Critical Sociology 36(1) 109-129

Critical Sociology
http://crs.sagepub.com

Symbolically Muslim: Media, Hijab, and the West

Michelle D. Byng
Temple University, Pennsylvania, USA

Abstract
This research examines newspaper reporting to question how the media represented the ideological interests of Western nations concerning symbolic representations of Islam in public following 11 September 2001. Critical discourse analysis is used to examine 72 stories that were published in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* between 2004 and 2006. The stories covered the ban on hijab in France, the debate about niqab in Britain, and veiling by Muslim women in the USA. They show that knowledge about veiling in Western nations must include their national identities as well as their concerns about Muslims' assimilation/integration and Islamic terrorism. American newspaper media positioned France, Britain, and the USA as ideologically alike in spite of their different framings of religious freedom. Reporting supported the interests, values, and hegemony of the West with representations that created the common sense that Muslim women would not veil in public.

Keywords
critical discourse analysis, hijab, niqab, Muslim women, veiling

Introduction

Global politics linking Islam to terrorism have complicated the legitimacy of symbolic representations of Muslim identity in the public spheres of Western nations. This was brought to the fore in some European nations after 11 September 2001 by legislation banning hijab in public schools and other state institutions, and political debates about the appropriateness of wearing niqab in public.[1] Media reports on international military actions against global terrorism, and states' efforts to circumvent terrorist acts and increase security have made Muslims in Western countries more visible. In this light, knowledge about veiling among Muslim women must be extended beyond the classic topics of patriarchy, Islamic feminism, religiosity, and identity to include the national identities of Western nations, the assimilation of Muslim minorities, and the potential threat of Islamic terrorism.

DOI: 10.1177/0896920509347143

Scholars have long been interested in veiling by Muslim women. Veiling was argued to be, and generally accepted as, a corollary of women's oppression that was stipulated by the Qur'an. However, researchers using feminist theoretical perspectives have made the case that the Qur'an's verses about women and equality delegitimize patriarchy (Stowasser 1994; Wadud 1999). Ahmed (1992) and Mernissi (1987, 1991) have examined the historic, cultural, and religious foundations of veiling and maintained that the interests of male elites are significant to women's seclusion, literally and symbolically, from public space. Studies have shown that Muslim women do not necessarily associate veiling with oppression or gender equality with refuting traditional gender roles (Bullock 2003; Fernea 1998; Read 2003). Moreover, there are social and political meanings associated with veiling that go beyond religious practice and gender inequality (Epstein 2007; Lorber 2002; Mohanty 1991).

This was evident in anti-colonial struggles where Islamic clothing was used by Muslims to reassert their culture and identity (Ahmed 1992; Bullock 2000). Additionally, Muslim women in Europe and the USA have worn hijab as an affirmation of their ethno-religious identity (Bullock 2000; Killian 2003; Shakeri 1998). Read and Bartkowski (2000) found that those who veiled used it to negotiate minority status, while those who did not saw hijab as prohibitive to their integration. According to Williams and Vashi (2007), veiling helped the daughters of Muslim immigrants to the USA formulate a Muslim and American identity. Additionally, researchers have shown that for Western converts to Islam veiling affirmed their 'new' identity (Anway 1998; Byng 2004; Franks 2000). Among African-American Muslim women veiling increased discrimination against them; however, it also mediated discrimination because it provided them with a means of self-definition (Byng 1998). Franks (2000) had similar findings with regard to white British converts who were targets for discrimination because they wore hijab, and empowered because veiling affirmed their agency and removed them from the sexual gaze of men.

The association of veiling with political concerns is evident also in the news media. Researchers found that negative media representations of hijab and the social exclusion of veiled Muslim women corresponded to efforts to prohibit veiling in Canadian and French public schools (Bullock 2000; Liederman 2000; Todd 1999).

More generally, the media have represented Islam and Muslims as culturally incompatible with the values, norms, and interests of Western nations (Haddad 1998; Karim 1997; Moaddel 2002; Muscati 2002; Said 1997). The attacks of 11 September 2001 brought this pattern in media representations of Muslims and Islam into sharper relief (Jiwani 2005; Muscati 2003; Smith 2005).[2] Media representations are central to creating common sense understandings of a wide range of social events and issues (Altheide 2000; Gamson et al. 1992), including veiling by Muslim women in Western nations.

Legislating Hijab in the West

So, how did the American media report on Europe's problems with hijab and niqab that developed after 9/11? Specifically, how was veiling represented in *New York Times (NYT)*

and *Washington Post (WP)* stories about legislation restricting hijab in France and the political debates that surrounded niqab in Britain? Additionally, how did these newspapers represent veiling by Muslim women living in the USA? Although France, Britain, and the USA faced similar security concerns following 9/11 and held similar ideals about religious freedom, their actual policies on religious freedom varied as did their responses to hijab and niqab.

