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BETWEEN MULTICULTURALISM AND NATIONALISM
– A DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF BRITISHNESS
IN THE *SPECTATOR* IN THE WAKE
OF THE LONDON BOMBINGS

Abstract

In his interdisciplinary work *Ideology* (1998), Teun A. van Dijk proposes to study ideology as a cognitive, social and linguistic enterprise. Such an integrative approach is assumed to model interfaces between social structure and cognition through discourse. The notion of ideology it presupposes may be described as shared social representations (group self-schemata), which become a group's defining attributes, and govern its ideological expression in discourse. It seems that this approach can be productively applied to a study of ideological relations in the discourses of multicultural societies, such as Britain.

In the wake of the London bombings in July 2005, the British right-wing quality weekly the *Spectator* published a series of articles raising alarming questions about the misguided ideological priorities of modern Britain, and envisioning a deepening crisis of national identity. According to the magazine, the heritage and values of mainstream British society are being endangered by the political promotion of multiculturalism. This in turn has instigated terrorist threats from Islamic extremists, who have been nurtured by the British welfare state and emboldened by its permissive policies. Thus the increasing ideological split between the militancy of the non-integrated Muslim minority in Britain and the decadence of national culture has become the subject of a number of articles. As a result, one of the pervasive discursive mechanisms emerging in the publication has been an ideological confrontation between "us" and "them."

The aim of the present study is to survey the pragmatic and rhetorical devices used to construct the image of British society tied in a discursive struggle to define its modern identity—oscillating between

the ideals of multiculturalism and the ideology of nationalism. The material for the study is taken from over fifteen articles that come from three subsequent issues of the *Spectator* published on 16, 23, and 30 July 2005. The methodological framework of the study draws on the research procedures of Critical Discourse Analysis accommodated to the analysis of ideological discourse in the press.

Keywords

Multiculturalism, nationalism, ideology, Critical Discourse Analysis.

1. What is ideology?

First of all, when introducing the concept of ideology it is important to eliminate its pejorative connotations, and treat it solely as a scientific construct employed in the analyses of a part of collective human experience. In general, the term ideology is used in the present study to refer to a system of beliefs which has been constructed as a way of comprehending the world, and “no person can engage with the world without the cognitive support of ideology in this sense” (Fowler 1981: 26). But ideologies are primarily understood as a property of “social cognition”: ideological beliefs are restricted to socially constructed reality only.

Due to its philological perspective, the present study adopts a theory of ideology that correlates the dimensions of the cognitive and the social through discourse. Such an integrative approach is offered by Teun A. van Dijk (1998), whose theory of ideology models a linguistic interface between social structure and cognition. The author proposes to define ideology as a set of “social representations shared by members of a group which allow them to organize the multitude of social beliefs about what is the case, good or bad, right or wrong, for *them*, and to act accordingly” (1998: 8). Drawing on the relevant research from cognitive psychology, van Dijk (1998) selects the notion of belief as his central explanatory concept. Beliefs, characterized as “building blocks” of the mind, are relative to specific groups that accept them and establish them as their “truth criteria.” In his semiotic and constructivist perspective, beliefs would be mental representations of the facts of the external world. According to this view, the representation of the world, even the facts of nature, involves interpretation and understanding of that world in terms of socially acquired conceptual categories (van Dijk 1998: 20-25). As a result, ideologies can be described as clusters of fairly coherent mental representations that predominantly include *evaluative beliefs* based on the criteria of moral judgment of a given group. Ideologies exclude strictly personal beliefs because these are not socially shared, although all

ideologies can be expressed by individuals, which is how they can be accessed and examined.

As ideologies are located in the minds of individuals, it is important to review how mental representations can be related to the construction of ideologies. In cognitive psychology and in discourse analysis it is assumed that the organization of beliefs in memory takes form of various mental models such as frames, scripts, prototypes, stereotypes or cognitive schemata (Brown and Yule 1983: 238-246). These models incorporate various aspects of our acquired knowledge in a conceptual version, so as to facilitate our comprehension of sequences of events and relations between things in the world. Specifically, mental models are useful in explaining the organization of ideas in our minds. For example, cognitive schemata are often described as higher-level conventional knowledge structures that predispose us to interpret our experience in a fixed way (cf. Scollon and Scollon 1995; Tabakowska 2000). Schema theory also attempts to explain the functioning of semantic memory: it is assumed that each new sensory or linguistic experience is understood in relation to a typical version of a similar experience held in memory. The new experience is then processed in terms of either its deviation from the typical version or its conformity to it (Cook 1994: 9-20). Presumably, some cognitive schemata are responsible for the storage and perception of ideology, as they are projected upon social discourse in order to make it relevant. In this study, ideology-related schemata are treated as chunks of evaluative knowledge acquired in the process of socialization, shared within a socially delimited group of people, and drawn upon in the process of social interaction and communication.

