the Illegal Migration Bill changed the law and made it so seeking asylum through irregular routes is illegal. Under NABA, the Home secretary had the power to remove asylum seekers from the country at their own discretion, while under the 2023 Act, the Home Secretary is 'bound by legal duty to remove illegal migrants'.

Though advertised as a solution to end long waits on asylum decisions and cost taxpayers less in asylum accommodation, the Illegal Migration Act 2023 raised concerns within Parliament prior to passing, and NGOs and human's rights activists (International Rescue Committee, Refugee Council, Freedom from Torture, etc.) warned that the act would only create further suffering to already vulnerable individuals who will now face indefinite detention as happened on the Bibby Stockholm barge docked off the Dorset

coast, which had the capacity to hold up to 500 asylum seekers at a time (Taylor and Syal, 2023).

1.6 Conclusion

More than 10 years after the hostile environment was announced, it is clear that it has not achieved its initial goal of reducing net migration to the tens of thousands. The goal itself, which reduces people to a numerical equation, has enabled a sort of ruthless 'means to an end' attitude that can be observed throughout the hostile environment measures mentioned in this chapter. This ruthless attitude doesn't only harm undocumented migrants, it harms everyone in society, disproportionately harming those most vulnerable, migrants, ethnic minority citizens, women, children.

Despite its failings, the hostile environment remains the dominant discourse on immigration in Britain. Its goal's unachievable nature in this case also doesn't seem to serve as a deterrent or a reason for politicians to reflect and back-track, rather it seems to have the opposite effect of triggering a feedback loop of 'confirming' that there is an 'immigration problem' which needs to be remedied with harsher means, and so on.

It is the contradictory and at times seemingly illogical nature of the hostile environment which attracted me to the topic. This is why the aim of this work is to contribute to the knowledge of, why the hostile environment, why in Britain, and why now?, and in order to do so I had to first answer, what is the hostile environment? A question, I hope this chapter has sufficiently answered. Ideally this chapter will have demystified the hostile environment, contextualized it within a long history of anti-immigration policies dating back to the end of the British empire, and captured the increasingly hostile logic which sustains it.

Finally, In the following chapter I will give an overview of the methodology and theories I will be using to analyze the hostile environment discourse in the context of Britain's colonial history.

Chapter 2

Methodological Reflections

2.1 Introduction

The main aim of this thesis is to contribute to the knowledge of why anti-immigration sentiments, now encapsulated in the hostile environment, came to be the dominant immigration discourse in Britain. The hostile environment is a complex social phenomenon where the logic of hostility, and the rhetoric and knowledge that sustain it, rapidly translate to material legislative and policy outcomes, that, in turn confirm the logic of hostility and feed it, creating a feedback loop of increasing hostility.

In order to study this complex socio-political phenomenon, I employ an interdisciplinary conceptual methodology which is inspired by and borrows tools from various traditions within psychoanalysis, discourse analysis, and colonial studies. In this chapter, I will illustrate the different theoretical and methodological devices that will be used in the coming chapters.

The main critical tool I employ in understanding the hostile environment is psychoanalysis. Using psychoanalysis, I conceive of the hostile environment as a symptom of the repressed legacy of the British Empire, interrogating its historical roots and the psychic conflicts at its heart.

In my case study in Chapter 4, in addition to psychoanalysis, I will be using political

discourse analysis (PDA) to analyze a speech given by former Home Secretary Suella Braverman at the Conservative Party Conference in 2023. In my analysis, I describe how an argument in favor of the hostile environment is constructed, and I evaluate its internal validity, and contextualize it within my psychoanalytic interpretation.

Finally, I place my work in the colonial studies tradition, viewing it as a work which attempts to theorize the 'West', in this case Britain, back to itself. While I do not use any explicit colonial studies tools in this thesis, I attempt to study the anti-immigration sentiments of modern day Britain through its colonial past, and hence the work conceptually falls under colonial studies

In the first section, *Psychoanalysis*, I begin with a brief account of how Freud conceived of psychoanalysis, followed by an overview of the central psychoanalytic concepts that are relevant to this work: the unconscious, the topographic model, the structural model, psychopathology and defense mechanisms. I then give an overview of the relationship between psychoanalysis and the social, giving a summary of how psychoanalysis has been used as a tool for social critique over the years. Finally, I illustrate how psychoanalysis theorizes and analyzes large group dynamics, using the works of Freud, Wilfred Bion, Vamik Volkan and Otto Kernberg.

In the second section, *Discourse Analysis*, I introduce political discourse analysis (PDA) which is an extension of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and the framework I will be using for my case study analysis of a speech by Suella Braverman in Chapter 4. The first part of the section is an overview of CDA, a socio-politically motivated school of discourse analysis which aims to empower subjects by shedding light on hidden social coercion and de-crypting the ideologies concealed in prominent discourses. The second part of the section is an overview of PDA and a detailed illustration of how Isabela and Norman Fairclough (2012) conceived of the use of the framework in the analysis of political discourse, e.g. parliamentary debates, speeches, or campaign slogans.

Finally the third and shortest section, *Colonial Studies*, contextualizes my work within colonial studies, specifically the colonial studies tradition which theorizes the West, in my

case, Britain. I give a brief overview of Edward Said's pioneering concept of *Orientalism* which opened the space for theorizing about how the West's production of knowledge about 'other' non-Western peoples and cultures has aided its imperial expansion, and allowed the West to re-invent itself as overall superior. I also give some examples of the work of relevant scholars who have developed on and utilized Said's theory over the years.

2.2 Psychoanalysis

Viewing the hostile environment discourse through the lens of psychoanalysis requires an introduction and discussion of psychoanalysis itself. In simple terms, psychoanalysis is the seeking of awareness of the past's role in shaping the present. While seemingly straightforward, this pursuit is complicated by the existence of the unconscious and, with it, our inability to fully know ourselves. The psychoanalytic pursuit of self-awareness, on an individual level, is seen as offering a possibility of freedom from the control of our instincts and from repeating the past.

I also consider the existing connections between psychoanalysis, and the critique and analysis of the social. This includes the role of society, as part of the external world, in the formation of the individual, and how psychoanalytic theories can help us gain different perspectives on how society functions and our patterns of relating to each other. Through these connections, I discuss how, on a social level, the psychoanalytic pursuit expands to include freedom from the social illusions that maintain the status quo.

In the first section, *Main Concepts*, I give an overview of the inception of Freudian psychoanalysis, of the central concept of the unconscious, and of the structure of the mind and its internal processes as conceived by Freud in his topographic and structural models. I then go onto illustrate how Freud conceived of the unconscious dynamics that lead to intra-psychic conflicts, and how intra-psychic conflicts might lead to pathology. I also discuss the unconscious methods, ego defenses, that Freud hypothesized are activated to

defend against our intra-psychic conflicts. Finally, I overview Anna Freud and George Vaillant's developments on the concept of ego defenses.

The second section, *Psychoanalysis and the Social*, is divided into two parts. In the first part, I give an overview of how psychoanalysis has been used as a tool of social critique, starting with Freud, who, after living through World War One, started reflecting on the effects of unconscious mechanisms, like repression, on society. He observed that repression serves to maintain a society's illusion of 'goodness', and to ignore its violent and destructive aspects which leads them to fester and have terrible manifestations like war. I also give examples of how psychoanalytic theory has been used to critique society by post-Freudian thinkers over the years.

In the second part, I summarize Freud's understanding of the unconscious dynamics of large groups and their analysis. I give an overview of the works of other psychoanalysts, Wilfred Bion, Vamik Volkan and Otto Kernberg, who contributed to our knowledge of large group psycho-dynamics and how they can predict the destruction or survival of the group.

2.2.1 Main Concepts

> "But human megalomania will have suffered its third and most wounding blow from the psychological research of the present time which seeks to prove to the ego that it is not even master in its own house, but must content itself with scanty information of what is going on unconsciously in its mind.".
>
> (Freud, 1977h, p.3361)

As a young physician, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), developed an interest in a specific type of mental disturbance, namely 'functional nervous diseases', later called neuroses. He was specifically interested in hysteria, a type of functional nervous disease where a person of, otherwise sound physical health, experiences severe somatic symptoms such as pains, losing function of one or more of the senses and even paralysis. Physicians, at the time, were trying and failing to decipher and treat this odd ailment. According

to Freud, the reason they failed was because they were treating a psychological ailment through physical means. The prioritization of the biological model was common at the time since the medical field was still influenced by Enlightenment thinkers like Descartes, who championed a clear distinction between mind as subject, and body as object.

In his search for new ways to understand and treat those ailments, Freud crossed paths with Charcot, a 'neuropathologist' in the Salpêtrière hospital in Paris, who was treating hysteric patients with hypnosis, and successfully using suggestion to remove their symptoms. He witnessed how patients under hypnosis were in an altered, sleep like state, which made them susceptible to external suggestions. Equipped with this new knowledge, Freud began to treat his hysteric patients with hypnosis and suggestion (Makari, 2010).

Shortly after beginning to use this new technique, Freud discovered that it did not work as well as he initially assumed. Not every patient could be hypnotized, and the ones who did, and had their symptoms suggested away, manifested different symptoms later. This is when he realized he needed a technique that would to get to the bottom of his patients' suffering, and not simply stop their symptoms. Thus psychoanalysis was born (Freud, 1977d, p.1556).

Psychoanalysis, as a clinical method, was developed to mimic hypnosis in its effect of reducing the inhibitions of the patient, but with the added benefit of them being conscious of everything they say. In psychoanalytic treatment, a patient is invited to lay on the analytic couch and 'free associate', meaning to talk about whatever comes to their mind without fear of repercussion or judgment and the constraints of needing to be coherent or logical. In order to facilitate 'free association', the analyst would sit behind the patient so as to reduce their external sensory impressions and to not influence them through facial expressions or reactions. The free association and willingness of the patient, combined with the psychoanalyst's use of the 'art of interpretation', forms the basis of the psychoanalytic technique.

The end goal of psychoanalysis as a clinical technique, is the practical recovery of

a patient's health. Psychoanalytic investigation is largely an act of reconstructing and restoring the patient's repressed personal history, freeing them from the symptoms and repetitions resulting from repression and allowing them to perceive themselves as agents of their own history. Therefore, after the patient is in a state of free association , the analyst's job is to pay attention to the inconsistencies in the patient's speech, for example gaps in the memory, slips of tongue, apparent discomfort when retrieving certain memories (Freud, 1977d, p.1556). Using interpretation, the psychoanalyst, translates the encrypted language of the patient, reaching the root of their ailment and retrieving 'undreamt of information' (Freud, 1977a, p.408).

Following traces to their historical source is not a straight forward process since, through repression, which occurs in the unconscious, those traces are ceaselessly changing and endowed with new meaning (Freud, 1977b). Psychoanalysis has to therefore simultaneously operate on multiple temporal spheres, through gathering factual or relevant data combined with interpretation work, it addresses both history and the meaning endowed to it at any given moment. The scattered speech of the patient is put together in psychoanalytic language and it becomes, "no longer nonsensical but may form a poetical phrase of the greatest beauty and significance" (Freud, 1977f, p.751). This alchemy helps the patient both reflect on things that were otherwise too difficult to look at, and to integrate experiences and parts of themselves that previously seemed foreign (Freud, 1977g).

The Unconscious

Freud first started formulating the concept of the unconscious while he was using hypnosis and suggestion with his patients. Under hypnosis, a sleep-like mental state, his patients' inhibitions were lowered and they spoke freely of difficult traumatic experiences, and 'immoral', contradictory and odd fantasies, all of which they had no recollection when they awoke. While his patients had no conscious recollection of the things they spoke of under hypnosis, he observed that, unbeknownst to them, these topics still af-

fected their waking life and were sometimes the cause of their symptoms (Freud, 1977n).

Freud concluded that the previous assumption that humans knew themselves, was incorrect, which caused an outrage in the medical field at the time. Although, historically, many thinkers e.g. Schopenhauer had discussed concepts akin to the unconscious, Freud's colleagues, who followed the biological model, doubted the scientific soundness of his work (Freud, 1924-1925). Consequently, Freud felt he had to justify his hypotheses and ground it in science, a sentiment that motivated him to expand psychoanalysis from being a clinical method of treating hysteria, to a theoretical endeavour into exploring and explaining the human psyche (Freud, 1977n,m).

According to Freud, "The unconscious comprises of, on the one hand, acts which are merely latent, temporarily unconscious, but which differ in no other respect from conscious ones and, on the other hand, processes such as repressed ones, which if they were to become conscious would be bound to stand out in the crudest contrast to the rest of the conscious processes" (Freud, 1915, p.2996). Thus, the unconscious has two manifestations, the first, being material which is unavailable due to human limitation, i.e. the inability to hold all thoughts and representation consciously at all times, and the second, being material which is 'made' unconscious, repressed, in an act of self defense against the possible psychic collapse that can happen if some of our distressing and 'self-contradictory' ideas or instincts become known to us.

The unconscious is vast and contains much mystery, but we know, according to Freud, that it houses all repressed material. Hence, all that is repressed is unconscious, but not all that is unconscious is repressed. Freud arrived at this knowledge indirectly through observing how his patient's resistances were activated when they tried to access their repressed material. Resistances guard the unconscious and ban any repressed material from exiting, making it so that material can enter the unconscious but not leave it (Freud, 1977l).

Resistance works by either completely blocking the material from reaching consciousness or by distorting it, making it harder to recognize. This distortion can potentially lead

to debilitating symptoms, but we can also see minute manifestations of resistance in our slips of the tongue, forgetting names, losing track of thoughts, and other such instances when our resistance is made seen without us consciously knowing the reason behind it (Freud, 1977l). Ultimately, the greater the resistance the greater the distortion.

The Topographic Model: The Conscious, The Preconscious, The Unconscious

In order to illustrate how the unconscious works, how resistance works, and how material is repressed, Freud introduced the topographic model. The topographic model, shows the mind divided into three regions/systems, the conscious, the preconscious, and the unconscious, illustrated through the classical 'iceberg' imagery that many people now associate with psychoanalysis.

Consciousness or 'being aware of', according to Freud, is an extremely 'fugitive' state. As our mind would be too overwhelmed if we were conscious of everything at the same time, there exists a system called the preconscious, which holds for us everything that has the possibility of becoming conscious. The preconscious, a derivative of the conscious, is the container of all conscious memory. It is also responsible for endowing conscious material with temporality and for reality testing, meaning it allows us to review our memories in a narrative and seemingly coherent way, avoiding simultaneous contradictory recollections, thoughts and feelings (Freud, 1977l). In summary, the preconscious is that which is unconscious, only 'for the time being'.

The unconscious, the largest of the three regions, is the part of our mind that we have no possibility of accessing or knowing. It is a system which has no regard for 'reality'; it is the realm of the illogical. One reason, is that it is ordered without any reference to time, meaning its processes are timeless, and are not affected by the passage of time (Freud, 1977q). Another reason, is that it contains contradictory wishful and instinctual impulses that have no influence on one another; according to Freud, "There are in this system no negation, no doubt, no degrees of certainty" (Freud, 1977q, p.3009).

Finally, Its important to note that the separation between the three topographic regions is not absolute. As we have seen, the conscious and preconscious are in constant interaction, and the unconscious, despite being guarded, often reverberates through our conscious life.

The structural model

The topographic model, reviewed above, illustrated how the psychic apparatus worked and how its parts interacted to shape how we store and process psychic material. What Freud thought the model lacked, were the psychic structures that determine how the material we process and store affects us, for example, why two people can have the same experience, and only one develops a pathological response to it. In order to address this gap, Freud created a complementary model called the structural model; in it, he theorized the existence of a psychic apparatus which consists of three mental structures, the Id, Ego, and Superego, that interact to constitute mental life and determine normal, and abnormal pathological, psychological outcomes.

Freud imagines the psychic apparatus as follows, "We assume that mental life is the function of an apparatus to which we ascribe the characteristics of being extended in space and of being made up of several portions - which we imagine, that is, as resembling a telescope or microscope or something of the kind" (Freud, 1977k, p.4957).

The id, according to Freud, is the first of the three mental structures to develop. It is present at birth, and informs our temperament, our constitution, and our phylogenetic inheritance. It also resides in the unconscious, and represents the expression of the true purpose of a single organism's life, namely, the satisfaction of its innate instinctual needs with no regard for consequences (Freud, 1977k). Freud defines instinctual needs as the unconscious somatic demands, the untamed passions of the mind, motivating all of our activities. Our instinctual needs are unconscious therefore unknown to us as such. While we don't have access to the instinctual impulses and the ideas attached to them, we have

access to the affects, whether pleasure or un-pleasure, which we are able to receive from the unconscious. Once we receive said affects, with no knowledge of the instinctual needs behind them, we create conscious substitute ideas and goals to attach to them (Freud, 1977k).

According to Freud, the baby for whom the id is the sole ruler, is at some point, faced with the 'real world', a world of undifferentiated sensory stimulus most of which are perceived as threatening and un-pleasurable. As a result, a portion of the id separates and evolves in order to shield the baby against un-pleasurable stimuli. This portion he names the ego, the second of the three structures to develop (Freud, 1977k).

Unlike the rest of the id, the ego, is not confined to the unconscious, it is directed towards the external world and is shaped and modified by it. When dealing with the perceptions of the external world, the ego's function is the differentiation, synthesis, and mediation of sensory stimuli (Freud, 1977j). In some cases, this synthesis is necessary in order to bring about advantageous changes in the external world; for example, when the ego synthesizes sense perceptions of the external world into muscular action it creates voluntary movement. In other cases, the synthesis is necessary for self-preservation; for example, the ego commits to memory different events and experiences of stimuli enabling it to send danger signals by means of anxiety in order to activate flight from excessively strong stimulus (Freud, 1977k,j).

Once fully demarcated from the id, the ego's function quickly expands from dealing with the external world's stimuli, to additionally dealing with and controlling the id's instincts, becoming the intermediary between the id and the external world. In this new role, the ego has to differentiate the instincts of the id, determining which instincts need to be acted on immediately, which would be appropriate to act on without causing the person acting on them or others harm in the external world, and which should be postponed until a more appropriate time (Freud, 1977k, p.4957).

Both the ego and the id operate under the pleasure principle, seeking pleasure and avoiding un-pleasure, but the ego through its connection to the external world has to

deploy reason in its pleasure seeking. In this deployment of reason, comes the role of repression. The ego as the structure in charge of repression, represses what it deems as crude impulses, which are usually sexual, aggressive, and selfish impulses. The ego also deploys repression in the cases of extreme excitation, what we now call trauma (Freud, 1977n, p.4106).

While repression overall works, it is not a perfect system; because instinctual impulses eventually always get their satisfaction, that which is repressed always finds a way of coming back, albeit in distorted forms, namely symptoms, which I will elaborate on in the next section (Freud, 1977n, p.4106). In *The Anatomy of the Mental Personality* (1932), Freud likens the relationship between the id and the ego to the relationship between a powerful horse and its rider respectively. The id as the horse provides the energy and momentum which moves the rider, and the ego as the rider has to balance between when to control the horse and guide it to where it 'needs' to go, and when to 'oblige' and guide the horse to where it 'wants' to go.

The last of the three structures of the mental apparatus is the super-ego. As the child is growing, there is a period where it has to be fully dependant on its parents, and in that period, the ego develops a distinct agency which internalizes the paternal function. The super-ego shares certain features with the ego and the id. Similar to the ego, the super-ego resides in both the conscious and the unconscious, and like the id, the super-ego represents influences from the past. Although both the id and the superego are inextricably linked to the past, the id represents the influence of heredity, whereas the super-ego represents the influence of what has been internalized and taken over from other people during childhood. In that, they both differ from the ego, which is determined by experiences both present and past (Freud, 1977k).

Once fully differentiated from the ego which created it, the super-ego takes on the role of the censor of the ego, or what we think of as our conscience. It watches over the ego and restrains its striving for satisfaction, inducing fear, guilt, and anxiety to punish the ego for unacceptable actions and intentions equally. With the super-ego there, the ego's

repression function is fortified. When considering the satisfaction of the id's instinctual needs, the ego, now, not only has to account for the dangers of the external world, but also the judgement and disapproval of the super-ego. In time, the ego learns to find ways of obtaining satisfaction without triggering the super-ego (Freud, 1977k).

The severity of the super-ego depends on the child's relationship with its parents and how it perceives and internalizes them. Family members, elders, teachers, and culture also contribute to the formation of the super-ego, although to a lesser degree. A strict environment can create a severe super-ego, but conversely an environment which is too permissive can cause a child to seek an internal regulatory punitive system and overcompensate through developing a severe super-ego (Freud, 1977c).

In the beginning of this section, I mentioned that Freud created the structural model in order to illustrate how different parts of our mind interact with each other to determine our psychopathology. The summary of the id, ego, and super-ego and their interaction, I gave above, is according to Freud, a part of 'normal' developments, with room for some divergence. In reality, interactions between the three structures are never easy. The id and the super-ego, have no means of direct communication, it is the ego which acts as intermediary between them, and between them and the external world. This means the ego has the difficult task of serving three harsh masters, of satisfying and reconciling the contradicting demands of the super-ego, the id, and the external world. The ego often "gives way" under the weight of the task and this can manifest in different ways (Freud, 1977j). In the next section, I will give an overview of how different structural interactions result in specific pathology, and what defense mechanisms the psychic apparatus employs in order to defend itself (Freud, 1977j).

Pathology & Symptoms

Freud's emphasis on the importance of the ego's function, is partly motivated by the fragility of the whole psychic apparatus. The ego's position as intermediary between

the id, the super-ego, and the external world means it constantly deals with internal and external threats and the anxiety they induce. Tension with the super-ego creates moral anxiety, threats from the external world create existential anxiety, and dealing with the id's strong instinctual needs creates neurotic anxiety (Freud, 1977j).

As mentioned above, in the process of acting as intermediary between the id and the external world, the ego has to repress certain instinctual impulses in favour of conforming to reality. In order for the process of repression to be realized, it has to neither be too weak nor too strong; if it is too weak then the id's instincts can thrust forward through the repression, and if it is too strong then the id can rebel and fill the ego with neurotic anxiety causing it to submit to its will (Freud, 1977n).

Neurosis and psychosis, the two main sources of Freudian pathology of the mind, are a result of failure in the process of repression, and a rebellion of the id against reality (Freud, 1977n). One difference between neurosis and psychosis is that the ego is dependant on reality in neurosis and is committed to suppressing the id's instinctual needs, while in psychosis the ego is dependant on the id and committed to fulfilling its instinctual needs. Another difference between them is that, in neurosis a part of reality is simply 'ignored' in order to maintain allegiance to the external world, while in psychosis a part of reality is 'disavowed', erased and replaced by an alternative piece of reality in favor of the id (Freud, 1977n). In some cases of neurosis, when repression fails, the ego succumbs to the super-ego, which means that the id's violent and aggressive impulses become directed at the ego itself, sometimes leading to severe depression and melancholia, and in other cases leading to extreme levels of self-torment and guilt as seen in certain obsessional neuroses (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder). In some cases of psychosis we see a full withdrawal of the ego, which can be disastrous as the id's impulses run rampant with no regard for reality or even preserving the life of the individual. One example of ego withdrawal is seen in certain psychotic manic episodes where reality testing ceases to function and individuals are pulled into an often dangerous quest of seeking instinctual satisfaction. Another example is in cases of 'traumatic excitation' (Post-Traumatic Stress

Disorder), when a person goes through an experience which is too traumatic, the mental apparatus gets flooded with stimulus, the ego defenses cease to work, and the mind fixates on unwanted experiences in the form of flashbacks (Freud, 1977n).

While the examples above are results of failed repression, 'successful' repression also comes at a price. According to Freud, while the wishes and the impulses attached to certain instinctual needs can be repressed, and therefore not consciously known or felt, the repressed never fully stays unconscious. It always finds ways of returning in the form of symptoms, famously referred to as 'the return of the repressed', which sees the affect passing through to consciousness, while the main instinct it was extracted from remains repressed (Freud, 1977n).

While the use of the term symptom in psychoanalysis is sometimes descriptive of manifestations of different neuroses and psychoses, the term is mostly used in a way which does not directly connect to pathology. Symptoms are considered a part of normal development, and start forming as soon as the ego emerges and the child learns that some wishes and pleasures have to be forfeit, repressed, in order to maintain the favour of their caregivers, hence the 'egoistic instincts are transformed to social ones'. Psychic maturity requires a reconciliation between our destructive wishes and our wish to be integrated and loved social beings. Symptoms operate as a way to regain some of the pleasure that was forfeited in the process of repression, often in a censored, convoluted and therefore more acceptable way. Although this system of compensation comes at a price that almost always ends up outweighing the pleasure received, the inadequacy of the compensation is overlooked by us as long as the symptom is not perceived as bothersome enough, or if the psychic threat of forfeiting our symptoms outweighs our perception of them as bothersome (Freud, 1977n; Roazen, 1970; Fink, 2017).

Another non-pathological psychic reaction to repression is seen in dreams. Freud argued that dreams were 'the royal road to the knowledge of the unconscious', because, in them, we get to witness an aspect of the unconscious interactions of our psychic apparatus. During sleep, the defenses and resistances of the ego are weakened, which makes it

possible for repressed unconscious material to surface. According to Freud, this is a compromise by the ego, this act of allegiance to the id, allows for a fulfillment of repressed instincts. That being said, before the repressed material surfaces, it passes through layers of ego and super-ego censorship, which is why what we see in our dreams is not straight forward wish-fulfilment but rather disguised and distorted material. For this reason, Freud draws similarities between the structure of dreams and of neurotic symptoms, as they are both examples of failures of repression that result in material or experiences that seem nonsensical at first glance, but, once subjected to free association and interpretation, we are led to their hidden meaning (Freud, 1977k).

Ego Defenses & Defense Mechanisms

Freud speculated throughout his career, that repression was not the only ego mechanism of defense, and that there was more than one way in which our psyche protects itself. As early as 1894, in his book *The Neuro-psychoses of Defence*, Freud wrote about ego defenses which he defined as unconscious psychological strategies that push against painful, unbearable, or unacceptable, external and internal experiences. In *Three essays on the theory of sexuality* (1905) and *The history of infantile neurosis* (1918), Freud outlined a new ego defense, a different 'type' of repression. He identified this new type of repression as disavowal. Disavowal, is the ego defense active in psychosis, which, as mentioned earlier, denies a piece of reality for the sake of the id.

In exploring ego defenses, Freud expressed his frustration with the repressive psychic and cultural systems he witnessed in his environment at the time. He believed that a shift needed to happen in order to replace the system in which we harshly disavow and repress our instincts, with a new system of truthfulness where we acknowledge our instinctual impulses and channel them through 'sublimation' instead of repressing them (Freud, 1977n).

Sublimation, considered a more reliable ego defense by Freud, is a process where in-

stincts are redirected from their original objects into healthier objects of satisfaction, e.g. like channeling violent destructive urges into art. This redirection of instinctual aims not only opens a path for satisfaction and the fulfilment of repressed wishes without meeting internal or external frustrations, but it also allows instincts to be at the disposal of 'cultural development'. Freud believed that, throughout history, sublimation is what has allowed for humanity's significant cultural achievements (Freud, 1977c).

After Freud's death, his daughter, Anna, expanded on the concept of defense mechanisms and popularized it in the psychoanalytic field. She believed that defense mechanisms should be "sharply" differentiated in order to allow for a clear category of constructive defense mechanisms, as opposed to only adaptive or pathological (Vaillant, 1992, p.77). Many psychoanalysts developed the concept after Anna, most thoroughly was George Vaillant, an American psychiatrist and psychoanalyst.

