

The rhetoric of acculturation: When integration means assimilation

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Viewing traditional acculturation literature through a social constructionist lens, the present paper identifies a number of limitations with this research. A discourse analytic approach to acculturation is offered as a means of addressing some of these issues. Drawing on examples taken from British print media debate surrounding the issue of faith schooling in Britain, an analysis is presented which illustrates the manner in which, though optimally positioned within acculturative moral hierarchies directed towards the legitimisation of both pro- and anti-faith schooling debates, integration rhetoric often conceals the (re-)production of a more implicit assimilationism. Findings are discussed in terms of their implications for hegemonically structured acculturative power relations. This exploratory analysis provides the basis for reflection on the benefits of a discursive approach to acculturation. Moreover, the dependence of acculturative discourse on a series of socio-spatial resources is considered and, following on from Dixon and Durrheim's (2000) discursive re-conceptualization of place-identity, is taken to signify the need for a more environmentally 'grounded' approach to cultural diversity.

The rhetoric of acculturation: When integration means assimilation

While multicultural societies are by no means a recent phenomenon – migration and movement across national borders have long been central forces in the production of culturally diverse societies – interest in the various questions posed by cultural diversity has intensified in recent years. Concern with ‘the multicultural’ is typically configured in response to particular socio-historical conditions. For example, in the aftermath of the Cattle (2001) report and its suggestion that the urban riots of 2001 in the north of England were due to segregation and a lack of social cohesion, Britain, which provides the context of the present study, has seen shifts in multicultural policy towards a discourse of integration (Worley, 2005). At the same time, ‘integration’ has emerged as an idealized response to diversity according to social psychological frameworks investigating acculturation in a variety of cultural contexts. It is the issue of acculturation that the present paper takes as its critical focus.

Acculturation research in social psychology

Acculturation has come to occupy an increasingly prominent position in psychology, frequently being positioned as an area where psychological enquiry might contribute to our understanding of immigration and cultural diversity (e.g. Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2003; Berry, 2001; Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault & Senécal, 1997; van de Vijver & Phalet, 2004; Zick, Wagner, Dick & Petzel, 2001). Definitions of acculturation typically orient to a process of prolonged intergroup contact between two or more cultural groups and the changes that this purportedly brings in both parties (in line with Redfield, Linton and Herskovits’, 1936, definition). Before critically engaging with traditional acculturation research, it is important firstly to outline some of its central assumptions.

Acculturation research has persistently located its findings within a typological discourse of the kind so prevalent in traditional personality psychology (Rudmin, 2003, makes a similar point from a positivistic standpoint). The key concern has been with identifying people's orientations to acculturation and how these relate to psychological adaptation. In this respect, the frameworks offered by Berry and colleagues (for example, 1990, 1997) have been particularly influential. Berry's work follows in the footsteps of a series of papers which have historically conceived of acculturation as a taxonomy of four types, reflecting the assumed possibility of an individual's positive or negative reaction to ontologically prior 'majority' and 'minority' cultures – that is, at a basic level, whether they accept or reject each culture (Rudmin, 2003). The precise nature of these reactions (whether they reflect attitudes, feelings or identifications) tends to vary in accordance with the particular context of each study but, nevertheless, they are consistently considered to determine the kind of acculturation strategy a person supports. Berry's early work, for example, takes an individual's position on a fourfold taxonomy of acculturation 'strategies'/'attitudes' to be determined by their intersecting attitudes to *cultural maintenance* (defined as the degree to which they wish to retain elements of their own group in the face of intercultural relations) and *cultural contact* (defined as the degree to which they wish to have or avoid contact with other groups).

Studies adopting this framework take answers to response-restricted questions such as "How important is it for you to maintain your culture?" as the legitimate basis for making typological classifications (see Berry, 1997, for a review of research on the fourfold taxonomy). Those who provide positive responses to questions regarding the need to maintain their own culture and the need for inter-cultural contact are consequently identified as supporters of *integration*. Positive responses to questions

of cultural contact and negative responses to cultural maintenance are taken to reflect support for *assimilation*. *Separation* is contrastingly defined by negative responses to the question of cultural contact and positive responses to cultural maintenance, while *marginalization* is the label applied where negative responses are obtained for both questions. Furthermore, it has been by establishing relationships between ‘positive psychological adaptation’ and ‘integration’ (Berry, 1997; Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987; Flannery, Reise & Yu, 2001) that integration has come to be privileged as *the* optimal acculturation strategy.

Limitations

However, problems persist. The typological discourse (re-)produces a static and de-contextualized account of acculturation. Not only are participants methodologically fixed into a limited range of supposedly mutually exclusive positions (integrationist, assimilationist, etc.) but these positions are assumed to reflect the same underlying attitudes within and across particular studies. It is assumed, for example, that positive reactions to cultural adaptation and cultural maintenance represent support for integration regardless of cultural context, that the meaning of integration is similarly stable and that consequently this body of literature can be seen to support its recommendation. This persists in spite of the fact that such studies take place in disparate socio-historical settings. In rigidly applying the typological acculturation model, they therefore run the risk of failing to understand cultural diversity in terms of the particular systems of meaning in which it is oriented to. Furthermore, it endures in spite of acknowledged historical variation (Rudmin, 2003) in the nature of these acculturation typologies (that is, in what the ‘endorsement’ of dominant and minority cultures is actually taken to refer to) and despite the fact that different models

conceptualize the attitudes supposedly underlying particular acculturation stances in very different ways (see Liebkind, 2001).

A second major criticism is that the typological discourse focuses our attention firmly on the individual in a manner which threatens to remove responsibility for particular forms of multicultural relations from wider, collectively driven, socio-political forces. Locating, for example, the desire for integration or assimilation within the individual risks reifying the particular acculturation construct, whilst glossing over its social construction and functions within wider systems of meaning. The lack of concern with the way participants orient to and engage in the functional construction of the acculturation process serves to remove variability from the equation. The possibility for contestation and re-configuration is shut down in ways which risk glossing over the collective practices involved in morally privileging or denigrating particular acculturation 'strategies'.