The conceptualization of ideological meanings is sometimes based on selecting salient features that constitute a prototype, or its “negative” equivalent—a stereotype. Stereotyping consists in creating exaggerated or oversimplified categories in an attempt to classify elements of social reality. This practice may be helpful in depicting “the typical,” but at the same time may make it inaccurate to perceive “the particular.” According to Roger Fowler (1991), the term “stereotype” is often used to denote socially constructed mental categories into which individuals are tentatively classified, for example as “a patriot,” “a terrorist,” or “a foreigner,” and which then become simplified mental “shortcuts” used in constructing meaning. However, it is important to realize that stereotypical categories are creative: we acquire them from the surrounding environment, and project them on the new experience in order to be able to process it. In his analysis of ideological processes in media discourse Fowler observes:

Having established a person as an example of a type, our relationship with that person is simplified: we think about the person in terms of the qualities which we attribute to the category already pre-existing in our minds. In so far as we regard the category of person as displaying strongly predictable attributes or behavior, the category may harden into stereotype, an extremely simplified mental model which

fails to see individual features, only the values that are believed to be appropriate to the type. This is, of course, a basic ideological process at work. (1991: 92)

Accordingly, ideologically oriented discourse analyses will often focus on the pragmatic and linguistic mechanisms of stereotyping.

As the acts of perception are accompanied by the acts of cognition, we tend to interpret the flux of experience by means of our cognitive schemata. They constitute an ideologically shaped apparatus that governs our initial expectations, priorities and interests. Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress notice that language is involved in ideological cognition at the stage of labeling and storing of perceptions and thoughts: if something has a name, it becomes easier to classify and remember, and later to share with others (1993: 5). Communicable perception has to be coded in language, which helps to fix some perceptions in the form of models and schemata. As language is sanctioned by society, it also reduces the gap between individual perception and social construction of reality. Consequently, the official standard language reinforces a habitual system of beliefs and representations—particularly the ideologies of dominant social groups. The examination of the linguistic choices recorded in press discourse can provide us with insights into these ideologies. So in a critical study attention must be paid to the frequency and type of lexical and syntactic patterns, rhetorical mechanisms, and pragmatic strategies that contribute to the reproduction of ideological meanings.

In their classical study on the social construction of reality, American sociologists Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann argue that humanity is inextricably intertwined with sociality. And, in turn, the relatively stable patterns of habitualization, institutionalization and legitimation underlying social reality constitute the basis for the functioning of social groups with their respective ideologies (1966: 51-61). Sometimes ideologies are so “natural” or “commonsensical” that individuals are not aware of them, which is often the case with dominant ideologies. But ideologies may also be used to justify social struggle for domination and to motivate resistance. Thus, ideologies can be most accurately articulated and consciously put into practice if people are faced with possible alternatives, e.g. in class or culture clashes. It must be stressed at this point that ideologies are not primarily about what is true or false, but about how people represent themselves and others in the social world. So the properties of ideologies should be evaluated with regard to their relevance to group interests. Van Dijk notices, for example, that the representations that constitute an ideology should be derivable from self-knowledge of the group: ideologies generally shape what is most significant for the identity of a group, namely its distinguishing conceptualization of itself vis-à-vis other groups (1998: 49-51). No wonder then that one of the most pervasive mechanisms in ideological discourse is the linguistic realization of the opposition between “us” and “them.”

If we acknowledge that ideologies include shared mental representations of a group with regard to itself and in relation to others, we can accept van Dijk's model of the structure of ideologies in the form of group self-schemata. The following categories (and the basic questions they stand for) seem to be the fundamental "co-ordinates" of social groups, which encompass both their identity and their interests:

MEMBERSHIP: Who are we? Where are we from? What do we look like? Who belongs to us? Who can become a member of our group?

ACTIVITIES: What do we do? What is expected of us? Why are we here?

GOALS: Why do we do this? What do we want to realize?

VALUES/NORMS: What are our main values? How do we evaluate ourselves and others? What should (not) be done?

POSITION AND GROUP RELATIONS: What is our social position? Who are our enemies, our opponents? Who are like us, and who are different?

RESOURCES: What are the essential social resources that our group has or needs to have? (van Dijk 1998: 69-70)

To conclude it can be stated that the main function of an ideology is to co-ordinate social and discursive practices of group members for the effective realization of the group's goals, promotion of its values or norms, and protection of its position, resources and interests. As a result, in a discursive approach, an ideology is not to be assessed as right or wrong, but rather as more or less effective in advancing the interests of a group.

