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Discursive integration and Muslims in Australia

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Abstract

This chapter reviews the core literature on media discourses about Muslims in the global and Australian contexts and, through a content analysis of articles published in *The Australian* newspaper in May 2010, compares media discourses around Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Our results show that Islam was portrayed systematically differently from either Christianity or Judaism. In particular, Islam was frequently associated with violence, particularly in the context of terrorism, and it was portrayed as a perpetrator of violence far more often than the other two religions. We argue that Muslims are discursively situated as a threatening other, indicating a lack of discursive integration in the Australian media context.

Keywords: *Discourse, religion, Christianity, Judaism, Muslims, discursive integration, content analysis, Australia, Islam*

Introduction

Migration flows to the West after World War II led to the emergence of highly multicultural migrant receiving societies. Muslim nations sent many migrants to the West in this period. Now over 15 million Muslims live in Europe¹ and over 340,000 live in Australia.²

¹ B Parekh, 'Europe, liberalism and the Muslim question', in T Modood, T, A Triandafyllidou, & R Zapata-Barrero (eds), *Multiculturalism, Muslims and Citizenship*, Routledge, New Jersey, 2005, pp. 179-203.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Religious Affiliation*, cat. no. 2068.0, 2006, retrieved 4 November 2010, <http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au>.

Since they began arriving in large numbers, questions have been raised about the willingness and capacity of Muslims to integrate into Western societies, and, particularly since the terrorist attacks of 2001, Muslims have been perceived as a problem for the West.³

In this paper we explore dominant Western and Australian discourses about Muslims and Islam. We first discuss the concept of social integration and whether discourse can be an indicator of social integration. Next we analyse Western and Australian literature on discourses of Islam, showing that Islam has been portrayed negatively throughout the West and in Australia. We then, using a sample from the nationally circulated *Australian* newspaper, investigate contemporary discourses on Islam, comparing the media discourses on Islam to those on Judaism and Christianity, and asking whether Muslims are portrayed differently from Christians or Jews. We find that Muslims were more likely to be portrayed in the context of violence, particularly as perpetrators of violence (e.g., as terrorist), than members of either of the other two religions. We argue that this systematically different portrayal of Islam to other religions is an indication that Muslims have not been discursively integrated in the Australian context, and that they remain situated as a threatening other. This portrayal of Muslims as other could have implications for broader perceptions of their potential for social integration into Australian society.

Social Integration

Social integration refers to the movement of a group from being outside the mainstream of society to being a part of mainstream society. It is a salient concept for migration research as governments have been particularly concerned with the integration of migrant groups over time.

³ See T Modood, T, A Triandafyllidou, & R Zapata-Barrero (eds), *Multiculturalism, Muslims and Citizenship*, Routledge, New Jersey, 2005.

In the 19th century, industrialization and urbanization broke down traditional communities and institutions and brought about new forms of social order. This shift and its characteristics have been examined by classical sociologists. For instance, Durkheim in his discussion of *mechanical* and *organic* solidarity⁴, and Tonnies, in his discussion of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*⁵, explore the mechanisms and consequences of industrialisation. In the past two centuries, technological innovations, particularly in communication and transportation technologies, and the globalization of political and economic processes have created profound changes in the structure and organization of societies. These ongoing processes of societal change bring the question of social integration to the forefront of sociological debates as they have facilitated migration processes. Sociologists have attempted to address the integration of highly diverse societies in a variety of ways.

Early attempts to understand the diversity arising from mass migration were made by the Chicago school of sociology and were largely based on Robert Park's theory of the race relations cycle.⁶ He claimed that immigrants go through the stages of *contact*, *competition*, *accommodation* and *assimilation* and will be ultimately absorbed into the host society, achieving social integration. This theory, along with its later developments, created a basis for the implementation of assimilation policies in Western migrant-receiving countries. In Australia, assimilationist migration policies were in operation until 1972. Social integration was meant to be achieved through assimilation: migrants were expected to act like and become members of the host/dominant society.

4 E Durkheim, *The Division Of Labour In Society*, Free Press, New York, 1964.

5 F Tonnies, *Community and Society (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft)*, University Press, Michigan State, 1957.

6 RE Park, 'Assimilation, social' in E Seligman & A Johnson (eds), *Encyclopaedia of the Social Science*, McMillan, New York, 1930, pp. 281-283.

Assimilation policy with its underlying assumption of the inferiority of immigrants led to a rise in racist and ethnocentric attitudes and discourses.⁷ International developments such as the emergence of East Asian countries as economic and political powers around the 1970s led to the abandonment of assimilationism in countries such as Canada and Australia. Assimilationist policies were replaced by multiculturalism, and diversity was ostensibly celebrated.⁸ In this new era, pressure was no longer put on migrants to abandon their cultural heritage in order to blend into Australian society. Social integration was sought through allowing different cultures the right to preserve their language, traditions and ways of life. Social integration under multiculturalism was largely reduced to civic citizenship. The underlying assumption was that by providing migrants with equal rights to practice their culture, social integration would naturally occur.