Moreover, the tendency to concentrate on the acculturation strategies of minority group members downplays the role of 'the majority' and locates responsibility for the outcomes of intercultural contact with those whose ability to influence acculturation may be constrained by wider hegemonic structures. Though a number of authors in recent years have sought to acknowledge the impact of the dominant ingroup on acculturation (Berry, 2001; Bourhis et al., 1997; Florack, Piontowski, Rohmann, Balzer & Perzig, 2003; Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001; Piontowski, Rohmann & Florack, 2002) the conceptualization of interaction has in practice, been a rather static one. Rather than focus on the performative functionality of the way that subjects negotiate and contest acculturation together in everyday interactional settings, the focus tends instead to be on comparing the typological classifications of minority and majority acculturation strategies. Concordance or

discordance is then attributed on the basis of this comparison (see Piontowski, 2002). In practice, a vision of interaction is (re-)produced which not only reifies distinctions between 'us' and 'them' but also privileges the maintenance of the status quo. The implicit emphasis on conflict resolution might unwittingly provide legitimization for segregation and social division under the auspices of 'harmonious' intergroup contact (that is, by demonstrating that this is a 'consensus' perspective). At an implicit level, it might also be seen to de-legitimize challenges to dominant discourses of acculturation, resonating therefore with the sense of conformity underlying assimilationism.

Assimilating acculturation within a critical discursive framework

More nuanced approaches to cultural diversity have recently been developed within mainstream social psychological frameworks by researchers such as Chrysochoou (2000, 2004). This work has been particularly helpful in shifting attention to the *social* (re-)production of the 'lay theories' by way of which people understand inter-related aspects of cultural diversity (for example, integration and superordinate category constructs). However, its privileging of a social representations framework (for example, Moscovici, 1988) has encouraged an underlying cognitivism which, in practice, has de-emphasized an analytic attention to the performative aspects of accounts of cultural diversity and group membership (that is, the social actions they are designed to accomplish).

Drawing on both micro- and macro-level social psychological approaches to discourse analysis and rhetoric (Billig, 1995; Billig et al., 1988; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Parker, 1992; Potter, 1996; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992) in a vein recently called for by a number of researchers (Edley, 2001; Edley &

Wetherell, 1999, 2001; Wetherell, 1998), our perspective therefore shifts to examining the global patterns of acculturation discourses as they are *rhetorically* configured to accomplish a variety of action-oriented, micro-level social actions. The focus is on the ways in which particular accounts of acculturation are constructed to achieve particular argumentative effects. This is not to suggest that acculturative matters have yet to be discussed from a broadly social constructionist perspective, nor indeed that they have escaped the attentions of discourse analysts.

Bhatia (2002) has employed a dialogical model of acculturation in order to examine the negotiation of the diasporic self – ‘a constant moving back and forth between incompatible cultural positions’ (p.57) – in a manner which explicitly challenges the traditional typological approach. More attentive to rhetorical function, Van Dijk (1997) has oriented to assimilation and integration as features of racist rhetoric directed towards blaming the victim for negative other-representation (based on ‘their’ failure to adapt). Moreover, Verkuyten and de Wolf (2002) acknowledge the need to understand ‘acculturation modes’ as part of discursive practice. Their focus, however, is the manner in which ethnic self-definitions are contextually negotiated rather than the wider action-oriented negotiation and deployment of acculturation discourses. The present research contrastingly treats the micro-level construction and functions of these broader interpretative resources as a substantive concern worthy of a more systematic analysis in itself.

This concern is supplemented by a macro-level attention to more global patterns of acculturation discourse and their implications for power relations. That is, attention to local level discursive practice occurs in tandem with concerns over the pervasiveness of particular repertoires and what might be gleaned from this regarding existing power structures and the ‘taken for granted’ (Edley & Wetherell, 2001).

Such an approach provides a fluid rather than static conception of acculturation. Placing an analytic emphasis on the kinds of variability which confound traditional acculturation research¹, it allows us to examine how particular positions are accepted/contested in discursive practice, in tandem with the meaning with which they are rhetorically imbued. This perspective leads us to question the way in which positions of dominance are negotiated and re-produced rather than simply being treated as pre-ordained givens. In shifting our focus to the interplay between discursive repertoire and occasioned deployment, the problems encountered by the underlying individualism of traditional acculturation research are avoided. Rather, we are encouraged to examine how the micro-level negotiation of culturally shared discourses of integration or assimilation, for example, has wider connotations for each of the implicated parties.

The present study focuses its attentions on the way in which integration is constructed and the functions it serves in media debate surrounding calls for more state-funded faith schools in Britain. The decision to concentrate on faith schooling arose from a preliminary engagement with our wider data set, and, as such, is contextualized in the following section. The reason for the specific focus on texts orienting to integration is not only practical. Alongside the aforementioned privileging of integration within traditional acculturation research, a series of papers focusing on policy rhetoric (Lewis, 2005; Worley, 2005; Yuval-Davis, Anthias & Kofman, 2005) has noted that, in trying to manage dilemmas of tolerance and control, the present British government has shifted to a rhetoric of integration which Lewis and Neal (2005) suggest has “been a partial shift away from affirmations of British

¹ More recent adaptations of these traditional acculturation frameworks have commendably attempted to address the context dependency of acculturation ‘strategies’ (for example, Navas et al.’s, 2005, Relative Acculturation Extended Model). However, the suggestion that different acculturative positions may be taken in relation to a limited range of domains (work, family relations and so on) orients to a fairly static conception of context.

multiculture towards a (re)embracing of older notions of assimilationism within a newer, de-racialized language of social cohesion” (p.437). The drive of integrationism towards homogeneity has been noted elsewhere in other socio-cultural contexts (Blommaert, 1997; Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998). The present paper extends this focus to a discourse analysis of its everyday, micro-political manifestation.

Background and method

The following analysis draws on newspaper materials obtained as part of a wider project concerned with discourses of acculturation in the mainstream British print media. In focusing our attentions on the mainstream press in this way, our assumption was not that a sample drawn from this source is necessarily representative of wider public opinion. Nor do we consider it advisable to take a reductively deterministic view of ‘media influence’ on, for example, the kinds of discourses reproduced in everyday interactional settings. Rather, our focus on the mainstream British press more modestly intended to provide an opportunity to sample and analytically engage with a range of culturally available acculturation-based interpretative resources as they were rhetorically deployed in the everyday print media negotiation of particular multicultural issues.