2. How to study ideology in texts?

It is often stressed that the reproduction of ideology takes place predominantly in discourse, which allows people to fully articulate and promote their beliefs. For example, discourse (including the press) enables people to communicate conclusions arising from their experiences and observations, as well as to describe and prescribe actions and goals at any level of specificity or generality (van Dijk 1998: 192). On the other hand, the discursive approach allows researchers to make the notion of ideology more operational with respect to such specific variables as, for example, discourse participants as "ideologues," ideology-laden language structures, or ideology-reinforcing discursive practices.

In this vein, the linguistically oriented school of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) proposes a viable approach to the analysis of ideological discourse in the press. Its methodology is often seen as analytical heuristics: a set of systematically, though not mechanically, applied procedures that explore the ways in which ideology is articulated (cf. Fairclough 2001; Johnstone 2002). The word “critical” in discourse analysis does not imply condemnation; instead, criticism is a form of consistent analytic interrogation of categories, roles and institutions through which discourse participants are able to interact with reality. As put by Fowler, criticism helps “to demonstrate the representedness of knowledge, the ordering of symbolic structures through which this is achieved [...] and to offer the possibility of alternative representations” (1981: 26). Thus, many critical analyses focus on disclosing ideologies inherent in texts and, in particular, in language forms that are taken to *represent* reality while in fact they *interpret* it. However, CDA does not promise to expose the truth behind ideology: its aim is to demonstrate that there are ideologies in texts and practices that are thought to be non-ideological. This can be achieved through a systematic examination of their rhetorical characteristics and pragmatic effects.

Methodologically, according to Norman Fairclough, a pioneer of critical language studies (1995, 2001), CDA research may entail a three-stage procedure. It starts with a *description* of the text: the linguistic features and organization of concrete discourse elements are reviewed, and choices and patterns of vocabulary (e.g. metaphor, phraseology), grammar (e.g. transitivity, modality), cohesion (e.g. conjunctions, repetition, collocation), and text structure (e.g. progression, sequencing, turn-taking) are systematically analyzed. In the second phase of the analysis–*interpretation*–the aim is to specify interactional features, such as, for example, specific discourse conventions drawn upon. The range of conventions available includes genres, speech acts, coherence, and intertextual references. Importantly, there are dominant, normative ways of using such discourse resources or oppositional, alternative ones, which, in turn, can be used and combined in an innovative manner. Therefore, interpretational discourse analysis tries to pinpoint how these conventions are applied. Finally, the *explanation* phase of the analysis aims to elucidate the properties of the interaction by referring to its social context, justifying its being conventional and stable or oppositional and problematic. Explanation is thus concerned with assessing “the social determination of the processes of production and interpretation of discourse and their social effects” (Fairclough 2001: 21-22).

The critical function of discourse analysis is also discussed by Fowler, the founder of the method called “linguistic criticism” (1996). The author advocates the use of standardized metalanguage and relatively rigorous methodological procedures rooted in linguistics instead of intuitive observations. He points out that research based on linguistic theory aims to be more “comprehensive,” as it

distinguishes various “linguistic facts” to be accounted for, and assigns them an appropriate “level of description”: semantic, syntactic, phonological, phonetic, textual, pragmatic or stylistic (Fowler 1996: 4-5). Yet, it should be emphasized that it is impossible to establish a stable relationship between a particular linguistic form and its critical/ideological significance:

Purely linguistic analysis cannot reveal this significance: only a critical analysis which realizes the text as a mode of discourse, which recognizes pragmatic and social and historical context, can do so; and treating text as *discourse* stretches the capability of linguistics as presently constituted, taking us towards a theory of language in a full and dynamic sense. (Fowler 1996: 9)

Consequently, most critical analysts would agree that various linguistic analytic procedures constitute a heuristic “toolkit” that can be used in an interpretative effort to disclose ideologies. However, such tools will not produce a mechanical interpretation of ideological processes in discourse. Analysts have to use their linguistic and ideological awareness to appropriately contextualize discursive cues within rhetorical, cognitive and social domains to arrive at a plausible interpretation of the chosen effects produced in the press.

3. How was Britishness constructed discursively in the *Spectator* in the wake of the London bombings?

The *Spectator*’s editorial of 16 July 2005, over a week after the London bombings, begins with a bitter reminder that the terrorists who planted the bombs “were not interested in distinguishing between kinds of people—they simply wanted to kill as many of us as possible” (16 July 2005: 7). Interestingly, the article itself is very much devoted to distinguishing between the kinds of people locked in an ideological struggle, i.e. “us”—the British, and “them”—Islamists. First of all, the editorial attempts to delimit the category of “us” by foregrounding such features as liberty and tolerance inherent in British society. In an emotion-laden proclamation, the editor grandiloquently emphasizes that “our history enables people with very different religious convictions not just to live peacefully together, but also to trust one another” (16 July 2005: 7), neatly overlooking, for example, the religious antagonisms in Ulster. Thus the author seems to presuppose that there have been no cultural conflicts in the seamless fabric of the British society until the arrival of Muslims. In the description of the historical and civilizational superiority of British society, the author frequently uses the following personal/possessive pronouns: “our laws,” “our priorities,” “our secular and liberal society,” or “we, as a society,” clearly identifying himself as a supporter of the nationally oriented politics. The real British, it seems to be contended, are white European Protestants.