Vaillant created a developmental hierarchy of defense mechanisms which included eighteen mechanisms, ranging from pathological to adaptive. His hierarchy is divided into four categories (or "Levels"): Level I – "Psychotic" Mechanisms, Level II – Immature Mechanisms, Level III – "Neurotic" Defenses, and Level IV – Mature Mechanisms. According to him, the maturation of the "normal" human being should ideally begin with Level I in childhood and develop into Level IV in adulthood (Vaillant, 1992, p.79-80). The more immature defenses like those in Level I and Level II have more to do with the boundary between self and external world, while more mature defenses like those in Levels III and IV are concerned with internal boundaries such as those between id, superego and ego. Like Freud, Vaillant did not correlate defense mechanisms with mental illness, but rather saw them as indications that can help us predict how individuals deal with and defend against internal and external stressors (Vaillant, 1992).

In the first psychotic level of defenses, Vaillant designates mechanisms such as, denial, delusional projection, and distortion. What these three mechanisms have in common is that their satisfaction of instincts is prerequisite on a distortion or severing of the relationship with reality. For example, through distortion, a person reshapes reality and creates

"positive" delusions to satisfy their inner needs. Psychotic denial does not simply refer to the denial of affects or thoughts, it is a denial of a complete piece of reality, akin to Freud's disavowal (Vaillant, 1992).

For the immature defenses, Vaillant designates five mechanisms: Projection, Schizoid Fantasy, Hypochondriasis, Passive-Aggressive Behavior, and Acting Out. While the disconnect with reality is not as severe with the immature mechanisms as it is with the psychotic mechanisms, the immature mechanisms still show a fracture in reality testing. For example, through projection, a person denies an element of their experience, like a violent wish or a negative emotion, and claim that they belong to and are felt by another. In another immature mechanism, schizoid fantasy, we see a person construct fantasies and escape into them in order to avoid unwanted feelings or situations (Vaillant, 1992).

In the third level are the neurotic defenses: Intellectualization, Repression, Displacement, Reaction Formation, and Dissociation. Neurotic defenses mark the second half of Vaillant's hierarchy where the conflicts that are defended against are intra-psychic between the structures of the id, the ego, and the super-ego. Most notably, this level includes repression, the familiar hallmark defense of Freudian neurosis where the ego represses the id's instinctual needs in order to maintain a safe and functional relationship with reality. Similarly, in displacement, the id's instinctual needs, especially violent and aggressive ones, are not repressed but are directed towards other objects and people that are less threatening; think of a child who is angry at its parents so it shouts at its dolls, or an employee who is angry at his employer but takes it out on his family (Vaillant, 1992).

The fourth level, mature mechanisms, according to Vaillant, are: Sublimation, Altruism, Suppression, Anticipation, and Humor. What these five mechanisms have in common is that before they allow for the satisfaction of the instincts, they require integration and awareness. For example, in order for a comedian to find humor in a difficult experience they have had, they need to have integrated and 'digested' it (Vaillant, 1992).

According to Vaillant, although there are endless variations of defense mechanisms, the eighteen he chose represent the spectrum of where our mechanisms can fall (Vaillant,

1992). Mechanisms are not rigid or predetermined, but they exist for a reason, and our job as psychotherapists is never to 'remove' them, but rather make our patients aware of which defenses they use and to, sometimes, replace immature defenses with correlating mature ones. For example, if someone's usual defense is (I) delusional projection or (II) schizoid fantasy where they, on varying levels, project a comforting, 'good', imaginary sense of self, then a good choice of mature defense to strive towards would be (IV) altruism, where they get to gain satisfaction from real 'good' they do in the world.

2.2.2 Psychoanalysis and the Social

Psychoanalysis as a Tool for Social Critique

"If I am asked what psychoanalysis is for, beyond transforming symptoms, I always say 'in order not to lie to oneself anymore" ("Mimi" Marie Langer(1910-1987) A psychoanalyst and activist who dedicated her life to the values of social psychoanalysis as quoted by (Hollander, 2014, p.185).

Just as psychoanalysis has illustrated how personal history that is not dealt with, repressed, always finds a way of catching up with us in the form of symptoms, the same applies to collective history; and just as the goal of individual psychoanalysis is self-awareness, the goal of social psychoanalysis is disillusionment, to be aware of difficult truths and abandon comfortable illusions.

In this section, I will provide some examples of Freud's use of psychoanalysis as a tool for social critique, and I will give a brief overview of how psychoanalytic thinkers have developed this function of psychoanalysis over the years.

Early on in his career, Freud (1977p) argued that neuroses were a collective response to oppressive social conditions. Although he was striving throughout his career to characterize psychoanalysis as a precise scientific study of the individual mind, the realities of World War I made ignoring the influence of oppression and injustice on the psyche impossible (Freud, 1977q).

With regards to the 'dark' and violent sides of humanity, in the famous public correspondence between Freud and Einstein titled *Why War?* (1932), Freud speculated that the origins of war was instinctual rather than social (Smelser, 1999). This was not the first time that Freud voiced this speculation, locating the source of war in the id's powerful and irrational instinctual forces. During WWI, in *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death* (1915), he wrote of war's 'blind fury' which destroys everything in its wake "as though there were to be no future" (Freud, 1977o, p.279).

He understood this most terrible satisfaction of instinctual urges as an id response to Europe's overzealous repression. After witnessing the First World War, Freud saw that it was important that humanity abandons its illusions and the repression sustaining them, in favor of knowledge and sublimation of the violent and dark sides of humanity. He was of the opinion that, "We welcome illusions because they spare us unpleasurable feelings, and enable us to enjoy satisfactions instead" (Freud, 1977o, p.279). That being said, he doesn't generally reject repression, it is useful if it is not overdone, and without it, civilization would not have begun (Freud, 1977k). He posits that civilization rose out of our social urges — our need for love — winning against our instinctual urges — our need for satisfaction. Once humans discovered the immense danger of the immediate satisfaction of instinctual needs and faced enough frustration from the external world, they repressed their instincts and sought safety amongst similar others (Freud, 1977k).

Following in Freud's footsteps, after WWI, many first-generation psychoanalysts were concerned with the effects of oppression on the mental health of the general population, and consequently created the Berlin Polyclinic (1920), and Vienna Ambulatorium (1922) free clinics with Freud's blessing (Layton, 2006). Emerging in the interwar years, Erich Fromm, Wilhelm Reich, Edith Jacobson, Otto Fenichel, and other left-wing psychoanalysts wanted to establish psychoanalysis as a social and political theory. They wrote about the social unconscious, and critiqued the social order which encouraged collective instinctual repression and the illusions which maintain it (Layton, 2006, 2019a). Fromm particularly called for a radical critique of society, where 'common sense' is taken for granted

without questioning the hidden norms and principles governing it (Layton, 2019b, p.112).

Unfortunately, the radical social psychoanalytic work was abruptly halted for years. As WWII began, many psychoanalysts had to flee from their homes, and by the end of the 1930s, hundreds of psychoanalysts, including Freud, fled from their European cities to the USA, Argentina, Israel, and England. During that period, many were recovering from their loss of home, stability, loved ones, as well as, trying to integrate into their new countries, and adapt the psychoanalysis they brought to the prominent paradigms of their new homes (Beltsiou, 2016).

Many scholars have proposed that this involuntary dislocation of psychoanalysts is the reason why, for decades, psychoanalysis was un-linked from its social roots (Layton, 2006; Beltsiou, 2016; Makari, 2010; Jacoby, 1986). For the dislocated psychoanalysts, un-linking psychoanalysis from its social roots allowed them to remain intimately acquainted with the unconscious without risking annihilation. This theory explains why literature on migration, racism, xenophobia, and similar sociopolitical issues was lacking in psychoanalysis, a tradition notorious for never shying away from the uncomfortable, the unthinkable, and the disturbing. Through repressing their trauma and the role forced immigration played in shaping their theory and practice, some psychoanalysts in exile came to identify with theories that focus on the individual, like Ego psychology, while others engaged with trauma, but chose to exclusively focus on childhood trauma (Beltsiou, 2016).

While mainstream European psychoanalysis was overall un-linked from its social context, this was not the case everywhere. Before the recent re-emergence of social psychoanalysis as a clear discourse in the nineties, psychoanalysts in the Global South were already showing interest in the importance of social considerations for psychoanalysis and in using psychoanalysis as a tool for social critique.

For example, in the 1950s and 1960s, Frantz Fanon, an Afro-Caribbean postcolonial critic, used psychoanalysis as a tool of understanding and describing the subjectivity of the colonized as it is shaped by their sociopolitical reality and their relational dynamic

with the colonizer. Through his work, he laid bare the extent of the psychic, existential, and cultural damage of colonialism (Greedharry, 2008).

Another example, is the movement of Liberation psychology. In the 1960s and 1970s, a group of psychoanalytically oriented, Central and South American social scientists, were dissatisfied with the Eurocentric and ethnocentric approaches to social sciences that pervaded at the time and decided to develop 'Liberation Psychology'. A social science that prioritized the theoretical and practical need to pay attention to the interplay of the dynamics between the oppressor and the oppressed, and that applied its findings for the benefit of the oppressed, demonstrating the importance of constructing freedom as a historical need (Mario and Osorio, 2009, pp.11-12). Liberation psychologists assigned a lot of significance to reflexivity in social research and clinical practice, acknowledging the power imbalance that is inevitable in the field and in the therapy room, by virtue of their connection to academic institutions, and possessing the kind of knowledge that previously colonized nations saw mainly in the hands of the colonizer.

It was not until the 1990s that social psychoanalysis emerged as a clear discourse in the West, drawing inspiration from the afore-mentioned ancestors in addition to relational psychoanalytic, feminist, and post-colonial theory (Layton, 2006). An early advocate of social psychoanalysis and one of its largest contributors, is Lynne Layton.

The aim of social psychoanalysis is to restore the link between the psychic and the social, which is severed by dominant ideologies that encourage the "continuous subordination of sensuous human existence and morality to the 'facts' of the marketplace" (Layton, 2006, p.109). According to (Layton, 2006, p.109), this "technical rationality severs, instrumentalizes, and commodifies connections between individuals and their environment", which ultimately serves to "un-link individuals from each other, from themselves, and from their social and natural world". This un-linking offers the illusion of being safe as a part of the institutions of dominant culture at the price of accountability, empathy, and in some cases reality (Layton, 2019b). Those in power have a lot to lose if the systemic nature of oppression is seen for what it is, rather than being seen as sheer individual

misfortune (Layton, 2006).

Layton (2019b) argues that because people living in western societies have become so laden with deeply rooted illusions that maintain the status quo and benefit those in power, thus we, as people, have to commit to a rigorous ethic of disillusionment which entails undoing those illusions, and the repressions and disavowals underlying them, ultimately breaking the chains of secret histories alive in the present and opening up a space for freedom, an opportunity for things to be different.

In order to commit to an ethic of disillusionment we have to be able to identify 'normative unconscious processes', which is what Layton calls the repressions and disavowals underlying our social illusions. Normative unconscious processes exist to uphold dominant ideology and preserve the psychic equilibrium of the white upper class. They act in the same way as repression and disavowal do in mainstream psychoanalysis, by hiding certain instincts and knowledge, and replacing them with substitute illusions that, when analyzed, seem to simultaneously point away and towards the truth (Layton, 2006).

Just as repression and disavowal are impossible to maintain without suffering, the normative unconscious processes made to serve western psyches and restore their equilibrium, end up hindering critical awareness and fostering further psychic pain in said psyches (Layton, 2006). While there are many who speak out and resist the power status quo, sometimes those oppressed by the power status quo end up internalizing the destructive attributes assigned to them by normative unconscious processes (Layton, 2006).

If the normative unconscious processes of dominant ideology are not understood, they can affect and hamper feelings, thoughts, behaviours and speech itself, and create unconscious conflicts that will continue to be acted out and repeated, in and out of the clinic. Layton calls on psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic institutions to "get woke". She urges them to see the 'ghosts' that unconsciously control us, residing in our minds and bodies, causing us to act out, what feels like, inevitable structural oppression. For her, the ghosts are those of white neo-liberalism, which is why she calls for white institutions to 'reflect on their whiteness', and offer their resources and support to those who have suffered

their race, class, gender, and sexuality inequalities (Layton, 2019b, p.117).

If psychoanalysts see individuals for the psycho-social creatures they are, then instead of helping their patients adapt to unacceptable sociopolitical conditions, they would help them on their journeys of disillusionment. For Layton, if psychoanalysts keep on clinging to the belief that psychoanalysis is apolitical, they are taking a clear political stance and colluding with dominant ideology (Layton, 2019b).

Psychoanalyzing Large Social Groups

In the last section, I gave a brief historical overview of how psychoanalysis has been situated in the social, and of the critical role Freud and his followers envisioned for social psychoanalysis. In this section, I will give an overview of the psychoanalytic understanding and analysis of large group dynamics. In my interrogation of how the British large group identity was influenced by Britain's colonial era and how it was affected by the loss of empire, and how those two major influences contributed to Britain's current hostile response to immigration, I use the work of Freud, Volkan, and Kernberg, which I will summarize below.

While the exploration of psychoanalytic large group dynamics was greatly developed by thinkers like Volkan (2004) and Kernberg (2020), already, in 1921, Freud wrote about "Masse", referring to mass movements where seeking cohesion and the mutual identification of belonging to the same group are so powerful that they impair the individuals sense of themselves, their decision-making, and their rational capacities. He differentiated such powerful groups from general crowds that are organically brought together through some event, but have no shared identity or vision for their mutual future.

A feature of mass movements is also the group's idealisation of and identification with the leader(s) who takes on the responsibility of the morality of the group, and the decision-making for its future, freeing the group from their burden. This freedom, and the affective identification of the group members with each other and their leader(s), of-

ten culminates in intense feelings of aggression that then get projected onto those outside of the "Masse" (Freud, 1977e; Kernberg, 2020).

On the projection of aggression outside the "Masse", Freud said that, "It is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness" (Freud, 1977c, p.4506). This means that different yet near others, such as minorities, often provide the function of bringing the large group together by uniting against them. Freud observed this dynamic, which he called 'the narcissism of minor differences', in reference to violence between neighbouring groups, and in reference to Europe's aggression towards its Jewish population at the time (Freud, 1977c).

Wilfred Bion (1897-1979), an influential figure who shaped much of the psychoanalytic understanding of group dynamics and how to recognise pathological patterns in small groups, came to a finding similar to Freud's. Through his work of facilitating small groups, he observed the process through which the group's cohesion and survival becomes dependant on them fighting the out group(s). Because of his findings, the study of the prevalence of the defence mechanisms of 'splitting' and 'projection' remains crucial to the study of both small and large groups (Bion, 1968). Splitting and projection, is the unconscious process whereby the group splits off its unwanted parts, usually the unwanted instinctual urges like aggression or sexual urges, and projects them onto the out group, simultaneously sustaining the large group's positive image of itself and justifying its hatred towards the large group (Bion, 1968).

As mentioned earlier, Vamik Volkan, provided psychoanalysis with some of its most profound insights into large group dynamics and processes. Below I will give a summary of his most relevant insights. A large group, according to Volkan (2008), is the sum of individual experiences of zealous sameness shared by thousands to millions of people. Such groups share a strong psychological tie, which he calls large group identity, and it can take the form of a nationality, an ethnicity, religion, or political party, amongst others. Which, as we will see is relevant to my analysis of the hostile environment.

When the psychological tie is strong enough, we can see individuals temporarily or partially unconsciously set aside their own ideals for those of the large group's. This ability is both beautiful and terrifying, it is what encourages mobilisation in revolutions, what makes us feel like we are part of something bigger when we attend a concert or a religious ceremony, but it is also how fascist movements have started and why genocides have happened. Populism, as a general mobilisation of the populace, whether to the left or right, is also attributed to this ability (Volkan, 2008).

Understanding large groups is important since the shared processes within each group consciously and unconsciously determine the group's fate, leading to either destruction or peace. Large group identity forms through a collection of images, signs, and symbols chosen by the large group to represent historical events, in a way unique to each group, and seen as a source of pride and superiority. Volkan calls those components that link the members of the group together and form large group identity, 'identity markers' (Volkan, 2006) or 'cultural amplifiers', a term he borrowed from John Mack (1979) (Volkan, 2008).

Once a large group identity forms, the struggle of maintaining and repairing it starts. When it comes to large group interactions, it becomes important that the group is able to preserve its identity and protect its psychological borders. Such a task of preserving and protecting the large group identity is often fuelled by fear, and achieved through violence (Volkan, 2008).

In connection to turbulence in the large group, we have another two of Volkan's important concepts, that of large 'group regression', and of 'second skin'. When a large group experiences a destabilizing trauma, for example a war, a natural disaster, a revolution, or a loss of existential, social, and cultural meaning, then it likely 'regresses' into immature psychic organization. This is especially the case, when the group's ability to mourn is hindered by shared unwanted feelings, like shame and humiliation.

Large group regression is a defence against persecutory and depressive anxieties, and unconscious threats of annihilation. As a large group's regression increases, its tolerance for outsiders or anyone who does not conform to identity markers decreases and indi-

viduals become unsure of their large group identity (Volkan, 2004). That is when we see group's becoming more violent, and when we see, "new infernos that are deliberately started by people in the name of identity" (Volkan, 2006, p.124).

Naturally, when a large group is regressed and its identity unstable, it becomes more vulnerable to leaders who exploit the group's existential anxiety in order to further their own interests or push their own agenda (Volkan, 2006). The destructive leader according to Volkan (2011), promises to "destroy" the group's rival "by any means" (p.45), ushering a 'collapsed time' that transports the group to an imagined golden age of glory.

When a group is regressed, and its psychic borders vulnerable, the group's need for a "second skin" emerges. The second skin, is a metaphor Volkan uses for the new socio-psychological envelope which contains the group's identity (Volkan, 2004). This second skin is usually coloured by the leader's ideology, and is often a call to action that increases the sense of victimization in the large group, unites the group against external enemies, and reassures them about their worth, goodness, and entitlement (Volkan, 2004). In some cases, when a national large group is regressed, physical borders shift from being a part of the large group identity to being the symbol on which the whole large group identity hinges.

Adding to the existing literature, Kernberg expanded on the connection between large group regression and exploitative leadership. He hypothesized that once regression sets in and individuals in the large group start feeling the tension of the loss of meaning, they beckon a strong decisive leader who will arrive with stability, new value and meaning — a second skin (Kernberg, 2020). While regressed, the group's cognitive function and critical thinking also decline which causes it to become influenced by the 'simple slogans' of politicians who create a new group ideal, reasserting the group's value and 'goodness', and fostering their aggression towards 'out groups' and excusing it as morally justified (Kernberg, 2020).

Denial of aggression within the group comes hand in hand with splitting and projection. The more regressed a group is, the more it will try to hold on to the group ideal and

with it, notions of purity and superiority, and project its aggression onto the out-group. This creates a cycle that feeds into itself because the more aggressive a group becomes the more they cling onto their group ideal. This kind of group will often choose paranoid leaders who are able to see danger where there is none, activating and aiming the group's aggression, and thus maintaining the cycle (Kernberg, 2020).

2.3 Discourse Analysis

I knew early on, that I would be choosing psychoanalysis as the lens through which I interrogate the hostile environment; after all, my clinical training was psychoanalytic, and after using psychoanalysis in my practice for my whole adult life, it came to be almost a third language of mine, an integral part of my understanding of the world. That being said, in addition to interpreting the psychological mechanisms of the British large group psyche that have led to the hostile environment and continue to sustain it, I searched for a framework that can help me address the discursive aspect of the hostile environment and to contextualize it in the British socio-political scene. To that end, I have chosen the framework of Norman and Isabela Fairclough's 'Political Discourse Analysis'. Political discourse analysis (PDA) (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012), an extension of critical discourse analysis (CDA), is a specialized framework which was created to critique political discourse, i.e, political debates, political speeches, campaign slogans and interviews.

In Chapter 4, *Suella Braverman: A Case Study*, I analyze a speech made by former Home Secretary Suella Braverman, as an avid supporter of the hostile environment, using the PDA framework. The analysis would serve the purpose of providing a thorough breakdown and evaluation of an argument presented in favor of the hostile environment, and studying the role language plays in creating and maintaining the colonial hierarchies and the psychological mechanisms that contribute to Britain's modern response to immigration.

Current day discourse analysis is generally concerned with exploring how language

is able to create identity, constitute our social reality, and both maintain and resist certain power relations. While earlier forms of discourse analysis purely focused on linguistics, Michel Foucault's work on the dynamic between knowledge production and power, and his use of discourse analysis to diagnose and critique culture, expanded the field from the linguistic into the social. In doing so, he illustrated how discourse is not simply a question of how we use language to communicate, but that it also shapes our understanding of the world, and can be used to create and maintain social norms and hegemonic power relations (Foucault 1975).

According to Gee (2014), all the different methods of discourse analysis fall under two categories, the first being language-in-use methods and the second being socio-political methods. Language-in-use methods tend to be more quantitative and detailed, studying and indexing the linguistic features of small and large data sets, while socio-political methods such as PDA are more qualitative in nature and tend to focus on singular instances of discourse, analyzing and contextualizing them in historical and socio-political realities, thus, opening space for new insights (Gee, 2014).

In the coming sections, I first give a historical overview of the inception of critical discourse analysis, its main influences and concepts, and provide an example of how it can be interpreted by different scholars. In the second section, I give a detailed overview of political discourse analysis, and the framework, as conceived by Fairclough and Fairclough (2012), under which political discourse can be broken down into its constituent arguments, justifications and counter-arguments.

2.3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis, a book edited by Wodak and Meyer (2006), gave an overview of the then novel paradigm of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and included contribution chapters from leading CDA thinkers like Tuen van Dijk, and Norman Fairclough. CDA first emerged as a socio-politically engaged theory of language in the

late 1970s and 1980s, but it was not until the early 1990s that it developed into a cohesive network of scholars, following the inception of the Discourse & Society journal by Van Dijk in 1990, and a symposium held in Amsterdam in 1991. The symposium gave the chance for scholars who were working towards similar aims to break their research isolation, and share their theories and methods, exploring the differences and similarities as they went. Similarly, the journal, combined with a few CDA books that came out at the same time, led to what is now a well-established and recognised paradigm in linguistics taught across the world (Wodak and Meyer, 2016).

CDA is inspired by and rooted in past traditions which range from the linguistic (e.g. text linguistics, classical rhetoric, applied linguistics, pragmatics, and socio-linguistics) to philosophy, anthropology, cognitive science, psychology and sociology (Wodak, 2009). For example, Habermas' conceptualization of language as a tool of legitimizing power relations that can become dangerous/ideological if not demystified, has played a role in CDA's understanding of language (Wodak and Meyer, 2006).

One thing that sets CDA apart from other discourse and linguistic studies is its critical element. CDA and critical discourse analysts are hugely influenced by the critical sciences tradition. Critical sciences operate on the belief that merely addressing academic or theoretical problems is not enough, they ask questions "such as those of responsibility, interests, and ideology" (Van Dijk, 1986 as quoted in (Wodak and Meyer, 2006, p.1)), investigate social problems from the perspective of those who are oppressed and critically analyze the power dynamics that lead to said oppression (Wodak and Meyer, 2006). This is all done with the hope of influencing and improving the material conditions of those who suffer under unequal power dynamics and of subverting those dynamics.

Not only is CDA critical of normative discourses that people take for granted as the truth, and of existing power structures and institutions which produce discourse, it is also critical of itself. CDA does not adhere to the goals of scientific theories whose aim is to manipulate the external world while clearly demarcating the theory from the objects it refers to. It is inspired by the critical tradition of the Frankfurt school which is reflective,

and views itself as part of the phenomena it aims to understand and describe (Wodak and Meyer, 2006).

To this end, CDA employs a constitutive problem-oriented and interdisciplinary and eclectic approach to achieve its aim of enlightenment and emancipation. Through describing and analyzing 'the language use of those in power, who are responsible for the existence of inequalities and who also have the means and opportunity to improve conditions' (Wodak, 2006, p.10), and rooting out and de-crypting the ideologies embedded in such prominent discourses, dictating and therefore misleading people about their needs and interests (Wodak and Meyer, 2006), CDA aims to empower subjects by shedding light on hidden social coercion, in turn, allowing them to make informed decisions and to act in their own best interest. This is why critical discourse analysts favour subjugated knowledge against dominant knowledge. Furthermore, the events or experiences that they investigate do not have to be 'serious' or urgent. The critical spirit of CDA requires most social phenomena to be challenged and not merely understood as given (Wodak and Meyer, 2016).

The 'critical' aspect of CDA is best understood as framework rather than a methodology, and each critical discourse analyst is responsible for identifying and describing their critical methodology. This is why we see the application of the 'critical' aspect of CDA sought out in different ways across the field (e.g. literary criticism, Marxism, cognitive science, psychology).

As CDA became more widely known and used, some researchers were confused about CDA's distinction between framework and methodology. Which is why, in 2016, in the third edition of *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, now called *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies*, Wodak announced the dropping of the name critical discourse analysis and opting for critical discourse studies to refer to all theories, methods, analysis applications and other practices of critical discourse analysts (Wodak and Meyer, 2016). She justifies this shift, referencing the confusion that happened when researchers claimed to apply CDA as their methodology without outlining the exact methodology they were using.

A general critique of CDA research is that it is too wide in its theoretical scope, too hermeneutic in its methodology, and that its theoretical framework can be too large for its data. One critique critical discourse analysts get is that they tend to advertise their ideological positions, making it impossible to fit the image of the unbiased researcher. For the purposes of this research, the methodological flexibility of CDA affords me the freedom of integrating different disciplines in my analysis.

Norman Fairclough, along with Ruth Wodak and Van Dijk were among the first wave of scholars that popularized and set CDA apart from previous discourse studies. To illustrate how the framework of CDA can be used differently depending on the researcher's methodological interests, I will give a brief summary of how Wodak and Van Dijk interpreted and applied CDA. In the following section, I give a detailed overview of the Faircloughs' framework for political discourse analysis, which I will be using in Chapter 4.

Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl developed what is now known as the 'Discourse Historical Approach' (DHA) in CDA. The DHA is grounded in ethics and "the principle of empathy with socially disadvantaged groups" (Reisgl and Wodak, 2016, p.56). They aim to evaluate the quality of political and public discourses, to critique the relationship between discourse and power structures, and to explain how said unequal relationships manifest (e.g. in biases in media representation and manipulative political arguments). Being a critical approach, their goal is to ultimately make a material emancipatory difference in the world around them. They suggest this can be done through making the research language simple, opening access to their research results, and sharing the research in forms such as, educational material, seminars and in expert opinion accounts.

DHA was first developed by Wodak in 1986 when she was analyzing the Austrian postwar-antisemitic discourse in the presidential campaign of Kurt Waldheim, who it was eventually revealed had a National-Socialist past. In this early analysis Wodak sought to conduct an interdisciplinary linguistic socio-historical investigation that can incorporate different theories, methodologies, and data. The goal was to provide research results that

can be used practically and, in this particular case, help Austrians make informed choices about their leadership (Reisgl and Wodak, 2016).

DHA has maintained those earlier principles, but also evolved through decades of research focused on discrimination, national identities, and political history. Currently Reisigl and Wodak place DHA under the larger umbrella of critical theory, and identify their position as socio-philosophical (Reisgl and Wodak, 2016).

