

Mediating Multiculturalism

American Media's portrayal of British Muslims

A Directed Research Project Submitted to:

University Honor's Program

American University, Washington D.C.

General University Honors

By: David Greenberg

School of Public Affairs, School of International Service



Abstract

This paper considers the integration of Muslims in British society from the perspective of the American print media. It engages in a longitudinal assessment of print media coverage over the past 10 years, including a qualitative assessment of normative biases found within American press. Specifically, it focuses on the discursive elements in the *New York Times* articles focused on Muslim integration in British society. Cases, which are drawn from the periods between 1997-2001, 2001-2005, and 2005-2009, demonstrate an evolution of American media coverage in the face of changing international and domestic perceptions of Islam and integration of Muslims. The cases also exposes biases or critical silences throughout the past decade in the coverage of British Muslim integration. US media sources appear to screen British multicultural policies through a hegemonic ideology of integration in which assimilation is deemed superior to multiculturalism. Integration policy is reduced to a function of national pride and "toughness" in the face of immigration and diversity. Multicultural policies in Britain are often implicitly or explicitly linked to disaffection, extremism, and terrorism within the Muslim community. Rarely considered are the complexities of the British identity crisis and their effects on integration, the multiplicity of factors which actually contribute to radicalization, and the benefits of multicultural policies. This study seeks to raise questions concerning the impact and source of American biases of British Muslim integration attempts. The study also suggests that divergent perspectives on multiculturalism reflect deep divisions within Western society over policies designed to foster Muslim integration.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my capstone advisor, Dr. R.S. Zaharna, for sharing her expertise with me and guiding me through the writing process. I would also like to thank Dr. Galina Miazhevich, who has offered consistent advice and support and is listed as a co-author of these findings in their presentation at the 2010 *Islam and the Media* International Conference. Gillian Peele served as advisor in my initial stage of research, and I am very grateful for all of her help. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Lee Jones, Liat Radcliffe Ross, and Carlotta Minnella who answered my questions and offered advice throughout this project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
PART I: INTRODUCTION.....	5
PART II: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
PART III: METHODOLOGY.....	18
PART IV: FINDINGS.....	21
PART V: CONCLUSION.....	29
REFERENCES.....	31
APPENDIX.....	34

PART I: INTRODUCTION

Multiculturalism has been the reigning model used by countries such as the United Kingdom to integrate predominantly Muslim immigrants into society. In the UK, a series of policy choices has led to a government and a society that preserves cultural differences. However, in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and July 7, 2005, and the resultant backlash against Muslims living in the West, the system of multiculturalism in Britain has come under attack from academia and from the media.

While America is united with Britain in both the War on Terrorism and under the banner of Western civilization, its own method of integrating immigrants varies greatly from the British model. America has a tradition of assimilating immigrants into American society, blending all Americans together in a common “melting pot” culture.

Thus, while both the British system of multiculturalism and the American system of assimilation have been contested, they remain the dominant systems in their respective countries. The British system of multiculturalism is diametrically opposed to American assimilation in terms of its normative emphasis on preserving heterogeneity instead of creating homogeneity. How the difference between multiculturalism in Britain and assimilation in America manifests in two countries with so many deep ties and common bonds merits investigation. One approach to understanding how the integration debate is interpreted and portrayed is to examine the media and how news coverage reflects the fundamental differences in integration models.

Study Purpose

The present study undertakes an analysis of American media coverage of British Muslims in an attempt to examine how the underlying normative divergence between the American and

British models of integration manifests in the public discourse. The study will conduct a discourse analysis of *New York Times* for three periods, [1997-2001, 2001-2005, 2005-2009].

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions;

Research Question 1: How do the American media portray British multiculturalism?

Research Question 2: How has the portrayal of British multiculturalism changed from 1997-2009?

Study Significance

The scope of the study was delineated to consider the media coverage in the midst of the global war on terrorism. The study's significance will be the understanding of whether and how the war on terrorism changed the portrayal of theoretical differences over integration. Further, this study will deconstruct the impact that divergent approaches regarding immigrant integration in the UK and USA have on the strategic partnership of these two allies.

Study Limitations

This study's main function is to create an avenue for further research. The incorporation of only one newspaper has a limiting effect on the findings, whereas the inclusion of different newspapers or other medias in the future may help to make the results more generalizable and polished.

The *New York Times* was selected because of its "agenda-setting function" for newspapers throughout the country on international issues (Golan, 2006). As an elite paper, it reflects ideology more potently. Practically, as a large and internationally focused paper the *New*

York Times was able to provide substantial data to analyze in terms of articles focused on the narrow issue of British Muslims.

Study Overview

In Part II: Literature Review, this paper provides a background of multiculturalism in Britain and assimilation in American. It then offers a theoretical overview of how ideologies such as assimilation and multiculturalism manifest in media and what scholars have concluded about the American media portrayal of integration in the United States and abroad. Part III: Methodology describes the quantitative and qualitative analysis and sources of data used in the current study of how American media portray Muslims in Britain. Part IV: Findings offers the findings and analysis. Part V: Conclusion restates the findings and directs readers towards avenues of further research.

PART II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This section surveys scholarly literature on the British and American variants on multiculturalism. It then presents a theoretical overview of ideologically marked discourses that will be drawn upon in this paper's analysis. Finally, this review offers previous scholarly research on American media's coverage of integration.

Multiculturalism in the United Kingdom

One consensus in the wide array of literature on multiculturalism is that the word multiculturalism is multifarious in its discursive meanings. Generally, the use of "multiculturalism" in Western societies since 1970 indicates "the general place of minorities, programmes designed to foster equality, institutional structures created to provide better social services, and resources extended to ethnic minority organizations" (Vertovec, 1996, p. 222). Horton (1993, p. 3) divided the discursive meanings behind the word into multiculturalism as fact and multiculturalism as ideal. Multiculturalism as fact concerns the basic presence of a "plurality of ethnic or cultural groups in society" whereas multiculturalism as ideal speaks to a specific model of integration in society, often defined against assimilation. This paper draws upon Horton's latter usage, defining multiculturalism as the active preservation of cultural distinctions in society.