In order to sample daily reproductions of acculturation discourse in the mainstream British press, we collected newspapers every day over a three-week period between May and June 2004. Our interest in delineating everyday acculturation discourses encouraged us to resist intentionally sampling a period either retrospectively or based on assumptions regarding the kinds of issues likely to arise. Instead we selected a random three-week period with the view that this might provide us with a snapshot of the *routine* occurrence of acculturation-based discursive

practices in the mainstream national press. The materials analyzed were derived from *The Daily Mail*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian* and *The Sun*. Sampling also included the Sunday versions of these publications (*The Mail on Sunday*, *The Sunday Mirror*, *The Sunday Telegraph*, *The Observer* and *The News of the World*). Papers were chosen on the basis that they represent a range of political opinion whilst covering both 'high-brow' and populist interests.

All articles considered to broadly orient to issues surrounding 'multiculturalism' in Britain were photocopied in preparation for further analysis. This produced a data set of over 250 articles, which were then included in the subsequent coding stage of our analysis. The aim of coding at this stage was to render the data set manageable and identify key emergent themes in a manner which would facilitate a subsequent, more systematic analysis. In this paper, we have chosen to focus specifically on the deployment of discourses of integration in relation to debate concerning the provision of state support for schools run by religious bodies. This decision rests on two main concerns. The first is pragmatic. An eclectic range of issues was found to be defined and regulated in terms of integrationism – from football supportership and national identification to asylum, immigration and the European Union. Providing a coherent analytic discussion of integrationist discourse as tangled up in this broad-ranging set of multicultural issues would require contextualisation and elaboration beyond the confines of the present article. By focusing on the faith schooling issue – an issue which itself represented a substantial proportion of the wider data set (42 articles) – it is hoped that some of the broader patterns evidenced in our data set might be delineated in order to permit a more coherent, concise and structured discussion.

Secondly, the issue of state-funded *Islamic* schooling has been flagged by work in other disciplines as an arena where Muslim claim-making might be revealing (through the potential challenge it poses) of the hegemonic structures underpinning particular discourses of multiculturalism, most particularly in the form of an apparently secular bias said to be resistant to religious equality (Modood, 2003; Statham, Koopmans, Giugni & Passi, 2005). However, while the dilemmatics of faith schooling have recently been navigated by work in political philosophy and sociology interested in developing approaches to ‘multiculturalism’ that are more sensitive to religious (particularly Muslim) concerns (for example, Modood, 2005; Parekh, 2000), the discursive practices which sustain arguments for and against faith schooling have rarely been examined in terms of their everyday media deployment.

This seems somewhat surprising given the perpetual re-emergence of faith schooling as a matter of media concern in recent years. Following changes in legislation brought about by the 1993 Education Act, it has been possible for private schools run by Muslims and other faith-based groups to apply to enter the state sector (Walford, 2000). However, it has been the current British government’s drive for more specialist schools which respond to the needs of the individual and with it the encouragement of more faith-based schools (DfEE, 2001) that has sparked recurring debate² within the British media (Valins, 2003). This debate was re-ignited at the time of our sample by the presentation of the *Muslims on Education* report to the House of Lords on June 9th, 2004. The paper – jointly prepared by the Association of Muslim Scientists (AMSS UK), the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR UK), FED 2000 (For Education and Development) and the Muslim College UK – expressed concerns regarding an ‘imbalance’ in the availability of state-funding for Muslim

² Debate has been revived on numerous occasions since – in March 2006, for example, after the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, at a speech to the National Church Schools conference, argued that faith schools play a key role in developing community cohesion.

schools (relative to other religious denominations). The ensuing debate yielded articles which contested the merits of state-supported faith schooling along lines frequently defined and regulated in terms of integrationist discourse.

The criterion for analytic inclusion in this data sub-set was simply that faith schooling had to be flagged as a relevant concern. Alongside commentary articles, we also examined extracts positioned as both news reports and letters to the editor in order to sample the occurrence of integrationist discourse across the wider fabric of the daily newspapers.

Relatedly, however, it should be noted that though the resulting data set evidenced both pro- and anti- state-funded faith schooling arguments, the latter were far more prevalent. Moreover, few articles were explicitly tied to Muslim ‘voices’. This relative lack of variability should not simply be seen as a sampling flaw. Rather it may be indicative of the accessibility of certain speaking positions within the *mainstream* British media in relation to issues such as faith schooling.

Analytic Framework

As noted earlier, analysis drew upon recent attempts (Edley, 2001; Edley & Wetherell, 1999, 2001; Wetherell, 1998) to marry a micro-level attention to the local organization of accounts and rhetorically-directed construction of meaning (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987) with a broader concern with patterns of culturally available meaning and their implications for relations of power and dominance (for example, Parker, 1992; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). This involved paying close attention to the ways in which accounts were constructed and the action-oriented rhetorical functions served by particular uses of language. However, as Edley (2001) points out, while concepts such as ‘hegemony’ may go unmentioned in a

particular piece of talk or text, their influence may nevertheless be felt as they sit implicitly on a text's fringes. The potential banality of constructions of integration was borne in mind such that we were led to look beyond the seeming triviality of its invocation (à la Billig, 1995). In orienting to the potentially inexplicit workings of integrationism, the assumption – as with more critical realist approaches to discourse analysis (for example, Parker 1992) – was therefore made (in agreement with Edley and Wetherell, 2001) that discourses may take on stable patterns potentially bound up with particular socio-political contexts and institutions. A micro-level analysis provided grounding for a more Foucauldian-level attention to the broader patterning of interpretative resources and their more global implications, thereby permitting the occasioned configuration of these discourses to be explored. While it is acknowledged that these interpretations are inextricably linked with our own speaking positions, the provision of extracts is intended to provide a means of assessing the persuasiveness of these interpretations from alternative positions. The extracts presented here were selected on the basis that they reflect wider patterns of integrationist discourse implicated in negotiating pro- and anti-faith schooling arguments. Material omitted from the original source for reasons of space is denoted by three bracketed ellipsis points (...).