Van Dijk introduced a problem-oriented critical perspective on discourse studies, as a socio-cognitive approach to CDA, one which employs various methods used in the humanities and social sciences. As the name of the approach suggests, it places a great weight on the cognitive element of discourse analysis. For Van Dijk, the relations between discourse and society are always cognitively mediated in what he calls the Discourse-Cognition-Society triangle. Social reality and norms manifest themselves in discourse through language users and their interpretation of their social worlds. Discourse then comes to influence social reality through "the same cognitive interface of mental models, knowledge, attitudes and ideologies" (van Dijk, 2016, p.64).

A socio-cognitive analysis of discourse starts similarly to other CDA methods; a text, speech, interview, a selection of campaign slogans, etc. is chosen; its discursive and semiotic structures are analyzed, e.g. what kind of imagery is conjured, what kind of pronouns are used (Us vs. Them), what kind of argument is being made; followed by an analysis of the cognitive structures of the text. Where cognitive structures refer to the interactions between the discourse and individuals, and "the cognitive processes and representations involved in the production and comprehension of discourse" (van Dijk, 2016, p.66). The analysis of cognition accounts for both personal and social cognition, and views the mind, personal experiences, memory and socially shared cognition as context and reproducer of discourse.

2.3.2 Political Discourse Analysis

In 2012, Isabela and Norman Fairclough published the book *Political Discourse Analysis: A Method for Advanced Students*. In it they introduce a new approach for analysing and indexing political discourse which views it as mainly argumentative and deliberative, and give a clear structure to follow when analysing different forms of political discourse. Political discourse analysis (PDA) is important since the strongest, most normative discourses in politics have an effect on the kinds of laws, policies and decisions that are taken in the short and long term.

PDA is not a new school of discourse analysis, it is rather an extension of CDA which combines classical discourse analysis interests (e.g. domination, ideology, manipulation), and the analytical framework of argumentation theory. The Faircloughs separate political discourse analysis from the analysis of other fields of discourse, and they attribute that separation to the intrinsically 'argumentative' and 'deliberative' nature of politics and political reasoning.

Their understanding of politics is informed by a long tradition, dating back to Aristotle, of defining politics as 'action' or 'decision-making' where politics is, "most fundamentally about making choices about how to act in response to circumstances and events and in light of certain goals and values[...]" and, in which, "[...]such choices and the actions which follow from them are based upon practical reasoning about what should be done" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012, p.11). Practical reasoning differs from theoretical reasoning in that it addresses practical reasons for action (e.g. 'should I do A or not' or 'what should I do about b'), while the latter addresses reasons for belief/believing or accepting something as truth.

While there are differences between deductive, inductive, and conductive arguments, an argument is generally understood as a set of reasons (premises) that combine together to support or lead to a conclusion (claim). Argumentation is also a dialogical social practice whose goal is to persuade a rational other of one's conclusion (claim) through giving

sufficient reasons. Practical reasoning, as it combines the theory of argumentation, the theory of action and language, becomes 'action by means of language'. Practical reasoning is often employed in situations where there is no possibility for certainty, as is the case with politics, where urgent action often needs to be taken in light of a problem or conflict despite the risk of uncertainty and incomplete information. For agents to arrive at practical reasons for action they deliberate, they reflect on reasons for and against their decision and consider many factors such as, values, priorities and context in order to reach the best solution.

In an ideal world, this is how politics should be conducted, but as politics currently stands deliberative democracy or "a democratic system where decisions are made by discussion among free, equal and rational citizens" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012, 30), remains a normative ideal to strive towards and evaluate current political argumentation against. The Faircloughs argue that politics is still fundamentally deliberative even if what we mostly see is examples of 'bad deliberation' or undemocratic deliberation, or deliberation which is restricted to certain spaces and activities such as parliamentary debates that are concluded with a vote. Political agents still try to convince, either themselves, their counterparts, or the public that the actions they have taken or wish to take are the most acceptable means to reaching a broadly shared vision of a future state of affairs, or that they are worthy enough of being accepted by everyone.

Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) posit that most CDA schools are 'representation' and not 'action' oriented, which is incompatible with the deliberative nature of political discourse. According to them, "the purpose of political discourse is ultimately not to describe the world but to underpin decision and action" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012, p.13). That being said, the aim of PDA is not to disregard the importance of 'non-argumentative' genres such as, narratives, explanations, imaginaries, identities, and metaphors, but rather to prioritize the action-focused 'practical argumentation' as the main analytic category and to presuppose the non-argumentative genres as elements of it, "as feeding into and influencing processes of decision-making, as premises in arguments for ac-

tion" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012, p.3). Highlighting the argumentative nature of political reasoning allows us to understand the connection between agency and structures and how discursive structures reproduce social orders and power relations (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012).

Some other key differences between the analysis of general discourse and political discourse are in the handling of the text, and the goals of the analysis. Where critical discourse analysts analyze 'isolated features' of a text, the Faircloughs suggest analysing a political text as a whole, mapping out its 'generic features'. As for their goals, because CDA is concerned with representations, its power lies in its ability to demystify opaque discourses and achieve material change through this process of critiquing social reality; PDA on the other hand is concerned with action and can more directly enact material change through analysing and evaluating political practical arguments and their claims for action against an ideal of communicative rationality (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012).

After choosing the discursive material that is to be analyzed, an essential first step in Political discourse analysis is to understand the text as a call for action, which means decoding the political text in terms of practical argumentation and reconstructing the argument correctly and accurately. Once the argument is identified and reconstructed sufficiently, the structure of the practical argument is analyzed. The Faircloughs, following traditions of argumentation theory, propose a modified structure for scholars to follow, which represents practical reasoning in political discourse.

After the argument is reconstructed and analyzed, it is evaluated through a process of critically questioning the relationship between the argument's conclusion/claims-for-action, and its premises, and through an analysis of the overall claim.

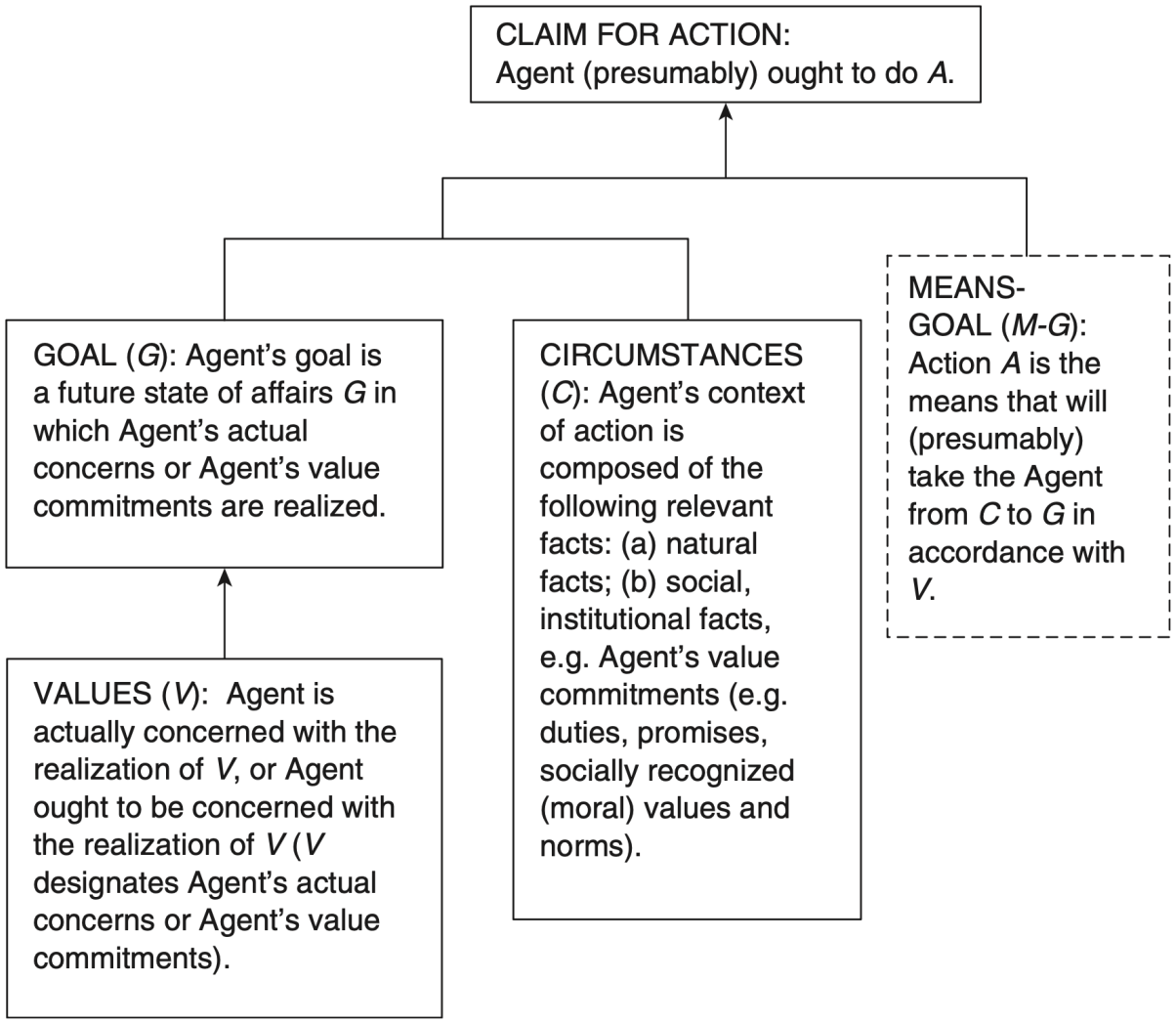

Figure 2.1: The structure of practical reasoning: a more detailed representation

Reprinted with permission: Fairclough and Fairclough (2012), p.48

Figure 2.1 represents the Faircloughs' first suggested structure and schema of practical reasoning. As mentioned above, they claim we can understand most political discourse as an act of justifying actions and deliberating on which actions should be taken. They suggest scholars make use of their original schemas, to reconstruct political arguments regardless of their discursive form, e.g. parliament debates, interviews, speeches, slogans (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012).

The premises of practical arguments mainly fall under two categories: circumstantial premises and normative premises. The circumstantial premise represents 'facts', while

the normative premise represents 'goals', and together they invoke the 'means-goal', and support the claim for action which allows the agent to transform an undesirable present situation, into another more compatible with their values and concerns.

The circumstantial premise represents facts that describe the 'problem' that the agent is attempting to solve. The facts used in the circumstantial premise can range from empirical truths to socially constructed facts such as institutional facts, e.g. collective history, and socially recognized moral values and obligations. What the agent chooses to present as circumstantial facts is deeply tied to the agent's values. Even empirical facts and circumstances that are presented and perceived as 'neutral' are inseparable from the agents values. Values play a role in how we choose to explain the circumstances relating to our claim and what kind of problems/conflicts we perceive and therefore choose to address in the first place, "we 'see' problems around us partly because of the concerns (values) we have" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012, p.41). What politicians consider a crisis e.g. 'the immigration crisis', is influenced by both their personal system of values and the institutional facts and discourses they internalize as 'concerns'.

The goal premise here does not merely represent the immediate desire of the agent, it is rather a 'future possible state of affairs' which they desire to bring about. This desired future possible state of affairs can be driven by not only internal but also external reasons. Meaning it can be desired for a clear material personal gain/advantage, or because of a sense of duty — what the agent imagines or feels is expected of them. The goal premise, like the circumstantial premise, is deeply tied to the agents normative values e.g. psychological inclinations, personal values, beliefs, and emotions.

The value premise can be seen as the driving force behind the goal premise, or the element which explains and dictates the goal premise's desirability to the agent, "without a motivational and emotional investment no belief could ever lead us to act at all, because nothing would really matter to us" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012, p.15). The value premise in this schema contains the identified sources of normativity underlying any given goal premise.

The premises mentioned above are called upon to support and justify the claim for action. That being said, such practical arguments ”are often advanced with great certainty but by nature they can only be put forward tentatively and provisionally and are inherently subject to defeat, due to human fallibility and other limitations” (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012, 77). Because such practical arguments are so vulnerable to new considerations, the agents taking them up must engage in critical questioning of the 'consequences of action' of the claim and some form of deliberation about all possible new considerations that might refute it, in order to lend the arguments more resilience (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012).

Figure 2.1 represented the schema for the practical arguments that follow from goals and circumstances. In Figure 2.2, they introduce a second type of practical argument, one which highlights the deliberative process that happens either internally or externally during political practical argumentation. They identify this type of argumentation as an argument from consequences, merging the previous argument from goals and circumstances with the new argument from consequences (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012).

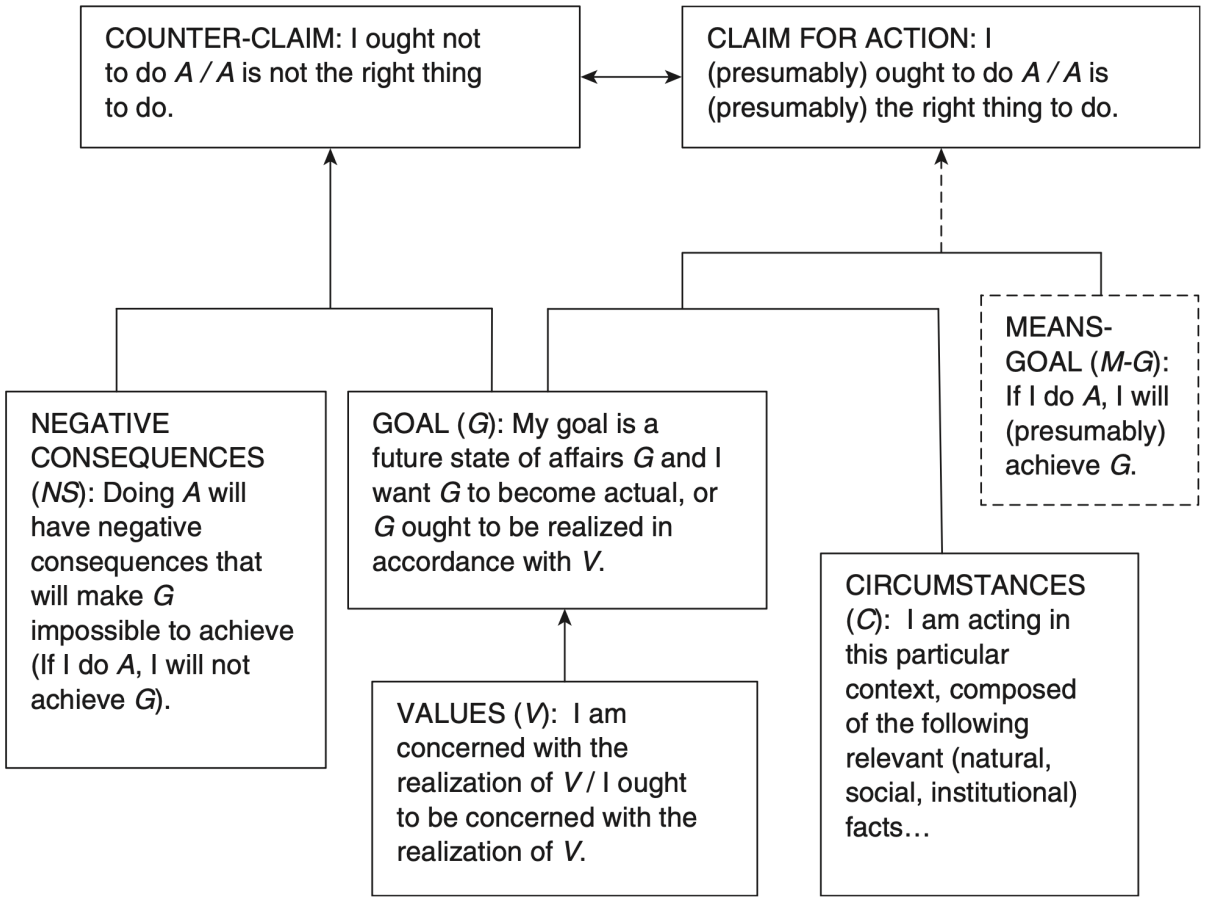

Figure 2.2: Deliberation: argument and counter-argument

Reprinted with permission: Fairclough and Fairclough (2012), p.51

Figure 2.2 represents the two types of practical argument connected together. The argument from consequences has both a claim and a counter-claim, and uses the probable consequences of the action as a premise in order to infer whether the call to action is actually compatible with the goal or not.

While the practical argument from goals and circumstances, shown in Figure 2.1, is based on the speculation that the call for action will bring about a desired future state of affairs, it is vulnerable to refutation unless the agent engages in deliberation. The argument shown in Figure 2.2, preemptively integrates the deliberative process, by making the 'negative consequences' of action into premises for the counter-argument of the argument from goals and circumstances; "[if] consequences are exposed that undermine

the stated goals of the action, then *not doing* the action is a more rational decision if one maintains one's commitment to those goals" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012, p.50).

In analyzing political arguments, they suggest that the validity and soundness of the arguments themselves is irrelevant; arguments can be valid and yet have a false conclusion as pointed earlier. What PDA is concerned with, in this case, is whether the 'conclusion' of the argument is true or not. While the negative consequences themselves might be speculative, the counter-argument here is deductively valid, which means that the conclusion will be true if the premises are true (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012).

The final step of PDA is argument evaluation which is necessary as "[i]dentifying premises and claim correctly gives us a snapshot of the structure of the text, as a prerequisite for evaluation, but does not do justice to the argumentative *process*, to the way it unfolds sequentially, as a process of reasoning, of deliberation" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012, p.89). Argument evaluation is done after reconstructing, representing and analyzing an argument sufficiently where it is then evaluated from a dialectical perspective. This is where the Faircloughs call on the critical spirit of CDA in the form of critical questioning which is to be understood as complementary to the two practical reasoning schemes presented above. They suggest that critical questioning should only be concerned with interrogating the proposed consequences of action and therefore the following examples of critical questions are only relevant if they can be connected to the question of consequence (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012).

One question they suggest is in regards to the rational acceptability of the circumstantial premise. As the circumstantial premise, or how the agent chooses and presents the problem they wish to solve, is inseparable from their values, the Faircloughs suggest that it might be useful to ask:

- Is the situation described in a rationally acceptable way? (Definition of Circumstances Question) (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012, p.67)

This can allow us to pick out manipulative discourse and to investigate whether the agent

is seeking to consciously misguide or deceive the public into thinking their claim is the best course of action.

They also give a few suggestions as to what questions researchers can ask to ascertain the character of the value premise: (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012, 67)

- Is the situation described in a rationally acceptable way? (Definition of Circumstances Question)
- Are the values that underlie the action rationally acceptable? (Acceptable Value Question)
- Should the agent consider other values? (Other Values Question)
- Do the stated values conflict with other values of the agent? (Agent's Multiple Values Question)

Critical questioning, is a vital aspect of PDA because it gives the methodology the best chance of exacting real change. If adopted on a large scale, it can eventually create an environment where political arguments are stronger, an environment in which political agents are able to take on critiques that affect the 'rational acceptability' of their conclusions and change their proposals for action accordingly.

2.4 Colonial Studies

This section serves the purpose of contextualizing my research within the lager tradition of colonial studies, allowing me to clarify the direction and type of colonial discourse analysis I conduct in the following chapters.

I will be referring to Williams and Chrisman (2013)'s *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory* reader for my definition of colonialism and overview of why colonial studies are still relevant today.

Colonialism, the acquisition of other people's lands and resources through force and coercion, is, according to Williams and Chrisman (2013), a phase in the larger history

of imperialism, which was brought on by the spread of capitalism across Europe. They place this colonial phase of imperialism in the early 19th century, when European nations were racing against each other in their acquisition of new territory, raw material, and monopolization of resources.

While, colonialism as a phase of the West's acquisition-based imperialism is mostly over, the colonial discourse, the logic and mechanism which sustained it, is still here. For this reason, Williams and Chrisman (2013) problematise the use of the term 'post-colonial' because, while it is accurate in terms of temporality, i.e. that which is after the era of colonial control, conceptually, they argue, we still operate within colonial lines, with the West reproducing colonial practices and hierarchies.

The effects of colonial discourse still resonate in the present, and continue to aid political and economic inequality and exploitation, therefore, it is not only still necessary that past imperial texts should be analysed and read carefully, but also that modern texts should be analysed with as much of an eye out for the past circumstances that formed them as the present context which birthed them. (Williams and Chrisman, 2013, p.4) describe this contextual awareness as, "the complex interrelation of history and the present moment provides the terrain on which colonial discourse analysis and post-colonial theory operate".

Colonial discourse analysis and post-colonial theory generally work at critiquing and understanding how the knowledge about the other is produced, and how legacies of colonial discourse are still active in the present. They also fundamentally aim for a change in the colonial status quo, whether through exploring alternative histories and amplifying the voices that are often dismissed, or through exploring 'better' and different ways of knowledge production, and tools for countering the ongoing damage of colonial discourse (Williams and Chrisman, 2013).

In the field of colonial studies there is a category of theorists who focused on theorizing colonized cultures and their self-discovery, resistance, and identities. Some of the most notable theorists in this category are Franz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri

Chakravorty Spivak. In the other category of theorists we have those who focused on 'theorizing' the west, and a leading figure in this category is Edward Said (Williams and Chrisman, 2013).

As this thesis falls in the latter category of theorizing the West, in this case Britain's response to immigration, I will give a brief overview of Said's colonial discourse theory, and of relevant scholars who have developed on and utilized his theory over the years.

Colonial discourse theory, as a field, was pioneered by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* (Said, 1978). The term 'Orientalism' in this context refers to knowledge produced by the West about non-western cultures and people, which helped pave the way for the execution of Europe's dreams of imperial expansion. In his book, Said studied a variety of manuscripts from political documents to literary works, scientific and anthropological books to diaries that have one thing in common, they were all western productions that produced knowledge about non-western cultures (Williams and Chrisman, 2013).

Said's work is heavily influenced by Foucault's theories on the dialectic relation between power and knowledge through tracing the sociopolitical realities of the Global South to their ideological roots in the West's creation of the concept of 'the Orient' dating back to the Middle Ages. Initially motivated by fear, Orientalism originated in the academic field in order to demystify the Orient and establish the West's superiority. Soon after, it developed into a permeating ideology, which viewed the Orient solely in relation to its ability to satisfy the West's needs. the West used orientalist ideology to claim the Orient was incapable of representing or 'knowing' itself, justifying the use of its land, people and resources, and legitimising colonialism and imperial expansion (Said, 1978).

Also inspired by Freudian language, Said writes about a Manifest (conscious) and a latent (almost unconscious) Orientalism. The manifest being the various views/ideas about what the Orient is, those that can change depending on time, ideology, and individual inclinations; while, by latent Orientalism he means the ideas that have calcified over the decades to form rigid and entrenched beliefs that come to be seen as epistemologically unchallenged and unchallengeable facts. Given that the Orient was almost exclusively

understood through the sovereign western consciousness, no discoveries or encounters with a different reality, as long as they were in the realm of the manifest, could initiate a complete reevaluation of latent Orientalism (Said, 1978, p.205). Because the Orient was silent and silenced it was assigned the role of the West's 'other'. Supported by "a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections" (Said, 1978, p.8) the West could deposit all its moral, logical, and physical shortcomings into the orient. The Orient was imbued with a phantasmic, therefore contradictory character; it could be both passive, sensual, exotic and beautiful, and violent, barbaric and dangerous.

In 1996, Paul Richards introduced the term 'New Barbarism' to criticize the way in which the West deals with the political violence of the Global South as inherent to local cultures and traits, ignoring economic, political and historical contexts. Tausad (2003) points out how orientalist and neo-orientalist sources also disregard how the legacy of colonialism and imperialism influenced the Global South as it currently stands. New Barbarism is harmful because if the Global South's political violence is viewed as irrational then it cannot be resolved through diplomatic means. Given the symbolic power the West still has to construct hegemonic versions of reality, Tausad (2003) argues that this is a form of symbolic violence committed against the Global South (p.591). The distorted imaginaries they produce create and maintain their power in ways congruent with Said's earlier mentioned Orientalism thesis, "In the same way that Orientalism once served the policies of colonial powers, the new barbarism thus serves the political interests of people who are aware of the need to produce images of a conflict as one between civilisation and barbarism" (p.596). They villainize or fetishize the 'uncivilized-other' while creating self-narratives that paint the West as superior and more deserving, hence justifying continuing colonial, political and economic projects, and requiting themselves of all responsibility towards reparations (Tausad, 2003).

Much has changed since Said wrote Orientalism, but his insights continue to guide scholars in their quest to interrogate representations and distributions of power in our modern world. Sa'di (2021) writes about Orientalism in the 21st Century, he attempts to

identify what remains of Said's original Orientalism and to map out its new representations in a world that is much changed by globalization and neo-liberalism. What Sa'di calls the old-style orientalist discourse can still be found wherever one looks in the West. From former UK prime minister Boris Johnson calling Muslim women 'bank robbers' and letter boxes without anyone in his party batting an eye, to the US and Britain justifying its invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan as 'bringing the democracy' and 'saving the women' (Sa'di, 2021).

What Sa'di adds to the research on Orientalism is what he calls the macabre, mundane and hidden version which he labels as neo-Orientalism. This version seems much less malignant and can be safely used by many groups, including liberal circles, because it discards the construct of race and, in its place, inserts those of 'religion', 'culture', and 'ethnicity' as racialized cultural identities, effectively replacing biology as the yardstick for social ordering (Sa'di, 2021). If the goal of Orientalism was to govern, discipline and subjugate the 'inept' Orientals, the goal of neo-Orientalism is for the West to protect the spoils and wealth of colonialism and to prevent the Global South from reaching it. Which means, policies to enact bans on immigration, social isolation, and exclusionary practices based on religious, ethnic or cultural lines become commonly accepted (Sa'di, 2021).

Although Sa'di is not the first to use the term neo-Orientalism, his definition is especially relevant to this research since he links neo-Orientalism to western anti-immigration sentiments. He also puts a lot of emphasis on the fear of the Orient in the western mind. He does not interrogate where it originates, but he links it to the contradiction between fascination/fetishization and contempt/disgust, which rose through orientalist discourse and subsequent colonial endeavors. Despite the West's global dominance, according to Sa'di (2021, p.2509), "[...]the fear of reverse colonisation, the fear of decline, and dangerous sexual anxieties that strangers' existence in Europe pose[...]" continues to exist in the western mind.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that the psychic and the social are intimately intertwined; a social theory, without considering the ways in which our psychological structure and internal life inform our understanding of our social reality, would be incomplete. Similarly, any psychological theory would be just as incomplete without considering the social, for example, when we speak of the ego's function of reality testing, society forms a large part of this reality, providing the roles, rules and controls we are expected to adhere to (Smelser, 1999).

Furthermore, I have demonstrated that the application of psychoanalysis to socio-historical research is not a novel endeavour, and that the utility of psychoanalytic knowledge in sociological research has been reasserted by important scholars in the field, like Lynne Layton. Nonetheless, a critique of psychoanalytic investigations of socio-political phenomena is that they, occasionally, end up focused on proving the validity of the psychoanalytic concepts used, in lieu of focusing on and analyzing the phenomena they intend to study (Greedharry, 2008). For this reason, it is important to recognize the limitations of psychoanalysis as a non-universal theory.

The majority of psychoanalytic theory remains largely unsuitable for the analysis of non-Western psyches. Following in the same footsteps as Greedharry (2008) who reasserts the suggestion made by many other scholars, I consider that psychoanalysis should be read as an "ethnography of whiteness", rather than "a theory of subjectivity". Furthermore, given that Freud and his predecessors used psychoanalysis to treat Western psyches, and understand the psycho-dynamics of Western society with its repressions, ailments and desires, psychoanalysis is a suitable framework for the analysis in this thesis.