In Britain, multiculturalism emerged out of mass immigration in the wake of the Second World War. After the War, certain industrial sectors experienced increasing demands for labor. Lenient immigration legislation in the UK allowed immigrants from former New Commonwealth nations to meet these British employment needs (Abbas, 1995, p. 9). By the

1950s, a recession in Britain reversed the demand for labor, but immigration from South Asia persisted through its peak in the early 1960s.

The predominantly non-white and Muslim immigration prompted fierce criticism from British conservatives such as Shadow Defense Secretary Enoch Powell, who in 1968 decried the “Rivers of blood” that would flow from the openness of British borders. Restrictive immigration laws were passed beginning with the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962. However, this legislation provoked a rush of wives and children of British immigrants into the country to “beat the ban.” This wave of family oriented immigration from South Asia spurred the settlement of Muslim immigrant communities into inner pockets of older industrial British towns (Abbas, 1995, p. 10).

Britain’s *modus operandi* for contending with its new multi-ethnic communities evolved from the anti-colonialism, anti-fascism, and anti-racism that permeated European thought throughout the first half of the twentieth century (Lloyd, 2002, p. 64). Britain focused on conferring equality and recognition to minority cultures (Peele, 2006, p. 204). In 1966, British Home Secretary Roy Jenkins explained, “I do not think that we need in this country a melting pot.... I define integration therefore, not as a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance” (Joppke, 1996). Since then, top down governmental initiatives such anti-racism and anti-discrimination legislation, a focus on respect for diversity in the education system, and the birth of a “race-relations industry” in the 1980s helped to enshrine multiculturalism in British society.

However, after British Muslims rioted in several towns in the 1990s, former Secretary Jenkins admitted, “In retrospect we might have been more cautious about allowing the creation in the 1950s of substantial Muslim communities here” (Poynting and Mason, 2007, p. 69).

Attacks on multiculturalism grew vehement after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Trevor Phillips (2004), Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, announced the “death” of multiculturalism, a system which he said made a “fetish of deference” (Peele, 2006, p. 207).

Paul Gilroy (2004) contextualized the increasing anti-multiculturalism rhetoric as a result of Britain’s “postcolonial melancholia.” Gilroy framed the country’s immigrant communities as biting reminders of Britain’s imperial past. He advocated the transcendence of the postcolonial anxiety surrounding migrants and resurrected the multicultural ideal of mutual regard for citizenship and belonging regardless of migrant status or cultural difference. And while anxiety towards British Muslims continued to increase after the July 7, 2005 London bombings, scholars such as Tariq Modood (2007) maintain that the British ideal of a “community of communities,” a notion popularized by the 2000 Parekh Report, is still a noble goal in the twenty-first century.

Assimilation in the United States

The roots of American integration policy extend deep into the early American experience. In 1755, Benjamin Franklin expressed anxiety about the influx of German immigrants into Pennsylvania and the ability to Anglify them (Bischoff 186). Franklin’s sentiments reveal an early proclivity in America towards the assimilation of immigrants. Assimilation connotes a “process by which society becomes more homogenous through such means as socioeconomic interaction, intermarriage, and shared identity and values” (Ziegler-McPherson, 2009, p2). Franklin’s concerns were echoed throughout the mid to late eighteenth century, as Irish and German immigrants challenged the ability of America to absorb their distinct cultural identities (Bischoff 194).

The mix of immigrants coming to America in the late eighteenth century birthed the concept of the “melting pot.” This phrase specifically entered the public discourse in 1908 via Israel Zangwill’s play, *The Melting Pot*, but the image continues to be fundamental to American identity. President Theodore Roosevelt was moved by Zangwill’s play, but went further, denouncing immigrants who maintained old cultural identities. Roosevelt declared, “There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americanism...a hyphenated American is not an American at all” (Roosevelt, 1915). Besides stigmatizing difference, the United States responded to immigration with Americanization, a movement that Samuel Huntington (2004) describes as a “social crusade.” In the early twentieth century, Americanization programs were established in chambers of commerce, factories, and YMCAs to teach immigrants English and American values (Huntington, 2004).

The relevance of the melting pot image in America today is ambiguous, especially in the context of a scholarly divide which has emerged over the type of assimilation that defines American integration. Huntington (2004) denies that America is a melting pot. Instead, he argues that American culture is fundamentally Anglo-Protestant, and that immigrants who come to America adapt and embody an established culture instead of engaging in a process of continual reshaping. George and Yancey (2004) performed an attitudinal analysis of Americans to determine which of these models of assimilation, the melting pot or the Anglo-conformist, had the most popular support. In a nationwide sample of 2,561 subjects, George and Yancey surveyed Americans’ agreement with statements that reflected one of these two assimilation philosophies. The study determined that the American people consistently support melting pot assimilation. George and Yancey’s study also measured the public opinion towards assimilation

in general against statements that reflected multiculturalism. They found support for multiculturalism among Americans to be ambivalent and weaker than support for assimilation.

It is contested that the multiculturalism has been present in the margins of American integration rhetoric since the birth of the concept of the melting pot. In 1916, Randolph Bourne captured the essence of multiculturalism, advocating for a cosmopolitan model of pluralism that would not stifle its vivid fabric of cultural diversity in America. Bourne called for a move from American nationalism to transnationalism in which “the attempt to weave a wholly novel international nation out of our chaotic America will liberalize and harmonize the creative power of all these peoples and give them new spiritual citizenship.” Bourne’s ideas built on the writing of Horace Kallen, a Jewish immigrant who published the 1915 article, “Democracy Versus the Melting Pot.” Kallen (1915) idealized America as a symphony of differences where the unique backgrounds of immigrants could contribute to a “richer and more beautiful” society.