This idealized vision of allegedly homogeneous British society is now portrayed to be under threat from fanatical Muslim extremists, also labeled in the article with such terms as “terrorists,” “suicide bombers,” “killers,” or “murderers.” By relying on the pronouns “they,” “them,” or “that group,” the author distances himself from “their medieval vision of Islamic theocracy” (16 July 2005: 7). Although the fact that “the murderers were Britons born and bred” (16 July 2005: 7) is admitted in the article’s introductory paragraph, its paradoxical significance (that Britons could be murderers) seems to function as a pretext for the rhetorical question posed at the beginning of the article’s main body: “What has gone wrong with our society that it is capable of producing such monsters?” (16 July 2005: 7). As if to reinforce lexically and stylistically the inferior status of Islamists within British society, the author uses colloquialisms to suggest a simple remedy for future social conflicts: people who are planning “to blow themselves up” must be caught and “locked up” so that they “cannot do further damage” (16 July 2005: 7). Further on, and in a somewhat patronizing way, the author declares that British Muslims—who are sympathetic to elements of the extremist ideology—are the people “we desperately need to educate into understanding the merits of our secular and liberal society and its fundamental principle [of tolerance]” (16 July 2005: 7). Interestingly, the author takes advantage of the commonly pejorative associations of the word “ideology,” implying that “their” way of thinking should be called ideology, while “ours” is simply education. The above statement further marginalizes British Muslims within the scope of British society. This gradual but pervasive exclusion is most evident in the focal point of the article: “We, as a society, have to be totally intolerant of their extremism” (16 July 2005: 7). The sense of urgency of this obligation is reinforced in the following short sentence: “There must be no concessions of any kind to it,” which lends its phrasing to the title of the whole editorial (“No concessions”). The repetitive usage of the verbs “have to” and “must” with such intensifiers as “totally” and “of any kind” is meant to strengthen the feeling of national tenacity and to impress upon the readers that there is a genuine need to act in defense of their national values.

Although the editor qualifies his condemning statements as referring to a “small minority” of British Muslims, he consistently applies presuppositions and generalizations that denote the group as a whole. This is especially visible in the passages where he contrasts the modernity of the British nation with the backwardness of Sharia-regulated Islamic society. In particular, he claims that the extremist fanatics, who are “committed to the most reactionary version of Islam,” want to realize a vision of society that would amount to inequality, sexism, religious intolerance, legal restrictions and ever-present discrimination “between the faithful and the unbeliever,” leading either to forced conversions or to “punishing the unbeliever with death” (16 July 2005: 7). Not incidentally, the oppositional depiction of British society’s advanced stage of civilizational

development is furnished with such appreciative nominals as enlightenment, religious tolerance, intellectual revolution, peace and trust. Needless to say, in his contrastive portrayal, the author draws on the widely known stereotypes of the British and Muslims by highlighting merely selected traits and passing over those that do not go with his argument.

Interestingly, the high frequency of references to the opposition between tolerance and intolerance seems to be significant for the argumentation inherent in the article. At one level, the characteristic British tolerance, which is a product of its historical legacy, must be starkly contrasted with the fundamental intolerance of an Islamicist autocracy. Yet, at another level, the conviction that British tolerance needs protection leads the author to request intolerance towards any kind of extremism on the part of the British. The trappings of rational argumentation conceal the deeper incongruence of the above levels of reasoning, and subtly project a conservative nationalistic stance of the editorial. What is more, the concluding paragraph of the article includes a call for the defeat of the currently debated Labour government's bill on religious hatred. The resulting impression is thus that the event of the London bombings has been exploited here as an argument to achieve political advantage and to strengthen the opposition. The implicit contempt for the liberal policies of the government is also manifested through the use of inverted commas with such terms pertaining to the official multicultural discourse as, for example, the "social" explanation of the bombings, or the "social exclusion" of the Muslim minority in Britain. It can therefore be concluded that the construction of the British national character in the *Spectator* relies on the discursive processes aimed at re-establishing the so-called traditional British values. By deploying rhetorical devices that vilify and exclude Muslims from the mainstream of society, the paper also strives to undermine the ideology of multiculturalism.