Having demystified the psychoanalytic concepts that I will be using in my interpretation of the hostile environment, placed my work in the tradition of colonial studies, and having illustrated the political discourse analysis framework I use in my case study, the

following two chapters will cover the analysis and the application of the aforementioned tools, as alluded to in the introduction.

Chapter 3

The Hostile Environment: an Analysis

"A dull, decent people, cherishing and fortifying their dullness behind a quarter of a million bayonets."

George Orwell

Burmese Days, 1934/2013, p.252

"All of the Western nations have been caught in a lie, the lie of their pretended humanism; this means that their history has no moral justification, and that the west has no moral authority"

James Baldwin

I am not your negro, 2017, p.90

3.1 Introduction

Since its inception by Theresa May in 2012, the main explicit aim of creating a hostile environment has been to reduce Britain's net migration to the 'tens of thousands', to discourage future migrants from coming to Britain, and to encourage 'illegal' migrants to

voluntarily leave Britain "at little to no cost to the government" (Webber, 2019; Griffiths and Yeo, 2021).

Over a decade later, it has become clear that the hostile environment has failed to achieve this aim, at a great cost to the lives of the people who have been harmed by it, as well as, to the British government. In addition, the hostile environment has also proved to be racist by design, as I will explain later in this chapter.

Yet, the government seems adamant on pursuing ever increasing hostile policies, which begs the questions—what is actually motivating the hostile environment? And why does it feel inevitable?

To answer these questions and open up space for a better understanding of the hostile environment as a phenomenon and the mechanisms sustaining it, I interrogate it as a psychoanalytic symptom.

For Freud, symptoms are always meaningful, even if their meaning is initially concealed from us and the patient, which is why it is important to trace their meaning both to the sufferer as well as in the context of who they are attempting to communicate with. Psychoanalysis is therefore not primarily concerned with the immediate relief of symptoms, although it is often a consequence; it is rather concerned with understanding and illuminating the psychic reality which is at the core of a symptom.

The hostile environment, or contemporary British discourse on migration in general, cannot be explored in isolation—without taking into account Britain's colonial and imperial history. Yet, so much has not been dealt with in relation to the implications of Britain's colonial history on large group identity. What we are witnessing now, in the way migrants and asylum seekers are received in Britain, can be understood as an indication of pathological defense mechanisms which are no longer serving their purpose efficiently.

Interrogating the hostile environment as symptom entails attempting to understand it in the context of British history and British large group identity, to understand the state of events it has brought about, and to question its utility and sustainability. This interroga-

tion will ideally lead to the identification of the repressed 'symptomal knot' (Fink, 2017) and to understanding how and why the British government reacts to immigration with hostility.

I posit that the current government hostility towards immigration is connected to, first, its past repression of the violence and coercion involved in the expansion and maintenance of the British Empire, and, second, to the collective meaning and identity vacuums left in the wake of the loss of empire, which eventually led to the government's erasure of the connection between modern immigration and the British Empire.

As the repressed always returns in the form of symptoms; I conceive of the hostile environment as a symptom of the compounded repression, of the knowledge of the violence and coercion of the British Empire and the post-imperial general repression of the memory of empire, which was triggered by the decline in Britain's politico-economic relevance over the past decades.

3.1.1 Chapter Structure

Below is a summary and overview of the sections in this chapter:

In *Repression at the Heart of Empire*, I explore how the British Empire understood itself, during the height of its power and while its power was declining. I specifically focus on the period's large group psychic conflict that arose from the combination of the realities of coercion and violence that underpin colonial acquisition, and the British 'character' informed by Victorian Christian Evangelical values rooted in decency, politeness, and moral superiority.

I speculate that the large group's response to two such contradictory wishes was to repress and omit the knowledge of the violent and coercive sides of empire and to fixate on and exaggerate the narrative of British identity as inherently good and empire as benevolent. I illustrate how those two mechanisms functioned, highlighting the common view of the British Empire as a fundamentally 'civilizing mission', and the government's

efforts to suppress and destroy proof of the empire's violence at the end of empire.

In section *Loss of Empire*, I give an overview of how the British large group dealt with the trauma of the loss of empire. I illustrate how the loss affected the group's meaning-making and ability to mourn, and created a regression within the group which required a new socio-psychological 'second-skin', represented in an idealized version of empire, to unite the group and provide it with solace and meaning.

I give an overview of 'colonial melancholia', as it relates to the British large group's inability to mourn the loss of empire and the complications it creates. I also explore imperial nostalgia, as it relates to the British large group's longing for a 'time of greatness', represented by the British Empire. Next, I give Brexit as the example of how powerful imperial nostalgia can be as a moving force of a group.

I address colonial amnesia as the selective remembering of history that avoids addressing the realities of imperial conquest and the violent means through which the British Empire reached its ends. From there, I provide an example of colonial amnesia in children's history curricula. Afterwards I focus on colonial amnesia in the context of migration and how the un-linking of modern immigration from Britain's colonial history has resulted in immigration being viewed as an ahistorical phenomenon. I give examples of colonial amnesia and immigration as it manifests in different fields of academia, such as: history, media studies, and migration and refugee studies.

Finally, I illustrate how migrants came to symbolize a feared 'return of the repressed' violence of empire, and how the large group employed the pathological defense mechanisms of splitting and projection, projecting its aggression on migrants and subsequently violently rejecting them.

In *The Hostile Environment & Colonial Heritage*, I make a connection between the colonial logic of racism and differential rights present in the hostile environment to the British large group tendencies towards colonial amnesia and imperial nostalgia. I explore the influence of Britain's colonial and imperial history on the dynamic of the hostile environment. Illustrating how the colonial logic of differential rights, colonial hierarchies, and

Orientalist conceptions of the 'other' still inform today's immigration discourse.

In *The Dysfunction of the Hostile Environment*, to further interrogate the hostile environment as symptom, I give an overview of the state of events it has brought about, specifically focusing on inconsistencies and signs of dysfunction. I then illustrate the internal inconsistencies within the logic of the hostile environment and the cognitive dissonance which allows the government to push through with increasingly hostile policies despite evidence pointing to their futility.

I explore the racism inherent in the selective application of the hostile environment measures through giving an overview of the Windrush scandal and how hundreds of lawful British residents were falsely deprived of their rights to healthcare, employment, and housing.

Finally, I provide my interpretation of where the hostile environment stands in this dynamic and I locate its symptomal knot in the compounded repressions which sustained the British Empire and the post-imperial large group identity.

3.2 Hostile Environment as Symptom

As mentioned in the introduction, in this chapter I interrogate the hostile environment as a symptom resulting from a disturbance in the British large group psychology, with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of this complex phenomenon and its motives. To achieve this, I followed the same sequence as I would in approaching a symptom in the clinic.

The large group, as mentioned in the methodology, refers to a large group of people who share an identity and a strong psychological tie which can take the form of nationality, religion, football club, or political party (Volkan, 2008). When I refer to the British large group, I am referring to the British identity which is shaped by unique identity markers, a collection of images, signs, and symbols the British choose to represent their history and provide the group with feelings of pride and superiority(Volkan, 2008). British large

group identity is best understood not as being shared by every single member of the group, but rather as the dominant narrative that is present in avenues such as education, film and TV, mass media, the rhetoric of the country's leadership, and the politics.

It follows that the British large group identity, like any other, would be largely connected to and influenced by its history. Two influential junctures in the formation of British large group identity, are Britain's imperial and colonial period, as well as, Britain's subsequent loss of empire and colonial territories. In order to better explore the purpose which the hostile environment, as a symptom, serves, and the state of events it has brought about for the British large group, I will look at the causes and the conflicts within the large group that led to and brought about the symptom, specifically focusing on those two junctures.

In the following section I will explore the identity markers and the conflicts of the British large group during Britain's imperial and colonial period.

3.3 Repression at the Heart of Empire

> "Liberal imperialism's Janus face of reform and coercion was powerful, beckoning Britons to focus on the peace in Pax Britannica while either denying or minimising its violent means or reconciling them as inherent or necessary feature".
>
> (Elkins, 2022, p.627)

In the 1920s, at the height of the British Empire, Britain held a great deal of power and influence, and with virtually no other nation powerful enough to challenge its authority, the British Empire ruled over 400 million people across the globe. This accumulation of power, combined with the British pre-imperial large group identity, which was informed by Victorian Christian Evangelical values and rooted in politeness, decency and moral superiority of 'character', led to psychic conflict (Tidrick, 1990).

What the large group had to grapple with, in this case, was two contradictory and

paradoxical wishes: one wish being to hold on to the aspiration of achieving moral superiority, and the other being to pursue power regardless of the practical reality of violence and coercion that underpins it. In the next two subsections I will illustrate the two complementary mechanisms, that I believe, were the large group's response to the aforementioned contradictory wishes. One mechanism was an exaggeration and fixation on British identity as inherently moral and empire as benevolent, and the other complementary mechanism was a repression and omission of the coercive and violent side of empire.

3.3.1 A Decent people - British Exceptionalism and Moral Superiority

In this section I illustrate the British large group identity as it formed and was maintained during the colonial period of the British Empire. Once a large group identity forms, the group's focus shifts to maintaining it and if needed repairing it. In this case, maintaining and protecting the Victorian Christian Evangelical values, now articulated in the new large group identity of imperial benevolence and moral superiority, was a task which imperial administrators, white upper-class men, took on.

We can see the importance of this large group identity since the earliest days of imperial expansion in the 19th century, when the British imperial administrators were seeking to separate the British Empire from its fellow European colonists, like the French and the Portuguese who, to them, seemed to only care about expansion even if it was through exploitative and abusive means(Lester, 2016a). We can also see it in how, when evangelical antislavery activists pushed for abolishing slavery, the empire heeded their call and abolished the transatlantic slave trade in 1807 (Lester, 2016b,a). The large group needed to believe that the British Empire was different from European empires and to soothe its anxieties about the moral shortcomings of being a colonial power.

We can also see the dedication to maintaining this large group identity in how imperial administrators chose to represent empire to themselves, to their fellow countrymen, and

to the rest of the world. Throughout its colonial era, the dominant narrative, peddled by the government about the British Empire, was that of a benevolent empire whose people have responded to the same calling as the Greco-Romans before them; the calling to inherit the mantle of civilisation (Robinson, 2017).

According to Ahmed (2017); Lester (2016a), British imperial administrators initially claimed that theirs was a trading, economically motivated nation with no expansionist agenda, and that any expansion into empire was just an inevitable result of the nation's economic dominance. As time went on and their power and colonies increased, imperial administrators claimed that theirs was a humanitarian 'civilising' mission motivated by goodwill and compassion for colonised subjects who were to be recreated in the 'British image' (Lester, 2016a).

For Robinson (2017), the 'civilising' position was the result of a basic dichotomy, that of a nation dedicated towards maintaining a democratic representative government while unwavering in its mission of global conquest. Similarly, according to Lester (2016a), the humanitarian 'civilising' position taken up by imperial administrators reflects the ambivalence at the core of the British Empire. Simultaneously, helping with idealised morality while directly aiding and justifying expansion efforts.

Even as the British Empire was weakening and could no longer hold on to its colonial possessions and subjects, the government adopted a mostly peaceful handover of power to locals, aided by the creation of the commonwealth, again morally separating the British empire from other empires like France who, for example, refused to hand power back to Algeria commencing an eight year war (Gildea, 2014), and Portugal and their long and violent resistance to Angola and Mozambique's independence which the two finally gained in the mid-1970s. As Elkins (2022) summed it up, "Britain imagined herself a uniquely imperial nation, the standard-bearer among peers, the purveyor of the world's greatest civilizing mission" (p.585).

In *Empire and The English Character* (1990), Kathryn Tidrick studies the 'English character' in the context of empire. Her research does not focus on how the English character

motivated expansion, rather she explores the role the English character played in imperial meaning-making once empire was already established (Tidrick, 1990).

Tidrick (1990) traces the values that defined British group identity during the time the nation was amassing power and resources through expansion, and specifically focuses on imperial representatives since they represented the 'face Britain wished to show the world'. She illustrates how imperial representatives believed they could rule through mere strength of character and not resort to violence, and attributes this ethos of governing to the Victorian Christian Evangelical values that Britain adopted in the early 19th century (Tidrick, 1990).

Inspired by the Christian evangelical belief in leading by example (Tidrick, 1990), imperial representatives imagined that with enough tutelage, the colonised can be as competent and knowledgeable as the British themselves (Robinson, 2017). Thus, the British Empire's humanitarian 'civilising' mission was, according to Lester (2016), often a patronising one, aimed at interfering in other cultures and beliefs in order to mould them to the 'British image'.

On this aspect of colonial oppression presented as benevolence, Fanon (2004) writes, "the final aim of colonization was to convince the indigenous population it would save them from darkness[...] At the level of the unconscious, therefore, colonialism was not seeking to be perceived by the indigenous population as a sweet, kind hearted mother who protects her child from a hostile environment[...] The colonial mother is protecting the child from itself, from its ego, its physiology, its biology, and its ontological misfortune" (p.149).

For example, Thomas Macaulay, a government official on the Governors's General Council of India in the 1830s, and famous author of five volume *The History of England* (1848), saw that his was a 'civilising mission' that started with making English the language of instruction for higher education in India in order to establish an Indian education model that mirrors the British model. This goal of Empire, according to Macaulay, was to "do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions

whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (Macaulay Orig. 1835, ed1979, p.359).

Other imperial administrators such as Charles Trevelyan (1807-1886) also justified the British 'civilising' position towards the colonies by likening it to that of the Roman Empire at the time of their conquest of Britain. His argument was that, because the Roman's were superior, their conquest of the British changed the British character for the better (Robinson, 2017).

The racism essential to that period of British and European colonialism, and racial hierarchy that favoured whiteness, meant that the belief that brown and black imperial subjects were inferior was hardly contested for the 19th century British public and government (Lloyd, 1984). This belief in European white racial superiority, supported by the 'scientific' discourse of the time (e.g Charles Darwin's biological racial hierarchy which saw white races as the most evolved[1]), largely contributed to maintaining the large group identity of moral superiority. As Goodfellow (2020) writes, "Whiteness was not simply a descriptor; it was used to give anchor to the idea that Europe was the place of modernity and civilisation" (p.51). The inherent racism of colonialism combated the psychological conflicts arising from the tension between maintaining the fantasy of a just and fair Empire, and the practical realities underpinning power, the brutal exploitation of colonial states and subjects.

In 1877, Cicil Rhodes, an imperial administrator and one of the most ardent champions of empire, wrote, "we are the finest race in the world and the more of it we inhabit the better it is for the human race" (as quoted by (Kombo, 2019, p.410)).

Imperial administrators, like Rhodes and Macaulay, were incapable of acknowledging that most of the 'benevolent' acts of empire — like free-trade, rails, and education — were acts of self-interest designed in service of empire, its settlers and beneficiaries. Empire, through its administrators, staunchly omitted the struggles of the colonised for inclusion and the realities of who was actually allowed to use colonial resources and under what

[1]Charles Darwin (1871) The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex

condition. For example, East Africans had restricted and conditional use of the railways supposedly built for them in their countries (Lester, 2016a).

The 'civilising' of the civilising mission was also often done with no regard for the experience or feelings of those being 'civilised'. An example being, how indigenous children were forcibly removed away from their families by imperial officials and put into the British residential schooling system (Lester, 2016b).

Thus maintaining the large group identity of a humanitarian benevolent empire and a morally superior British character required a distortion of the reality of the group, as well as, of colonized 'others'. Upholding the view of the British Empire as mostly a humanitarian endeavour, according to Lester (2016b,a), required a great deal of omission and in some cases wilful forgetting.

This commitment to the unifying large group identity, although psychically taxing, was relatively easy to sustain while The British Empire had uncontested power, and its administrators had the power to control the narrative. Below I will discuss the lengths imperial administrators went to in order to preserve this image, especially as empire was declining and its power was diminishing.

3.3.2 A Forgotten Legacy

> Repressed and buried knowledge of the cruelty and injustice that recur in diverse accounts of imperial administration can only be denied at a considerable moral and psychological cost [...] active in shaping the hostile responses to strangers and settlers and in constructing the intractable political problems that flow from understanding immigration as being akin to war and invasion..
>
> (Gilroy, 2005, p.84)

In this section, I further explore the repression which contributed to the British large group's response to its two contradictory wishes between morality and power. Repression in this context is expanded beyond its traditional definition of an unconscious forgetting, and refers to the forgetting and omissions consciously and unconsciously employed

by the 'British Empire' and its administrators.

Repression of the violent and coercive nature of colonialism acted as a complementary mechanism which helped the British large group, represented by its administrators, maintain the identity of benevolence and moral superiority. Through exploring the repression which aided in maintaining empire, we can gain insight into the understanding of the official psyche at the time, and the developments it has witnessed over the years.

When the British Empire began to decline around the 1940s/1950s, the narrative backed by imperial administrators changed from civilizing the colonized to portraying Britain as the champion and protector of lesser races (Lester, 2016a). This illustrates how the group identity of benevolence and moral superiority was still prominent at the cusp of post-imperial Britain and at the time of decolonisation. As more countries started winning their independence, imperial administrators took pride in how successful their withdrawal from their previous colonies was, compared to other colonial powers like France and Portugal.

Below I give an example of the lengths imperial administrators went to maintain the large group identity fostered during the height of imperial power, specifically focusing on the imperial efforts of the omission of the legacy of violence and coercion that took place at the end of Empire.

After retreating from the colonies, which won their independence in the 1950s and 1960s, British colonial officials undertook an often methodical process of re-arranging and discarding of any incriminating or 'embarrassing' evidence instead of handing them to the newly independent government officials (Cobain, 2016; Elkins, 2022; Gildea, 2014; Sato, 2017).

The Mau Mau case, which was in court in 2011-2012, involved a group of elderly Kenyan citizens suing the British government for the violence and torture they and the remaining few thousand Kenyans endured at the hands of the British empire in its attempts to suppress the Mau Mau rebellion in the 1950s (Branch, 2023). The court eventually ruled in favour of the claimants, and in the process requested that the government provide the

records they have of that period. It was then that it was discovered that thousands of such government colonial records had been concealed from the public, directly breaching the 1958 Public Records Act (Gildea, 2014). As a result, in 2013, 20,000 of those documents, from 37 past colonies were declassified and are now available at the Kew archive (Sato, 2017).

Before this discovery, scholars, like Caroline Elkins and Ian Cobain were already exploring the empire's evidence 'purging', asking how and why it took place. Elkins (2022) found that the purging started as an experimental process in 1950s India and South-East Asia (Malaya), and became an institutionalised codified policy by the time African nations started winning their independence in the 1960s (Elkins, 2022). The newly institutionalised policy came to be known as **Operation Legacy** around the time of Uganda's independence in 1961 (Sato, 2017).

The motive for this purging process was mainly to protect the historical legacy—the memory—of empire, in anticipation of how the British Empire would be viewed in the future if the truth about the empire's violent and coercive aspect came to light(Elkins, 2022). Europe's novel focus on international human rights after World War II meant that, "New[...] conceptions of human rights, dignity, and equality forced the hands of those in favour of empire to recognise, however grudgingly, that brazen violations of universal norms could not continue without exposing Britain's "derogation regime" in ways that would undermine the triumphant narrative proclaiming the civilising mission a success" (Elkins, 2022, p.618).

Although it is worthwhile to speculate about the secretive nature of the British government and the psychological forces that motivated the destruction of and tampering with records of their governance; it is important to also acknowledge it as an act of avoiding accountability. Imperial administrators sought to protect themselves and their collaborators from retribution and, more interestingly, embarrassment. Hence, the destruction of records simultaneously hides a violent legacy while maintaining it by denying justice to those who have been wronged by Britain.

The process of purging was also often developed and executed by colonial government officials in their respective colonies, rather than designed by the colonial office in London or executed by external agents. This meant that those ordering the purging had stronger motives to discard any documents that would embarrass or incriminate them directly (Sato, 2017).

In her latest book, *Legacy of Violence: A History of The British Empire* (2022), Caroline Elkins has a chapter dedicated to Operation Legacy, where she gives multiple examples and variations of the British Empire's erasure of its violent legacy. One interesting example she gives is of a variation of Operation Legacy called the "Watch" system which was applied in Kenya, where documents were indexed into two categories: "Watch" and "Legacy". The "Watch" being documents that need to be destroyed or shipped to Britain, and "Legacy" being documents that do justice to the British legacy and can be handed over to the newly independent Kenyan government. The operation was carried out by a small number of colonial officials under the supervision of MI5 security liaison officers, and, by the time they were done, around three and a half tons of documents were incinerated or sunk at sea, and a significant number sent back to Britain (Elkins, 2022; Sato, 2017).

The 'Watch' documents, not allowed to be passed on to local governments, fulfilled one or more of the following:

> "1- Might embarrass her Majesty's government or other governments; 2- Might embarrass members of the police, military forces, public servants or others (such as police agents or informers); 3- Might compromise sources of intelligence; 4- Might be used unethically by ministers in successor government."
> (*Colonial Secretary, "disposal of classified records & accountable documents". May 3, 1961, FCO CONT as cited in Elkins (2022)*)

As illustrated, the British Empire's colonial period saw conflicting wishes in the large group between amassing and seeking power, and seeking and maintaining the values of moral superiority that previously defined the group. During that time, given empire's

seemingly unbridled power, this conflict was resolved through repressing the violent and coercive nature of colonizing, and championing a narrative of empire as a benevolent civilizing mission.

The more powerful empire became, the less likely it was for anyone to challenge its narrative and the easier it was to maintain the repression. Violence could more easily be classified as means to a most moral end of civilizing inferior others and recreating them in the British image.

Operation Legacy and similar processes are indicative of the British large group dynamic and the identity the British government wanted to maintain post-empire. The decline of the British Empire was destabilizing, empire was no longer powerful and it no longer had control over its narrative of benevolence. Thus, the identity that had served as a middle ground for the group's conflicting wishes for power and moral superiority was gone, and, in its absence, the government wanted to preserve the fantasy of moral superiority and the narrative that theirs was a successful civilizing mission by putting its colonial period behind it in order not to be reminded of the unsavoury and 'embarrassing' realities of colonizing.

In the following sections I explore the traumatic effect the loss of empire has had on the British large group, and I connect the disturbance of British large group dynamics to the governments subsequent treatment of migrants.

3.4 The Loss of Empire

The decline and eventual end of the British empire, in the language of psychoanalysis, was a destabilizing existential trauma which caused a loss of social meaning in the British large group. Existential trauma, loss of meaning, and humiliation often cause regression in large groups and hinder their functioning, making them more susceptible to illusions of security and more anxious and suspicious (Volkan, 2008). The British large group thus regressed as a response to the loss of empire.

When a large group is regressed it becomes unable to mourn, and more pathological defences are employed to deal with the looming pain of the loss and restore the group's cohesion (Volkan, 2008). The pathological defences often present in an externalization and projection of the group's aggression onto 'others', followed by a violent rejection of those seen as outsiders, and a submission to illusions of superiority, which I will illustrate in the following sections.

Where the British Empire once had uncontested power and, with it, control over maintaining the large group identity of benevolence and moral superiority, it now had neither. The British large group's identity was more vulnerable and unstable than ever and the regression was exacerbated by the threat of the truth coming out about the embarrassing, the violent, coercive and racist realities of colonizing that were repressed while empire was in power. Thus, while becoming conscious of the repressed knowledge of the imperial destruction and violence was detrimental before, it was now disastrous.

As I illustrated earlier, the British government post-empire was still dedicated to preserving the group identity, but while the threatening documents and reminders of Britain's violence were easily destroyed to that end, the same could not be said about living reminders, colonial subjects, who were immigrating into the metropolis from the 1960s onwards.

In this context, the return of the oppressed threatened the return of the repressed. Potential proximity to former colonial subjects and commonwealth citizens outside the power dynamic of colonization threatened to uncover the decades of racist discourse which justified white Europe's domination of the rest of the world, based on a classification of the superior white, and inferior black and brown person (Young, 2001). Imperial administrators had been justifying their violence under the guise that it was for a good cause, to civilize and rule those who could not rule themselves, and now there was a chance that this narrative would be contested.

Gilroy writes of the period spanning the end of the 1950s and the 1960s, "Victorian melancholy started to yield to melancholia as soon as the natives and savages began to

appear and make demands for recognition in the empire's metropolitan core[...]The end of external hostilities demanded a new map of the nation's internal fractures and divisions " (Gilroy, 2005, p.82). The threat that former colonial subjects posed to the carefully maintained British identity, combined with the decades of racism that painted them as inferior, and the regression of the large group due to the loss of empire, all informed how the British government dealt with migrants post-empire and continue to inform their reaction to immigration presently, as manifest in the hostile environment.

Below, I will elaborate how the British government's dynamic of hostility towards migrants has formed in the contexts of the loss of empire, the regression of the large group, and the new large group identity — or second skin — which hinges on the concept of imperial glory.

3.4.1 Imperial Melancholia

In his book, *Postcolonial Melancholia* (2005), Paul Gilroy argued that understanding Britain's modern relationship to immigration requires us, "to understand something fundamental about the cultural life of a post-colonial country that has never dealt with the consequences of its loss of empire" (p.27). He theorized that pervasive "post-imperial melancholia" is behind the diminishing and active forgetting of the history of colonialism, which feeds a mono-cultural/white conception of Britain, and detaches immigration from the history of empire (Gilroy, 2005).

Gilroy borrows the psychoanalytic use of the term melancholia, which denotes an unconscious grieving process whereby the source of grief, namely, the loss of an empire and geopolitical dominance, is not properly identified, leading to a cyclical form of nostalgia (Gilroy, 2005). Melancholia differs from mourning which requires conscious awareness of the loss suffered, the painful realisation that things will be different in the future and that we cannot bring back the past. Through mourning, large groups can digest their losses and bargain with their social and political reality until they reach a compromise

they can accept.

In 1975, the Mitscherlichs wrote about how the inability to mourn is caused by the emptiness left behind in a group at the end of a fascist period where the fantasy of omnipotence is broken. Since both fascism and colonialism require a large amount of dehumanisation and muting of empathy, colonialism leaves a similar legacy of emptiness that renders mourning difficult.

The loss of the British Empire could not be mourned for various, yet connected reasons. One reason for the inability to mourn is inherent to the dehumanizing and violent nature of colonialism itself and the consequent emptiness it left behind. Another reason, as introduced by Gilroy (2005), is that the post-imperial British society just refused and did not have the capacity to deal with the reality of having lost empire, opting for comforting delusions instead.

Further, I consider the following two interrelated factors to be important. The first of which is, the fact that since a large part of the reality of empire, its violence, was repressed, and since mourning requires a conscious awareness of the loss suffered and a renegotiation with reality, it meant that mourning posed a danger of uncovering the truth about empire, which seems to have been a risk the group was not willing to take.

The second factor was that the group was regressed and therefore its priority was not dealing with the pain of the loss of empire. Instead, its main aim was to minimize the pain and restore the group's cohesion by any means necessary. This was demonstrated with regards to Operation Legacy, which I will discuss further with regards to imperial nostalgia, colonial amnesia, and the government's violent rejection of migrants.

3.4.2 Imperial Nostalgia

In this section I will explore imperial nostalgia as it exists today in general public discourse, giving Brexit as an example of how it informs the material reality of the British large group. I will also explore its connection to 'colonial melancholia' and the British

large group's inability to mourn the loss of empire and the consequent complications this creates in its ability to integrate and learn from the past.

