

# Critically Analyzing Discourse in Dutch Refugee Integration Programs: Images of the Unmodern Other and their Unmodern [Ways of] Doing

**Author(s)**

Blankvoort, N.L.

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## **WFOT 3 Minute Thesis**

### **Critically Analyzing Discourse in Dutch Refugee Integration Programs: Images of the Unmodern Other and their Unmodern Doing**

Throughout Europe, refugees must participate in civic integration programs aimed to improve language and to have them learn and adopt the 'European' way of life. These programmes have been criticized for being restrictive, discriminatory and as negatively impacting on the lives of refugees. Our study aims to explore the Dutch civic integration programme at the level of discourse.

#### **Method**

This three-part critical ethnography explores civic integration in the Netherlands by drawing on Foucauldian and decolonial theories. Firstly, a critical discourse analysis of practice texts (course books, exams) explored how they present integration and the Other. Secondly, observations during integration courses and focus groups with staff will further explore how these concepts are shaped. Lastly, a variety of creative methods will be offered to refugees, exploring how they demonstrate their integration through everyday doing.

#### **Impact/Results**

Results of the first study demonstrate that texts are actively constructing an image of the unmodern Other, attributing inherently unmodern values and 'ways of doing' to them. This image is reminiscent of previous historical depictions of the Other; suggesting that colonial classifications have their afterlife in programs today. It demonstrates that Othering is an indestructible practice across time and across multiple levels of integration, from policy to practice.

#### **Conclusions/Outcomes**

The discourse we use shapes our understanding of who belongs and who not. These understandings impact on the treatment of groups and their occupational possibilities. Analyzing discourses creates spaces for new narratives and for new understandings of integration.