Although multiculturalism has been looked at as a social policy that promotes the social integration of ethnic groups, its success has been dubious⁹. Multiculturalism has been subject to many critiques advising that it favours rights over responsibilities and enhances political fragmentation. Bloemraad argues that multiculturalism has been misread as it is a policy for political participation not socio-economic integration.¹⁰ This suggests that multiculturalism does not necessarily lead to integration in itself, that we can have demographic multiculturalism, where people of different ethnic backgrounds are present and able to run for office and vote, without meaningful social integration. These kinds of critiques have led to retreats from multiculturalism in a number of liberal states.¹¹

⁷ E Vasta, 'Dialectics of domination: racism and multiculturalism', in E Vasta & S Castles (eds), *The Teeth Are Smiling*, Allen and Unwin, NSW, Australia, 1996, pp. 46-72.

⁸ S Castles, B Cope, M Kalantzis & M Morrissey, *Mistaken Identity: Multiculturalism And The Demise Of Nationalism In Australia*, Pluto Press, NSW, Australia, 1992.

⁹ C Joppke, 'The retreat of multiculturalism in the liberal states: theory and policy', *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 55, no. 2, 2004, pp. 237-257.

¹⁰ I Bloemraad, 'Unity in diversity? bridging models of multiculturalism and immigrant integration', *Du Bois Review*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2007, pp. 317-336.

¹¹ Joppke, 'The retreat of multiculturalism in the liberal states'.

While culture was thought to play a vital role in the assimilation paradigm, it has been removed from social integration debates under multiculturalism. Culture was replaced with civic citizenship. In the assimilation policy period in Australia, migrants were explicitly asked to adopt Anglo-Australian culture. The dominant (Anglo-Australian) discourse asserted that Australia was a White nation where non-Anglos were tolerated.¹² This discourse reflected the value system and ideology of the dominant Anglo-Australian group and positioned non-Anglos as inferior others. In the shift to multiculturalism, the focus turned from assimilation to citizenship and civic engagement; people could integrate under multiculturalism through their civic participation. They did not need to assimilate and adopt Anglo-Australian culture. Although the shift to multiculturalism was reflected demographically, the dominant Anglo-Australian discourse that placed non-Anglos as outsiders remained and was expressed both explicitly and implicitly.¹³ Non-Anglo migrants continue to be discursively situated as outsiders in Australia. Multiculturalism has emerged as a competing discourse to the dominant Anglo-Australian discourse; however, as will be discussed later, it has not supplanted the dominant discourse.

Discourse as an indicator of social integration

Employing the basic concepts of Durkheim, modern societies build solidarity differently from traditional ones. While societies in the past were organised around kinship and *similarity* (e.g., religion, work), modern societies are organised based on a *division of labour*.¹⁴ Industrialized society, which is characterised by high rates of labour specialization, is integrated through the interdependence of its component parts and the reliance of all parts

12 G Hage, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society*, Routledge, New York, 1998.

13 Hage, *White Nation*.

14 Durkheim, *The Division Of Labour In Society*.

on each other. Thus in an ideal type of an integrated society, all parts and groups need each other to make a harmonious and productive society. The interest of society as a whole is achieved through the contributions of all societal subgroups. Social cohesion occurs because all strata are needed for society to function.

The above analysis raises the question of power: who defines which groups are integral? Which group is in a position to judge other groups and evaluate their benefit or harm to the society? The dominant group that has established its power in key social institutions plays a role here. Dominant groups have the power to disseminate their definition of situation throughout society, and influence public discourse. This is the case particularly in a multicultural society.¹⁵ Foucault's explanation of interplay between *discourse* and *power*¹⁶ as well as Gramsci's notion of *hegemony*¹⁷ are helpful here. Discourse reflects power relations and reinforces power structures. Gitlin reads the core conception of hegemony as 'those who rule the dominant institutions secure their power in large measure directly and indirectly, by impressing their definitions of the situation upon those they rule'.¹⁸ Thus, a dominant group (e.g., a ruling class, an ethnic group) reflects and entrenches its views and ideological values around race, ethnicity and religion and other social categories through discourse. Van Dijk et al. argue that discourse is the main way in which ethnic prejudices are reproduced.¹⁹ A dominant group's values and definitions of other groups serve its own interests rather than those of society as a whole. Dominant groups can position particular ethnic or religious communities with whom they share few interests as outsiders or 'others'.

¹⁵ Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*.