When a large group is regressed and unable to mourn, melancholia can take a strong hold, which, as theorized above, is what seems to have happened to the British large group post-empire. When a group is seized with melancholia and their future seems uncertain and bleak, it is more likely for the individuals in the group to escape their reality by fantasizing about times of 'greatness', where they imagine they would have had power and would not be blighted by their current worries and fears.In the case of the British large group this fantasizing about a lost times of 'greatness' manifests in imperial nostalgia. These large group circumstances are often when groups seek what Volkan (2004) called a 'second skin'.

The term 'second skin', refers to a new socio-psychological envelope which contains the group's identity. Because the regressed group's psychic borders are vulnerable it needs a way to defend against anxiety and unconscious threats of annihilation, therefore, the job of the second skin is to reassure the group about their worth, goodness, and entitlement, and to unite the group together, often against a common external enemy(Volkan, 2004).

The British large group needed a second skin in order to fill the existential emptiness created after the loss of empire and, thus, just as the Victorian Christian Evangelical values were reformulated into the imperial large group identity of benevolence and moral superiority, the latter identity was reformulated into an identification with 'greatness' encompassed in the legacy of empire. In this distilled concept of past imperial glory, post-imperial Britain found a second skin and an identity through which it can understand itself.

While the second skin serves to reassure the group about its worth, it also unites the group in their quest of maintaining it and protecting it from inside and outside threats. Below I will illustrate the two complementary mechanisms of imperial nostalgia and colonial amnesia that are still active today and continue to maintain and protect the second

skin of imperial glory in the British large group psyche. Exploring both can help us form a clearer picture of the perpetuation of colonial logic which we find in the hostile environment.

Imperial nostalgia is encouraged by unnuanced historical accounts that glorify empire and aided by colonial amnesia and the obscuring of the realities of the past. Gilroy (2005) wrote about 'anti-history', the glorifying triumphalist narratives of empire which constitutes a large part of imperial nostalgia. Those triumphalist narratives serve as a substitute delusional knowledge for the knowledge which is repressed through colonial amnesia. For example, a view of the British Empire still common in Britain today, is that although not without its faults, empire was largely a blessing to India and Africa, ushering in the modern era and bringing with it education, free-trade, and religion (Gildea, 2014; Lester, 2016a).

Afua Hirsch, author of the book *Brit(ish): On Race, Identity and Belonging* compared Britain's relationship with its selective remembering of imperial glory to an addiction. She writes, "Britishness – at least this patriotic, defensive, glory-addicted version of it – seems to be in a highly fragile place. It cannot withstand being problematised or critiqued" (Hirsch, 2018).

We can find examples of imperial nostalgia in the British government, with one extreme example being former Prime Minister Boris Johnson's insistence that Africa and the world were made better by the British Empire and statements like "The best fate for Africa would be if the old colonial powers, or their citizens, scrambled once again in her direction; on the understanding that this time they will not be asked to feel guilty"(Johnson, 2016).

Elkins (2022) refers to two public historians such as Niall Ferguson and Oxford professor Nigel Biggar, who champion this selective remember of imperial glory.

In Ferguson's widely read 2003 book *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*, he argues that, all things considered, the British Empire was ultimately a "good thing", and he attributes 'goodness' to the triumphant and noble British character. The British Empire,

according to him, helped the 'world' enter the modern era, developed the countries it colonized, and increased global welfare (Elkins, 2022).

We also see Biggar in 2017 stand in defense of the British Empire and the moral superiority of the British. He defends empire against allegations of 'badness', claiming that any empire did what it had to, in order to civilize and bring together people who were averse to peace and unity (Elkins, 2022). In an interview with Gimson (2020), Biggar summed up his view saying that, "Not allowing our imperial history to be rubbished is important, because if indeed our imperial history was all that they say it was, namely a litany of atrocity, then the moral authority of the West is eroded".

According to Dooling (2019) the view of empire as benign or largely positive feeds into the 'sensibilities' of the British who prefer to see themselves as the bringers of civilization and as governed by "the rules of fair play". Similarly, Lester (2016b) claims it is not simply a matter of reminiscing over a past long gone, rather it stems from an ongoing conviction of British exceptionalism and moral superiority.

Twenty years ago, Gilroy (2005) wrote about the extreme fragility of postmodern British nationalism. He tells us that any analysis of said nationalism "must also be able to acknowledge that exceptionally powerful feelings of comfort and compensation are produced by the prospect of even a partial restoration of the country's long-vanished homogeneity" (Gilroy, 2005, p.79). In Britain, the restoration of the lost homogeneity, or preservation of the large group, is often sought out through attempts at narrative and material 'preservation of endangered whiteness'.

Brexit

In June of 2016, 17.4 million Britons voted for Britain to leave the European Union, now known as 'Brexit'. Brexit provides a good concrete example of how the powerful force of imperial nostalgia can move and inspire a large group to make certain decisions.

In their book, *Rule Britannia: Brexit and the End of Empire* (2019), Dorling and Tomlinson

suggest that Brexit and the hostile environment are similar in that they both serve as politically constructed distractions from the rising economic inequality in Britain. For Yeo (2020), the hostile environment and Brexit are not just similar, rather they stem from the same ideology, and the hostile environment discourse directly affected the result of the Brexit vote, and possibly why Brexit happened in the first place.

Like the hostile environment, Brexit involved a projection of badness and displacement of economic and structural troubles on a scapegoat, in this case the European Union. This projection was combined with unrealistic goals of control over immigration, trade, and the economy in general. Harteveld et al. (2018)(2018) found evidence which suggests that Euroscepticism increased among viewers who consumed media on the 'refugee crisis'. Years of anti-immigration discourse and vilification of migrants by politicians and the media, made it so a campaign that promised to reduce immigration seemed attractive to many Britons.

Dorling and Tomlinson (2019) argue that it was not poverty and desperation that drove the majority of those who voted leave but it was rather the unresolved mourning and longing for empire. The slogan for Brexit, 'Take back control' proved to be a powerful slogan as it played on the fantasy of returning to a time of glory when the British felt they had a lot of control through empire.

Brexit illustrates the British large group's complicated relationship with the legacy of British Empire. According to Hutchinson (2018), who researched the genealogy of the term, 'British' was always an imperial and never a national term. British, was initially used in relation to expansion, specifically to refer to expanded territories in Ireland in the 1600s. At the height of imperial expansion, it represented both expansion and the shared institutional structures that formed the United Kingdom. He points out the irony of the 'Brexit project', which, in this context, simultaneously represents a fantasy of a second chance at imperial glory while straying the furthest it has ever been from the meaning of British.

Finally, While the new second skin fulfilled the groups need for meaning and worth, it

is important to remember that it was built on an already unstable structure— since empire as a benevolent civilizing mission led by the morally superior British character never actually existed. This makes the group psyche vulnerable, and the task of protecting the second skin more precarious, leading the group to be more hostile and susceptible to pathological defense mechanisms.

3.4.3 Colonial Amnesia

In order to protect the second skin of imperial glory, the British large group, represented by the government, needed to push away the memory of empire and keep it at enough of a distance to be able to look back on it fondly. In other words, history needed to be forgotten in order to fulfill its role of second skin and give meaning to and fulfill the group.

Resistance to remembering the truth of empire as manifested in colonial amnesia, contributed to imperial nostalgia and in the British large group's inability to mourn. Pertaining to immigration discourse and the hostile environment, colonial amnesia, as I illustrate below, has resulted in the phenomenon of immigration coming to be viewed by the government, academia, and public discourse as ahistorical, through unlinking of immigration and migrants from Britain's colonial and imperial history.

In Chapter 1.3.1, I wrote about the first instance of this unlinking by the British government who as the loss of the empire was becoming imminent introduced The 1962 & The 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Acts ending citizenship rights to British colonial subjects and semantically severing the connection between them and Britain by officially naming them immigrants, and subjecting them to immigration controls (Spencer, 2002). El-Enany (2020) calls this the British Empire's last vanishing act which "cast Britain's imperial history into the shadows" (p.231), shattered the illusion of imperial unity, meaning "Britain made itself, for all intents and purposes, an exclusionary white space" (p.220).

Now, I will provide a brief example of colonial amnesia and selective remembering in

education, before I explore colonial amnesia in the context of immigration. I chose education, since it can help contextualize the wider and more general colonial amnesia affecting the British large group and provide a better understanding of unlinking of immigration and migrants from Britain's colonial history in the hostile environment.

According to Dorling and Tomlinson (2019), since the expansion of elementary education in the 1880s coincided with a time that the British empire was in its prime, school was a space for children to learn about the glory of empire. They give an example of how British classrooms displayed maps where the vast British colonies were colored pink and the children were taught that those were the lands that belonged to them(Dorling and Tomlinson, 2019). Even in the decades between 1950 and 1980 when empire was diminishing, textbooks still featured "imperial adventurers who had made Britain Great" (Dorling and Tomlinson, 2019). In his blog, Scottish writer Hassan (2020) writes about the same imperial maps that were still up in his and many other classrooms up until the 1970s, he contemplates, writing, "The map of the British Empire on my school wall was a sign that something was wrong. It was a mixture of not letting go and denial. It showed an unwillingness to confront who we were and are and what had been done in our name" (Hassan, 2020)

Today, the history curriculum that British children are provided in school offers a simplistic view of empire, which leads to a lack of knowledge and information about the impact of empire on the indigenous subjects who were colonised, and the violent means through which empire reached its ends (Dooling, 2019). (Olusoga, 2016) writes that, "the problem today is not that our national feelings about the British empire are too positive or too negative, but that we know too little of the actual history to make a sound judgment. How can we ask people to take pride in, or feel regret about, a history that is hardly taught in schools and little explored elsewhere?"

Heath (2016a) argues that due to the unnuanced way that imperial history and colonialism are taught in schools, children come to view Britain and the rest of the world in an exclusivist and essentialist manner. She further argues that England's national curricu-

lum largely erases the legacy of the British Empire, constructing a simplified triumphalist portrait of empire. The effect of colonialism on colonized nations and people is not addressed, rather the focus is on when and where the fist colonies were created. There is also no attention paid to the continued effects of colonialism on the present—students are taught that countries gained their independence—as the end of the colonial story. Even in the case where students are taught a more nuanced history of the evils of the transatlantic slave trade, the larger focus is placed on the triumphant narrative of how Britain abolished slavery (Heath, 2016a).

There also seems to be a resistance to any change in the way history is taught as can be seen in the backlash to Jeremy Corbyn's, then Leader of the Labour Party, suggestion in 2018 that British school children should be taught about the legacy of British imperialism and colonialism in a way that is more realistic than the simplistic whitewashed version available. He was subsequently attacked by fellow MPs, most of whom were right-wing white middle-aged men, who claimed he was 'ashamed' of his country, when he should be 'proud of the good Britain has brought to the world'Heath (2018). Heath (2018) argues that it is colonial amnesia, the erasure of empire's violent legacy, which makes it possible for people to think that teaching children about their history is shameful and will make them hate their country.

Colonial Amnesia and Migration

Histories of colonialism have directly influenced modern patterns of migration and the rules and regulations that exist around them, yet Britain's colonial history is largely absent from its immigration discourse and its response to immigration.

The absence of this historical link, which many scholars like El-Enany (2020); Gilroy (2005); Goodfellow (2020); Mayblin (2017) placed under the larger umbrella of 'colonial amnesia', has resulted in modern immigration being represented, by the government, mass media, and even academia as an ahistorical phenomenon. Historically de-

contextualizing immigration in this way, serves to justify the hostile response to immigration as a response to an unexpected novel crisis, to maintain the narrative of Britain and the West, in general, being champions of human rights, and to conceal the ongoing colonial violence of the immigration discourse.

According to Gilroy (2005), the "silence" surrounding British colonialism results in "the error of imagining that postcolonial people are only unwanted alien intruders without any substantive historical, political, or cultural connections to the collective life of their fellow subjects" (p.98). Similarly El-Enany (2020) is of the opinion that the colonial amnesia in immigration law, symbolically cut Britain off from its violent history which is the reason the hostile environment is not seen for what it is, an extension of the colonial violence which restricts the access of imperial loot to white Britons, protecting it from the arrival of the historically dispossessed.

Below I give an overview of how colonial amnesia, in relation to immigration, is understood by different scholars, providing examples of how it manifests in academia and mainstream media.

While university offers more opportunities for students to seek a less censored education on British history, as an institution, the university has historically contributed to colonial expansion, and still plays a role in the forgetting of the violence of colonial history (Rees, 2022). In *Time's Monster* (2020), Priya Satia writes about the role that historians played in creating and sustaining the British Empire through making it "ethically thinkable". The historians' adoption of the view of time 'as progress', according to her, is what made the violence of imperial conquest 'ethically thinkable'. If time is seen as progress, it is easier to rationalise and disregard exploitation, violence, and cruelty if they helped progression towards an objective of a better future for all. Satia, heeds modern historians to pay attention to how they write and teach history now, to challenge the view of history as directional, and to re-discover other views of time (Rees, 2022).

Similarly, Mayblin (2017) calls for the relevance of history to be taken seriously in academia when addressing Britain's contemporary view on immigration and response to

asylum seekers. Her focus is specifically on the colonial amnesia, the history of colonialism which is missing/forgotten from the dominant accounts on immigration into Britain. She argues that colonial amnesia makes it so that most scholars find it much easier to connect immigration to events that took place in 'geographical' Europe like WWI, WWII, and the Cold War, than to connect it to histories of colonialism. Goodfellow (2020) also argues that, if the UK refuses to acknowledge the horrors of the empire and how they have shaped the British sense of self, then it will be impossible to "challenge the racialized 'them' and 'us' at the heart of the national identity and immigration debate" (p.202).

In 2022, Połońska-Kimunguyi published a study investigating the historical amnesia present in most of the British media's coverage of migration between 2015 and 2018. In interrogating this historical amnesia, she makes the link between the colonial racist hierarchies and the current media coverage of migration, which continues to carry and reproduce the same colonial hierarchies and racial divisions (Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022). Arif (2018) also notes that even in sympathetic press coverage by outlets like the Guardian and the Independent, refugees are still under-represented, not given the space to use their voice, and often de-contextualized as nameless and sensationalized alien figures of suffering.

Połońska-Kimunguyi (2022) does not only condemn mainstream media for sustaining the racism of colonialism in their coverage of migrants, she also accuses the academic field of media studies of being complicit in maintaining the 'forgetting' of the connection between colonial racism and the media's discourse on immigration. She argues that, as an academic field, media studies refuses to hold mainstream media accountable and that, with few exceptions, even when researchers investigate and critique the media's discourse on immigration and address the important issues of ideology, nationalism, and racism, they still fail to historicize them and connect them to Britain's colonial history.

Even the fields of refugee and migration studies, where one would expect more reflexivity, one finds the field 'haunted by a persistent colonial amnesia' (Basaran, 2022). The field of refugee studies has been, on more than one occasion, criticised for its gen-

eral disinterest in history (Marfleet, 2007; Kleist, 2014; Stone, 2018). Since its conception, refugee studies seem to have been exclusively geared towards policy driven research and exclusively engaged with current pressing and practical concerns (Stone, 2018, Gatrell, 2017).

Research conducted with the purpose of investigating scholarly interest in refugee history has often hypothesized that refugees have either been omitted from general history or that their presence was notably lacking and misconstrued (Mayblin, 2017). Historians, according to Marfleet (2007), have functioned under a "Methodological nationalism", which contributed to, "celebrating nationstates and those within their borders" (p.4), often ignoring movements along those borders, except in instances when such movements directly served national agendas (Marfleet, 2007; Kushner and Knox, 1999). Consequently, the role and influence these movements have had in shaping both history and current affairs has been forgotten in what Marfleet calls a general amnesia, pointing that "history did not observe the refugee" (Marfleet, p.7, 2007; Gatrell, 2008).

Neumann and Tavan (2009) suggest that, another reason refugees were absent from history was related to the fact that a genuine relaying of refugee history would mean challenging long standing and crucial national narratives of proud traditions and generous legacies of refugee protection. To research the history of current refugee crises we would have to interrogate the global developments, colonial legacies and external interventions that contributed to them. In order to avoid such reflection and the responsibility that comes with it, refugee research has adopted an attitude of amnesia, disconnecting those living in the present from those living in the past, considering each crisis as a unique occurrence 'a temporary blip' of an ahistorical nature (Gatrell, 2017; Kirkwood, 2019; Marfleet, 2007; Mayblin, 2017). Contemporary refugee realities in the west are so far removed from the 'mythic heritage' (Lowenthal, 1998 as quoted by Kirkwood, 2019) most western nations remain attached to, it begs the question of what underlying mechanisms are at work in order to hold up such illusions.

In questioning and attempting to explain the misconstrued representation of refugees

as 'ahistorical', Elie (2014) develops on Marfleet's opinion that historians have ignored and silenced refugee movements and 'those involved' in them, and therefore aims the spotlight on the historians, quoting Kushner (2006) and Gatrell (2007) in saying that when it comes to refugees, "historians have shown 'actual resistance rather than simple apathy' in their engagement with the theme" (p.1). Eli (2014) defines the ahistorical reputation of the field as a conscious erasure of the figure of the immigrant rather than a disengagement with matters related to forced migration; quoting Forcade (2008), he clarifies, "the refugee or the forced migrant is 'less an unknown of history than a missing, untraceable and unnameable character of the historiography'" (p.332). At best, when historians engage with refugee history, their work concerns refugees in relation to specific historiographical debates rather than the general historiography of refugees (Elie, 2014), at worst the refugees' current and past experiences are distorted beyond recognition in order to adhere to hegemonic national narratives (Kushner, 2003; Marfleet, 2007; Eli, 2014).

Paul Gilroy stresses the cultivation of the ability to reflect on history and culture through a de-colonial lens (Gilroy, 2005). He argues that often what we perceive as 'disturbing' in the views of government on topics where race plays a factor, like immigration or citizenship, can be guaranteed to be traced back to historical concepts of colonial domination and 'race', that have long been 'omitted'. Because of the prevalence of omission it becomes easy for us to fall prey to forms of nationalist exceptionalism and the superficial narratives of national cohesion.

In his interrogation of the British government's unlinking of the relationship between forced migration and its colonial history, Whittle (2023) pinpoints two narratives he believes are used to justify and promote the hostile environment, fostering of anti-immigration sentiments in the public, and legitimizing the existence of national borders. He identifies the first narrative as "the story of nation-as-family" and the second as "the story of security".

The story of nation as family is the narrative of a national belonging based on an 'often imagined' cohesive shared culture, ethnicity, and race. While the narrative of the

story of security, has its roots in the Orientalist ideologies of the ”war on terror” and ”the clash of civilizations”, painting asylum seekers as potential terrorists and threats to socio-economic stability (Beshara, 2018). To remedy this erasure and the resulting current hostility, he suggests using migrant narratives and stories to guide us back into colonial history, thus addressing hostility both historically and symptomatically.

Some scholars, like Dalal (2001), speak of colonial amnesia in a manner akin to repression or involuntary forgetting caused by the British psyche's inability to process the guilt of its violent colonial legacy, while other scholars like El-Enany (2020) assert that colonial amnesia, in this case, is a deliberate effort of omission by the British government to dispossess people of the colonial riches which have been stolen from their lands and are now hoarded in Britain .

Colonial amnesia understood as a large group suppression does not necessarily mean a full memory of an event is erased, usually what is erased is a part of the memory which is associated with painful feelings, the feelings attached to a memory, a wish that is too perverse, or a link that is too disturbing to make. While as deliberate erasure, it is understood as a strategic decision that can be adopted by governments, institutions, or individuals for a variety of reasons and always out of self interest. Reasons can range from avoiding responsibility and reparations, favouring a certain narrative, to gaining favour with or controlling the public.

Both views on the source of colonial amnesia are applicable in Britain's case where omission seems to fuel the narrative that immigrants 'appeared out of nowhere', which, in turn, legitimises Britain's need to protect its borders. In this narrative, migrants and asylum seekers are seen as either complicit in their own suffering or poor unfortunates who need to be kept out lest they bring down their potential new host countries with them.

3.4.4 Splitting and Projection

Resistance to and the suppression of the memory of empire in order to protect the large group second skin of imperial glory didn't only manifest in colonial amnesia, it also manifested in the pathological defense mechanism of splitting and projection. Regressed large groups have a tendency to externalize and project their aggression on others and subsequently violently reject those others in order to maintain illusions of superiority. For the post-imperial British large group, the figure of the migrant was simultaneously a reminder of the loss of empire, and of its violence; which posed a threat to the fragile second skin of imperial glory.

Having colonized hundreds of millions of people meant that the reminders of empire's violence were never too far off. It was clear that Britain could not simply shed its past if living reminders were arriving to its shores, and thus it resorted to the dynamic of splitting and projection. Which was easy since as Said (1978) wrote in *Orientalism*, the projection of badness on the colonized and the production of knowledge about them as inferior was a key part of colonialism. Migrants were thus seen as dangerous intruders that threatened to corrupt and who needed to be stopped by any means.

In order to preserve the second skin of imperial glory and hold on to the fantasy of themselves as pure and good, the British large group united against a common enemy, which in this case was the migrant. From there, the unconscious dynamic of splitting and projection, which Bion (1968) described as an unconscious process through which the group splits off their unwanted parts and projects them onto an 'out' group was established, and continues to thrive today.

Morgan (2022), makes a similar connection, stressing that the unacknowledged western guilt and violent colonial pasts caused western societies to function on the paranoid schizoid fragmented level, splitting off their 'badness' and projecting it onto the figure of the migrant who threatens to either force them to face their past or to retaliate and respond to the violence brought onto his ancestors.

Once the group enters this dynamic of splitting and projection, the group becomes dangerous and starts to hold more aggressively onto notions of purity and superiority, "The sense of internal goodness becomes a sense of entitlement and a gradual distortion of reality, in which unpleasant and threatening aspects of reality are denied." (Kernberg, 2020, p.10).

An apt example of this dynamic and the dissonance in the British large group's relationship with migrants is seen in Margaret Thatcher's bizarre and now infamous interview with Gordon Burns for Granada TV.

In 1978, on her third anniversary as Conservative party leader, Thatcher told Burns, "If we went on as we are then by the end of the century there would be four million people of the new Commonwealth or Pakistan here. Now, that is an awful lot and I think it means that people are really rather afraid that this country might be rather *swamped by people with a different culture* and, you know, the British character has done so much for democracy, for law and done so much throughout the world that if there is any fear that it might be swamped people are going to *react and be rather hostile to those coming in*" (Thatcher, 1978).

This statement contains many elements that are ripe for analysis, but, for the sake of brevity, I will point to only a few of them.

One element, in a foreshadowing of the hostile environment to come, is how Thatcher embodies a way in which regressed large group leaders operate. The external 'enemy' group, migrants, is dehumanized, depicted as dangerous and associated with a non-human toxic trait—swamping. This is in line with the findings of Kernberg (2020) that large groups create images of enemy groups that depict them as animals, vermin, or bodily waste as a way to devalue them and raise the value of one's own group as superior and morally justified.

Another element is that migrants are made to carry the responsibility of Britain's aggression, it is their fault if the British react to them with hostility. This, yet again, demonstrates the regressed irrational ends that large groups can follow to maintain their illusions. Unfortunately, this 'look what you made me do' attitude is not unique to Thatcher

as, as Goodfellow (2020) writes, migrants and racial minorities are often blamed for the aggression perpetuated towards them. She also writes about how the government and the media claim that the solution of the problems of 'race relations', is having less racialized people (Goodfellow, 2020).

Most interesting is the juxtaposition between the 'British character' that 'has done so much for the world' and those who will 'react and be rather hostile to those coming in'. My first impression, before I knew more about British psycho-dynamics, was confusing as I could not reconcile the dissonance between the two images, how could such a 'character', spoken so highly of, not be able to control itself and its hostility to those coming in. Now, I have come to understand her statement as referring to the British character of the second skin's glorious empire rather than the actual character of the British. In this context, what she is reaffirming is the British group's dedication to maintaining the legacy of empire at any cost.

Since Thatcher's interview, the hostility towards migrants and the large group regression which sustained it only grew more powerful as the Welfare State started to decline and Britain became less and less politically and economically relevant culminating in the hostile environment.

I have illustrated the historical and psychological circumstances that have led to the hostile environment, below I will illustrate what role the it fulfills as a symptom and the pathological dysfunction it achieves instead.

3.5 The Hostile Environment & Colonial Heritage

> "Every new configuration contains masses of the old".
> (Hall, 2013)

One feature of Freudian symptoms, according to Fink (2017), is that they often involve a repetition that aims at resolution, e.g. of a difficult aspect of the past or an internal

conflict. In this section, I highlight the repetition of colonial hierarchies, racism, and differential rights in the hostile environment. I also explore how they converge and diverge from the the history which preceded them.

Colonial amnesia, combined with the mechanisms of splitting and projection employed by the British large group, meant that the dissatisfaction the group feels with their current circumstances finds an outlet in reliving the violent and aggressive instincts of the colonial past in the acceptable framework of anti-immigration hostility.

According to, Williams and Chrisman (2013) colonial and imperial discourse is still the blueprint for the West's dealings with the global South, and the West's understanding of itself. The practices and hierarchies of imperialism, still feed into the 'unequal international relation of economic and political power'. Those practices can be seen in how Western nations still conduct military interference, and decide which leaders are elected in countries of the global South all while claiming the 'highest moral authority'.

Colonial and imperial discourse can also be observed in how the West deals with immigration. In Britain, the hostile environment is a clear example of how colonial and imperial logic continues to dangerously determine much of the racist and xenophobic immigration discourse alluded to in the last section. Below, I attempt to clarify the role that Britain's colonial and imperial legacy plays in the dynamic of the hostile environment and provide an example of colonial logic in action.

Despite the general government and large group resistance to addressing Britain's racist and violent past many researchers like El-Enany (2020); Gilroy (2005); Goodfellow (2020) and Mayblin (2017) have taken on the task of exploring the connection.

In her widely acclaimed book *Bordering Britain: Law, Race and Empire* (2020), Nadine El-Enany makes the argument that the current immigration discourse is a continuation of Britain's colonialism, that, "Immigration law, in this way, is the modality through which Britain transitioned from being a colonial power in the traditional overseas extractive sense, to a space of domestic colonialism masquerading as a post-colonial nation" (El-Enany, 2020, p.131).

She argues that the same colonial violence that was used to dispossess people of their resources, lands, and welfare, is enforced on their descendants through state sanctioned racism, in the form of immigration laws and border controls that reproduce colonial and racial hierarchies. Additionally, the same discourse, which saw the colonized as inferior persons incapable of ruling themselves, undeserving of the riches in their lands, and a workforce to exploit, has been applied to racialized 'others' who are seen as incapable, 'bogus', and undeserving (El-Enany, 2020).

Mayblin (2017), makes the connection between the administrative means that make the dehumanisation and deprivation of asylum seekers possible, and Britain's past racist colonial hierarchies of who was human and deserving and who was not human enough. According to her, it was slavery which served as a blueprint for the distinction between who was human enough and who was not.

Goodfellow (2020), also challenges the common belief that racism and xenophobia in the UK only appeared when migrants 'of a certain kind' started arriving, and that it is their fault for causing disharmony. Although her research mainly focuses on post-1960s Britain, she suggests that racism and xenophobia have been there and can be traced back to the British Empire.