Analysis

The analysis is split into three sub-sections. The first deals with the manner in which integration was consistently positioned as *the* acculturative moral good. It attempts to demonstrate the way in which privileging integration provided a rhetorical platform oriented to fulfilling a variety of micro-level functions (garnering a liberal footing, identifying transgression and so on). The second section attends to the socio-spatial undertones of integrationist discourse. In doing this, it responds to recent calls for a

discursive focus on the role of place in everyday argumentation (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Wallwork & Dixon, 2004). A final section deals with the assimilative undertones of integration discourses, providing a more macro-level discussion of the implications for power relations between those groups occupying centre stage in the multicultural debates sampled by our data set – that is, between Muslims and a non-Muslim ‘mainstream’ in Britain.

Idealizing integration

A common pattern that emerged across the data set was an orientation to the capacity of faith schools to fulfil certain acculturative ‘responsibilities’. Anti-faith schooling arguments and, indeed, the relatively few pro-faith schooling arguments evidenced in our sample, oriented to taken-for-granted moral orders. At a global level these appeared to reflect a hierarchy of acceptability in accordance with which integration was idealized, while social division and segregation were positioned as transgressive.

A brief consideration of the following extracts helps exemplify this wider pattern:

Extract 1: The Daily Mail (10/06/04) – News Report by Sarah Harris

MUSLIM children are being failed by the state education system and need more faith-based schools, academics and education experts claimed yesterday.

They said the country’s largest minority community should have access to more Muslim state schools...

...In a report they claimed that ‘institutional racism’ was preventing more Muslim schools being set up.

‘There are still major Muslim populations that are not served by any suitable education service, state or private,’ said the document.

Its authors called for the private Muslim schools to be ‘fast tracked’ into the state sector. This would be highly controversial as critics argue that faith schools prevent integration into the local community...

...Kurshid Ahmed, of the Commission for Racial Equality, admitted state education for Muslims could be improved but warned that faith schools prevented integration.

They were labelled ‘an easy copout’ by Labour MP Andrew Bennett who headed a committee of MPs which investigated race riots and suggested that Muslim schools caused social division.

Extract 2: The Guardian (11/06/04) – Commentary Article by Polly Toynbee

The small Muslim population – under 3% nationwide – now has more regular mosque attenders than there are CofE (*Church of England*) church goers. With 26 CofE bishops passing laws in the House of Lords and so many Christian state schools, the injustice of it is no longer sustainable. We expect Muslims to integrate, and yet offer them a model of society that deliberately excludes them. The answer, as secularists always said, is for the state to abolish all faith schools...

Extract 3: The Guardian (16/06/04) - Letters

...I support Polly Toynbee's call for integrated cross-cultural schools, but she privileges one particular belief system – atheism – above all others. Anti-religious fundamentalism may be just as divisive in our education system as the religious varieties.
Jonathan Schofield
Worcester

In extracts 1 and 2, for example, “integration” is implicitly optimized by way of the negative reaction with which its ‘prevention’ is met. For example, in orienting to an ‘expectation’ that Muslims should “integrate”, extract 2 (re-)produces an acculturative order in which integration is optimized (in a manner reified by the condemnation of its prevention) while exclusion is positioned as unjust. In extract 1, the prevention of “integration” warrants “warning” in a manner which problematizes that which is positioned as a barrier (“faith schools”). By condemning the obstruction of “integration”, “integration” itself becomes morally privileged, a state that should be facilitated rather than impeded. Moreover, the nature of this prevention is elaborated in a manner which contrastingly orients to the attribution of “social division” as a form of self-evident criticism and implicitly acts as explanation for the Muslim school’s obstruction of “integration” (“...suggested that Muslim schools caused social division”). Of course, the attribution of this integrationist discourse to a series of externally located ‘independent’ voices through the demarcation of reported speech

(“Kurshid Ahmed, of the Commission for Racial Equality, admitted...”) forms part of the wider construction of neutrality characteristic of news ‘reporting’ (Potter, 1996). Possible charges of partiality are countered by presenting a multiplicity of positions – both pro- (“they claimed that ‘institutional racism’ was preventing more Muslim schools being set up”) and anti- faith schooling – in a manner which upholds the article as a balanced representation of ‘the facts’ rather than one biased by personal opinion.

The assumed acculturative moral order provided a legitimizing basis for anti-faith schooling arguments: faith schools were either constructed as inhibitors of integration and facilitators of social division (as in extract 1) or else attempts were simply made to undermine faith schools’ claims to facilitate integration. In extract 2, the optimization of integration serves clear rhetorical functions, providing the legitimizing basis of a call for “the state to abolish all faith schools”. Quantitatively-formulated inequalities between Muslims and CofE church goers (for example, “so many Christian state schools”) are implicitly presented as an exclusionary barrier to ‘integration’ (“the injustice of it...”, “a model of society that deliberately excludes”). In this context, abolishing faith schools is positioned as a numerically equalizing act and therefore a move towards a fetishized equivalence whereby ‘integration’ might, according to this formulation (by implicit contrast) be made possible. As such, integrationism can be seen to intersect with rhetorical resources of ‘equality’, the mobilization of which is designed in this case to frame support for negative action (that is, taking away faith schools from Christians) as liberally congruent and inclusionary (such that support for Muslim state-schools is ‘reasonably’ avoided).

These extracts notably evidence a general lack of engagement with the meaning of integration, alongside a failure to qualify its privileged positioning,

serving to lend integration an air of taken-for-granted self-evidence such that it is implicitly imbued with the rhetorical weight of common sense. In extract 3, for example, the assertion of support for “Polly Toynbee’s call for integrated schools”³ works as something of a disclaimer. It is oriented to as evidence of the argument’s reasonableness – a sense of even-handedness being worked up through the demonstration of a willingness to make concessions of support where the ‘common-sense’ good of integrationism dictates necessary. As such, potential allegations of a more personally motivated attack are inoculated against. In our wider sample, it was similarly oriented to as a signifier of tolerance.