As regards upholding the integrity of Britons' traditional values, in one of her "Diary" entries, Lucy Kellaway insists that, although they were tragic, the bombings left the British collective personality intact—"the good bits and the bad bits are all present and correct, just as before" (16 July 2005: 8). In addition, Charles Moore believes in the "innate good sense of the British people" (16 July 2005: 11), though he is disturbed by their fatalism or complacency with regard to the threat posed by Islamic fundamentalists. In his "Spectator's notes" the author offers some somber predictions, for example that "Islamist extremists [...] will undermine our way of life if they can exercise a hold over a growing Muslim population" (16 July 2005: 11). His warnings are intertwined with exaggerations and are expressed in memorable phrases, e.g. "After last week's events, there can be few white couples with children who have not at least considered moving out" (16 July 2005: 11). The usage of future tenses and modality makes such claims seemingly true, yet impossible to verify. Moreover, Moore uses a variety of

rhetorical devices to deprecate the values inherent in the ideology of multiculturalism. For example, he scoffs at the stock phrases (“rotten apples”) and indirectness (“issues around things”) of the London police officials who commented on the bombings. He also eloquently observes that Islam-related websites call for violence and disseminate “words as poisonous as ricin,” and quotes them as considering bin Laden to be a “good-hearted Muslim,” for example. The author seems to deliberately subvert the conventions of restraint, politeness and political correctness that are standard for quality magazines. He satirizes the dominant discourse of multiculturalism by passing jokes on Muslims, offering black-humor remarks referring to the bombings (e.g. “The cosmopolitan character of London makes its citizens more likely to be killed” 16 July 2005: 11), posing ironical questions in the spoken mode (e.g. “How diverse can diversity be, by the way?” 16 July 2005: 11), and mocking minorities (e.g. “One thing that Muslims hate much more than dogs is homosexuals” 16 July 2005: 11). Such discursive endeavors presumably aim to portray the current governmental policies of appeasement of Muslim radicals as both absurd and dangerous.

The article “Just don’t call it war” by Boris Johnson is another example of an ideologically unequivocal appeal to reassert so-called British values in the face of extremist Islam. From the very beginning the article applies sarcastic witticisms and striking figures of speech to give coloring to an explicitly informal oral mode of expression. For example, when describing the irony of having some “home-bred” suicide bombers, the author uses a selection of similes and parallelisms: “[They were] as British as the fish-and-chips shops in which they grew up. They were born in our NHS, these killers. They were coddled by our welfare state, they were fed on our butties and Spangles, they played cricket on our glam and bemedded streets. They were washed by the rains and blessed by the suns of home” (16 July 2005: 12). The ironic bitterness of the above depiction gradually gives way to ire, which is manifested through the author’s resorting to invectives when referring to terrorists, as in the following examples: “something scorched these fools in their young male psyches,” “the threat from Islamicist nutters,” “the actions of these Yorkshire maniacs,” “the paranoid Muslim mind,” or “the bombs were placed neither by martyrs nor by soldiers, but by criminals” (16 July 2005: 13).

Johnson’s article is strongly critical of all politicians, political analysts and journalists who use the phrase “war on terror,” since they lend credibility to the Islamists’ fight by assigning them the status of soldiers and inadvertently glorifying their actions. The author’s point is expressed most forcefully in the conclusion: “they were just killers; not military figures, but criminals.” Not surprisingly, in the course of the article Johnson’s stern and provocative reprimand of terrorists is extended to Islam in general, seen as “the most viciously sectarian of all religions in its heartlessness towards unbelievers” (16 July 2005: 13). One of his

concluding assertions is that “Islam is the problem” (16 July 2005: 13), which is expressed with such a degree of authority that there is no room for doubt or questioning. The same authoritative style is employed when the author urges the Muslim clergy to announce that “there is no eternal blessedness for the suicide bombers, there are no 72 virgins, and that the whole thing is a con and a fraud upon impressionable minds” (16 July 2005: 13). Here, syntactic parallelism and repetition are used to rhetorically reinforce the message of condemnation of Islamic terrorism. The author also coins new terms, such as “Islamophobia”—to express the public reaction to “disgusting arrogance and condescension” of Islamists, or “re-Britannification of Britain”—to highlight the need for a radical re-assertion of national values. In yet another telling metaphor, the author apparently recognizes pernicious multicultural influences as the poison in the bloodstream of British society and demands that it is high time that immigrants began to acculturate themselves with British values.