Colonial language plays an important role in colonial control, it classifies and reclassifies people, it separates citizen from subject, subject from immigrant, deserving and undeserving, and ultimately human and sub-human. We can see a timeline of such reclassifying in immigration law when in the 1960s colonial subjects became immigrants distancing them from empire, as shown in Section 1.3.1; in the 1990s asylum seekers became bogus thus undeserving, as shown in Section 1.3.4, and now after The Illegal Migration Act 2023 asylum seekers themselves became illegal.

This selective humanity also comes with the active-passive logic of colonialism which assumes that only the colonizers have agency and can affect influence, while the colonized are there to be influenced and shaped. This logic also lends itself to repression, because, if the British colonial officials were unwilling to see themselves or their fellow

British citizens as being influenced, they, too, become blind to the changes that imperialism has brought to Britain, from education, to policing, to managing certain segments of the population.

Many researchers who engaged with the question of immigration in relation to the British Empire argue that Europe and Britain, as 'post-imperial' nations, have to take responsibility for the damage they have done to the infrastructure and resources of the Global South, and acknowledge that much of the capital they have accumulated, and continue to accumulate under current economic systems that support global inequity, is a result of the exploitation of the Global South's resources (Gilroy, 2005; Goodfellow, 2020; Whittle, 2023). El-Enany (2020) specifically views irregular migration as anti-colonial resistance, and stresses that legal categories should not be accepted as given, rather they, and Britain's claim to bordering itself, should be questioned and understood in their historical context.

3.5.1 Colonial Logic in Action

"Colonial violence not only aims at keeping these enslaved men at a respectable distance, it also seeks to dehumanize them" Sartre (preface to Fanon (2004)).

An example of the prevalence of colonial discourse in Britain's asylum system was made by Rosa Heimer in 2019. Heimer analyzed the Supreme Court (SC) decision on *HJ (Iran) v. Secretary of State* and *HT (Cameroon) v. Secretary of State* for the Home Department (2010), and showed that immigration law in Britain has been a powerful source of 'racist and orientalist manipulation', with further potential for symbolic and material violence towards asylum seekers (Lopes Heimer, 2020).

She chose this SC decision because it was seminal in affecting the Home Office's handling of sexuality-based asylum claims and was welcomed as a positive shift in Britain's asylum law since it rejected the 'reasonably tolerable' test which most sexuality-based asylum claims were rejected for prior to this decision. The 'reasonably tolerable' test was

used to assess whether a person who had a well-founded fear of persecution owing to their sexuality, would be able to tolerate living in discretion or hide their sexuality in order to avoid persecution upon being sent back to their home country. Understandably, there was a lot of criticism of the test especially since Britain a country that prides itself in its upholding of LGBTQ+ rights, was implicitly asking people to repress their sexuality (Lopes Heimer, 2020).

What Heimer highlights is that the discursive framing of the SC decision itself reproduces an orientalist fantasy of western societies as sexually liberated and modern, and non-western societies as homophobic traditional and 'pre-modern'. This in turn influenced and continues to influence new guidance for sexuality-based asylum claims. She illustrates how even after SC rejected the 'reasonably tolerable' test and set out a new guidance for handling sexuality-based claims, the new guidance was still implicitly oppressive because it was informed by orientalist constructions of the 'Other' (Lopes Heimer, 2020).

Heimer reviewed cases taken on by the Upper Tribunal Immigration and Asylum Chamber, and the Court of Appeals, in the years following the introduction of the new SC guidelines and found that, while cases were not rejected on account of the 'reasonably tolerable' test anymore, they started getting rejected on the basis that asylum seekers would be safe in their home countries because of a perceived 'personal discretion' which they exhibited while living in the UK, which means they would be safe if returned to their home countries. Judges were justifying this 'personal discretion' by making arguments that the person was, for example, 'family oriented' and refused to engage in the western/liberal understandings of queerness during their time in Britain (e.g. going to gay clubs, consuming gay catered products, and broadcasting their sexuality). This assumption disregarded the fact that queerness exists outside its Western construct, and the emotional and financial toll of being an asylum seeker in Britain. In that way a new category of 'discreet' queers, who are ultimately understood as sexually repressed was created. Queers who are unable to live 'freely and openly' and therefore cannot be accepted as refugees (Lopes Heimer, 2020).

The SC decision re-framed and shifted the discourse from —Britain refusing to accept asylum seekers through forcing the repressive 'reasonably tolerable' test on them— to—Britain refusing racialized LGBTQ+ asylum seekers due to some intrinsic qualities they possess, or that were inevitably gained through their cultural upbringing that made them naturally repressed. In that way, Britain maintains its image as a morally superior nation and a keen protector of LGBTQ+ rights while giving a rationale to its continued hostility towards asylum seekers. This rationale is only made possible by the perseverance of the orientalist discourse and the symbolic power it gives the West to say "They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented" (Said, 1978, p.293), and the neo-orientalist discourse that says, "they cannot be 'helped/saved' for their 'cultural/natural' differences render them unable to live their sexuality openly and freely even in an 'open and free' country" (Lopes Heimer, 2020, p.192).

3.6 Dysfunction of the Hostile Environment

> "The hostile environment has been a disaster. The system encourages race discrimination; the financial costs of the red tape needed to set it up have been huge; the wrong people have been catastrophically affected; there has been no discernible decrease in unlawful immigration; and even where the 'right' people have been punished, the public have baulked at the dire consequences".
> (Yeo, 2020, p.42)

The interpretation above indicates that the Symptomal knot at the heart of the hostile environment is thus not only the repression of the legacy of empire in order to protect the second skin of imperial glory as seen in the *Colonial Amnesia* subsection, it is also compounded by the repression of the violence and coercion of empire which is seen in the *Repression at The Heart of Empire* section. In this section, I explore the state of affairs the hostile environment as symptom has brought about and what purpose it has achieved, exploring any inconsistencies, dysfunction, resistances or unwanted results.

In the *Internal Inconsistency* section, I begin with exploring the internal inconsistencies in the logic of the hostile environment, specifically the government's persistence in developing exceedingly hostile policies despite increasing proof that they do not work, and are, in fact, detrimental to the country's economy and overall cohesion.

In the section *Racism in The Hostile Environment*, I give an overview of the racism which is central to how the hostile environment measures are applied. I also illustrate how while, the Home Office acknowledges the racism of the hostile environment and does not 'seek' it, it justifies it as being in accordance with previous immigration legislation and as the only means to an important end. As an example of the harmful hostile environment measures, and the racist and selective way those measures are enforced, I write about the Windrush Scandal. Finally, I illustrate the government's resistance and suppression of the direct link between the racism present in the hostile environment and the racism that was inherent to the British Empire's colonial period.

3.6.1 Internal Inconsistency

The internal inconsistency of the hostile environment has been an overarching problem since its inception in 2012. According to Yeo (2018), how the hostile environment has manifested thus far, seems more like a "moral crusade" rather than a thought through government policy direction. While politicians made big promises of reducing net migration to the tens of thousands, the actual measures taken have not been evidence-based, and the ever-changing legislation failed to live up to the promises made. What the government has achieved so far, has been making the lives of immigrants difficult—often unlivable—and making the journeys of those coming to seek asylum dangerous—often deadly (Bowling and Westenra, 2020).

In the *Inspection Report On The Hostile Environment Measures* done in October 2016, the Chief Inspector reported that "There was no evidence that any work had been done or was planned in relation to measuring the deterrent effect of the 'hostile environment' on

would-be illegal migrants" (Bolt, 2016, p.51). This indicates that the Home Office and politicians advocating for hostile policies are not actually interested in the question of whether they work or not. Additionally, the Chief Inspector was informed by senior civil servants that the Home Office had no plans of abandoning the hostile environment, even if it proves not to deter illegal migration or reduce the number of illegal migrants; their reasoning being that it was "the right thing to do" for the British public, who "would not find it acceptable that illegal migrants could access the same range of benefits and services as British citizens and legal migrants" (Bolt, 2016, p.51).

It has been eight years since the report, yet, we see the same unresolved problems in the Home Office June 2023 *Impact Assessment* of the latest major piece of immigration law, The Illegal Migration Act 2023. The aim of the Act was to make the asylum system inadmissible to anyone who arrives irregularly, thus irregular arrivals would be detained and 'promptly removed' back to their home country or a safe third country. According to the *Impact Assessment*, the cost of implementation, the "value for money", of the Act is unclear as the scheme is "novel and untested [...] and uncertain of what level of deterrence impact it will have" (Home Office, 2023b). The assessment also concedes that the details of how the Act is to be implemented like: detention, safe third countries, and judiciary capacity are unclear. The alternative to the bill is presented as "doing nothing" and against that alternative the Act is considered worth pursuing (Home Office, 2023b).

3.6.2 Racism in The Hostile Environment

> "The violence of Britishness is therefore the expression of a white national identity that operates to the exclusion of populations who fall outside this category".
>
> (Ali, 2023, p.10)

Since their inception, the hostile environment measures have raised concerns about human rights and have been accused of being disproportionately hostile to people of

colour (Bowling and Westenra, 2020). Griffiths and Yeo (2021) and Whittle (2023), write about the hostile environment as more than the straightforward immigration policy it appears to be. They argue that, it is, in fact, an admission by the government that it does not have any real control over its borders and, in turn, the hostile environment is an "attempt to 'devolve' responsibility for border policing, diffusing it throughout British society" (Griffiths and Yeo, 2021, p.538). Griffiths and Yeo (2021) argue that the hostile environment is designed to disenfranchise some of the most vulnerable people in society, "leaving them physically present, but criminalised, marginalised and precarious" (p.538).

In fact, the impact assessment titled *Compliant environment: Overarching Equality* published by the Home Office in February 2023, the Home Office concedes that their " internal data suggests some of the compliant environment measures may disproportionately impact on people of colour" (Home Office, 2023a, p.28). The assessment also states that most of those impacted by government measures are "visibly not white", resulting in an overall differential impact.

The assessment justifies the Home Office's position, referencing the 2010 Equalities act which permits "direct discrimination on the basis of nationality, ethnic or national origins, place of ordinary residence and duration of presence or residence" (Home Office, 2023a, p.25). Another justification used is that "[t]he operation of the compliant environment framework, and the resulting directly differential impact, is consistent with the overall approach the UK takes to immigration control" which deems "[...]the compliant environment framework to be a proportionate means of achieving legitimate aim, rational, fair and reasonable because it is based on the existing framework and legislation underpinning immigration control in the UK" (Home Office, 2023a, p.25).

The assessment specifically references the Immigration Act 1971, which introduced the first criminal offenses of arriving to Britain, as the basis of the direction immigration legislation has taken so far. Therefore, it is important to remember that immigration legislation between the 1960s and the 1990s was a racist endeavour by virtue of being designed to stop black and brown former colonial subjects and commonwealth citizens from entering

and living in Britain (El-Enany, 2020).

Because hostile environment's measures are designed to target 'illegal' migrants by any means, even if those means are racial profiling and discrimination, the selective application of immigration policing has ended up affecting and harming people outside of its target group, most notoriously the Windrush generation (Ali, 2023).

According to Griffiths (2017); Yeo (2020); Griffiths and Yeo (2021), a major flaw in the hostile environment is that the lack of papers is conflated with the lack of permission by the government. As Yeo (2018) points out, we might not know the exact number of 'unlawful migrants', but the number of people in Britain without documents is well in the millions, and they will almost all be affected by the hostile environment in one way or another. This means that the hostile environment measures do not only affect undocumented migrants, but they also affect citizens who cannot afford passports, citizens of color, asylum seekers, refugees and " migrants [...] with or without permission to be in the country, are in practice possessed of no rights but, at best, privileges which can be with- drawn at any time" (Webber, 2019, p.77).

In *Hostile Environment: How Immigrants became Scapegoats*, Maya Goodfellow, uses a socio-historical lens to break down the current immigration debate, tracing the decades of 'restrictive policy and demonizing rhetoric' that have led to the hostile environment and examines their impact by interviewing a range of individuals, current and former politicians, activists in the charity sector, and immigrants whose lives were made extremely difficult by the hostile environment. She uses the Windrush affair as the nexus of her investigation, calling it the visible tip of 'a nightmarish iceberg', and indicts both the government and the racist attitudes of the country at large for the state of the immigration system in Britain (Goodfellow, 2020). Her goal is to introduce the most prominent and normative anti-refugee discourse and find out how and why they became so commonplace, how "it is so easy to talk about people as if they're not people at all, just because they were born in another country", and how "[...]politicians are able to build illustrious careers around denigrating immigrants and calling for stronger borders" (Goodfellow,

2020, p.10).

Goodfellow (2020) argues that anti-migrant politics, rather than migrants, are the problem, and unless we start addressing them as such, we will contribute to the poisonous public discourse and the racist legislation that comes along with it. She showcases how discourse is not harmless and, in the case of the hostile environment, its outcomes are tangible and devastating to the lives of migrants and racialized individuals. Anti-migrant politics leads to policies that, at best, make people's lives difficult, racialize and demonise them, and paint them as subhuman, and, at worst, can be murderous, e.g. leaving people to drown at borders. For her, the issue goes beyond political parties, because both the left and right have contributed to anti-migrant politics; it also goes beyond common sense, because public discourse runs on "mistruths, hysteria, and racism" (Goodfellow, 2020).

Mulvey (2010) looks at the cause of the hostile discourse through a policy/sociological lens, and argues that immigration policies directly affect immigration politics. He views the current situation in Britain as "a politics in which hostility towards all migrants, but particularly those considered least 'wanted', has been institutionalized in both the political and public debates" (Mulvey, 2010, p.432). He also cites Lowi (1972) who, as early as the 1970s, was writing about how British hostility towards immigrants, especially those from the global south, was being institutionalized through hostile policies and politics (Mulvey, 2010).

The insistence on following through with the hostile environment policy direction even if it fails because it is 'the right thing to do', and the Home Office's justification of the racism in the hostile environment as being in line with past immigration legislation. This seemingly stubborn position and cognitive dissonance suggest a muting of rational and critical capacities which is commonly seen in regressed large groups and their leadership.

As a therapist, if my patient makes a similar argument to the Home Office's 'we have always done it therefore it cannot be wrong', the first question I ask myself is; what is this resistance defending against? If a person or a group is unable to fully articulate why they are taking a certain action or adopting a certain position and 'resist' prompts to reflect on

it, it usually means that repression is at play.

Windrush

> ”Empire is no longer merely “out there” in other parts of the globe. The disdain for human life that underpinned it has been brought ’home’”
>
> (Heath, 2016b)

I write about Windrush as an example of the racist harm of the hostile environment. In 2017, a media exposé by Amelia Gentleman revealed that hundreds of Britons who had immigrated from Commonwealth countries following WWII and had been living in Britain for decades, were being denied employment, pension and healthcare, and in some cases detained and deported by the Home Office. People who had lived in Britain for most or all of their lives were suddenly asked to provide paperwork proving every single year they had lived in Britain. Some were fired from their jobs and evicted without notice, and many were deported without warning to a country they could not remember and had no connections in. This all happened because, in the eyes of the hostile environment, they were ’undocumented’ (Gentleman, 2019).

This discovery, which later came to be known as the ’Windrush scandal’ caused a lot of public and media outrage, especially since most of the Windrush generation were British subjects who were invited by Britain to fill labor shortages after WWII. They arrived between 1948 and 1973 and were British subjects who were legally allowed to reside and work in the UK (Gentleman, 2019).

After Windrush, the enormity of the damage of the hostile environment started sinking in for many, and the government scrambled to deal with the aftermath, and it was the first time that they took responsibility for an outcome of the hostile environment. Before she resigned, Amber Rudd, who was Home Secretary at the time, exclaimed that she was concerned for her department and how the ”Home Office has become too concerned with policy and strategy and sometimes loses sight of the individual” (as quoted by Gentleman

(2018a)). After Rudd, Sajid Javid, the son of Pakistani immigrants, was appointed as Home Secretary.

The Windrush generation was presented as the ideal of the hard working, 'quite', and integrated immigrants who came to rebuild Britain after the war, and they were pitted against other migrants who want to 'game' the British system and abuse British kindness (Ali, 2023). A problem with this presentation was that it did not seem like the government had really learned from its mistakes, they showed remorse at what happened to the Windrush generation but it was treated as an isolated incident, thus failing to address the failure of the hostile environment. Another problem is that, the narrative of Windrush generation as ideal immigrants who were 'wanted' and welcomed by Britain is disconnected from history and reality. In reality, the Windrush generation, just like other immigrants from South Asia, the Caribbean, and East Africa, were met with a lot of public and government hostility and racism upon their arrival (Ali, 2023).

Shortly after the truth came out in 2017 about the injustices that the Windrush generation endured, it was found out that in 2010, while Theresa May was Home Secretary and two years before she announced the hostile environment, the Home Office was responsible for destroying the landing cards of British subjects and Commonwealth citizens who arrived to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s, including those of the Windrush generation (Ali, 2023). The move to destroy this material was seen as odd since the destroyed landing cards were often the only proof their owners had of entering Britain and of having 'indefinite leave to remain', and were frequently used by the Home Office to prove people's statuses. When the hostile environment measures started picking up and people of color were getting asked to prove their immigration status, the Windrush generation was told there was no record of them in the Home Office database and were given no further explanation.

Gentleman (2018b) was approached by former Home Office staff members who said that the decision was made by senior staff despite the protests of many members of staff, some of whom suggested sending the files to public archives, while others suggested

digitizing them, but ultimately their suggestions were refused and the files were destroyed. Ali (2023) saw both the act of destroying the records and the carelessness with which it was done as proof that Britain does not care about its black and brown citizens, just as it never cared about its commonwealth and imperial subjects.

As a response to the Windrush scandal and after discovering that many of the Home Office employees did not know about much about the British Empire, the Home Office created a plan to educate them about Britain's colonial history(Gentleman, 2022a).

As a part of its commitment, the Home Office commissioned several professors at Coventry University to create an education module, to be taught to all its 36,000 employees, on Britain's imperial history and its relationship to migration. What ensued, (Gentleman, 2022a) writes, is that the module launch kept getting delayed because the the Home Office and several parliamentarians wanted to omit aspects of the module which pertained to the violence and racism of empire, their argument was essentially that they didn't want their employees to feel bad— to feel "browbeaten".

In an article published on the 26th of September 2024, Amelia Gentleman, the journalist who was responsible for uncovering the Windrush scandal, reported on how the Home Office was recently forced, by first-tier tribunal judge Chris Hughes, to release a report titled *The Historical Roots of the Windrush Scandal*, and which, up until then, had been purposefully suppressed.

This report, like the education module, was commissioned by the Home Office as part of its new plan to educate its employees. The historian, who the Home Office kept anonymous, wrote a 52 page report which focused on how Britain has historically dealt with immigration (Gentleman, 2024).

The Guardian was first made aware of the report in June 2022, when a former Home Office civil servant leaked it to Gentleman (2022b), by then the report which indicates that systemic racism is at the root of the Windrush scandal, had already been suppressed for a year. It was only when James Coombs, a transparency campaigner appealed the Home Office's decision to refuse his freedom of information request, that the Home Office was

forced by judge Chris Hughes to make the report public in 2024.

The author of the report makes the argument that the British Empire ”depended on racist ideology in order to function” (as quoted in Gentleman (2024)), and that this racist ideology is reflected in immigration law where, “during the period 1950-1981, every single piece of immigration or citizenship legislation was designed at least in part to reduce the number of people with black or brown skin who were permitted to live and work in the UK” (as quoted in Gentleman (2024)).

For the past two years, the Home Office refused every freedom of information request it received about the report, first citing the reason that it contained sensitive policy information, and later that it might ””damage affected communities” ”trust in government” and ”its future development of immigration policy”” (as quoted in Gentleman (2024)).

Gentleman (2024) indicates that the real reason for the Home Office’s reluctance is avoiding embarrassment and protecting the legacy of the British Empire. The judge who made the ruling also seemed be of the same opinion, Gentleman (2024) reported that he referred to Orwell’s 1984 and quoted George Santayana’s “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”.

Windrush was a clear example of the injustice of the hostile environment and the repetition of colonial violence and racist differential rights. How the Home Office dealt with it is also a perfect example of how the government as a representative British large group still deals with concrete reminders of empire. The recent suppression of this report which linked the racism of the hostile environment to that of the British Empire, the attempt to sanitise the Home Office’s education module on Britain’s colonial history, and the destruction of the Windrush landing cards in 2010 all point to the structural resistance to the knowledge of the reality of the British Empire becoming conscious, to holding it in mind.

Even if, at first, the hostile environment as symptom served its purpose of deflecting the large group’s aggressive impulses and maintaining the second skin of imperial glory, it lead to a dysfunction in the group’s impulse control which impacted the group’s ability of rational thinking and with it its reality testing and relationship with the external world.

3.7 Conclusion

3.7.1 Compound Repression

> "Moreover, if we want to respond to the expectations of the Europeans we must not send them back a reflection, however ideal, of their society and their thought that periodically sickens even them."
>
> ((Fanon, 2004, p.239))

Repression, as mentioned in the last chapter, is a negating mechanism which begins from the realisation that some wishes are unacceptable and therefore need to be negated. These wishes and the impulses attached to them become repressed, and therefore not consciously known, yet the repressed never fully stays unconscious. The repressed always finds a way of returning in the form of symptoms, where the affect passes through while the main instinct it was extracted from remains repressed.

Freud wrote about the difference in repression between neurosis and the more pathological psychosis. He theorized that while in both, the mind attempts to evade a certain piece of reality and shelter itself from encountering it, the way each replaces this unwanted reality is different. In neurosis, the person employs the help of 'the world of phantasy', since it does not follow the harsh rules of the ego's reality testing, in order to create a new fanciful piece of reality to symbolically escape into when needed. In psychosis, on the other hand, while the person still relies on the world of phantasy to create a new piece of reality, they disavow the real external world and replace it with the world where the fanciful wish is reality (Freud, 1977i).

I mention the two different manifestations of repression since both have been played out in the British large group dynamics mentioned above.

When I wrote of the repression which occurred during the British Empire, where the knowledge of the aggressive and violent instincts was repressed and displaced in a way which allowed the urges to be acted on under the pretext and fantasy of a noble civilizing

mission, I was referring to the typical variety of neurotic repression.

On the other hand, the repression which maintained and continues to maintain the British large group identity after the loss of empire is more similar to the psychotic and more pathological variety, because the second skin—or the fantasy chosen to replace the reality of the loss of empire and reunite the group—was that of imperial glory which itself is not based in reality, but in the fantasy empire used to maintain its original repression.

The hostile environment is thus a symptom of this compounded repression, where the neurotic fantasy is overlaid with a psychotic illusion, which became triggered by the decline in Britain's politico-economic relevance over the past decades. This is in contrast to the time of empire, where empire's power allowed it to maintain the narrative and with it the fantasy of the noble civilizing mission.

As a symptom, the hostile environment manages to replicate and speak the true aggression of empire and, as Heath (2016b) called it, its disdain for human life all while being cognitively cut off from it. What it represents is an instinct which is stubbornly seeking impossible satisfaction.

One can observe this in its persistence beyond party lines and any single politician, and in the way in which it does not seem to respond to the reality of its failure. Theresa May and other politicians who introduced the hostile environment, could not have imagined how powerful the discourse would become a decade later. That being said, the hostile environment and all its open aggression towards the formerly colonized was also inevitable. In the years since the empire, the British large group had a chance to find a less pathological second skin to unite it and give it meaning, and to face its past and learn to deal with it, yet, unfortunately, what happened instead was that the repressed continued to fester and with it the need to protect imperial legacy and the intolerance for 'badness' within the group.

3.7.2 The Urgency of Disillusionment

> "The hidden, shameful store of imperial horrors has been an unacknowledged presence in British political and cultural life during the second half of the twentieth century. It is not too dramatic to say that the quality of the country's multicultural future depends on what is now done with it. The history of empire directs attention to the practical mechanisms of racial hierarchy and the ideology of white supremacy, but that is not its only value to contemporary debates. Once those encounters have begun and a revised account of the nature of imperial statecraft has been folded into critical reflections on national life, the possibility of healing and reconciliation come into view."
>
> (Gilroy, 2005, p.84)

Gilroy (2005) wrote this almost twenty years ago, and unfortunately it still holds true today. The defenses created to serve the British large group and restore its equilibrium have only ended up hindering critical awareness and fostering further psychic pain. Without a reckoning with the past and a true commitment to disillusionment, British society is doomed to stay in this cycle of increasing hostility, and, if history has taught us anything, the hostility does not stop at the marginalized and disenfranchised, it only starts with them.

Chapter 4

Suella Braverman: A Case Study

4.1 Introduction

> "Language's endeavor to confuse is a mask behind which looms an even greater undertaking to dispossess. The intention is to strip the people of their possessions as well as their sovereignty. You can explain anything to the people provided you really want them to understand."
>
> (Fanon, 2004, p.131)

Discourses are ways of representing reality, and analysing what the arguer or political discursive agent presents, helps us understand what discourses they have internalised. This is possible even if the agent seems to be presenting 'neutral' material, values still play a role in how the agent chooses to explain the circumstances relating to their claim, and what kind of problems/conflicts they perceive and therefore choose to address in the first place. As quoted in Chapter 2, "we 'see' problems around us partly because of the concerns (values) we have" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012, p.41). What politicians consider a crisis e.g. 'the immigration crisis', is influenced by both their personal system of values and the institutional facts and discourses they internalize as 'concerns'.

With the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of the hostile environment discourse and how it has persevered over the past one and a half decades, this chapter provides a case study of former British Home Secretary Suella Braverman. Braverman served as

Home Secretary between 2022 and 2023, and her time in office represented some of the most hostile discursive and material manifestations of the hostile environment. In her first few weeks of office, she made the news for saying that it was her 'dream and obsession' to see immigrants being removed on a flight to Rwanda[1] (Dearden, 2022). The most notable material outcome of her tenure is the Illegal Migration Act 2023, which aims to criminalize asylum seeking and make the asylum system inadmissible to anyone who arrives irregularly, with a focus on detention and 'prompt removal' to country of origin or a safe third country.

The material for the case study is a speech given by Braverman at the Conservative Party Conference in 2023. As we will see later, her rhetoric internalises and uses many modern and historical representations from the hostile environment discourse.

To this end, I believe the argument reconstruction and evaluation presented below can help us understand how arguments for the hostile environment are structured, what values are held by those who advocate for it, and to pick out certain patterns that we otherwise would not pay attention to.

The speech will be analyzed using the framework of political discourse analysis outlined in Chapter 2, utilizing Norman Fairclough's definition of political discourse as inherently argumentative, and his methodology for extracting and analyzing the 'arguments' of political agents as found in their speeches, statements, texts, slogans etc..

Before the speech analysis, in the first section *Suella Braverman*, I first provide my motivation for choosing Braverman as the subject for my case study and give an overview of her upbringing, cultural, and social background. This is especially pertinent since she employs her heritage and background as a child of immigrants, from countries with historical colonial ties, Kenya and Mauritius, as part of her argument. Next I provide further historical context to Braverman's family's relationship to the British Empire and the circumstances of their arrival to Britain.

In the following section *Braverman's Conservative Party Conference Speech 2023*, I present

[1] Rwanda scheme is expanded on in section 1.5.2

the relevant parts of the speech and organize them as suggested by the PDA framework. In this section, I also provide a brief analysis of Braverman's overview of her agenda, as a means of calibrating and establishing the direction of the speech.