¹⁶ M Foucault, *The Archaeology Of Knowledge*, Tavistock, London, 1972.

¹⁷ A Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Edited and translated by Q Hoare and G N Smith, International publishers, New York, 1971.

¹⁸ T Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching, Mass Media In The Making And Unmaking Of The New Left*, University of California Press, California, 1980, p. 10.

¹⁹ TA Van Dijk, S Ting-Toomey, G Smitherman & D Troutman, 'Discourse, ethnicity, culture and racism', in TA van Dijk (ed.), *Discourses as Social Interaction*, Sage publications, London, 1997, pp. 144-180.

The central role of news media in producing discourses means that it is a key vehicle for establishing and reinforcing the position of dominant groups.²⁰

At the same time, minorities and marginalised groups present their own competing discourses to show their benefit to the operation of society. These competing discourses reflect marginal views in society but may challenge dominant discourses and even eventually come to dominate. For example, white supremacy was a dominant discourse in apartheid South Africa while non-racialism was a competing discourse. In the post-apartheid period, non-racialism has become the dominant discourse while white supremacy has been marginalised.²¹ Minorities and subordinate groups attempt to challenge dominant discourses because they impact on their life chances and their access to the resources.

The role of discourse in social integration, then, is important. Although individual migrants may live their lives alongside members of mainstream society, at the discursive level, if they are othered, the dominant societal perception is that they are not integrated. A lack of discursive integration places them outside of the mainstream and could lead to instances of racism or other types of discrimination.

Applying the above discussion to Australian Muslims we explore whether Muslim migrants are discursively integrated in Australia. To narrow our focus, we will examine dominant global (Western) and local discourses on Islam, contrasting those with the competing multiculturalism discourse.

Western discourses on Islam

²⁰ Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching*.

²¹ K Farquharson, 'Racialized media discourses in the 'New' South Africa: the Makgoba Controversy', *Research in Politics and Society*, vol. 6, 1999, pp. 175-194.

The Western discourse on Islam associates Islam with fundamentalism, barbarism, violence, threats and jihad.²² It is a negative framing of Islam that places Muslims outside of mainstream Western societies. The Western discourse on Islam suggests that Muslims cannot integrate into Western societies which are, in contrast, civilized and peaceful.

Said has examined the root of such views, particularly in his study of Orientalism.²³ Drawing on Foucault's discourse analysis, Said carefully illustrated the interplay of knowledge and power in the West for the purpose of dominating the orient in the colonial period. Orientalists have always dogmatically viewed the Orient as something that should either be feared or be controlled. Said argues that one of the reasons for the persistence of antagonistic views towards Muslims in Western countries is the mass presence of Muslim migrants in these countries.²⁴

The negative Orientalist view of Islam intensified after the Cold War, particularly in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks and the subsequent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. After the succession of terrorist attacks in London, Madrid and Bali, the Orientalist discourse on Islam resurged and solidified. This negative Western discourse on Islam has challenged multiculturalism in many Western societies and has called multiculturalism and its associated discourses into question.²⁵

Not all Western discussions of Islam situate it negatively. For example, the President of the United States, Barack Obama, has attempted to soften the negative images of Islam in Western discourse.²⁶ However, the deeply entrenched and formulated *us/them* views persist.

²² B Milton-Edwards, 'Researching the radical: the quest for a new perspective', in H Donnan (ed.), *Interpreting Islam*, Sage publication, London, 2002, pp. 32-50.

²³ EW Said, *Covering Islam, How The Media And The Experts Determine How We See The Rest Of The World*, Pantheon books, New York, 1981. EW Said, *Orientalism*, Penguin, London, 2003.

²⁴ EW Said, 'The clash of ignorance', *The Nation*, 22 October, 2001.

²⁵ Modood, et al. (eds), *Multiculturalism, Muslims and Citizenship*.

²⁶ For example: B Obama, 'A new beginning', speech delivered at Cairo University, 4 June 2009, text viewed at *The Guardian*, 30 November 2009, available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jun/04/barack-obama-keynote-speech-egypt>.

The dominant discourse on the Islamic-Western relation is still Orientalist and antagonistic and the Western media's representation of Islam persistently others Muslims both at home and overseas. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the Arab-Israel conflict have fuelled anti-Muslim rhetoric in the West. Fear of fundamentalist terrorist networks has replaced the traditional discourse of fear in media²⁷ and led Western liberal states to revise their policies towards Muslim migrants.²⁸

Australian discourses on Islam

The Australian Muslim population was 340,389 in 2006, comprising less than two per cent of the Australian population.²⁹ Nevertheless, Muslims' presence and activities have been regularly debated in public discourse. The first group of Muslims to arrive in Australia were Afghans who were brought by new settlers to contribute to the exploration of the central part of Australia in the 1800s. Afghans helped in the establishment of telegraph systems and worked in mines in Australia.³⁰ More recently, in the second half of the twentieth century, when the government enacted a post-war immigration program, increasing numbers of Muslims arrived in Australia.³¹ This mass immigration program resulted in the arrival of a range of groups of people. These included Muslims from the Middle East, East and South Asia, Southern Europe and Africa who came to Australia and formed a diverse community of Muslims.