Elsewhere, those few extracts which adopted a pro-faith schooling line contrastingly attempted to inoculate against charges of segregationism and construct faith schools as facilitators of ‘community cohesion’ (as we will see in the next section). In summary, this struggle for the right to make integrative claims seems to reflect not only the manner in which integration was morally optimized within our sample but also the extent of the rhetorical cachet it was taken to carry.

Integrating space

While the previous section points to the ambiguity embedded in banal constructions of integration, our wider sample evidenced variability in this domain. That is, attempts were seen elsewhere to elaborate on the meaning of integration. Particularly, integration and the acculturative moral order were often structured and elaborated in socio-spatial terms. Blommaert and Verhshueren (1998) themselves point to the spatial connotations of integration, examining its etymological roots and suggesting that it represents something of a boundary concept, referring to the process of

³ Polly Toynbee is a regular columnist for *The Guardian*. This quotation represents a response to an article in which she called for faith schools to be abolished. Extract 2 is taken from the Toynbee article, ‘Get off your knees’ (*The Guardian*, 11/6/04).

movement from outsider to insider in a manner which implicitly locates its subjects' current position as 'other'. While the next section attends to the insider/outsider implications of integration, this section lays the foundations for this by focusing on the socio-spatial maintenance of the acculturative moral order. This might best be exemplified through close examination of extract 4.

Extract 4: The Guardian (10/06/04) – Commentary by Madeleine Bunting

...In this Hackney school, there are 40 different nationalities, over 20 different languages – and one faith. Nigeria, the Philippines, Colombia, Eritrea, Vietnam, Portugal, Italy, Ireland: what goes on in this Catholic primary school is an extraordinary process of integration that makes the public debate about the divisiveness of faith schools appear absurd. This is a model of social cohesion and it is a faith school.

Similarly, in Muslim schools I have visited I have seen the same sort of astonishing global connections forged in the classroom between Afghans and Turks, Indonesians and Nigerians, Pakistanis and Ugandans. It's not that this kind of integration doesn't go on in good secular state schools. It's just that faith schools have a particular strength here - call it a head start if you like.

Here are two faiths, Islam and Catholicism, which both have a huge heritage of travelling across race, culture, tribe and nations to build common transnational identities. Both hold strongly to a powerful belief of the equality of all believers, and a sense of belonging as co-religionists. These two faiths were the first internationalists. It is their ethical frameworks that have inspired subsequent secular global humanism.

Where else in an inner city do you get Irish, Nigerian, Italian and English talking to each other in the same public building, but a Catholic church?...churches and mosques are often the only means left of bringing together people of different race and economic background.

(The Guardian, June 10th, 2004)

The relatively few pro-faith schooling arguments in our sample reified constructions of the integrative potential of faith schools by drawing on place-identity formulations in which the school provided a 'place-as-container' organizing metaphor as grounding for the construction of "social cohesion". In extract 4, the word "In" ("In this Hackney school...") invokes a sense of the school as a physically bounded area by way of the implicit distinction it makes between potential positionings within and without.

The discursive location of multiple nationalities within a socially constructed ‘physical area’ works up a sense of co-presence in a manner which implicitly explicates “the extraordinary process of integration” in terms of the sense of shared physical proximity that this creates. Moreover, the enormity of this integrative achievement is emphasized through the juxtaposition of the faith’s school’s socio-spatial singularity with a quantitatively-formulated sense of diversity (“40 different nationalities, over 20 different languages”).

This, of course, resonates with the kinds of spatial metaphors (for example, ‘nation-as-container’) identified in anti-immigration arguments in the right-wing press (Charteris-Black, 2006). Here, it similarly serves to enhance the intelligibility of an otherwise complex argument by grounding it in the accessibility of simplified everyday language. However, where anti-immigration arguments typically draw on spatial metaphors to legitimize tighter boundary controls (keeping ‘them’ out), here the container metaphor is used to render a sense of togetherness. In extract 4, the assumed physical proximity of faith space is oriented to as permitting an interactional scene which informs the wider construction of integration (“Where else in an inner city do you get Irish, Nigerian, Italian and English talking to each other in the same public building, but a Catholic church?”).

However, it is important to recognize that this spatial rendering is not detached from the social. “Faith schools”, “Catholic churches” and “Muslim schools” represent place-identity formulations of the kind identified by Dixon and Durrheim (2000), that is, rhetorically-driven, naturalized associations between place and identity constructions. Moreover, the movement of the passage from one spatio-temporal context to another (that is, from “faith schools” in the first paragraph to “Muslim schools” in the second paragraph and then the “Catholic church” in the third) assumes

continuity and mutual relevance. It assumes a generalizability from the positive connotations embedded in the integratory construction of “churches and mosques” to “faith schools” more generally (and vice versa). This relies on the conjoining of Islamic and Catholic place-identities through associations with the common category construction of ‘faith’ (“Here are two faiths...”). This assumed superordinate commonality alongside the metonymic elision of place and identity – an elision which establishes equivalence between the geographic and the social (Wallwork & Dixon, 2004) – permits “churches and mosques” to stand not only for “faith schools” but also faith more generally, forming a process of mutual constitution. ‘Faith’, symbolized by the “churches and mosques”, is positioned as the agentic force which permits and encourages integration to occur (“bringing together people of different race and economic background”). Locating groups *within* faith space brings groups together along this dimension, such that previously discussed spatial components are inextricably interwoven with faith in the construction of integration and, in doing so, positive claims of integration are extended to a socio-geography of faith in general. Moreover, the spatial connotations of the “faith school”, “the Muslim school” and “the Catholic church” serve to concretize the integrative construction of faith by grounding it in a construction of out-there material reality.

Orienting to the rhetorical power carried by located constructions of integration, anti-faith schooling arguments contested such constructions in ways which contrastingly drew on constructions of socio-spatial division.

Extract 5: The Daily Telegraph (10/06/04) - News Report

Andrew Bennett, the Labour MP and chairman of the Commons select committee which inquired into social cohesion last year, said Northern Ireland demonstrated the dangers of faith-based schools. (*The Daily Telegraph*, June 10th, 2004)

Extract 6: Daily Mirror (10/06/04) – News Report

But most MPs believe more religious schools would fuel racial divisions. Andrew Bennett, chairman of a Commons committee which investigated the 2002 race riots, said: “What we want is for children to have a good understanding of each other’s culture.