Bourne and Kallen’s ideas were resurrected in the renewed debate over integration raging since the 1960s. In 1965, the Immigration and Nationality Act abolished national-origin quotas, allowing more immigrants from non-European backgrounds to come to the United States and become citizens (Eck, 2001, p1). By 2001, the effects of “new immigration” were visible and 10% of Americans were foreign born (Eck, 2001, p. 43). Unlike prior waves of immigration, these immigrants were not narrowly drawn from Europe, but came from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds such as Asia and Latin America. The different and sometimes conflicting identities of the new immigrants revived cries for a cacophony of cultures among some American scholars, such as Harvard professor Diane Eck (Eck, 2001, pp. 54, 77).

However, the underlying current in American integration remains assimilation. Thernstrom (2004) cites the 2002 National Survey of Latinos as evidence of the assimilation of

second and third generation immigrants in America. Thernstrom describes that while 72 percent of first-generation Hispanic immigrants speak Spanish as a dominant language, 93% of their children are English-speaking (p.58). While only one-third of Hispanic immigrants describe themselves as American, 97% of their grandchildren identify this way. Second and third generation Hispanics in United States are attending American colleges and universities, getting American jobs, and intermarrying with Americans of different cultural backgrounds (p.58).

Theoretical Overview

In order to better understand how the portrayal of British Muslims in American media reflects normative differences over integration, this paper draws on the theoretical framework of ideology in media.

Ideology is defined to include, “the mental frameworks, [i.e.] the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation” that groups employ to understand and explain societal processes (Hall, 1996, p. 26). Herman and Chomsky (1988) outline the presence of ideological bias in media coverage as a propaganda model. They emphasize the evolution of ideological bias in countries, such as the United States, where the ownership of the media is monopolistic and the state engages in official censorship (p. 1). According to Herman and Chomsky, these two factors create a subordination of all viewpoints that conflict with those of the dominant elites. They argue that the elite controlled media “filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant interests to get their message across to the public” (p.2).

Knight and Dean (1982) expounded on this understanding of ideology, explaining that the process of ideology is hegemonic. Constructed by Gramsci (1971), hegemony refers to the

Comment [rz1]: can't have 2 citations for exact same quote

process in which the interests, perspectives, and practices of the dominant faction are emphasized and universalized as common sense. Meanwhile, alternative or counter-hegemonic ideologies are institutionally silenced and “expelled from normal reality as dangerous, bizarre, [or] comical” (Knight and Tony Dean, 1982, p. 145). Whereas Gramsci’s definition of hegemony rested on the articulation of a specific “material base” that facilitates the propagation and maintenance of an “ideological superstructure,” scholars such as Williams (1960) have since broadened the meaning of hegemony to a more comprehensive understanding as the “whole body of practices and expectations” that construct and disseminate reality in society in “all its institutions and private manifestations” (Williams, 1960, p.587). Gitlin (2003) expands on this broader interpretation, advocating that hegemony is the bottom-up permeation and absorption of one conception of reality in society and not merely a deterministic or top-down coercion (p. 10).

The current study utilizes a conception of ideology and hegemony heavily influenced by the works of Gitlin (2003) and Hall (2000). Gitlin (2003) defines hegemony as a fluid and active process accomplished directly and indirectly (pp. 4, 9). He writes that hegemonic ideology embodies what is “natural” and tries to become and meshes with “common sense” (pp. 10-11). Society is not told what to think or believe, but the media creates boundaries and limitations in making sense of the world in individuals’ everyday lives.

Gitlin describes the shaping of public assumptions, attitudes, and moods through ideological media coverage. By assumptions, Gitlin refers to the usually unspoken foundations that underlie people’s conscious thoughts. Attitudes and moods speak to the general and collective sentiments expressed on a topic or issue. According to Gitlin, assumptions, attitudes, and moods are each influenced by hegemonic ideology as it operates through emphases, tones, omissions, and statements. Emphases are certain concepts which are stressed over others and

tones refer to the manner and overall feel of the media coverage. Omissions are statements which by their absence reflect a bias towards one perspective.

The fourth aspect of ideology, statements, can be clarified through the work of Hall (2000). Hall (2000) stresses the working of ideologies in the underlying justification of statements in media. He writes that ideological consensus helps to legitimize, often subconsciously, common beliefs and ideas. In his study of racism ideology, Hall describes how ideology can be *overt*, such as direct expressions of an ideological position, or *inferential*. Inferential ideology is expressed through the reliance on principles and propositions which have unquestioned assumptions of ideological supremacy (p. 273). Thus, the framework I will use to evaluate the ideological composition of the American media includes the consideration of 1) statements which reflected ideology either *overtly or inferentially* 2) critical omissions, and 3) emphasis and tones.

American Media Portrayal of Integration

The portrayal of ideology in media discourse is evident in scholarly work on media in the United States and its portrayal of assimilation and multiculturalism. Benson (2005) writes that while journalists openly criticize the lack of physical diversity among journalists, they preserve the ideological status quo by withholding substantive reasoning for diversity or multiculturalism in their articles. According to Benson, the media focuses on “specific complaints, motives and strategies” in the integration debate instead of covering the economic and structural deficiencies of the American system of integration (pp. 6, 15, 17). Benson argues that journalists do not want to appear “ideological” so they gloss over these deeper issues (p. 17). Benson does not explain

the implicit paradox in the media's preservation of ideology in its attempt to appear non-ideological.