²⁷ DL Altheide, 'The mass media and terrorism', *Discourse and Communication*, vol. 1, no. 3, 2007, pp. 287-308.

²⁸ Joppke, 'The retreat of multiculturalism in the liberal states: theory and policy'.

²⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Religious Affiliation*.

³⁰ B Cleland, 'The history of Muslims in Australia', in A Saeed and S Akbarzadeh (eds), *Muslim Communities in Australia*, UNSW Press, New South Wales, Australia, 2001, pp. 12-32.

³¹ H Deen, *Caravanserai: journey among Australian Muslims*, Allen & Unwin, NSW, Australia, 1995.

Since settlement, Muslims have been depicted negatively in Australia.³² The practices of Islam (e.g., fasting, veiling, eating Halal meat, mosques) were deemed to be antithetical to the Western way of life and stereotypical views made Muslims as *others* in society.³³ For example, in the nineteenth century, ‘local newspapers declared Afghans more detestable than the Chinese and attacked them for refusing to drink grog and for opening their own stores and butcher shops’.³⁴ Those views have been in line with the Western Orientalist discourse which, as discussed above, associates Islam with fundamentalism, barbarism, violence, threat and jihad.³⁵

One of the ways the media relates a discourse about a minority group is through highlighting particular issues and not balancing those with counter issues. This kind of discourse is called a discourse of deviance.³⁶ Brasted researched Australian press representations of Islam in the period of 1950-2000, when large numbers of Muslims entered in Australia. He found that the Australian media focused on ‘single snapshots’ of Muslim history and highlighted the charismatic leaders, fundamentalists and radical and controversial facets of Islam.³⁷ Kabir examined Australian media representations of Islam between 2001 and 2005. He showed that the media, by focusing on Islamic militants, effectively demonised all Muslims. He suggested that the media prefers to preserve community anxiety and looks for scapegoats for social problems instead of elaborating their root causes. Using primary and

³² Cleland, ‘The history of Muslims in Australia’; H Brasted, ‘Contested representations in historical perspective: images of Islam and the Australian press 1950-2000’, in A Saeed and S Akbarzadeh (eds), *Muslim Communities in Australia*, UNSW Press, NSW, Australia, 2001, pp. 206-227; KM Dunn, ‘Islam in Australia’, KM Dunn, ‘Representation of Islam in the politics of mosque development’, *Tijdschrift Voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, vol. 92, 2001, pp. 291-308.

³³ M Humphrey, ‘An Australian Islam? religions in the multicultural city’, in A Saeed and S Akbarzadeh (eds.), *Muslim Communities in Australia*, UNSW press, Sydney, 2001, pp. 33-52; M Humphrey, *Islam, Multiculturalism, and Transnationalism: from the Lebanese Diaspora*, Centre for Lebanese studies with I.B.Tauris, London, 1998

³⁴ Cleland, ‘The history of Muslims in Australia’.

³⁵ Milton-Edwards, ‘Researching the radical: the quest for a new perspective’.

³⁶ H Goodall, A Jacobowicz, J Martin, T Mitchell, L Randall & K Seneviratne, *Racism, Ethnicity and the Media*, Allen & Unwin, NSW, Australia, 1994.

³⁷ Brasted, ‘Contested representations in historical perspective’.

secondary sources, Kabir demonstrated how the news media constructs Muslims as *others* and Islam more generally as a social menace.³⁸ Australian discourses that situate Muslims as deviant are evident in many other studies.³⁹

Another type of discourse by which a cultural minority is constructed as *other* is the discourse of absence.⁴⁰ In this discourse the majority group does not recognise the existence of the minority group and simply ignores it. Dunn illustrates this discourse in Sydney's anti-mosque politics. Muslims' attempts to establish mosques in a number of Sydney suburbs encountered obstructions, with local councils advising that those suburbs were not Islamic. Through the non-recognition of their presence, Muslims were deprived of their rights as Australian citizens.⁴¹

The Australian media has also tended to racialise the crimes committed by Muslims, most notably in the case of a rape that occurred in Sydney. In 2000, 14 young Lebanese-Australian men were prosecuted for forming a rape gang in Sydney and assaulting a number of White Australian girls. The media representations of the incident implied that the criminals were 'Muslims' and 'Lebanese' and victims were 'Aussie', and in this way the Lebanese and Muslim categories were excluded from the Australian category.⁴² In effect, the media presented a cultural explanation for individual criminal behaviour.⁴³

³⁸ N Kabir, 'Representation of Islam and Muslims in the Australian media, 2001-2005', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 26, no. 3, 2006, pp. 314-328.