“Separating them in schools is not going to be a good idea.”

Extract 5 orients to this task by drawing on “Northern Ireland” as a totemic

instantiation of the transgressive “dangers” of faith schools. Its demonstrative power implicates socio-historical connotations which go beyond the purely spatial, its ambiguity eliding social and spatial meanings in a manner which, by extension, ‘materially’ grounds the more abstract connotations of the former. It thereby renders a sense of social cohesion-threatening socio-spatial division as justification for the implicit condemnation of faith schools. It is oriented to – through a lack of qualification or explanation – as having assumed cultural resonances which permit it to be used as a symbolic short-hand for the dangers of social division. Moreover, it serves by way of a comparative formulation (“...Northern Ireland demonstrated the dangers of faith-based schools”) to present the problems posed by faith schools within a wider national framework, thus positioning faith schools as potential facilitators of social division outside their own local context.

Extract 6 represents a more explicitly spatialized formulation of the ‘same’ speakers’ account. It again orients to a place-as-container construction of (faith) schools in which children might be located but which is taken to entail inevitable ‘separation’. It is unclear whether the act of “separating” refers to in-school segregation or sets up schools as spatial units providing the boundaries of a wider apartheid – an ambiguity which conjoins both meanings and therefore inextricably links local and macro levels of a socio-spatial transgression of integrationist values (“good understanding of each other’s culture”). To summarize, these examples demonstrate the ways in which the struggle to represent faith schools as ‘integrative’ is frequently a socio-spatial one, with a varying implementation of place rhetoric

providing a means by which constructions of social cohesion or division might be grounded in a sense of material reality, whilst at the same time guiding the construction of this reality.

Assimilationism and discourses of tolerance

Finally, attempts made by articles to align themselves with the liberal norms of the acculturative moral hierarchy, could frequently be seen to gloss over an underlying drive towards assimilationism. Integration was often used synonymously with a privileging of assimilative outcomes, while ‘assimilation’ itself was never directly oriented to. Typically, this was predicated on an implicit rendering of insider and outsider status. Throughout our sample, the boundary connotations of ‘integration’ suggested by Blommaert and Verschueren (1998) were reinforced by normative constructions of the mainstream British ingroup, which served simultaneously to exclude Muslims from insider status. A re-consideration of Extract 2 exemplifies this banal exclusion. In ‘expecting’ Muslims to integrate, they are positioned as current ‘outsiders’ to the assumed ingroup. This does not simply locate responsibility for ‘integration’ with Muslims (it is positioned as a state that *they* must seek to fulfil). Rather, the invocation of what is positioned as a self-evidently legitimate ‘expectation’ serves implicitly to position Muslims as subjects of simultaneously privileged mainstream requirements.

These assimilative undertones were also more explicitly reproduced.

Consider extracts 7 and 8:

Extract 7: The Daily Telegraph (06/06/04) - Letters

...There was a room set aside for prayers but I never saw anyone using it. Perhaps this was why it all had to change. What a shame...

...We even had a Christian Jordanian Arab boy in the school, totally integrated with the others and highly popular. Academically these young men, lively but manageable, were ahead of their contemporaries in state schools, especially in mathematics. The modest princes mixed easily with everyone else and sang Amazing Grace in the music room as enthusiastically as the rest...

Alan F Orr

Ockbrook, Derbyshire

Extract 8: The Daily Mail (10/06/04) – Commentary by Manzoor Moghal

Chairman of the Federation of Muslim Organisations

The report's authors also demand substantial changes in the culture, teaching methods and even the curriculum of mainstream state schools in order to accommodate the special needs – real and imaginary – of Muslim pupils...

...But most of these problems are easy to solve. For example, it is not difficult to provide halal meat or to give enough time and space for those who wish to pray. Indeed, compromises are constantly being worked out by individual schools every day with parent-teacher associations and local mosques...

...As an East African Asian who fled Idi Amin's murderous regime in Uganda to this country, I know real prejudice. In my experience, this is one of the most tolerant countries in the world, and the constant niggling criticism by those who should know better is both unfair and counter-productive...

...Those groups who want separate Islamic education should not expect to be granted funding purely on the basis that they are Muslims.

Instead they should concentrate on producing funding applications with more convincing arguments...

Though extract 7 notably draws on the notion of being “totally integrated” as part of its romanticization of the school's past, it is a state oriented to as entailing a minimization of difference and assimilation into the mainstream culture. It is this minimization of non-mainstream cultural expression – signified by the lack of prayer room usage (“I never saw anyone use it”) and the lack of protest with which “Amazing Grace” is sung – that is taken to demonstrate that integration had been achieved. Integration, in effect, is being used synonymously with assimilation,

entailing in its micro-level configuration an assumed conformity to mainstream values and modes of identity expression.

Frequently, this was legitimized by contrastive constructions of ingroup tolerance and Muslim transgression. In extract 8, for example, we see evidence of attempts to position “this country” favourably within a discourse of tolerance. Its anthropomorphic construction as “one of the most tolerant countries in the world” (relatively) emphasizes a willingness to indulge other cultures in a socio-spatially fixed manner which lends this ‘tolerance’ a dispositional status. While mainstream tolerance is maximized through a constructed willingness to “accommodate...special needs” and make “compromises”, Muslims are positioned as exploitative transgressors of reasonableness in the sense that they make “demands” in spite of mainstream concessions and, moreover, “expect” such concessions to be made (“on the basis that they are Muslims”). Positive self-presentation is thereby coupled with negative other-description. This occurs in a manner which implicitly places blame for the faith schooling situation on unreasonable Muslims whilst avoiding charges of prejudice through an appeal to liberal norms – a rhetorical pattern which resonates with that delineated by Van Dijk’s (1991) analysis of racist discourse in the press. Moreover, the tolerance discourse carries with it an agent-patient structure which reproduces power-relations between tolerator and tolerated. “This country” is empowered with the ability to tolerate. Muslims are contrastingly positioned as an outside force that must be indulged in a manner which, in tandem with their transgressiveness, justifies an implicit diminishing of rights. Their outsider status and transgressiveness combine to legitimize the assertion of assimilative ideological demands made by the tolerant mainstream. The line “they should concentrate on producing funding applications with more convincing arguments” necessitates that for

Muslims to act in a morally acceptable way, they must adhere to mainstream routes to political and social action, alternatives having been constructed as unmeritocratic. Such arguments uphold a monistic vision of morality centring around liberal notions of meritocracy and equality in a manner which glosses over potential inequalities embedded in existing power structures and, in condemning alternative action, consequently serves to legitimize the maintenance of the status quo.