Burdick-Will and Gomez (2006) empirically studied how assimilation was prevalent vis-à-vis multiculturalism in American media. The authors studied the coverage of state legislative bills in Colorado and Massachusetts. The bills would effectively terminate bilingual education initiatives in public schools in favor of English language immersion to promote fluency. Burdick-Will and Gomez performed content analysis on two local newspapers' coverage of the debate on the bills in each state. They found that the Colorado media incorporated more assimilation rhetoric in pushing for the passage of the bill while multicultural rhetoric was completely absent from the Colorado debate. In Massachusetts, while multiculturalism rhetoric was used to attack the bill, it was far outweighed by assimilation rhetoric.

Burdick-Will and Gomez also found the presence of a "neoassimilationist" rhetoric in both states' media coverage. This perspective was similar to "straight-line assimilation" except that it focused on the historical pattern of immigration in America, idealizing the assimilation path that many settled generations of immigrants in America took in the past. Neoassimilationism reflects an expectation that present immigrants will repeat this assimilation same path carved by those who came before them without seeking change (p. 3).

Though Burdick-Will and Gomez separated assimilation and multiculturalism in their study of rhetoric, Rodriguez (2009) argued that multiculturalism and assimilation perspectives can be layered within the same discourse. She uncovered a steady source of this hybrid discourse in the American press. However, Rodriguez determined that assimilation and specifically the model of Anglo-Conformism, was portrayed as dominant in the public sphere but not the private

sphere. Stories that stressed a comfort and conciliation with alien cultures predominantly

Comment [rz2]: unless explain model, confusing. suggest deleting

relegated these cultures to private identities and individual's personal space while the public space was defined by "identification with European American values" such as the English language.

Berkowitz and Eko (2007) provided further insight into the ideological constitution of American media through their analysis of the *New York Times* coverage of the Mohammed cartoons affair in comparison with *Le Monde's* coverage of the same incident. Through a qualitative textual analysis, the authors concluded that the *New York Times* coverage emphasized the multicultural dimension of the event instead of portraying it as a test of free expression (p15). Specifically, the *New York Times* questioned the degree that a "receiving culture" needs to 'compromise' in order to incorporate these new immigrants." The coverage reinforced the notion of a clash of civilizations between Islam and the West and thus cast doubt on the feasibility and normative aspirations of multiculturalism (pp. 11-12).

Berkowitz and Eko also concluded that the Mohammed cartoon controversy and the backlash it inspired was portrayed as not "'our' news, but 'their' news." This distancing of Europe and the Middle East in the *New York Times* coverage results from the ideological constitution of the American media. According to Izadi and Saghaye-Biria (2007), ideology in media accentuates the good properties of the in-group and the bad properties of the out-group (p 144). However, this theme is yet to be fully developed in the literature on the American media in relation to European countries. Similarly, the dearth of scholarly work on how American media portrays multiculturalism is exacerbated by absence of any longitudinal study that captures the complexities of this portrayal in light of the global war on terror. This study seeks to fill this gap in the literature by examining the American media's portrayal of British Multiculturalism.

Comment [rz3]: please use full name and put publication in italics

PART III: METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative methodologies used in the study.

Again, the research questions for this study are:

Research Question 1: How do the American media portray British multiculturalism?

Research Question 2: How has the portrayal of British multiculturalism changed from 1997-2009?

This study is a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of *New York Times* articles focused on British Muslims in the *New York Times*. CDA aims to deconstruct the cultural dynamics and power relations which are embedded in language through the reproduction of certain types of statements, thematic choices, and concepts (Fairclough, 1995). Fairclough describes a discourse as language that represents a social practice from a particular perspective (1995, p. 56). Van Dijk proposed a model for dissecting such perspectives by studying the argumentative structures, presupposed assumptions, norms and values, and rhetorical components that constitute a particular discourse (Van Dijk, 1988). CDA is distinguished from other forms of discourse analysis through its multi-level analysis that emphasizes text on its concrete constitution as well as its social function (Fairclough, 1992).

The *New York Times* was selected because it is a major national paper that is often syndicated in local papers. Also, the New York Times has frequent coverage of international issues, such as British multiculturalism.

New York Times articles were taken from three periods: January 1, 1997 to September 11, 2001, September 11, 2001-July 7, 2005, and July 7, 2005-August 1, 2009. These divisions were

made at critical junctures of two major terrorist attacks on the US and British soil: the September 11, 2001 and the July 7, 2005 bombing.

Using LexisNexis Academic Universe Database, I performed an “easy search” to collect articles using the following indicator terms: “Britain Muslim;” “Britain Islam;” “Britain Asian;” “Britain immigrant;” “Britain migrant;” “Britain multiculturalism;” “Britain extremism;” “Britain commonwealth;” “Britain terror;” “Britain terrorism;” “British Muslim;” “British Islam;” “British Asian;” “British immigrant;” “British migrant;” “British multiculturalism;” “British extremism;” “British commonwealth;” “British terror;” “British terrorism;” “UK Muslim;” “UK Islam;” “UK Asian;” “UK immigrant;” “UK migrant;” “UK multiculturalism;” “UK extremism;” “UK commonwealth;” “UK terror;” “UK terrorism.” The terms were selected in order to generate all articles that were relevant to the topic of British Muslims, even if they were indirectly indicated.

All of the search hits using these indicator terms in the periods specified were catalogued, totaling 903 articles. The articles were then assessed for relevance to Muslims in Britain. British Muslims had to be explicitly mentioned as the focus of the article or implicitly discussed through other terms such as Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Asian, migrant, immigrant, terrorist, ect. The relevant articles were grouped both by the three time periods.