³⁹ N Kabir, 'Depiction of Muslims in selected Australian media: free speech or taking sides', *M/C Journal*, vol. 9, no. 4, 2006; S Poynting, G Noble, P Tabar & JH Collins, *Bin Laden in the suburbs: criminalising the Arab other*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 2004; L Hopkins, 'Muslim Turks and anti-Muslim discourse', *Australian Journal of Communication*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2008, pp. 41-55; H Rane, & M Abdalla, 'The impact of media imagery on public opinion', *Australian Journalism Review*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2008, pp. 39-49; M Humphrey, 'Culturalising the abject: Islam, law and moral panic in the West', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2007, pp. 9-25; G Hage, (ed), *Arab-Australians Today: Citizenship and Belonging*, Melbourne University Press, VIC, Australia, 2002.

⁴⁰ KM Dunn, 'Islam in Australia: contesting the discourse of absence', *The Australian Geographer*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2004, pp. 333-53.

⁴¹ Dunn, 'Islam in Australia'.

⁴² Poynting, et al., *Bin Laden in the Suburbs*.

⁴³ Humphrey, 'Culturalising the abject'.

The September 11 attacks and subsequent terrorist events in London and Bali were a turning point for discourses around Muslims in Australia. While before September 11 the Australian discourse on Islam revolved around cultural compatibility and Muslims' capacity for social integration, after September 11 the discourse constructed Muslims as threats to Australian society.⁴⁴ Ghassan Hage notes that until the late 1990s (the time of the Gulf War) Muslims were not considered as Australia's most threatening outsiders; it was Asians who were the key threatening *others* in Australia. Even the racist movement of Pauline Hanson targeted Asians rather than Muslims. At the turn of the 21st century Muslims replaced Asians and became the primary threat to Australia.⁴⁵ This shift had little to do with internal dynamics of Australian society and was mainly fed by the Western discourse on Islam and Muslims.

According to the literature, then, Australian discourses on Islam place Islam and Muslims as a threatening other that threatens the Australian way of life. In particular, in the post-September 11 era Muslims in Australia are seen as potentially violent, as evident in the discursive framing of Lebanese 'gangs' in Sydney.

This discussion of both Western and Australian discourses on Islam leads us to our two research questions. First we ask: does the contemporary Australian media discourse found in *The Australian* mirror the Orientalist Western and previous Australian discourse on Islam? Secondly we ask: are Muslims portrayed differently in the Australian media than Jews or Christians? We ask this to ascertain whether other religions are also othered by the media. Judaism is a particularly interesting comparison, because it is also a minority religion in Australia.

Methods

⁴⁴ Humphrey, 'Culturalising the abject'.

⁴⁵ G Hage, 'The doubts down under', *Catalyst*, 17 May 2006.

To answer these research questions we conducted a content analysis of articles published in *The Australian* published from 1 May through 14 May 2010 inclusive. We selected *The Australian* as it is an influential broadsheet newspaper that is sold nationally. We chose a two week period as covering a typical news cycle. There were no particular foci on religion and no particularly newsworthy events that occurred during the time frame for the study as we were interested in everyday discourses around religion in general and Islam in particular. We analysed all items that included a mention of religion including opinion pieces, letters to the editor, book and movie reviews, and articles.

Content analysis is a research method used to analyse the content of texts. It involves developing a coding scheme and counting occurrences of each code.⁴⁶ Content analysis is usually descriptive and quantitative.⁴⁷ In this case we were interested in both how, in what context or frame, the three religions were discussed, and how frequently they were discussed in each context. The codes were developed to see whether media discourses on Muslims and/or Islam mirrored the Western and Australian discourses discussed above. Through a careful reading of the data, other codes were developed that reflected the ways in which religion was portrayed.

Our data consisted of all articles published in *The Australian* from 1 May through 14 May 2010. Articles were downloaded from the Factiva Australian newspaper database. We did a keyword search for ‘Islam* OR Muslim* OR Christian* or Jew*’. These word searches picked up on the variations of the words such as ‘Jewish’, ‘Islamic’, and ‘Christianity’. Once duplicates were removed, we had 81 articles for analysis. All articles were analysed in accordance with a coding scheme. The coding scheme is listed in the appendix.

Results

⁴⁶ WL Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Pearson Boston, 2006.

⁴⁷ Newman, *Social Research Methods*.