Incidentally, the same demand is foregrounded in a report of Douglas Davis’s interview with Jose Maria Aznar, the prime minister of Spain at the time of a similar terrorist attack in Madrid in March 2004. According to the interviewer, Aznar “is in no doubt that multiculturalism in Europe is ‘finished, dead’” (16 July 2005: 15). In addition, all immigrants should be made to assimilate: “to salute the national flag and to sing the national anthem,” which supposedly will ensure that they stop zealously defending their own values and disregarding European ones. Paradoxically, Aznar does not seem to recognize intra-European influences and immigration as realizations of multicultural ideology. But the prospect of a possible “alliance of civilizations” between the West and Islam seems “an enormous nonsense” to him. The true alliance is the Atlantic alliance, since it is “the guarantee of our liberty and freedom, democracy and prosperity” (16 July 2005: 15). Interestingly, unlike in many other *Spectator* articles, the notion of European values is explained: “our values are family-centered Christian values” (16 July 2005: 15). It is not difficult to notice that by resorting to a prominent politician’s arguments the *Spectator* adds credibility to its conservative position that favors nationalism and questions the ideals of multiculturalism.

It can be assumed that a magazine’s choice of “letters to the editor,” which are published to demonstrate various responses to its reporting and commentary, might also be indicative of the magazine’s ideological stance. The *Spectator*’s selection of letters from readers in its issue of 16 July clearly reflects the public’s concerns for the state of British politics and society, often through the criticism of Tony Blair’s government. The readers seem to perceive the Labour policy of multiculturalism as a threat: “This is a cultural *war* we are in. If we value our way of life, all we can do is *fight back*” (16 July 2005: 24, italics mine). Another British reader comments: “This is a *battle* of ideology, of *freedom versus* fundamentalism, which we can only *win* by *championing* our ideas, and by showing freedom-haters

the logical consequence of theirs—the ultimate *loss of freedom: death*” (16 July 2005: 24, italics mine). The above examples contain a high number of words that originate from the cognitive domain of the military (see my italics). Consequently, their frequency proves that the sense of inter-cultural conflict has also been intensified in society at large, at least as demonstrated by the *Spectator*’s readership.

It is noticeable that after the strong emotions evoked by the London bombings had abated, the *Spectator*’s attention was gradually shifted away from the condemnation of Islamist extremism and toward the critique of the Labour government—its specific agencies, proposed legislation and public relations. A major object of the *Spectator*’s ridicule has also been the so-called “liberal press,” particularly for its championing of multicultural ideology. For example, Frank Johnson criticizes liberal politicians, administrators, religious leaders and the media for resorting to appeasing clichés when faced with new threats: “We cannot give in to the godfathers of moderation,” who “are taught never to write or say anything original,” be it about “the ozone layer, African debt or Islam” (16 July 2005: 26). The author jokes: “there we Londoners were on that Thursday morning—going about our traditional business of being all multicultural and vibrant under Mr. Livingstone. Suddenly we were innocent victims” (16 July 2005: 26). Adding to that, Charles Moore observes the paradox that even Islamist websites use the views of “white liberal commentators to support their position” because these journalists fail to “unequivocally condemn” the London bombings (23 July 2005: 9). The attack on the patronizing attitude of the authorities is also the subject of the acerbic commentary by Rod Liddle entitled “Don’t treat us like fools.” Assuming the position of a spokesman for the British, the author attests that “people deserve to be treated as sentient, rational adults” (16 July 2005: 16) by the media and the authorities. The author’s repetitive use of the inclusive pronoun “we” helps him to project himself as a member of the public, not a representative of the media (e.g. “You see, we can be trusted. So please don’t lie to us—otherwise we won’t believe you next time” 16 July 2005: 16). Moreover, to gain credibility and readers’ sympathy, he uses the stylistic trappings of the spoken mode, characterized by direct imperatives, paratactic sequences and idiomatic phrases (e.g. “Tell us what is going on without caveat and without the bloody flannel and the loaded reporting” 16 July 2005: 16). He openly mocks the means of “social control” used by the political elites to prevent Londoners from panicking or going berserk on hearing about the terrorist attacks, as well as the media’s inept coverage of the event, such as comparing it to the Blitz, for example.

A significant contribution to the discursive construction of Britishness—what it is and what it should be like—is offered by Anthony Browne in his ostensibly well-researched piece “The Left’s war on Britishness.” The London bombings have raised many disturbing questions about British politics, according to the author, but

one of the most pressing ones is why it was Britain among all the developed countries that produced its own suicide bombers. Browne contends that although there are fewer Muslims in Britain than in some other EU countries, and despite the fact that they are not as oppressed and poor as elsewhere, militant Islamic movements have flourished due to British “political correctness” and “a joyfully optimistic tolerance of Islamic extremists” (23 July 2005: 10). Yet in his thesis, the author states that the real reason for the attacks is Britain’s national disease: “deep, pervasive and lethally dangerous self-loathing” (23 July 2005: 10). The strongly negative, emotionally charged vocabulary of this declaration makes it an intriguing and memorable claim, which is immediately substantiated with ironically embellished examples of British attitudes: “We get bombed and we say it’s all our own fault. Schools refuse to teach history that risks making pupils proud [...] The government and the BBC gush over ‘the other’ but recoil at the merest hint of British culture” (23 July 2005: 10). To rectify the situation, the author resolves to remind the readers of the glorious achievements of the British nation: “these small rainswept isles [...] have contributed far more to the well-being of the rest of humanity than any other country, bar none” (23 July 2005: 10), for example, by giving it industrialization, democracy and football.