A brief digression is called for at this point. Extract 8 demonstrates that integrationism was not only associated with ‘non-Muslim’ voices but was also mobilized from implicitly Muslim speaking positions. For example, the positioning of “Manzoor Moghal” as “Chairman of the Federation of Muslim Organisations” constructs an association which privileges readings taking the former to be a member of the Muslim community and moreover indexes a role which confers the entitlement to speak for members of this community (“Chairman...”). Category entitlements are further worked up in the body of the extract (“As an East African Asian...”) in ways which establish experiential credentials that locally legitimize the dismissal of Muslim faith schooling demands and, in conjunction with the adoption of authorial insiderness, inoculate against potential charges of Islamophobia.

Extract 9: The Mail on Sunday (13/10/04) – Commentary by Peter Hitchens

Muslims must learn language of tolerance.

If we are to have more Muslim schools then they must teach in the English language so that we can all know for certain that their pupils are not being poisoned against Christianity and our free way of life.

We must not be afraid of accusations of ‘Islamophobia’ when we address this issue. I know of nowhere where Islam in power is even half as tolerant of Christianity as we are of Islam.

(The Mail on Sunday, June 13th, 2004)

Returning to our central concern, the relationship between discourses of tolerance and assimilation is crystallized in extract 9. Mainstream (Christian) ‘tolerance’ of Islam is set up in direct contrast to Islamic ‘tolerance’ of the assumed

mainstream faith of Christianity (“I know of nowhere where Islam in power is even half as tolerant of Christianity as we are of Islam”). Positioning relative to the taken-for-granted moral order of tolerance consequently serves to justify the assimilative call for Muslim schools to teach in the English language on the basis that this will perform a civilizing function, protecting against the assumed tendency of Muslim schools to ‘poison’ pupils “against Christianity and our free way of life”. It is a call which supposes an existing mutual exclusivity of Islam and Christianity-centred Englishness along linguistic dimensions and moreover, reproduces a form of hegemonic paternalism permitted by the hierarchical structuring of morality embedded in the tolerance discourse.

In spite of consistent attempts to uphold integration as ‘the moral good’, what we see in practice is the reproduction of a hierarchical insider/outsider structure which prescribes conformity and, in doing so, frequently diminishes the acculturation responsibilities of the non-Muslim mainstream. While non-Muslim cultural systems are privileged, the rights of Muslims to assert their own cultural identities are implicitly marginalized. In our wider sample, this marginalization was frequently legitimized by a variety of transgressive constructions of Islam. In summary, integration may work to maintain positions of tolerance and an acceptance of diversity, but frequently this conceals a drive towards a hegemonically-driven cultural homogeneity.

Discussion

This paper has attempted to demonstrate the benefits of adopting a discourse analytic approach to the study of acculturation. It has been argued that a discursive approach provides a useful point of departure by way of which problems associated with typologically-situated acculturation research might best be addressed. While previous

research has privileged 'integration' as a relatively stable acculturation 'attitude' or 'stance' held by the individual, the present study provides evidence of how this moral privileging is achieved in rhetorically-directed discursive practice.

Acculturative moral hierarchies were consistently oriented to in which integration was positioned as *the* optimal response to diversity while segregationism and social division were positioned as transgressive. These were drawn upon as a rhetorical basis from which to legitimize (albeit in a small subsection of the data corpus where pro-faith schooling stances were taken up) or condemn faith schooling. Their reproduction was implicit in the banal commonplaces of everyday language. Orienting to integration as an assumed optimal state without qualification imbued it with the self-evident moral weight of 'common sense' thereby serving to close down possible avenues of contestation. It is in its taken-for-granted alignment with the moral good that integration takes on the rhetorical characteristics of resources such as meritocracy and equality (as delineated by authors such as Augoustinos, Tuffin, and Every, 2005, Riley, 2002, and Wetherell and Potter, 1992), consequently finding itself to be implicitly positioned within a wider liberal interpretative framework.

Furthermore, the rhetoric of integration evidenced in the print media was shown to encompass ideological dilemmas embedded in wider liberal discourses of tolerance, as demonstrated elsewhere in both British and non-British political rhetoric (Blommaert, 1997; Blommaert & Verhshueren, 1998; Lewis & Neal, 2005; Yuval-Davis, Anthias & Kofman, 2005). While integrationism might be explicitly mobilized to garner a liberal footing, it frequently concealed assimilative undertones and a drive towards homogeneity in line with normatively positioned 'mainstream' (that is, non-Muslim) British values. Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins (2006) have recently stressed the importance of analysing the ways in which both minorities *and* majorities make

sense of intergroup relations and group positioning in order to better understand the ways in which particular approaches to intercultural contact are sustained. It is therefore important to recognize this mainstream media assimilationism in practice. It conflicts with the conceptualization offered by traditional acculturation models which take integration to minimally involve an acceptance of multiple cultures. The assimilative-integration discourse evidenced in this study contrastingly assumes the kind of pre-existing moral and cultural structure to society which, as Parekh (2000) suggests, is equated with a dominant in-group. The use of normative constructs to demand assimilation as the basis for allocating social and political rights clearly reproduces power structures in which the rights of 'other' cultures are necessarily diminished in order for assimilation to be achieved (assimilation requiring a relinquishing of cultural and moral values which are 'other' to those of the mainstream). Its drive towards homogeneity is inherently at odds with notions of cultural diversity predicated on a sense of shared intercultural development. It contains traces of cultural imperialism and an underlying intolerance of cultural diversity which risks, albeit in the name of integration, encouraging the persistence of conflict. Moreover, the implicit (and sometimes explicit) marginalization of Islam (that is, closing down Muslim speaking positions) may provide a resource by way of which intergroup relations are understood from minority perspectives, in ways which might potentially legitimize separatism or else preclude the possibility of intercultural and interfaith dialogue (see Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins, 2006).