Table 1 shows the number of articles by religion. It shows that 58% of articles mentioned Muslims/Islam, far more than mentioned either Jews (32%) or Christians (26%). Islam was the most mentioned religion during the two-week period. In many articles religion was not the focus. For example, an article might mention the ‘Islamic Republic of Iran’ and that might have been the only mention of Islam. Similarly, an article might have mentioned the name of a Christian school, and that might have been the only mention. In fact, in 5 of the 21 articles coded as mentioning Christianity the only mention of the religion was the name of a Christian school. Nevertheless, the numbers of articles mentioning the three religions differ greatly, with Islam being mentioned much more frequently than the other two.

Table 1: Number of articles by religion

Religion	N (%)
Islam	47 (58)
Judaism	26 (32)
Christianity	21 (26)
Total	81 (100)

Note: percentages do not total to 100 due to more than one religion being mentioned in some articles

Did the media discourses on Islam in *The Australian* mirror the Orientalist Western and Australian discourses on Islam discussed in the literature? The Western discourse associates Islam with fundamentalism, violence, threats and Jihad. We found few overt indications of an association between Islam and fundamentalism, but we did find that Islam and/or Muslims were frequently portrayed in a context of violence. Twenty-eight of the 47 articles (60%) that mentioned Islam also mentioned violence. This suggests that contemporary Australian media discourses on Islam frequently place it within a context of violence. This is in contrast to both Judaism, which was placed in a context of violence 35% of the time, and Christianity, which was placed in a context of violence just 8% of the time.

Now we will focus on just the 34 articles that discussed violence (42% of the articles in our sample). Table 2 shows that in 71% of these articles, violence was discussed solely in

the context of Islam. When we combine those articles that only mentioned Islam with those that mentioned Islam and another religion, the total of articles that mentioned Islam in the context of violence jumped to 83%. So a large majority of articles that discussed violence also discussed Islam.

Table 2: Mentions of violence by religion(s), n (%)

Religion(s) mentioned	Violence mentioned
Islam	24 (71)
Judaism	5 (15)
Christianity	1 (3)
Islam and Judaism	3(9)
Islam, Judaism and Christianity	1(3)
Total articles where violence was mentioned	34

In Table 3 we look at some of the ways in which violence was discussed. In the Western discourse on Islam, Islam is portrayed as a violent religion and is associated with causing terrorism. We found that violence in the context of religion is mainly discussed in three ways: (1) the religion and/or its members was framed as perpetrating/being the cause of violence; (2) the religion and/or its members was framed as a being the victim of violence; and (3) the religion was mentioned in the context of terrorism. Situating Islam in the context of terrorism is a particular feature of Orientalist discourses.

Table 3: Further contexts of violence by religion, n (%)

Religion	Terrorism mentioned with direct reference to religion	Religion as perpetrating violence	Religion as the victim of violence
Islam	16 (80)	18 (78)	3 (38)
Judaism	1 (5)	1 (4)	3 (38)
Christianity	0	1 (4)	0
Islam and Judaism	3 (15)	2 (9)	2 (25)
Islam, Judaism and Christianity	0	1 (4)	0
Total	20 (100)	23 (100)	8 (100)

Of the three, we found that religion was portrayed as being the victim of violence in eight of the 34 articles that mentioned violence (24%), all of which featured either or both Islam and Judaism (see column 4 in Table 3). For example, one article reported that the remaining gunman behind the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks would be sentenced to death. The article described a Jewish centre as being attacked by Islamist gunmen,⁴⁸ placing the Jewish centre as the victim of violence.

Terrorism was mentioned in 20 of the 34 (59%) articles that mentioned violence. Of the articles that mentioned terrorism, 95% mentioned Islam or Muslims. So Islam was strongly associated with violence in general and terrorism in particular in these media discourses. Judaism was also associated with violence 20% of the time. However Judaism was only mentioned in the context of terrorism on its own in one article (5% of the 34 articles); the rest of the time it was mentioned in the context of terrorism in conjunction with Islam, as in the example above. Christianity, in contrast, was not mentioned in the context of terrorism.

Sixty-eight percent of the articles that mentioned violence did so in the context of the religion and/or its members as being the perpetrator of the violence. Again, Islam was most frequently portrayed in this way, with 78% of these articles referring solely to Islam and a further 13% referring to Islam in conjunction with other religions. So Islam was implicated as the perpetrator of violence in 91% of the articles where any religion is implicated as a perpetrator of violence.

Thus far our findings show that Islam was associated with terrorism and perpetrating violence far more often than either Judaism or Christianity. Christianity was only barely associated with violence, and while Judaism was implicated more frequently, it was not even close to the frequency with which Islam is associated with these contexts.

⁴⁸ A Hodge, 'Mumbai terrorist to be hanged', *The Australian*, 7 May 2010, p 12.