The articles were further grouped into three subject categories. The first category was “*Integration*,” which included articles that presented British Muslims in terms of racial/religious strife, immigration issues, and multicultural dynamics in British society. For example, articles that focused on race riots would be categorized as integration articles. The second category was “*Extremism*,” which focused on British Muslims in connection with Islamic fundamentalism, violence, and terrorism. For example, an article about the arrest of 6 British Muslims on charges

of terrorism would fall into this category. Finally, the third category, *Government* articles, were focused on British laws, public officials, political dynamics, courts, or police actions. For example, the election of a notorious Islamophobic politician to Parliament would fall into this category.

Often, categories overlapped such as an article about political wrangling over an anti-terrorism law that would disproportionately affect British Muslims. In cases where there was overlap, the dominant focus of an article determined in which category it was placed. The raw numbers of articles in each category over the three time periods was tallied and analyzed. One article was then taken from each category for each of the three periods for qualitative analysis. The nine articles were examined using critical discourse analysis. I followed the methodology advocated by Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000), which advocates a focus on lexical choice, narratives, voices and “patterns of language use... that carried clear societal power or policy connotations” (p. 10). Specifically, I analyzed the discourse of the *New York Times* coverage of British Muslims in terms of its ideological constitution, analyzing the language patterns in the three selected articles (per time period) focusing especially on the reflection of ideology through, as described above, 1) Covert statements, 2) Inferential statements, 3) Critical omissions, and 4) Shifting emphasis and tones. After this initial qualitative analysis, other articles were considered to support or mitigate the initial findings in the context of the period as a whole.

PART IV: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS¹

American media coverage of British Muslims: quantitative inquiry

This sub-section presents quantitative analysis regarding the coverage of British Muslims in the *New York Times* from the period 1997-2009. My inquiry demonstrated a steady increase in American press coverage of the issues related to British Muslims during the last decade (Table 1). Relevant material more than doubled from period I (21 articles) to period II (52 articles), and then further increased in period III (70 articles). The coverage, however, concentrated on specific topics. The number of articles emphasizing terrorism or *extremism* increased six-fold after the first period. *Government-related* articles were three times as numerous in the third period as in the second. Meanwhile, the articles dealing with *integration* (12 articles in period I, which constituted more than half of all relevant first period's items) decreased further and constituted only around 10% of the coverage in each of the latter periods. Some other major trends, which emerged from the data, include increasing newsworthiness of extremism-related issues and their interconnectedness with the British Muslims in the post 9/11 environment and an increase number of articles concerning the government-related aspect of Britain's domestic Muslim population, following the 7/7 bombing.

¹ Coauthored with Galina Miazhevich, Oxford University

Table 1: Division of Relevant Articles within Each Period

Comment [Deg4]: Should there be a description here as well as a title?

Period*	Percentage of articles (and number of articles) in each category				Total number of articles
	Integration (of Muslims)	(Islamic) Extremism	Government/ politics and Islam	Miscellaneous	
I	57% (12)	23% (5)	10% (2)	10% (2)	21
II	13% (7)	57% (31)	17% (9)	10% (5)	52
III	10%(7)	40% (28)	39% (27)	11% (8)	70

* Period I: (1997-2001), Period II: (2001-2005), Period III: (2005-2009)

American media coverage of British Muslims: qualitative inquiry

The following sub-section analyzes the discourse of the *New York Times* coverage of British Muslims in terms of its ideological constitution, analyzing the language patterns in the three selected articles (per time period) focusing especially on the reflection of ideology through 1) Overt statements, 2) Inferential statements, 3) Critical omissions, and 4) Shifting emphasis and tones.

Period I (1997-2001)

During this period explicit references to the concept of multiculturalism are almost absent. When mentioned, multiculturalism is usually delegitimized through wording patterns which elicit fear or anxiety and are used to describe the failures of British integration of Muslims, remembering the 1995 Bradford race riots as “blow[ing] up” and causing “damage to community relations [that] was incalculable” (Lyall, 7/12). The articles, summarizing the Cantle report,

characterized Bradford as divided by “prejudice”, “fear” and “suspicion” (Lyall, 7/12). It constructs an artificial continuum with assimilation on one side and “segregation” on the other. The British government is portrayed as having tried by ‘pouring’ money into initiatives and frustratingly failed to integrate Muslims, who are “far from being assimilated...” but instead “feel more alienated” (Lyall, 7/12).

The partial delegitimization of multiculturalism goes hand in hand with a sympathetic tone toward British Muslims through what can be called as a “failed American dream narrative.” The American dream of opportunity, represented in the article by a Bradford textile mill that operated “around the clock” as a symbol of “prosperity” or the “tentative success” in “providing jobs to thousands of immigrants” is now portrayed as “derelict, its windows broken, its cavernous halls empty, its promises unfulfilled” (Lyall, 7/12). Immigrants were portrayed as victims of a society unable to provide them with a way to advance their lives. The failed American dream narrative was recurrent in several articles, including the film review of “Brothers in Trouble,” describing the search for economic opportunity among hopeful Muslim immigrants to Britain ending in their despair and exploitation (Holden, 5/14). Thus, the alienation of British Muslims was interpreted as economic grievance and not as cultural discrimination.

The articles from the first period confirm that the religious/cultural identity constituted only one out of a subset of immigrant identities (some articles dealing with Britain’s Muslim population did not mention Islam at all). Several articles explicitly stated that many or most immigrants were Muslims. In other articles, Islam was referenced indirectly, as in some immigrants’ rigid adherence to “tradition” (Lyall, 7/12). In most of the cases the ethnic rather than religious label was used: “Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrants” and “Immigrants from the Asian subcontinent,” or simply, “Asians.” This constitutes a sharp contrast with the articles from

the two other periods where the notion of Islam became conflated with ethnicity of British Muslims (e.g. the “problem of British Muslim extremism” and how “Muslim anger” had been ignited in the second period).