In the next section *Argument Reconstruction* I reconstruct the speech to identify its claim—its call for action—and the circumstantial and value premises that support this claim by establishing a problematic that the claim proposes to solve and motivating the claim respectively. I also investigate the instances of internal deliberation in the speech and how the counter-argument is represented

In the following section *Argument Evaluation*, I evaluate the argument's rational acceptability, asking questions the Faircloughs suggest can help us identify whether the agent is seeking to manipulate or misguide their audience, such as: Is the situation described in a rationally acceptable way?—Are the values that underlie the action rationally acceptable?— Should the agent consider other values?—Do the stated values conflict with other values of the agent? (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012, p.67). Finally, I will combine the findings of this argument analysis with the earlier work that interrogated the hostile environment as symptom, ultimately identifying the repressed colonial violence in Braverman's discourse.

4.2 Suella Braverman

In the last chapter I argued that the hostile environment is a symptom of the British large groups compounded repression of the violence of the British empire and the eventual decline and loss of empire. In this chapter, I ground my argument in a practical analysis of a speech made by Suella Braverman, a politician known for ardently supporting the hostile environment. In this section, I motivate my choice of Suella Braverman as the subject of my case study and I contextualize my choice in a brief background of her psychological, social, and political identity formation.

4.2.1 Motivation

In choosing the subject of my case study I needed to choose a politician who not only internalized the hostile environment discourse, but who also had direct material power over immigration legislation. My choice of Suella Braverman was based on this initial criteria. Additionally, her being a British politician born to immigrant parents who arrived to the UK from countries with historical colonial ties, namely Kenya and Mauritius, offered potential for a richer analysis. Another factor for my choice had to do with the timing of my research; when I started researching the topic of the hostile environment in 2020, Priti Patel was Home Secretary, whom I initially considered before Suella Braverman.

While former Home Secretary Priti Patel also fit the criteria of being a person in power who embodied and internalized the logic of the hostile environment despite being a child of immigrants, she had not always been immersed in conservative politics in the same way Suella had been. In 1995, Patel began working for the Referendum Party, then switched to the Conservative Party in 1997 where she faced difficulties when it came to party candidature. She quit politics for Public Relations (PR) in 2000, working for Weber Shandwick and then Diageo for the next 7 years. She eventually re-entered politics and the Conservative Party around 2006 and won a seat from the all-white rural parliamentary constituency of Witham in Country Essex after the 2010 general elections.

Braverman on the other hand has been consistently involved in conservative politics, and thus her discourse shows a deeper internalization and integration of the hostile environment logic. Her relationship with the Conservative party began at an early age when, in 1990, two major events took place in her life. The first being her father losing his job and the family's financial stability, and the second her mother getting elected as a Conservative councillor for the council of Brent, subsequently serving in that role for 16 years (Braverman, 2022). She cites her mother as inspiring her to follow a career in the conservative party and inspiring her leadership style saying, "She taught me that if you

want something done you have to do it yourself" (Braverman, 2022).

She also stood against her mother at the Conservative contest for the Brent East seat in 2003, until she was dissuaded by relatives. In the same year, in an interview with the politically active youth, 23 year old Braverman was asked about her experience as a young Asian female in the Conservative party and her response was "I've never had to struggle...I've just had to be myself and haven't felt that anything's entitled to me because I'm an Asian female. I just have to do my best and work hard for the party in any way that a white man would have to do" (Arthur, 2003).

4.2.2 Background

Suella Braverman, born Sue-Ellen Fernandes in Harrow and raised in Wembley, is the only child of Uma and Christie Fernandes. Her father immigrated to the UK from Kenya in 1968 as a young man in search of better opportunities and to escape the hostile climate that was forming towards the Indian diaspora in post-colonial Africa (Tominey, 2021). Braverman's mum was born in Mauritius and immigrated to the UK when she was recruited by the NHS, where she worked as a nurse for 45 years (Braverman, 2022). According to Braverman, they came with 'nothing' and found opportunity and a better future in the UK (Braverman, 2022).

She also describes the 4 years where her father was unemployed as difficult years where her mother assumed the financial responsibility of their small family. It was during that time that she won a partial scholarship to Heathfield school in Pinner and, despite her parents' financial struggles, they pooled their resources into her education (Tominey, 2021). Braverman took the responsibility of not letting her parents down seriously, and alludes to that time in her life as a 'wake-up call', when she realized that her education was 'precious' and the 'ladder' she needed to get ahead in a world where financial security was not guaranteed.

After completing her schooling, Braverman went to university in Queen's College,

Cambridge where she read law and served as the President of the university's Conservative Association. She also studied for a year at the Pantheon-Sorbonne in Paris as part of the Erasmus program during her undergraduate studies where she focused on European law. Graduating from Cambridge was a great joy to her parents and an event which she said inspired both her parents to pursue university themselves as mature students (Tominey, 2021).

She sat the New York Bar exams, qualifying as an Attorney in the state of New York and worked as a barrister between representing the Home Office in asylum tribunals in what she described as 'fighting in court' against the broken asylum system, which she partly attributes to her present stance on asylum (Braverman, 2022). She also helped set up the Michaela community school in Wembley and sat as its chair of governors for four years (Braverman, 2022).

She won a seat as MP for Fareham, a town in North-West Portsmouth in 2015, and was last re-elected in 2019. Before being appointed Home Secretary she served as the Education Select Committee and as a Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Treasury before she served as Junior Brexit Minister in 2018 and as Attorney General in Boris Johnson's Cabinet from 2020 to 2022.

Finally, she served very briefly as Secretary of State to the Home Department under former Prime Minister Liz Truss in 6th of September 2022 and was made to resign on 19th of October 2022 when it was discovered that she breached ministerial law by sending official documents to a colleague through her personal e-mail. A week later she was reinstated as Home Secretary under Prime Minister Rishi Sunak until November 2023.

Braverman is a loyal and vocal Brexiteer. She chaired The European Research Group (ERG) between 2016 and 2017. The ERG is a research group within the Parliamentary Conservative Party, in which euro-sceptic Conservative cabinet members and MPs provide research, organize and plan activities ranging from public letters on Brexit, data and support for fellow Euro-sceptic Conservative MPs (ukandeu.ac.uk). The group held much influence and its members worked diligently towards one goal, the UK's withdrawal

from the European Union. In 2018, she also served as Brexit minister under Theresa May until she resigned in protest of the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement.

In 2019, she was part of the 28 MPs who were later called the rebel 'Brexit Spartans' who voted against Theresa May's Brexit deal every time it was put to the House of Commons because they felt it was Brexit only in name and didn't present an actual separation from Europe. On Brexit she says, "I saw Brexit as the most important political decision of my life. My views are not triangulated or calibrated. They are as much part of me as my DNA" (Braverman, 2022).

4.2.3 Braverman's Connection to the British Empire

In her interview with Christopher Hope in 2022, Suella Braverman called herself the "child of empire", and spoke of the progress and good the British Empire brought to its colonies (Anthony, 2023). This rhetoric combined with her internalization of the hostile environment anti-immigration discourse, invites an exploration of possible parallels, between the large group compounded repression of the legacy of empire and its violence, and the individual repression of colonial violence present in Braverman's discourse.

As mentioned earlier, Braverman's parents immigrated from Kenya and Mauritius in the late 1960s to escape the persecution they faced as Indian East Africans. They arrived right before the introduction of the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act which stopped other South-East Asian Africans in a similar situation from doing the same. Their blight, like many others at the time, had everything to do with the British empire as I will summarize below.

The large South-East Asian, mainly Indian, diaspora currently in East Africa and the Caribbean is owed largely to the British Empire's system of indentured labour (Mattausch, 1998). After the abolition of slavery in 1833, the British Empire turned to South-East Asia, mainly India, one of its colonies at the time, for a cheap or often free alternative to slave labour (Mattausch, 1998). This was not the Empire's first attempt at indenture,

there were failed attempts to indenture labour to Mauritius for example, before the abolition of slavery, but it was only after 1833, fuelled by the fear of post abolition economic collapse, that indenture picked up (Mattausch, 1998).

Around two million labourers were sent to 19 colonies between 1834 and 1917 when the British government abolished the system of indenture (Mattausch, 1998). Under the indentured labour policy of 1833, labourers usually signed 2 to 5 year contracts and were sent in groups on ships to the British colonies in the Caribbean to work on sugar, coffee, cocoa and rubber plantations in order to fill the labour gap created by the lack of slave labour (Mattausch, 1998). The policy later included sending labourers to East Africa in order to work on plantations, in mines, and on construction projects such as the East African Railway (Mattausch, 1998).

The labourers chosen were usually single young men but sometimes accompanied with their families (Mattausch, 1998). Women were harder to contract especially after the Indian immigration Act of 1883 which prevented single women from leaving India (Mattausch, 1998). The women who were indentured were usually assigned domestic and farming work by plantation owners (Mattausch, 1998). Travel conditions were harsh and unsanitary, and many died during their rough journeys at sea, upon arrival living conditions were often also difficult and dangerous, for example, 2,500 labourers died and 6,500 were injured during work on the East African Railway (Mattausch, 1998).

Connolly (2018) researched public and media discourse on indenture (1830-1917) and found that while sentiments in the 1830s and 1840s were anti-indenture because of its resemblance to slavery, by 1959 the sentiments were generally pro-indenture using the same anti-slavery discourse to legitimise it (Connolly, 2018). The Government discourse co-opted the counter discourse and politicians were convincing the public that indenture or 'free labour' was the morally correct path, that it not only allowed Britain to compete economically with foreign colonies that still relied on slave labour, but also saved indentured workers from poverty and taught locals who refused to continue working on plantations after abolition a lesson (Connolly, 2018). Imperial officials wanted to eat their

cake and have it, they wanted to claim moral superiority over the other colonial nations who still relied on slave labour, while still maintaining the same exploitative economic and class structure which it previously maintained through slavery.

Colonial subjects were seen as resources, and what the Empire did was use this resource, the diaspora, as a tool of 'space making' (Quayson, 2010), in order to increase its control and create loyal citizens moulded in its image with severed attachments to homeland, culture, and religion. Colonial powers have often used divide and conquer tactics to weaken the resistance of local populations and this case was not any different; in East Africa, for example, a new social order was created and the indigenous population was placed lower in the hierarchy created by the British than their South-East Asian counterparts (Quayson, 2010). Furthermore, the indentured population itself was categorised in a further hierarchy measured through allegiance to the Empire and usefulness, those who resisted or asked for their rights were categorised as 'criminals', whereas loyalists were categorised as 'Martial race' (Quayson, 2010).

In Africa, although many labourers returned home after their contracts were over, around 50% could not afford to or chose to continue living where they were (Quayson, 2010). The indentured labourers who decided to stay and the networks they formed after their contracts were fulfilled, transformed the South-East Asian diaspora from a labour diaspora to a trade and administrative diaspora by the 1930s and 1940s, which made the South-East Asian population an economically and culturally significant one (Quayson, 2010). The South-East Asian diaspora continued to grow and form networks and by the end of the Second World War there were around 320,000 South-East Asians in East Africa and many of them were in charge of the commercial trade in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania (Quayson, 2010).

With time, and especially after many African nations gained their independence from the Empire in the 1960s, the diaspora started identifying as African (Quayson, 2010). East African Asians were settled and enjoyed their place and status in African society during that period (Quayson, 2010). This status that the diaspora acquired and the fact that they

were seen as loyal subjects to the Empire they were recently emancipated from, moulded in their image, caused friction with the indigenous communities (Quayson, 2010). The tensions continued to rise and in the late 1960s and 1970s the South-East Asian diaspora faced another forced and sudden migration following the violent policies of Ugandan president Idi Amin (Quayson, 2010).

It was also around that time that British government officials, following the loss of empire, were attempting to physically and rhetorically separate Britain from its former subjects, dubbing them immigrants and enforcing controls accordingly. As mentioned in Section 1.3.1, the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, and the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act were created out of a panic that immigration from former British colonies and the commonwealth would overwhelm Britain. The 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act was specifically created to fix a loophole in the previous Act which allowed the descendants of British Indians who were living in newly independent East African countries like Kenya and Uganda to enter Britain. It was under these circumstances and in this context that Suella Braverman's parents arrived in Britain.

4.2.4 Politicians of Colour and Anti-immigration Politics in Britain

In 2023, Nick Robinson interviewed Suella Braverman on his radio show, Political Thinking. Robinson made it clear that he did not want the interview to be just another 'political interview', he was specifically focused on her policies in contrast to her family's immigration to Britain to escape persecution in East Africa. In the interview she did not shy away from talking about the hardships her parents faced in East Africa and later, in Britain, where they settled. What she did shy away from was questions about experiencing racism, she initially said she never experienced racism in Britain and when she was pushed she recounted situations where she was called slurs in the street or discriminated against, but refused to label them as racism.

I imagine internalizing the hostile environment discourse, especially as a child of mi-

grants with historical ties to the British Empire, must require much psychic distortion and manipulation. Understanding how Braverman argues for the hostile environment, what rhetorical devices she uses and how she forms her identity in relation to the discourse will undoubtedly bring us closer to understanding how the hostile environment discourse operates and why it has persevered.

That being said, Suella Braverman is not the first Briton of colour or child of immigrants to show anti-immigration sentiments, serving before her as Home Secretary was Priti Patel, who was a child of Indian Gujarati migrants. Goodfellow (2020) tells of Mancherjee Merwanjee Bhownaggree, an Indian immigrant and Conservative MP for Bethnal Green North East in London, who, in 1895, was anti-immigration and blamed "'foreign pauper aliens' for everything from 'increased house rent in East London' to 'over-crowding and insanitary dwellings'" (Goodfellow, 2020, p.186). Braverman is also not the last to show such sentiments, current Conservative Party Leader Kemi Badenoch, a young Conservative minister who quickly rose up the ranks, self identifies as a first generation Nigerian-British immigrant and has notoriously been against the Black Lives Matters movement, and is anti-immigration, saying that the government is not tough enough on immigration, calling for deporting immigrants to 'safe third countries' (BBC News, 2020).

Children of immigrants, and people of colour in general, should not be assumed to inherently be pro-immigration or anti-racist—after all they are members of the same society and are exposed to the same discourses. Humans are complex and many psychic motivations contribute to which discourses are internalised and which are rejected. Myambo (2023) argues that expecting politicians who are children of migrants, like Braverman, Patel, and Sunak, to identify with those who immigrated from the same country or immigrants in general is not reasonable. She argues that identities of members of diasporas are not rigid, and that there is no way to predict how individuals would choose to identify or what their politics would be (Myambo, 2023). In the political field this is especially pertinent in Britain, where British nationalism, as (Gilroy, 2005, p.98) writes, "cannot be

purged of its racialized contents any more easily than a body can be purged of the skeleton that supports it...Wherever nationalism is politically engaged, all the violent perversity of race thinking will not be far away".

On an institutional scale, the British Government's modern Conservative party cabinet has been significantly more racially diverse than other parties despite adopting an anti-immigration, at times racist stance. This fact is worth reflecting on, especially since its reminiscent of Fanon's reflection that, "In the colonial context the colonist only quits undermining the colonized once the latter have proclaimed loud and clear that white values reign supreme" (Fanon, 2004, 8). Author and Guardian columnist Sathnam Sanghera makes a similar observation with regards to the modern Conservative party, saying that "You can make it to the top in Britain as a person of colour, as long as you agree to argue that racism is not a problem, and as long as you're willing to propound actual racism in your politics"(as quoted by (Anthony, 2023).

4.3 Conservative Party Conference Speech 2023

This speech was given by Suella Braverman in Manchester at the Conservative party conference October 2023 (Braverman, 2023). One reason this speech was highly anticipated was because Braverman had just returned from the US where a few days prior, she gave a controversial speech on immigration at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) in Washington DC. In this US speech, which was described as incendiary by news outlets like *The Independent* and *The Guardian*, she spoke of the threat that 'uncontrolled migration' posed on the security and stability of Western society and its Nation states. She also claimed that, combined with immigration, the 'dogma' of multiculturalism has been poisoning Europe over the past few decades, and argued that the way out was through reforming the 1951 Refugee Convention, to exclude more people from seeking asylum today (Omer, 2023).

Another reason this speech was anticipated was due to the uncertainty the Conserva-

tive Party was facing in the run up to the general elections in the second part of 2024; tensions were high with Conservatives polling lower than Labour (Paxton, 2023). In this context, this speech serves three purposes, it was Braverman's pitch for leadership, her rallying of the party, and also her bid to connect with the voters.

The speech also has retrospective value now because it was one of the last speeches Braverman gave before she was made to resign from her role as Home Secretary after she offended the MET police and caused tensions by accusing them of not being harsh enough with the pro Palestine protests that were taking place at the time. I will follow the structure of practical reasoning introduced in Chapter 2 to identify the arguments made in this speech.

1. Let me start ladies and gentlemen by thanking a few people.
2. (...) I'd also like to thank all the Home Office civil servants who work flat out to keep this country safe.
3. (...) I don't know if you've noticed but as Home Secretary, I do occasionally receive a modicum of criticism.
4. Sometimes I'm asked if I ever read what my critics say about me.
5. Well, the answer is: yes, I do.
6. I'm made of strong stuff, so I'm prepared to wade through the personal abuse, the wild invective, and the wilful misrepresentation.
7. Because I believe that all of us should strive for improvement.
8. And if we close our ears to anyone who disagrees with us…we are less likely to identify our mistakes.
9. One of the reasons why the Conservative Party has survived and thrived for so long…it is because we are not afraid to admit when we get it wrong…and adapt accordingly.
10. We listen, we learn, and we renew ourselves.
11. And that's what we are doing this week in Manchester.
12. We are raising our game.
13. Because next year, this country will face a clear choice at the general election.
14. Who do people trust to deliver the change that Britain needs?
15. There are huge challenges ahead.
16. The world is being transformed by powerful forces.
17. I think the British people see that.
18. Perhaps more clearly than some of those in Westminster who live in a bubble of complacency.
19. I also think most British people have a pretty good sense of how they expect their government to respond to those challenges.
20. And I'm confident that when push comes to shove the voters will realise that they are much more likely to get the change they really want from Rishi Sunak and the Conservatives….Than from any of the left-wing parties.

Braverman begins her speech by aligning her values with those of the Conservative Party. She makes clear the price she has had to pay for internalising those values 'personal abuse, the wild invective, and the wilful misrepresentation'. With her Conservative allegiance now reiterated she presents her argument to fellow Conservatives. Up to this point the argument is being made for change and evolution in the conservative party in order to meet the 'huge challenges ahead', and in doing so live up to the expectations of the British people and ultimately win the elections. She also calls upon the pre-existing values of the conservative party which encourage her proposal. Below is a breakdown of this argument:

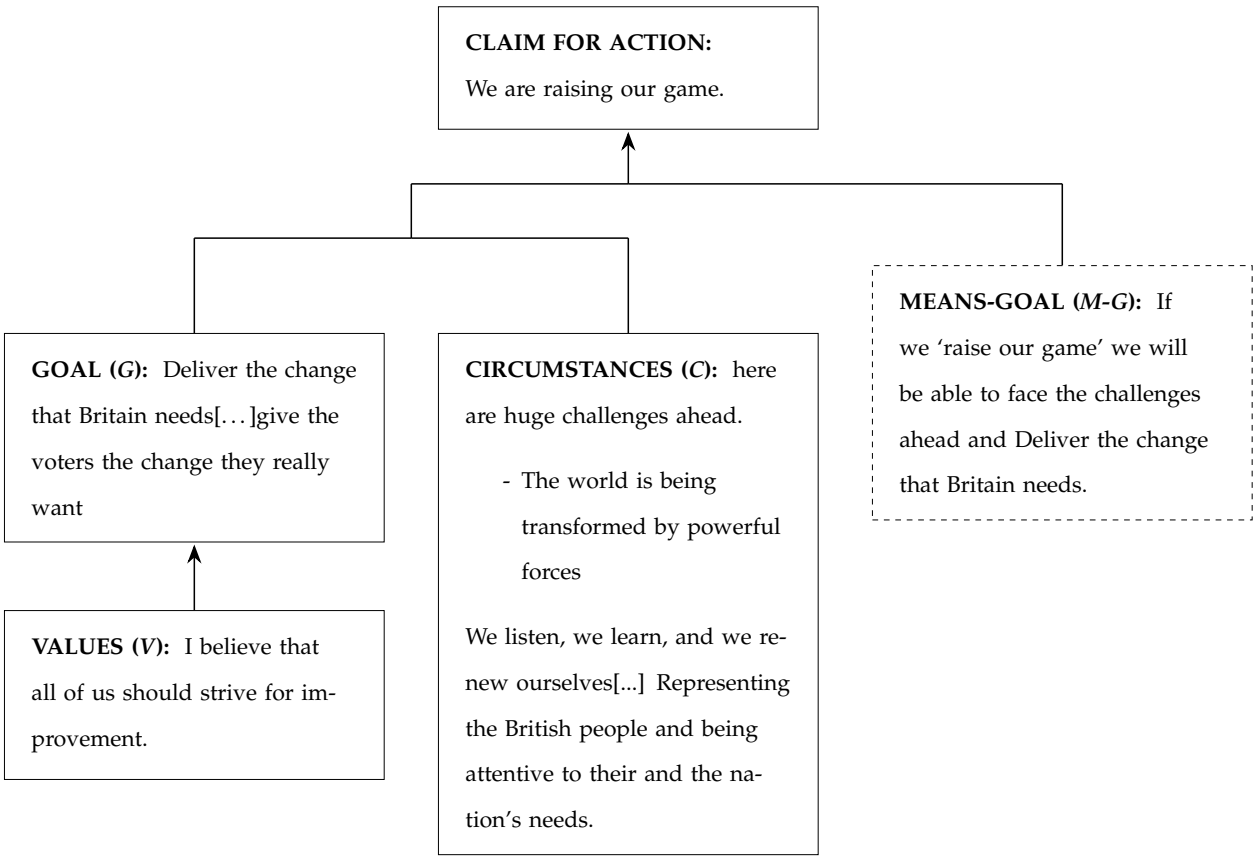

Figure 4.1: Flowchart of the arguments of lines 1-20 of Suella Braverman's speech given at the 2023 Conservative Party Conference.

Table 4.1: Table listing the arguments of lines 1-20 of Suella Braverman's speech given at the 2023 Conservative Party Conference.

Claim	We are raising our game
Circumstantial premises	There are huge challenges ahead. The world is being transformed by powerful forces
Goal	Deliver the change that Britain needs…give the voters the change they really want
Value	[From] I believe that all of us should strive for improvement.. [To] We listen, we learn, and we renew ourselves. [Also implicit] Representing the British people and being attentive to their and the nation's needs.
Means-goal	If we 'raise our game' [renew ourselves] we will be able to face the challenges ahead and Deliver the change that Britain needs.

From how the context of action and the goal are represented, it seems that there is an implicit argument being made for voting for the Conservative Party. Since, if they do not win the next general election then the goal of delivering the change that she thinks Britain needs would not be possible. If we consider that the immediate audience is fellow members of the Conservative Party and not just potential voters, it seems like the speech is also aimed at restoring faith in the party's chances of winning the elections after the turbulent year they had had. Braverman here, implicitly, deliberates on 'what ought to be done?' considering the circumstances and shared goal. She does not give a set of actions to define the claim yet, rather the arguments serve to justify the claim 'we are raising our game'.

'We are raising our game' serves an important, if changing, function throughout the speech. In its first usage on line 12 it is the main claim for this argument (1-22), which sets the groundwork for the main argument presented later. 'We are raising our game', a phrase often used in the context of sports, is the slogan of this speech, showing up three times in the beginning middle and end. Slogans are often used as a rhetorical device in political speeches and campaigns, because they condense and summarise the agent's

agenda into a memorable phrase. They are also a popular advertisement and campaigning device because other than being condensed, their simplicity also open a space for projection, which allows hearers to imbue their own meaning onto a slogan increasing the likelihood of it resonating with them (Sardoč and Wodak, 2023).

The argument's problematic or circumstantial premise is that there is a threat, challenges that lie ahead in the future of Britain. The circumstances are presented as fact, a prophecy, of looming powerful forces. The challenges are also not yet associated with human agency, they are presented as inevitable, which also justifies why they have not been dealt with or resolved during the party's tenure. These challenges require a new way, a change of game, in order to face them. Not only is the opposition (both in and out of party) not as equipped at handling these challenges, they cannot even see them (through their bubble of complacency). It follows then that if the conservative party's fate in the next elections is unclear, so is Britain's.

Now that Braverman's agenda is summarised she goes on, in the next section, to elaborate why this is the best path of action. On line 23, Braverman says she will offer an example of why the public will back this new conservative party, from her role as Home Secretary. From lines 24 onwards, she makes her argument about immigration

21. And the reason is simple... And I'll explain it with an example from my responsibilities as Home Secretary.
22. Now one of the most powerful forces reshaping our world is unprecedented mass migration.
23. The wind of change that carried my own parents across the globe in the 20th century was a mere gust compared to the hurricane that is coming.
24. Because today, the option of moving from a poorer country to a richer one is not just a dream for millions[2] of people.
25. It's an entirely realistic prospect.
26. Every human, every single person, has the right to aspire to a better life.
27. As Conservatives, that is one of the cornerstones of our philosophy.
28. And, indeed, without that dream, I wouldn't be standing before you today.
29. But Conservatives are also practical and realistic.
30. Nobody can deny that there are far, far more people in poorer countries who would love to move to Britain than could ever be accommodated...
31. Even if we concreted over the countryside....

[2]It is transcribed as millions but she says billions in the actual speech

32. Turned our cities into one vast building site…
33. And erected skyscrapers from Eastbourne to Elgin and from Hull to Holyhead…
34. …It still wouldn't be enough.
35. Demand will always outstrip supply.
36. I know it.
37. You know it.
38. And the voters know it.
39. This country has been generous in taking in refugees from Afghanistan, Ukraine, Syria, and Hong Kong.
40. The decency of the British people cannot be questioned.
41. But they also care deeply about overall numbers.
42. In poll after poll, the British public have been clear: immigration is already too high.
43. And they know another thing. That the future could bring millions more migrants to these shores…
44. …uncontrolled and unmanageable, unless the government they elect next year acts decisively to stop that happening.
45. We are the only Party that will take effective action.
46. I can't pretend that politicians have done a great job of managing immigration for the last thirty years.
47. We were too slow to recognise the scale of the problem.
48. Too unwilling to accept that our legal framework needed to be updated.
49. And, let's be honest, far too squeamish about being smeared as racist to properly bring order to the chaos.
50. But under Rishi Sunak's leadership things are changing.
51. We are raising our game.
52. For years, too many overseas students were bringing their dependents here to the UK.
53. So we've changed the rules to ensure that a student visa is not a route for whole families to come and live and work in the UK.
54. When I stood before you at Conference last year, we were dealing with a surge of Albanian illegal migrants coming on small boats. Over 12,000 in 2022 alone.
55. Fast forward a year, and thanks to the returns deal with Albania that we put in place, and changes that we made to our rules, those numbers are now down by 90%.
56. Indeed, against a backdrop of increasing illegal migration into Europe, small boat crossings to the UK are down by 20% compared to last year.
57. And Conference we will soon begin closing down asylum hotels.
58. That is not nearly enough. I accept that. But it is a start.
59. And it's a hell of a lot more than Labour would do.
60. I said at Conference last year that we had to change our laws. And we did.
61. Our Illegal Migration Act which will come into force in the coming months, now means that the only route to asylum in the UK is a legal route.
62. The Act means that those arriving illegally, will be detained and removed, back to their home country if possible, or to a safe third country like Rwanda.
63. All of this is ultimately a question of political will.
64. And be under no illusion, we will do whatever it takes to stop the boats and deter bogus asylum seekers.
65. We will also ensure that legal migration comes down to reasonable levels… and that it occurs only when there is a clear benefit to the British people.
66. That's our pledge. That's our plan.
67. And I believe the public will back it.