The body of Browne’s article provides the readers with an extended list of discoveries and inventions by British scientists, explorers and philosophers, including a comment on Britain’s greatest creations: “the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, all stable, affluent, successful liberal democracies” (23 July 2005: 11). By mentioning the dates of important inventions (from the steam engine to the Internet), the names of cultural icons (from Shakespeare to the Beatles), and the figures and statistics for Britain’s development, the author manages to overwhelm the reader with carefully selected factual details. In this light, his conclusion that “the problem with Britain is not that it has too little to be proud of, but too much” (23 July 2005: 11) seems particularly plausible. Reminding the readers about their “national story” is aimed at making them feel good about being British again and to render the Left’s “war on Britishness” outrageous. Instead of celebrating Britain’s achievements, the Left and particularly multiculturalists “wage an intolerant war of attrition against British identity and social cohesion” (23 July 2005: 10). In this sense, it is implied, the terrorists were very British, as they wanted to eradicate British values as much as some liberals do. Again, the negative stereotype of a liberal multiculturalist, cast as an opponent of the British tradition and heritage, is effectively exploited.

The theme of sense of pride that needs to be restored in British society is also taken up by Bruce Anderson in his article “War on the Law.” The author rallies to the defense of the British military forces, who bravely and effectively fight in Iraq, yet who must live in constant fear of investigation and prosecution at home. Although “British military discipline is almost universally admired, as is the

decency of our soldiers” (23 July 2005: 13), the greatest current threat to military cohesion and morale comes from lawyers who are to judge the adequacy of the soldiers’ battlefield decisions. The article’s logic is built on the frequent use of conditional sentences (e.g. “If lawyers thousands of miles away can spend many hours reviewing a decision which a soldier had to take in a fraction of a second, [...] fine young men will be subject to injustice [...] [and] the entire process of military decision-making will be degraded” 23 July 2005: 13). By giving examples of cases in which liability lawyers are cast as British servicemen’s “enemy,” the author demonstrates the hostility of the Labour government to the historical ethos and patriotism of the armed forces. And although the new legislation is only a proposal, the author tries to convince readers that Labour has been planning to undermine the effectiveness of the military to “defeat a ruthless and determined enemy,” such as Islamic terrorists. In the same vein, Andrew Gilligan criticizes some Whitehall officials for their wavering stance on the role of British troops in Afghanistan. He implies that the London bombs might have scared the government into admitting that sending more troops there could be an unnecessary provocation to Islamists. The author also derides the Foreign Secretary for denying the obvious links between the London bombings and the war in Iraq: “How undignified it must be, endlessly having to pretend that black is white” (23 July 2005: 12). With both articles, the *Spectator*’s aim is probably to intensify the negative depiction of the Labour political establishment as deceptive and spineless, an impression which is further strengthened by the government’s unfavorable comparison with the responsibility and moral code upheld by the British armed forces.

The *Spectator*’s issues under investigation in this study offer a selection of articles designed to introduce the readers to the ideology behind Islam, as demonstrated in Theo Hobson’s “War and peace and Islam” (23 July 2005: 22-23), Matthew Parris’s “What is extremist about Islam that is not extremist about Christianity?” (23 July 2005: 28), Peter Osborne’s “Don’t be misled—the London bombs were a direct response to the Iraq war” (30 July 2005: 10), Patrick Sookhdeo’s “The myth of moderate Islam” (30 July 2005: 12-14), and Mark Steyn’s “Wake up, folks—it’s war!” (30 July 2005: 14-15). The articles try to present the driving forces of Islamic extremism, particularly the Koranic justifications for bloodshed: “Koran is like a pick-and-mix selection. If you want peace you can find peaceable verses. If you want war you can find bellicose verses” (30 July 2005: 13). Yet, according to the so-called “rule of abrogation,” in later texts, which override earlier texts, there is a straightforward call for violence. The articles also aim to expose the manipulative tendencies of mullahs who inspire young suicide bombers to desperate acts of terrorism by instilling in them the feeling of guilt. The articles seem to have been written from the position of authority, as they are supplanted with specialists’ opinions (e.g. Professor David Martin, a Christian sociologist), they sometimes feature Arabic vocabulary (e.g. “A

kafir is an unbeliever (i.e. non-Muslim) a term of gross insult” 30 July 2005: 13), and resort to frequent comparisons between Islam and other religions, particularly Christianity.