Period II (2001-2005)

The second period has more overt references to United States assimilation as a model for integration. The article set faulted Britain for lacking “a schoolroom tradition...like the one in the United States” where students pledge alliance to the flag every morning (Hoge, 12/11). Several articles portrayed the United States as more experienced in integrating immigrants than Britain, where immigration dates back “only” to the 1950s (Hoge, 12/11). Some articles suggested that the failures of multiculturalism were possible to be rectified if a “new” or “European” Islam that blends with modern European identity is promoted. The compatibility of traditional Islam (with principles of Western Democracy) is discounted, and thus the “melting pot” style concept of cultures is promoted. However, in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks British integration started predominantly to be construed as a “façade of tolerant multiculturalism”, which masked an undercurrent of extremism (Lyll, 1/29). This constitutes the core of this period. However, the nuanced should not be omitted.

The “depth” of the alienation of British Muslims was a repeated theme. Covering the Cantle report, the *New York Times* reported that Britain is “deeply divided,” that there is a “deep distrust” between whites and nonwhites, a “depth of polarization,” and a “deep seated sense of competing identities” (Hoge 12/11). However, failures of British Muslim integration started to be described via ‘*radicalisation*’ rhetoric. The articles are characterized by quite emotional

language: “violent convulsions” that “rocked” northern England in which rioters “ravaged” and “rampaged” in 2001 (Lyall, 5/1). Similarly, discussions of British Muslims revolve around radicalization, jihad, and the caliphate. The articles discuss British Muslims as dichotomy of those who feel obligated to “abide by [Britain’s]...rules” and those who “responded differently, abandoning comfortable middle class existences in Britain to seek out training as guerrilla fighters in Afghanistan, Kashmir and elsewhere” (Cowell, 10/18).

Voices, which advocate integration of British Muslims are persistently screened through the prism of assimilation (and its supremacy over multiculturalism). So, the position of British Home Secretary David Blunket - “a man who has brought a tough law-and-order agenda to his office”- who “place(d) *some*” of the blame on immigrants instead of directly identifying “communities choosing” separation is criticized (Hoge 12/11). Meanwhile, the voices that criticize assimilation are the same. This is combined with further distancing from Britain via promotion of “*self-deluding narrative*”. Articles reported the surprise in Britain at the “depth of the racial divide” (Hoge 12/11). Britons were “alarmed,” “dismayed and shocked,” previously “unaware,” and “struck” (Hoge 12/11, Lyall, 5/1). Condescendingly, this surprise and ignorance expressed by the British people is often represented as self-delusion in the articles. It is suggested that instead of “‘tiptoe(ing)’ around the subject of discrimination” Britons should engage in “‘honest and robust debate’” (Hoge 12/11).

Furthermore, the ties between extremism and “multicultural” Britain were becoming more and more explicit. One article begins with a cricket match, a symbolic representation of British identity, but then this conventional image is disrupted with the glaring presence of disaffected British Muslims (Cowell, 10/18). This “new multicultural Britain”, where the homegrown extremism proliferates, is portrayed as distant and foreign to America. For instance, one article

described the sale of “so-called jihad videos” in Britain (Cowell, 10/18) implying the unfamiliarity of Americans with these extremist videos and impossibility of this happening in the US. The same article quotes British Muslims talking about the higher “status” of bin Laden and that Britain made him into a “hero.” The growing rift between the countries on issues on inter-ethnic cohesion is one step away from suggesting that Britain is an unequal partner in the American-led War on Terrorism.

Period III (2005-2009)

The line of open critique of the British-style model of multiculturalism was sustained in period III. For instance, the “tolerant policy of pluralism and multiculturalism” and “separate schools with traditional Muslim attire for Muslim students” were often denounced, and the article questioned why British Muslims were not “farther up the road of assimilation” (Lyall, 8/18 , Fattah, 7/15). However, more attention is drawn to the UK’s faults of not realizing the obvious flaws in multiculturalism.

The failures of the British government are presented in a tone of a clear antipathy. Similar themes and narratives emerged in the third period as in the first and second. As in the first period, lexical choices such as “poured” money into initiatives (Lyall, 8/18) were used to demonstrate an “inability” or “little success” (Lyall, 8/18) of Britain to address Muslim “alienation” (Lyall, 8/18). Continuing from the second period, the American image of Britain as “pristine” with “untouched countryside,” the “tradition bound” nature of Britain, inclusive of “tucked away” villages and “Norman castle [s]” was established and then tainted with the portrayal of multiculturalism (Perlez, 4/2). However, in the third period, the dichotomy between

America and the UK was on the increase. The articles focused criticism on Britain's "inability" to address Muslim alienation, as initiative after initiative focused on creating a multicultural society through the creation of "Muslim community centers" and "state-run Muslim schools" fails to produce results (Lyll, 8/18). In addition to highlighting 'failures' of British multiculturalism, the *Times* presented British tolerance as "slowly eroding in the face of extremism" (Perlez, 6/16). One example is Jack Straw's opposition to the "niqab," which was celebrated as a self-censorship or a limit to the British "tolerance".

When the British government's stance was more congruent with the American position (in the context of the War on Terror), the 'othering' of Britain became more complex. In these instances, either Britain or individuals in the British government were selectively glorified. One of the articles invoked heroic word choice, such as "Tony Blair vowed to outlaw" extremist groups (Kovaleski, 8/25). The infrequency of this reinforcement helped to emphasize the much more frequent cases of disapproval of British integration and portrayal of it as conflicting with (and undermining) the goals of the US War on Terror. Here (continuing the theme from period II) British homegrown extremism was often brought to the fore and described as a natural outcome of "Britain's live-and-let-live liberalism" (Lyll, 8/18).