In tandem with the interplay of 'integration' and 'segregation' in establishing acculturative moral orders (which itself was suggestive of the mutually constitutive nature of these constructs), our findings point to an interrelationship of acculturation constructs as they are caught up (and themselves constructed) in the accomplishment

of occasioned argumentative goals. While we acknowledge the need for further studies to examine the nature of this interrelationship in more detail, the present study nevertheless begins to demonstrate the limitations of the typological discourse in which traditional research locates itself. The discursive focus on contextualized constitution problematizes the inscription of pre-defined meanings of acculturation constructs on data which may risk reifying hegemonic forms of sense-making. It provides a lens through which the hegemonic structure of acculturation discourses might be understood and consequently opened to critique. From this perspective, the privileging of integration in traditional research becomes troubled rather than reified as a taken-for-granted positive outcome that we should seek to facilitate. The shift away from the typological discourse to an exploration of collectively shared forms of sense-making consequently avoids locating responsibility for particular forms of multicultural relations with the individual in a manner which absolves wider socio-political structures.

Our findings demonstrate the limitations of typological acculturation research and are intended to carve openings for a discursive approach to acculturation. There are, however, a number of points that should be raised regarding the specific context of this study. Firstly, while acculturative constructs such as marginalization and assimilation were not directly invoked in relation to the faith schooling debate, alternative contexts might see argumentation negotiated in terms of alternative resources. Moreover, the relative lack of variability identified in the deployment of integrationist discourse drawn upon in relation to the faith schooling arguments discussed here may be a by-product of constraints associated with the mainstream

media at the time of sampling⁴. Nevertheless, in a preliminary way, our analysis makes clear the importance of an attention to that which remains inexplicit and to which a typological approach based on restrictive questionnaire methodology appears insensitive.

Secondly, while the critique provided in the introduction draws attention to the failure of traditional research to account for the ways in which acculturation is actually negotiated within and between groups, the present study similarly fails to address the latter issue. Our media study provides a sampling of culturally available acculturative repertoires. However, the hegemonic structures of the British media may frequently marginalize or exclude the voice of particular cultural ‘others’. As such, our newspaper sample may have potentially precluded the kind of resistances that might occur in more inclusive interactional settings (or, indeed, in other sections of the media where a diversity of non-secular – particularly Muslim – voices may be more widely represented). Verkuyten (2003), for example, has recently drawn attention to the ways in which ‘assimilation’ may be resisted through discourses of cultural essentialism which render it an impossibility and by conceptualizing cultural adaptation as a possibility which does not necessarily entail assimilation. Indeed, the possibility might also be entertained that, since assimilationism prescribes a relinquishing of cultural values, it entails an explicit friction with liberal discourses of cultural diversity predicated on an assumed drive towards tolerance. The encroachment of liberal tolerance ‘norms’ might permit or even encourage particular forms of resistance which threaten the persuasiveness of assimilation-based arguments. This seems to be a potential explanation for the synonymous usage of

⁴ More recently, media debate regarding the rights of Muslim women to wear the niqab has, in more liberal sections of the British press, begun to orient to the failures of white non-Muslims to ‘integrate’ into multicultural society (for example, ‘Let’s have an open and honest discussion about White people’, *The Guardian*, 02/10/06)

integration in our sample. However, further research is required which not only gives voice to 'others' but also examines the contestation of acculturative outcomes in everyday discursive practice, a pursuit which favours an approach focusing on the milieu of everyday conversational interactions.

Thirdly, our concentration on the faith schooling issue has provided a useful contextual lens through which to examine acculturative discourses. However, it is acknowledged that this focus provided something of a restricted sample on the basis that it was rarely engaged with by a particular section of our newspaper sample (namely *The Sun* and *The Daily Mirror*). While this represents something of a limitation, our wider research project has nevertheless evidenced similar discursive patterns in relation to a range of issues across diverse sub-sections of the British print media. Nonetheless, the present study seems to support the identification of schools as a key site of power struggles to determine 'belongingness'. Recent research has examined the socio-spatial practices through which faith schools are materially drawn upon and challenged in the maintenance and contestation of particular identities (Valins, 2003). In line with the present findings, this research has acknowledged the fluidity of socio-spatial boundaries and their openness to justification or contestation along lines of inclusivity and segregation respectively. Our discourse analytic perspective has suggested that the rhetoric employed in the struggle over faith schools may be involved in the re-production of the more macro-level power structures underpinning acculturation. More research is required which takes faith schooling as a substantive concern and sets out to delineate its rhetorical role in the negotiation of cultural diversity.

To conclude, it is important to address a key research finding as yet conspicuous by its absence in this discussion. This study drew attention to a number

of issues on which the negotiation of acculturation discourse was seemingly dependent. Particularly, our analysis drew attention to the sense in which the negotiation of acculturative moral orders was frequently a discursively *located* one. That is, it was frequently dependent on socio-spatial constructions of integration and segregation, constructs which were simultaneously shown to carry banal boundary connotations implicated in the upkeep of insider/outsider distinctions. By locating the integrative or divisive potential of faith schools in geographically-grounded constructions of the material environment, these acculturative consequences were lent a sense of out-there-ness, oriented to as carrying the rhetorical weight of ‘reality’. These preliminary findings point to the potential that discursive re-conceptualizations of place (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Wallwork & Dixon, 2004) hold for developing a ‘grounded’ understanding of acculturation. Indeed, acculturative questions of intergroup contact and participation might be thought to encode a spatial dimension (see Dixon, 2001, for a spatialized discursive re-working of intergroup contact). Questions might be raised not only about how place resources sustain particular acculturation discourses but also about how acculturative constructs sustain particular discursive mappings of place and what role this relationship might play in the (re-)production of intercultural relations. Our earlier call for research into the negotiation of acculturation in everyday discursive practice should therefore be extended to include a spatial dimension. Particularly, what is needed is a discursive approach which not only considers the role of place at a linguistic rhetorical level but also begins to consider the ways in which the discursive-material environment is implicated in the everyday accomplishment of acculturation.

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