The style and the textual features of the abovementioned articles reflect the authors’ growing concern with immigration from Muslim countries, the call for assimilation of Islamic minorities, and the condemnation of the government administrators’ condescension towards extremists. The authors often claim to speak for the general public and demand the tightening of immigration controls and the reversal of multicultural policies, especially in the issue of 30 July after the second series of bombs and the shooting in Stockwell. For example, one commentator almost hysterically attests that “Britain today is facing one of the greatest crises in our history: the emergence of the ‘enemy within,’ something which could possibly mutate into a ghastly form of civil war” (30 July 2005: 10). The authors frequently focus on divisions and conflicts within British society, a situation which can only be remedied by a decisive embrace of a nationally centered political agenda. The authors strongly object to the government’s accommodating Muslim wishes through its far-fetched multicultural concessions which have allowed some Muslims to create “a parallel society” in the UK. A catalogue of specific examples is offered to substantiate this claim: “British Muslims now have Sharia in the areas of finance and mortgages; halal food in schools, hospitals and prisons; faith schools funded by the state; prayer rooms in every police station in London; and much more” (30 July 2005: 13). By giving factual details and quoting statistical figures pertaining to the expansion of the Islamic populace, the authors emerge as well-informed and objective reporters, so their warnings about the social crisis in Britain sound ever more convincing.

The sheer number of articles and shorter commentaries presenting various measures that can be applied to deal with the Islamic threat facing Britain amounts to a cumulative impression that the problem must be confronted with extreme resolve. Obviously, this implies that the current Labour government, preoccupied with its multicultural policies, is not capable of ensuring that terrorism is rooted out in Britain. The *Spectator*’s stance, as expressed by Mark Steyn, can be summarized in the following points: “Stop funding the intifada, reclaim the lost sovereignty from Europe, imprison or expel treasonous imams, end the education system’s psychologically unhealthy and ahistorical disparagement of the Britannic inheritance” (30 July 2005: 15). What is striking, the *Spectator*’s commentators frequently resort to satirizing their political and ideological opponents, sometimes including black humor references to the terrorist attacks. They use the so-called oral mode, which is characterized by direct appeals to the readers (“you”), the use of the inclusive “we” pronoun, imperatives, colloquialisms, expletives and word puns. This mode is one of the typical means of expression designed to make the politically engaged discourse more palatable for ordinary readers. As if in

opposition to the unintelligible complexity and formality of the official announcements about the terrorist attacks, Mark Steyn writes ironically: “There’s a pleasant thought the next time you’re on the bus when some Islamakazi self-detonates: it’s on your bill; P-A-Y-E–pay as you explode” (30 July 2005: 14). The above coinage and acronym, together with informal phraseology and syntax, function as extremely effective discursive means to criticize the government’s subsidizing of Islamists living on welfare in London.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be stated that the *Spectator*’s commentators have used a wide range of discursive devices to effectively construct, validate and promote the ideology of nationalism, and to contest the commonly accepted tenets of multicultural discourse. By drawing on various mental models, particularly on the negative stereotyping of Muslims and liberals, the authors aim to question and undermine the policies of the current Labour government. They repeatedly and explicitly denounce it for its socially irresponsible promotion of multiculturalism, which is consistently portrayed as a threat to the security and prosperity of British society. Relying on the presupposition of the superiority of “traditional British values”—though this notion is rarely specified—the *Spectator* emerges as a guardian of Britishness.

The magazine claims to represent the general public by successfully establishing the category “we—the British,” by excluding the multiculturalists and unassimilated immigrant minorities, particularly British Muslims. As has been demonstrated earlier, according to van Dijk’s (1998) model of ideology in the form of group self-schemata, the categories of membership and values are crucial for the discursive delineation of a separate ideology. But the *Spectator*’s articles also highlight other factors which contribute to the legitimation of the nationalist perspective on Britishness, namely the goals, interests, activities, position and resources of British society.

The analysis has demonstrated that the extensive repertoire of rhetorical devices, linguistic patterns and stylistic choices which feature in the *Spectator*’s articles makes it an effective outlet for nationally focused politics. The magazine’s discursive means of persuasion were visibly intensified after the fatal consequences of the London bombings in July 2005 had been reported. Thus the articles that followed included outspoken, “politically incorrect” criticism of multiculturalism, often expressed in the informal rhetorical mode, characterized by pervasive stereotyping as well as by elements of black humor and sarcastic bitterness.

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