Looking at religion as the victim of violence, the portrayal of the three religions shifted. Christianity was not associated with being a victim of violence. Islam and Judaism were associated with being victims of violence with the same frequency: in 15% of the 34 articles that referred to violence respectively.

The findings so far indicate that these contemporary Australian media discourses on Islam do mirror both the Western and previous Australian discourses on Islam. Islam was often portrayed as violent and terrorist. It was also portrayed systematically different than either Christianity or Judaism. Two other key ways that religion was framed in the articles in our sample were as a personal descriptor (e.g., the Christian man) or as a national or political party descriptor (e.g., the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Christian Democrats). These descriptions, while having the potential to other a religion, do not necessarily place the religion in a negative light in the way that the violence context does. Table 4 shows the frequency with which religion was used as a personal descriptor and a national or political party descriptor.

Table 4: Religion as a personal descriptor or a political party/national descriptor, n (%)

Religion	Personal descriptor	Political party or national descriptor
Islam	4 (16)	6 (40)
Judaism	12 (48)	5 (33)
Christianity	3 (12)	2 (13)
Islam and Judaism	1 (4)	2 (13)
Islam and Christianity	1 (4)	0
Judaism and Christianity	3 (12)	0
Islam and Judaism and Christianity	1 (4)	0
Total	25 (100)	15 (100)

Note: percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Table 4 indicates that Judaism was most frequently discussed as a personal descriptor. For example, an article mentioned that Lena Horne’s husband was Jewish. This was a typical way that religion was used as a personal descriptor. In 17 of the 26 articles (65%) where Judaism was mentioned at all, it was as a personal descriptor. In eight of the 21 articles

(38%) where Christianity was mentioned it was as a personal descriptor. These eight, combined with the five mentions of Christianity in a school name, means Christianity was mentioned as a descriptor of some sort in 62% of the articles where it was mentioned at all. These relatively benign invocations of religion are in contrast with the largely negative invocations associated with Islam.

Table 4 also indicates that only 15 articles used religion as a political party or national descriptor and it was more common for Judaism and Islam, than for Christianity. Of the 81 articles over all, only 19% included a mention of religion as a political party or national descriptor, and in 10% of these articles the religion mentioned was Islam, in 9% it was Judaism, and in just 2% it was Christianity. So Islam and Judaism were more likely to be associated with political parties or nations than Christianity, but this use of religion was not a major part of these media discourses.

We were also interested in whether Islam was discussed in the context of multiculturalism as multiculturalism could be a potential competing discourse that could situate Islam as a worthy part of multicultural Australia. Multiculturalism was discussed in just three articles. In the first, it was discussed as a way of providing cultural choice. Islam was not mentioned in this first article. Islam was mentioned in the other two articles. The second article suggests that multiculturalism has actually led to a rise in Islamic fundamentalism because its ethnic particularism ‘...has helped push many young secular Asians towards Islamism as an alternative worldview’.⁴⁹ The third article was similarly negative about multiculturalism, suggesting that it keeps ethnic minorities segregated from the mainstream population. For these articles, then, there is no indication of multiculturalism as a competing discourse to dominant Orientalist discourses.

⁴⁹ ‘Fundamentally radical’, Global Web Watch, *The Australian*, 5 May 2010, Downloaded from the Factiva database on 17 May 2010. Document AUSTLN0020100504e6550001k

Discussion

Our findings indicate that Muslims and Islam were portrayed as violent, particularly in the context of terrorism but also as perpetrators of violence, more frequently than members of either of the other two religions. Our main findings were that the majority of items that mentioned religion mentioned Islam, and the majority of items that mentioned Islam also mentioned violence. In contrast, Judaism and Christianity were more likely to be mentioned as descriptors. These findings indicate that Orientalist discourse dominates framings of Islam in *The Australian* newspaper.

This systematically different portrayal of Islam from other religions suggests that Muslims have not been discursively integrated in the Australian context, that they remain discursively situated as a threatening other. In contrast, Jews/Judaism, also a minority religion in Australia, were/was not portrayed as a threatening other.

Negative discourses about Muslims have the potential to alienate Muslims in Australian society and inhibit them from full integration with the broader society. Similar to Parekh's categorization of British Muslims⁵⁰, we can think of three types of Muslims in Australia; Muslims *in* Australia, who live in Australia but do not feel any attachment to it. Muslims *of* Australia who feel 'Australia' is home and have loyalty and attachment to it and where 'Muslim' refers to their religious affiliation. For this group, however, their religion and their sense of nation remain distinct. The final group are *Australianized Muslims*, those Muslims who feel attachment to Australia and read the Quran and Muslim history from their Australian cultural orientation, allowing them to create their distinct form of Islam. This third group is likely to be small if the dominant discourse around Muslims looks at them as *other* rather than *Australian*.