There was a pronounced change in the treatment of British Muslims, who were presented as an increasingly dangerous force. The economic and political grievances of Muslims that were largely included in the first period now were generally ignored. British Muslims were described not only as "alienated" but as "increasingly assertive" and "the symbolic encroachment of Islam at the pinnacles of British power is already clear" (Perlez, 4/2). This, in turn, justified strengthening of the security discourse: "the police were poised outside" to prevent violence, (Perlez, 4/2). Overall, the newspaper opted for stronger wording (than in the first period)

describing Britain's Muslims as involved in the "battle," a "bitter struggle," and a "tussle" between races and religions

Thus, in the first period, neither British Muslims nor their integration into society was presented in cultural or religious terms. Instead, British Muslims were seen as immigrants, and their lack of integration was construed as economic disaffection and simply as a failure of the British government to facilitate their assimilation into British society. In the second period, the same issues of alienation were portrayed through a cultural lens. British Muslims were predominantly defined as Muslims, not as immigrants or Asians. Islam became the salient aspect of British Muslim identity in light of the Islamic extremism behind the 9/11 attacks. The emphasis was placed on the issue of Muslim integration as a defining problem of British society and as an endogamous challenge to peace and security. Multiculturalism was increasingly referenced and portrayed as a façade for extremism. These themes continued in the third period. However, the use of hostile language to critique the British government and its failure to promote assimilation increased. The three periods can be unified by employing similar *silencing* strategy, as any substantive arguments in favor of multiculturalism or acknowledgement of the complexities of the British situation (such as the ambiguity of "Britishness") were missing from the articles in any given period.

PART V: CONCLUSION

Recently, the United States and United Kingdom have taken further steps in cooperation in the global War on Terror, both pledging more troops to Afghanistan (*Washington Post*, 12/3/09). While these two countries are bonded as part of the same Western civilization, their similarities do not extend to each country's preferred model of integrating immigrants. This study sought to examine how these differences manifested in American media coverage of British Muslims, especially in recent context of growing Islamic extremism. Overall, it became apparent that US media sources screen British multicultural policies through a hegemonic ideology of integration in which assimilation is deemed superior to multiculturalism.

The more detailed analysis of *The New York Times'* coverage revealed a shift from a sympathetic tone towards British Muslims to an open hostility to and an 'othering' of Britain as the American media perpetuated an ideology of assimilation. However, the tactics differ depending on the period. So, the articles from 1997-2001 (period I) constructed assimilation as the uncontested goal of immigrant integration and as a function of national pride and "toughness" in the face of immigration and diversity. Multiculturalism was predominantly portrayed as *failed assimilation*, and its aim at preserving heterogeneity and respecting difference was often implicitly or explicitly undermined. In the period directly following the attacks of 9/11 (period II), the discursive attacks on multiculturalism became more overt. In addition to simplification of the essence of multicultural policies in Britain, they were repeatedly linked to disaffection, extremism, and terrorism within the local Muslim community. This created an "us-them" dichotomy where the UK was generally portrayed as an unequal partner in the fight against Islamic extremism, which was weakened by its home-grown terrorism. In final period (III), the

articles on British Muslims in American media were largely focused on the government's role and the tone they took was remarkably hostile toward British multiculturalism and Britain itself.

REFERENCES

- Abbas, T. (1995). British South Asian Muslims: State and Multicultural Society. In Abbas, T. (Ed.), *Muslim Britain: communities under pressure* (pp. 3-17). New York, NY: Zed Books Ltd.
- Altheide, D. (1987) Format and symbols in TV coverage of terrorism in the United States and Great Britain. *International studies quarterly*, 31(2).
- Benson, R. (2005) American Journalism and the Politics of Diversity. *Media, Culture, and Society* 27 (1).
- Berkowitz, D. and Eko, L. (2007) Blasphemy as Sacred Rite/Right: The Mohammed cartoons affair'' and maintenance of journalistic ideology. *Journalism Studies* 8.
- Bischoff, H. (2002). *Immigration Issues*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Blommaert, J. and Bulcaen, C. (2000). Critical Discourse Analysis. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 29. pp. 447-466.
- Bourne, R. (1916). Trans-National American. *Atlantic Monthly* 118, p. 92-97, In Bischoff, H. (2002). *Immigration Issues*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. pp 201-203.
- Burdick-Will, J. and Gomez, C. (2006). Assimilation Versus Multiculturalism: Bilingual Education and the Latino Challenge. *Journal of Latinos and Education* 5., p. 209-231.
- Eck, D. (2001). *A New Religious America*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.
- Fortier, A. (2005) 'Pride politics and Multiculturalist Citizenship'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28: 3, 559 — 578
- George, D. and Yancey, G. (2004). Taking Stock of America's Attitudes on Cultural Diversity: An Analysis of Public Deliberation on Multiculturalism, Assimilation and Inter-marriage. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 35.
- Gilroy, P. (2004). *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gitlin, T. (2003). *The whole world is watching: Mass media in the making and unmaking of the new left*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Golan, G. (2006). Inter-media agenda setting and global news coverage. *Journalism Studies*, 7(2), 323-333.

- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (Q. Hoare & G. N. Smith, Trans.). New York, NY: International Publishers.
- Hall, S. (2000). Racist ideologies and the media. In P. Marris & S. Thornham (Eds.), *Media studies: A reader* (2nd ed., pp. 271-282). New York: New York University Press.
- Herman, E. and Chomsky, N. (1988). *Manufacturing Consent*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Horsti, K. (2008). Antiracist and Multicultural Discourses in European Public Broadcasting. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Montreal: Quebec, Canada, May 21, 2008, http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p230229_index.html.
- Horton, J. (1993). Liberalism, Multiculturalism and Toleration. In Horton, J. (Ed.), *Liberalism, Multiculturalism and Toleration* (pp. 1-17). New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
- Huntington, S. (2004). *Who Are We?* New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Izadi, F. and Saghaye-Biria, H. (2007). A Discourse Analysis of Elite American Newspaper Editorials: The Case of Iran's Nuclear Program. *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 31. p. 140
- Joppke, C. (1996). Multiculturalism and immigration: A comparison of the United States, Germany, and Great Britain. *Theory and Society*, 25, 449-500.
- Kallen, H. (1915). Democracy Versus the Melting Pot. *The Nation* 100, cited in Eck, D. (2001). *A New Religious America*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., p 58.
- Knight, G., and Dean, T. (1982). Myth and the structure of news. *Journal of Communication*, 32(2), 144-161.
- Lloyd, C. (2002). Anti-racism, social movements and civil society. In Floya A. and C. Lloyd (eds.) *Rethinking Anti-racisms. From theory to practice*. (pp. 60-77). London: Routledge.
- Modood, T. (1997). Introduction: The Politics of Multiculturalism in the New Europe. In Modood, T. (ed.), *The Politics of Multiculturalism in the New Europe*. New York, NY: Zed Books Ltd..
- Modood, T. (2007) *Multiculturalism*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Olssen, M. (2004). From the Crick Report to the Parekh Report: Multiculturalism, cultural difference, and democracy - the re-visioning of citizenship education. *British Journal of Sociology and Education*. 25(2).
- Peele, G. (2006). The Politics of Multicultural Britain. In Dunleavy, P. et al. (eds.), *Developments in British Politics* 8, (p. 198). Brunel Road, UK: Macmillan Publishers, Ltd.

- Phillips D, 2006, "Parallel lives? Challenging discourses of British Muslim self-segregation" *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* **24**(1) 25 – 40
- Phillips, T. (2004), cited in Peele, G. (2006). The Politics of Multicultural Britain. In Dunleavy, P. et al. (eds.), *Developments in British Politics* 8, (p. 198). Brunel Road, UK: Macmillan Publishers, Ltd. p.9
- Poynting, S and Mason, V. (2007). The resistible rise of Islamophobia: Anti-Muslim racism in the UK and Australia. *Journal of Sociology*, 43, 61-86.
- Roosevelt, T. (1915). "Americanism," address before the Knights of Columbus, Carnegie Hall, New York. In Bischoff, H. (2002). *Immigration Issues*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. p. 200
- Runnymede Trust (1997). *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All, Summary* .
- Runnymede Trust (2000). *The Future of Multi-ethnic Britain: The Parekh Report* , London: Profile Books
- Thernstrom, S. (2004). Rediscovering the Melting Pot-Still Going Strong. In Jacoby, T (Ed.), *Reinventing the Melting Pot*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Vertovec, S. (1996). Multiculturalism, culturalism, and public incorporation. In Vertovec, S. (Ed.), *Migration and Social Cohesion* (pp. 222-240). Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc.
- What Mr. Obama Changed. (2009). *Washington Post*. Editorial, 12/3.
- Williams, G. (1960) Egomania in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci: Some notes on interpretation. *Journal of the Interpretation of Ideas* 21, p587. Cited in Altheide, D.(1987) Format and symbols in TV coverage of terrorism in the United States and Great Britain. *International studies quarterly*, 31(2).
- Ziegler-McPherson, C. (2009). *Americanization in the States: Immigrant Social Welfare Policy, Citizenship, and National Identity in the United States, 1908-1929 (Working in the Americas)*. Gainesville: FL, University Press of Florida.

Appendix

Period I Case Studies

Sarah Lyall, "The Immigrant Journey Gets No Easier in Britain"

Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 3

1100 words; BRADFORD, England, July 12

Warren Hoge, "Britain Arrests 7 Suspected Of Links To Bin Laden"

Section A; Page 3; Column 4; Foreign Desk

485 words; LONDON, Sept. 23

Warren Hoge, "Nonwhites Barely Visible in British Vote"

Section A; Page 8; Column 4; Foreign Desk

971 words; LONDON, April 28

Supplementary Articles:

Stephen Holden, "FILM REVIEW; Of Streets Paved With Sadness"

Section C; Page 16; Column 1; Cultural Desk

May 14, 1997, Wednesday, Late Edition - Final

LENGTH: 617 words

Period II articles

Warren Hoge, "British Life Is Fractured Along Racial Lines, a Study Finds"

Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 3

1101 words; LONDON, Dec. 11

Alan Cowell, "The Tug of Faith Unsettles Many British Muslims"

Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 8;

920 words; BIRMINGHAM, England, Oct. 18

Sarah Lyall, "Burnley Journal; In a British Election, the Alienated vs. the Aliens"

Section A; Column 3; Foreign Desk; Pg. 4

942 words; BURNLEY, England, May 1

Supplementary Articles:

Sarah Lyall, "A NATION CHALLENGED: TERROR CELL; English Town Whispers Of a Taliban Connection"
Section 1; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 14
1164 words; TIPTON, England, Jan. 29

Period III Articles

Jane Perlez, "Old Church Becomes Mosque In Altered and Uneasy Britain"
Section A; Column 5; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1
1577 words; CLITHEROE, England, April 2, 2007

Serge F. Kovalski, "Young Muslims in Britain Hear Competing Appeals"
Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 3
1254 words; LONDON, Aug. 25

Sarah Lyall, "Britain's Plans for Addressing Its Muslims' Concerns Lag"
Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 3
1209 words; LONDON, Aug. 18

Supplementary Articles:

Jane Perlez, "Muslims' Veils Test Limits of Britain's Tolerance"
Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1
1281 words, LONDON, June 16

Hassan M. Fattah, "Anger Burns on the Fringe of Britain's Muslims"
Jonathan Allen contributed reporting for this article.
Section A; Column 3; Foreign Desk;
1685 words, LEEDS, England, July 15