68. Because everybody knows what Labour will do on migration.
69. Labour will do what Labour always does: Open our borders.
70. At heart, Labour doesn't believe that we have the right to keep people out.
71. Sure, they may mouth a bit of occasional rhetoric about controlling our borders... but that's not what the Labour Party has ever done in government.
72. And it's not just negligence or incompetence... although you can be guaranteed of plenty of that if Labour wins.
73. It's actually deliberate.
74. The biggest reason why Conservative governments have struggled to get illegal migration under control is because Labour governments passed laws that inhibit effective action.
75. Because the truth is we struggle to remove foreign criminals;
76. We struggle to get accurate data on the ages of the asylum seekers;
77. We struggle even to confiscate their phones when they arrive on our beaches.
78. Our country has become enmeshed in a dense net of international rules that were designed for another era.
79. And it is Labour that turbocharged their impact by passing the misnamed Human Rights Act.
80. I am surprised they didn't call it the Criminal Rights Act.
81. Each time I have gone to Parliament to improve the law on immigration, Labour has tried to block us.
82. Some of whom openly declare that they oppose national borders merely on principle.
83. And all of them bleating the same incessant accusation:
84. Racist. Racist. Racist.
85. They've always used that smear.
86. They tried it against Margaret Thatcher... It didn't work.
87. A couple of years ago they even tried it against Winston Churchill... Our greatest ever leader... And it didn't even work then.
88. And I can promise you this... it won't work against Rishi Sunak... and it won't work against me.
89. The truth is every one of us in this room should be proud of their roots, and proud of our Conservative values.
90. We believe that Britain has the right to secure borders...
91. To decide who gets in to our country... and who does not.
92. We are the Party to confront the challenge of global migration in the years ahead.
93. Not a Labour Party that will open the borders and then cry racism to anyone who objects.
94. Let's be clear... The choice between Conservatives and Labour is the choice between strong borders and no borders.[...]
95. (...) The distortions. The insults. The lies.
96. That's what the Labour Party always does:
97. It prefers smears to debate.
98. Personally, I take their abuse as a compliment.
99. I know they have tried to make me into a hate figure because I tell the truth.
100. The blunt, unvarnished truth about what is happening in our country.
101. People with luxury beliefs will flock to Labour at the next election because that's the way to get the kind of society they want.
102. (...) Keir Starmer lacks the personality to lead this country effectively.
103. You are many, they are few!
104. We stand with the many...
105. The law-abiding...

106. Hard working…
107. Common sense majority.
108. Against the few…
109. the privileged woke minority…
110. … with their luxury beliefs…
111. … who wield influence out of proportion to their numbers.
112. Our message to the people is clear.
113. We are raising our game.
114. We are fighting for a Britain that puts you first.
115. We are on your side.

4.4 Argument reconstruction

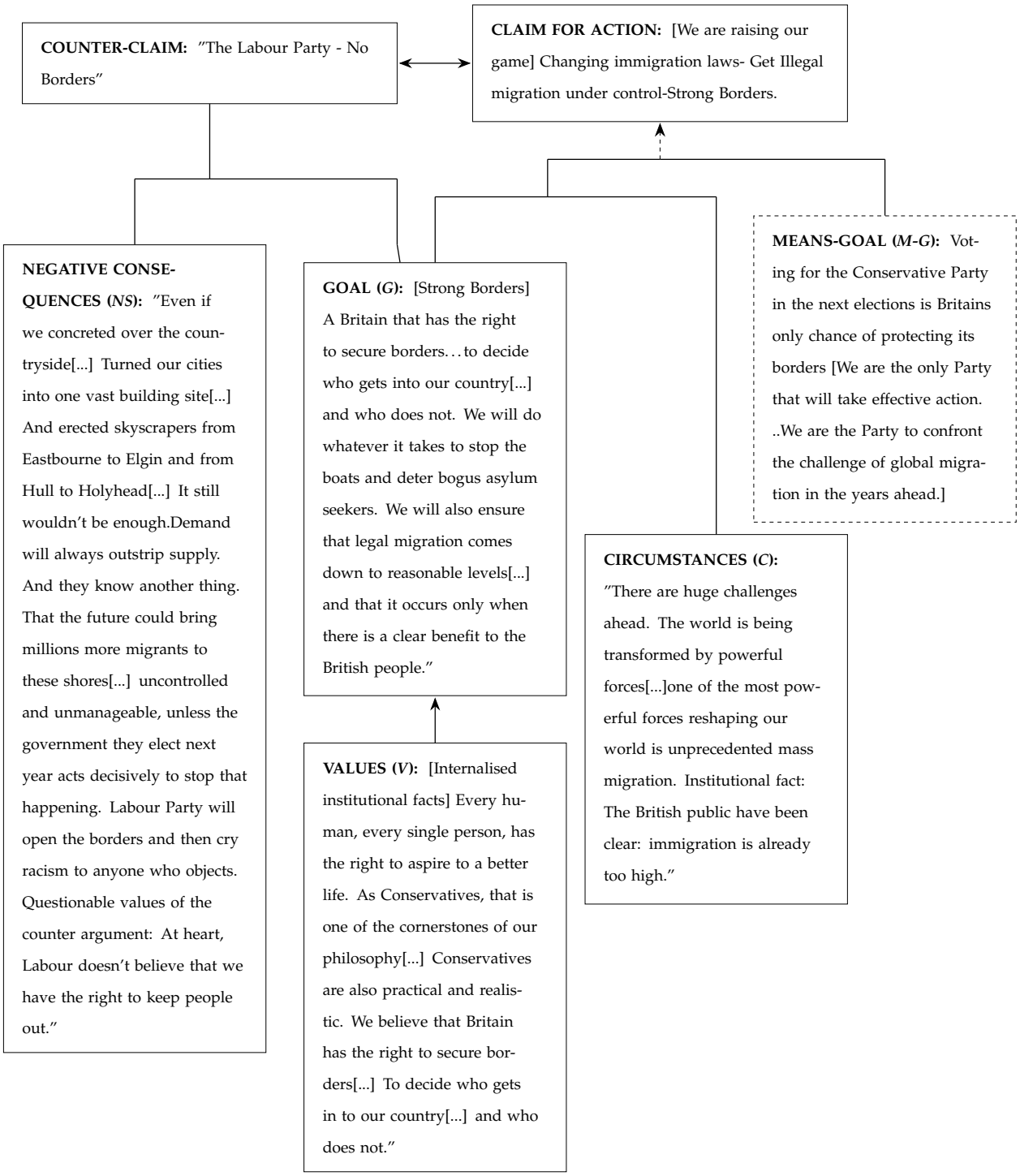

Figure 4.2: Flowchart of the arguments of lines 21-118 of Suella Braverman's speech given at the 2023 Conservative Party Conference.

Table 4.2: Table listing the arguments of lines 21-118 of Suella Braverman's speech given at the 2023 Conservative Party Conference.

Claim	[We are raising our game] Changing immigration laws- Get Illegal migration under control-Strong Borders
Circumstantial premises	"There are huge challenges ahead. The world is being transformed by powerful forces[...]one of the most powerful forces reshaping our world is unprecedented mass migration. Institutional fact: The British public have been clear: immigration is already too high."
Goal	[Strong Borders] A Britain that has the right to secure borders...to decide who gets into our country[...] and who does not. [...] stop the boats and deter bogus asylum seekers. [...] legal migration comes down to reasonable levels[...] and that it occurs only when there is a clear benefit to the British people."
Value	[Internalised institutional facts] Every human, every single person, has the right to aspire to a better life. As Conservatives, that is one of the cornerstones of our philosophy[...] Conservatives are also practical and realistic. We believe that Britain has the right to secure borders[...] To decide who gets in to our country[...] and who does not."
Means-goal	Voting for the Conservative Party in the next elections is Britains only chance of protecting its borders [We are the only Party that will take effective action. ..We are the Party to confront the challenge of global migration in the years ahead.]
Counter-claim	"The Labour Party - No Borders"
Negative-Consequences of not acting/of Counter-claim	"Even if we concreted over the countryside[...] Turned our cities into one vast building site[...] And erected skyscrapers from Eastbourne to Elgin and from Hull to Holyhead[...] It still wouldn't be enough.Demand will always outstrip supply. And they know another thing. That the future could bring millions more migrants to these shores[...] uncontrolled and unmanageable, unless the government they elect next year acts decisively to stop that happening. Labour Party will open the borders and then cry racism to anyone who objects. Questionable values of the counter argument: At heart, Labour doesn't believe that we have the right to keep people out."
Argument from authority (appeal to the public)	Deliver the change that Britain needs[...] give the voters the change they really want
Anticipating critique for not achieving the goal sooner	"I can't pretend that politicians have done a great job of managing immigration for the last thirty years. 1. We were too slow to recognise the scale of the problem. 2. Too unwilling to accept that our legal framework needed to be updated. 3. And, let's be honest, far too squeamish about being smeared as racist to properly bring order to the chaos."

Table 4.3: Table listing the arguments of lines 21-118 of Suella Braverman's speech given at the 2023 Conservative Party Conference (cont.).

Emerging positive consequences of actions already taken	"So we've changed the rules to ensure that a student visa is not a route for whole families to come and live and work in the UK[...]thanks to the returns deal with Albania that we put in place, and changes that we made to our rules, those numbers are now down by 90%[...]against a backdrop of increasing illegal migration into Europe, small boat crossings to the UK are down by 20% compared to last year[...]I said at Conference last year that we had to change our laws. And we did. The Act means that those arriving illegally, will be detained and removed, back to their home country if possible, or to a safe third country like Rwanda."

In the argument above, Braverman's earlier circumstantial premise of the 'huge challenges ahead' is elaborated on, she establishes the problematic as a threat emerging from [forces of change]—which are in the process of changing the world—-'one of the most powerful [being] immigration'. As a solution to the circumstantial premise, the claim, or the call to action is a call for the Conservative Party to 'get migration under control' through 'chang[ing] immigration laws' and 'strengthen[ing] borders'.

The values that she calls upon to motivate her claim of action, of why the Conservative party will follow through with the suggested solution to the problem, are the beliefs in the values of aspiration, practicality and in Britain's right to sovereignty over its borders. As it follows, the goal premise, the future which the claim promises to bring in order to alleviate the threat of change, is one where Britain is Sovereign over its borders and the 'British' can decide who [comes in].

In her deliberation, Braverman provides an image of an impotent yet malicious counter-claim represented by what she believes the Labour party's response would be to the threatening 'forces of change' like mass migration, which will be to 'do nothing' and 'remove borders'

According to Braverman, the negative consequences of the presented counter-claim—the consequences of inaction and bringing Labour to power—are a dystopian future where 'open borders' and 'uncontrolled and unmanageable mass migration' ultimately lead to a Britain in which the whole country is 'one vast building site' with concrete skyscrapers

'erected from Eastbourne to Elgin[...][,] from Hull to Hollyhead'.

Portraying the choice for the voters as limited to two extremes, no borders vs. strong borders, is an informal logical fallacy called the False Dilemma, and it is used as a rhetorical device to mislead the audience into making the choice that seems aligned with the goals set in the argument.

In anticipation of the critique of not having achieved the goal sooner, Braverman takes accountability for the Conservative party not being prepared for the [scale of the problem], or flexible enough to recognize they needed to change their legal framework. She also says while her colleagues were discouraged by fear of being called racist, she would not let that stop her.

Finally, to instill faith she lists her and the Home Office's achievements in deterring migration, which included changes to Student Visa dependents regulations, and a returns deal with Albania.

4.5 Argument Evaluation

By questioning the presentation of an agent's argument, its context and its logic, we can identify whether the agent is seeking to manipulate and/or misguide their audience (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012). As discussed in Chapter 2, Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) suggest that questions such as:

- Is the situation described in a rationally acceptable way?
- Are the values that underlie the action rationally acceptable?

are effective in interrogating the consequences of the proposed action and identifying if the agent is seeking to manipulate or misguide.

Taking the first of these questions—Is the situation described in a rationally acceptable way?—we can see that the answer is no. This follows from the fact that the argument presented by Braverman is, on the surface, an anti-immigration argument that uses the

rhetoric of the hostile environment and presents a problem that which can only be solved through voting for the Conservative Party. In effect, this shows how the existing anti-immigration discourse is so pervasiveness that Braverman is able to present a problem and its solution — voting for the Conservative Party — without factual support. Ultimately, while appearing to be a call for reducing migration, the underlying message given by Braverman is "vote Conservative".

The second of these questions — Are the values that underlie the action rationally acceptable? — is also no. Braverman presents, more than once, the dichotomous values of a kind people who are also practical, a people who believe "Every human, every single person, has the right to aspire to a better life", and are also "practical and realistic". The contradiction arises because, after asserting both values, Braverman goes on to say that they apply differently to migrants as compared to the British people. Thus, while the values are presented as unconditionally applicable to all people, the message of her speech is that the non-Briton's "right to aspire to a better life" applies so long as it is not in Britain.

Given that the answer to these questions is negative, we can reasonably assert that Braverman's intentions, whether conscious or unconscious, are to mislead the audience, first by inventing a problem, and then subsequently into conflating its solution, "reducing migration", with "voting for the Conservative Party". This is in line with Volkan and Kerberg's assessments of leaders of regressed large groups.

According to (Kernberg, 2020, p.9), "the dynamic between groups and their leadership are complementary and determine a mutually reinforcing psychopathology". In Chapter 3, I discussed how the loss of the British empire brought about a loss of social and cultural meaning that, combined with the group's inability to mourn, eventually led the British large group to regress into immature psychic organization as a defence against persecutory and depressive anxieties and unconscious threats of annihilation. Regressed large groups, according to Volkan (2006), often become vulnerable to destructive leaders who exploit the group's existential anxieties to further their personal agenda and interest as we see here in Braverman's attempt to use the large group's anti-immigration senti-

ments to achieve her electoral goal.

4.5.1 Repression of Colonial Violence in the Discourse of Suella Braverman

This speech, as a whole, contains a lot of the symptomatic dissonance of the hostile environment discussed in Chapter 3, and which is caused by the compounded repression that is a result of the violent colonial past being completely repressed and cut off, while the instincts that motivated its aggression are still expressed. Below is a sentence I have selected to illustrate and interrogate this dissonance further.

Line (23): *The wind of change that carried my own parents across the globe in the 20th century was a mere gust compared to the hurricane that is coming*

Here Braverman makes a reference to the 'wind of change' that carried her parents across the globe. While her use of the phrase could be completely coincidental, it is striking because the phrase 'wind of change' was famously used by former Conservative Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in 1960 as a response to increasing pressure from British colonies seeking and achieving independence. The speech is famously seen as the British Empire's acceptance of the reality of the fact that it no longer had control over its African colonies, that "The wind of change is blowing through this continent. Whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact" (Macmillan, 1960).

While one could follow the logic that Macmillan's wind of change which African independence brought about are the same winds which saw the leaders of newly independent African nations evict their South Asian population, some of whom migrated to Britain like Braverman's parents, the rest of her statement is still confusing.

Braverman compares the arrival of her parents to Britain as a 'mere gust' compared to the 'hurricane' that mass migration will bring to Britain. This is an example of the hostile environment's repression of colonial history which allows modern migration to

be represented as ahistorical. The only reason she gives for modern day mass migration is presented as being due to the ease with which people in 'poor countries' can dream and act on those dreams. So while one may consider that she provided an implicit reason for the arrival of her parents, the same consideration is not afforded to current migrants, and serves to delegitimize any claim they may have and erase the realities of war, inequality and persevering colonial world structures.

Another layer of dissonance and repression in her statement is that the arrival of her parents in the 1960s was received by Britain as a 'mere gust'. This is in contrast to the reality of Britain at that time where the contemporary government was introducing policies and rhetoric to discourage migration from former colonies. Specifically, as discussed in Section 1.3.1, the contemporary government's introduction of the 1968 Commonwealth and Citizens Act was in response to the mass arrival of British Indians who were being evicted from the newly independent East African countries.

Braverman appears to deal with the dissonance between her background as a child of immigrants and her anti-immigrant politics through persistent attempts of separating her parents from modern immigrants, while simultaneously using the same rhetoric and language that was used about immigration at the time of their arrival. Not only is there an adamant denial of the British colonial intervention which gave rise to modern immigration patterns, there is a denial of the present reality and of the actual facts of why people seek migration. Furthermore, in rejecting the reality of the time in which her parents arrived, she is denying the reality of her own personal heritage as it relates to empire.

Lastly, her use of the imaginary of uncontrollable weather patterns, especially hurricanes the British large group has no experience with, is aligned with the manner in which the regressed large group refers to out-groups in a dehumanising fashion, i.e. as animals, vermin, or natural disasters (Kernberg, 2020). The dehumanising trend continues throughout the speech when she refers to migrants as "uncontrolled and unmanageable", and acts as an explicit reinforcement of the subliminal imagery of hurricanes as uncontrollable.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to further understand the hostile environment, as it has been internalised by one of its biggest advocates, former Home Secretary Suella Braverman. I chose Suella Braverman as her advocacy for the hostile environment, as demonstrated by her speeches and political career in the Conservative Party, are seemingly at odds with her heritage as the child of South Asian immigrants from Britain's former colonies, Kenya and Mauritius. Through applying Isabella & Norman Fairclough's Political Discourse Analysis framework, I reconstructed and illustrated the main argument given in one of Bravermen's most anti-immigration speeches to date, delivered at the 2023 Conservative Party Conference in Manchester.

In reconstructing her argument, I showed the speech's main call to action and argument was a call to "vote for the Conservative Party", I evaluated the consistency of her arguments as well as their delivery by asking "Is the situation described in a rationally acceptable way?" and "Are the values that underlie the action rationally acceptable?" following the template laid down by Fairclough and Fairclough (2012). In doing so, I illustrated how Braverman, using rhetoric comparing immigrants to hurricanes — "animals, vermin or natural disasters" (Kernberg, 2020) — misleads the public and creates the problematic of 'the threat of immigration' to obscure her, and her party's goal, of winning the popular vote.

Finally, through a psychoanalytic exploration, I showed how the rhetoric and logic of Braverman's speech connects to the hostile environment as a symptom of compound repression. By exploring the connections between Braverman's choice of language and the denial of her parents' circumstances, I illustrated how her speech shows her personal repression of the violent legacy of the British empire. I also showed how the systematic repression of the violent legacy of the British empire manifests in how Braverman conflates her stated and true goals to the public, either consciously or unconsciously, using rhetoric that harkens to anti-immigration discourse at the time of her parents' arrival. I

demonstrated that both her personal repression and the manifestation of the systematic repression in her rhetoric can be linked to the regression of the British large group and distortion of the large group identity. The very same regression which ultimately led to the birth of the hostile environment as symptom.

———————————-

Conclusion

4.7 Summary of Goals Achieved

The goal of this thesis is to contribute to the knowledge of why the dominant immigration discourse in Britain is strongly anti-immigrant, as encapsulated by the hostile environment phenomenon. This work is not aimed at reaching any final conclusion or truth, rather it is meant to open up space for further understanding of and reflection about this complex socio-political phenomenon.

In my quest to demystify this phenomenon, I explored modern immigration discourse, the mechanisms that sustain the hostile environment, and the historical context in which it arose.

In Chapter 1, I laid the groundwork for my research through defining the anti-immigration legislative measures and policy direction known as hostile environment introduced by Theresa May in 2012, tracing historical anti-immigration policy and legislation preceding the hostile environment, and summarizing its logic and material legislative development and features. The hostile environment is designed with the aim of reducing undocumented migration into Britain through introducing barriers to the access of necessities such as housing, employment, and healthcare and coercing everyday citizens to act as keepers of said barriers. Finally, I observe that the hostile environment is a socio-political phenomenon in which the logic of hostility, the rhetoric and knowledge that sustain it, are part of a vicious feedback loop in which anti-immigration discourse rapidly translates into material legislative and policy outcomes, further increasing hostility independently

of the results of the measures taken.

In Chapter 2, I provided my framework which is an interdisciplinary conceptual methodology utilising tools from within psychoanalysis, discourse analysis and colonial studies, with psychoanalysis as the main critical tool, allowing me to conceive of the hostile environment as a symptom, an indication of dysfunction. I summarize the central psychoanalytic concepts relevant to this work especially focusing on the use of psychoanalysis as a tool of social critique and for analysing large group dynamics by thinkers such as Freud, Kernberg, Volkan, and Bion. Next, I give an overview of discourse analysis, focusing the use of political discourse analysis (PDA) as a method for assessing political discourse such as speeches, debates, or even campaign slogans. Finally, I situate my work in the tradition of colonial studies which theorizes the West, in this case Britain, and its relationship with post-colonial peoples.

In Chapter 3, I lay out my central argument which is that the hostile environment acts as a symptom of a compounded repression of the knowledge of the violent and aggressive instincts which manifested during the British Empire's colonial period, and, the later, more pathological repression of the reality of the loss of empire, which was replaced with the fantasy of imperial glory that continues to maintain the British large group's understanding of itself today. Through interrogating the hostile environment as a symptom, I have presented an understanding of its consequences, the context of British history and British large group identity that gave rise to it, and ultimately questioned its utility and sustainability.

In my case study, in Chapter 4, I further examined the hostile environment discourse in action, and contextualized it within my central argument and interpretation of the hostile environment. I used the framework of PDA combined with psychoanalysis to analyse a speech given by former Home Secretary Suella Braverman, a politician who I show has internalized the logic of the hostile environment despite being a child of immigrants herself. In my analysis, I showcase how the repression underlying the hostile environment is reproduced in the discourse of Braverman and how it is utilized to achieve political

gains such as encouraging voting for the conservative party which promises to sustain the symptom and increase hostile measures.

4.8 Implications of Research

I began this dissertation with a mention of the far-right Southport immigration riots that happened across Britain in August of 2024 and I am ending it with the counter-protests that included hundreds of people who gathered and formed human shields to protect mosques and immigration centres, and to let those victimized by the hostile environment know that they are not alone (Ho et al., 2024).

In my thesis examination, I was asked if it is my view that there is no hope for Britain and the British large group to 'recover' from the symptomatic hostile environment and the repression of the violence and loss of empire.

Because of my psychoanalytic orientation I believe the answer lies initially in disillusionment. It is through an academic dedication to disillusionment and a commitment to the truth, however uncomfortable, that we can open up the possibility for a healthier society and political field, and less pathological large group dynamics.

Freud writes about how repression, while initially serving its purpose of shielding us from our own instinctual impulses, unwanted feelings, or memories, eventually always leads to suffering. Suffering comes in the form of symptoms that usually lead to loss of control over one's own inhibitions and psyche. On a larger scale, the same applies to collective history; and just as the goal of individual psychoanalysis is self-awareness, the goal of social psychoanalysis is disillusionment, to be aware of difficult truths and abandon comfortable illusions. In this same vein, psychoanalytic scholar (Covington, 2019) writes in relation to the rise populist racism in the West, "It is the comfort of illusion that imprisons us, that lures us into mindlessness, and paves the way for evil to take place" (p.128).

I hope that through this work I have also highlighted the need for more works that

aim towards disillusionment and reflection—that take away the power from hierarchies, concepts, and discourses that we take for granted without understanding their historical, social and psychological context.

This being said, we cannot stop at disillusionment for it is the precursor to action. In the clinic, my task is to help my patients obtain self-knowledge that is otherwise obscured through their unconscious forces, and the idea is that through obtaining this knowledge we are free to reflect and take action that is more aligned with who we wish to be and how we wish to live our lives.

Consequently, in the case of this research on the hostile environment, it is important to engage with and expand in the direction of research which counters the hostile environment discourse and which seeks practical solutions to the material effects of said discourse.

Discourse is always influenced and shaped by counter-discourse, and failing to acknowledge that can accidentally lead us to feed into the mythic 'unchanging' and 'unchangeable' perception of such a persistent discourse. Works that try to find practical ways to solve/fix Britain's immigration system, and those trying to centre immigrant/refugee stories in the immigration debate are crucial in countering the government's unnecessary harm inflicted on thousands of people made vulnerable by their circumstances.

4.9 Future Research

While the scope of this work was limited by the realistic expectations of a singular PhD dissertation, its interdisciplinary nature yields various enriching future research opportunities.

Using my framework to research the British government's anti-immigration sentiments as encapsulated in the hostile environment I was able to formulate an argument which tied this hostility to the British large group's repression of its violent colonial past and the

trauma of the loss of empire. This argument can be applied outside of the scope of the hostile environment, for example it can be applied to analysing the dynamics and issues in the academic field of migration studies in order to find out if, and how, the British large group's repression hinders or colours research and fieldwork. Similarly, it would be interesting to apply this research's findings to the fields of human rights and international relations in Britain in order to deepen our understanding of the unconscious factors that continue to shape Britain and the West's relationship with the global South, as most recently witnessed in the British government's response to the genocide in Gaza.

In terms of expansion, one direction this research can take is to develop on the colonial studies angle. As a further endeavour into theorizing the West it can be very instructive to conduct comparative studies on other Western countries with violent colonial histories, such as France and Germany, and compare how their large groups have historically understood themselves, how they have dealt with their loss of power, and how that has affected their modern immigration policies and rhetoric. A study to illustrate and differentiate how rising anti-immigration sentiments across Europe may appear similar yet can have different symptomal roots, could be conducted by comparing the British large group's reliance on past imperial glory as a second skin for the group's identity, to the German large group which, while also seeing a similar rise in anti-immigration discourse and measures (McGuinness, 2024), shies away from a glorification of the past due to its fascist and genocidal history.

Other opportunities for future research can be found in expanding on the political discourse analysis and psychoanalysis work done in the case study through either expanding the data used for a single politician representing the hostile environment discourse, or through analysing the different political agents and arguments they make for the hostile environment and distilling them to articulate differences and commonalities between politicians who internalize the hostile environment discourse and politicians who do not. A comparative study of the political discourse of former Prime Minister Boris Johnson, an ardent anti-immigration figure especially known for his imperial nostalgia and mak-

ing statements like, "The best fate for Africa would be if the old colonial powers, or their citizens, scrambled once again in her direction; on the understanding that this time they will not be asked to feel guilty"(Johnson, 2016), and former Leader of The Labour Party Jeremy Corbyn who has consistently been outspoken against the government's hostile environment measures can help us understand not only how hostility is internalized but also how it is resisted and at what price.

4.10 Concluding Reflections

As I mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation, while this work is theoretical in scope, it has been an immersive experience for me as an international student from the Global South, directly affected by the hostile environment. This research focus has emerged from a very instinctive albeit possibly naive questioning of —why am I being treated this way?—why in a country that boasts of its human rights do I feel like I am given differential rights and treated with constant suspicion?

While my experience is, of course, still privileged and not comparable to that of asylum seekers and irregularised migrants whose lives are made impossible by the hostile environment, living in a hostile environment means being in a state of constant alertness and anxiety. Even as I am writing these final lines as a part of my minor thesis corrections, the shadow of the hostile environment looms over me. I have to be mindful of my visa deadline, to finish my corrections in a third of the time I am given by the university in order to have time to apply to a graduate visa, and to find a way to pay the exorbitant visa and health surcharge fees, all while fulfilling my expected student duties. On a small scale or as a singular situation it might not seem like a lot, but I can attest that over a prolonged period of five years, it takes its toll.

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