⁵⁰ Parekh, 'Europe, liberalism and the Muslim question'.

We were surprised to find that multiculturalism was discussed so infrequently and in the two articles where it was mentioned it was framed as a negative for the social integration of Muslims into society. Official discourses of multiculturalism place it as a policy and discourse that welcomes and celebrates cultural diversity and deems it as the basis of societal self understanding.⁵¹ Multiculturalism could act as a unifying force through its value of accepting and respecting all cultural heritages within an overriding commitment to the basic values of Australian democracy ⁵², however this is not the way it is being invoked in these media discourses of Islam. Although the dominant discourse on Islam asserts that Muslims are threatening others, it could be countered by multicultural discourses that assert we all have the right to maintain our cultural practices in Australia; in practice they do not appear to act as counter discourses to the dominant Anglo-Australian and Western discourse on Islam.

Although multiculturalism is the official policy of the Australian government, giving it some authority, popular discourses regarding migrants continue to be less welcoming⁵³ and this is reflected in our findings. In the late 20th and early 21st century, there has been a retreat from multiculturalism in Canada, Australia and in some of the liberal states of Europe.⁵⁴ The retreat from multiculturalism has been accelerated by some Muslim-related events particularly in Europe.⁵⁵ The Salman Rushdie case in Britain and other incidents such as the shooting of Dutch movie director Theo Van Gogh because he was directing a movie

⁵¹ B Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2006.

⁵² National Multicultural Advisory Council, *Australian Multiculturalism for a New Century*, Canberra, 1999.

⁵³ Hage, *White Nation*; H Brasted, 'Contested representations in historical perspective'; E Poole & JE Richardson, *Muslims and the News Media*, I.B.Tauris, London, 2006.

⁵⁴ H Entzinger, 'The rise and fall of multiculturalism: The case of the Netherlands', in C Joppke and ET Morawska (eds.), *Toward Assimilation and Citizenship: Immigrants in Liberal Nation-States*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2003, pp. 59-86; C Joppke, 'The retreat of multiculturalism in the liberal states'; R Brubaker, 'The return of assimilation? changing perspectives on immigration and its sequels in France, Germany and the United States', *Ethical and Racial Studies*, vol. 24, no. 4, 2001, pp. 531-548; A Triandafyllidou, T Modood, & R Zapata-Barrero, 'European challenges to multicultural citizenship' in T Modood, T, A Triandafyllidou, & R Zapata-Barrero (eds), *Multiculturalism, Muslims and Citizenship*, Routledge, New Jersey, 2005, pp. 1-22.

⁵⁵ A Triandafyllidou, T Modood, & R Zapata-Barrero, 'European challenges to multicultural citizenship'.

conceived as Anti-Islam by Muslims have accentuated negative European views on Muslims.⁵⁶

Obviously, Muslims are successfully living in Australia, working, attending school and socializing with mainstream Australians. Nevertheless counter discourses to the dominant largely negative discourses on Islam were not present in the media articles we analysed. Although multiculturalism has the capacity to be a competing discourse enabling the removal of Muslims from the position of *other*, it is not currently being invoked in this way.

Conclusion

In this chapter we investigated whether contemporary Australian media discourses found in *The Australian* mirrored the Orientalist Western and previous Australian discourses on Islam, and whether Muslims were portrayed differently from Jews or Christians. We found that the discourses we analysed did mirror the Orientalist discourse, associating Islam with threat, violence and terror in particular. Further, we found that Muslims were portrayed systematically differently from either Jews or Christians. Although both Islam and Judaism are minority religions in Australia the ways they were discursively situated were markedly different, with Islam being framed much more negatively.

Our analysis of contemporary media discourses on Muslims in *The Australian* reveals a lack of discursive integration of Muslims in the Australian context. Islam is portrayed as violent and as different from mainstream Western society. Broadly speaking, we would suggest that the social integration of Muslims cannot occur in the absence of discursive integration. In this paper we endeavoured to show how discourses around Islam *other* Muslims, positioning them outside of the 'Australian' category. The consequence of this is

⁵⁶ B Parekh, 'Europe, liberalism and the Muslim question'.

that Muslims are subject to experiences of discrimination due to their positioning as other, a positioning that is reinforced by the ways we discursively frame Islam.

Appendix: Coding Scheme

Articles were coding using the codes below.

Table A: Codes

Muslim/Islam mentioned
Christian/Christianity mentioned
Jewish/Jew mentioned
Australian context
International context
Terrorism mentioned
Islam-West relations mentioned
Violence mentioned
Religion othered
Religion normal
Religion as a personal descriptor
Religion as perpetrator of violence
Religion as victim of violence
Religion as national or political party descriptor
Multiculturalism mentioned

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