The Commission and Parliament of the European Union provided the legislative frame for France and Britain's policies on religious freedom. It held that 'the determination of religion's place in the public sphere fell under the sovereignty and exclusive competence of each European Union member-state' (Shadid and Van Koningsveld 2005: 35). In addition, the European Court on Human Rights in Strasbourg, as articulated in the European Convention on Human Rights, ruled that legal restrictions on religious freedom could be enacted only to the degree 'necessary in a democratic society for public security, the protection of order, health, and public morals, or the protection of the rights and liberties of others' (Shadid and Van Koningsveld 2005: 40). In this light, France banned hijab in public schools and for civil servants. Eight of Germany's 16 states banned hijab for state employees but not for public school students (*Deutsche Welle* 2004, 2006, 2007). Italy, the Netherlands, and Belgium outlawed covering the face – or wearing niqab – in public. Yet, in Britain there was only a politicized debate over the public appropriateness of niqab.

France's legislative ban on hijab for public school students and state employees was guided by that nation's ideal of *laïcité* (or secularism) which defined religious freedom as state neutrality and protection from the religious expressions of others (Ezekiel 2005; Killian 2003; Liederman 2000; Shadid and Van Koningsveld 2005). In the early 1990s, the French Council of State held that forced removal of hijab was a violation of human rights as well as personal and religious freedom; yet by 2004, French secularism meant restricting hijab, yarmulkes (Jewish skullcaps), and large Christian crosses in the public sphere (Liederman 2000; Shadid and Van Koningsveld, 2005).

In Britain, the political debate around niqab was framed by the nation's multiculturalism policy. According to Britain's Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), multiculturalism implied the recognition and accommodation of culturally based group identities with the goal of integration (i.e. social and political participation) but not assimilation (i.e. acculturation to the majority) (CRE 2006). Government policies and decisions assumed that identity-based interests, organizations, and political activities were legitimate (CRE 2006). Niqab pushed the boundary of what was appropriate given British social and political multiculturalism.

Unlike Britain or France, in the USA there was no national political debate or legislation about veiling by Muslim women following 9/11. For Americans, the First Amendment to the Constitution protected freedom of religious belief and worship. Religious pluralism developed in combination with immigration and increasing diversity because ethnic groups adapted the Protestant congregational structure in establishing their religious institutions (Smith 1978; Warner 1993). Yet, in 1879 the Supreme Court issued its first ruling allowing states to limit religious practice (Reynolds v. United States [1879]); therefore, legislation

enacted at the state and local level has implications for wearing hijab and niqab in America's public sphere. This is demonstrated by two court rulings and state regulations regarding driver's license photographs.

In 1990, Pennsylvania's religious garb statute was upheld by the US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in a case prohibiting a public school teacher from wearing hijab (Moore 1998; US v. Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia 1990): 911 F.2d 892 3rd Cir. [1990]).[3] In June 2007, this decision was precedent in a case stopping Philadelphia police officers from wearing hijab (Gambardello 2007; Webb v. City of Philadelphia 2007).[4] The decision supported the city's uniform dress code's exclusion of religious symbols.[5] According to research by the Council on American Islamic-Relations (CAIR) religious accommodation of hijab and niqab in driver's license photographing increased following 11 September 2001 (CAIR 2005: 6). In many states, agency or personnel directives allowed for head coverings on driver's license photographs, but only 10 protected the practice by law (CAIR 2005: 4). In terms of face coverings like niqab, 22 states specifically prohibited them, although nine offered religious accommodations (CAIR 2005: 5).[6] At the state and local level, the US response to veiling after 9/11 was characterized by patterns of accommodation and restriction, but there was no accompanying national political debate.

As France, Britain, and the USA faced security concerns following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, each nation responded differently to veiling by Muslim women in the public sphere. In France secularism was used to prohibit state employees and public school students from wearing hijab. In Britain multiculturalism framed a politicized debate on the public appropriateness of niqab. In the USA the response was consistent with that nation's reputation of linking religious pluralism and ethnic diversity: there were no legislative proposals or debates about veiling by Muslim American women. What did this mean for how the *NYT* and *WP* represented veiled Muslim women in each nation? Did the news media position these three nations as ideologically alike with regard to the presence of veiled Muslim women in their public spheres?

I used critical discourse analysis of stories that appeared in the *NYT* and *WP* between 2004 and 2006 to answer these questions. The following analysis shows that the US media represented the French hijab ban and British niqab debate through images of national identity, the assimilation/integration of Muslim minorities, and the threats posed by terrorism and radical Islam. Furthermore, it will demonstrate that these two American papers represented veiling in the USA similarly: through the lenses of the assimilation/integration of Muslims and concerns about the possibility that veiling was a tangential indicator of radicalism that could lead to terrorism. However, unlike France and Britain, *NYT* and *WP* stories signaled that in the USA Muslim women gained access to freedom and opportunity by voluntarily removing their veils. My findings are that newspaper stories represented the three nations as having a shared ideological perspective that would restrain veiling in public places, although each nation's approach to limiting veiling was different. Before turning to my analysis, I will describe the methods used to collect my data and the rationale for my choice of the *NYT* and *WP*. Also, I will describe the objectives of critical discourse analysis as they relate to the ideological influence of the media on society.

Methods

The newspaper stories used for this analysis were published in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* between January 2004 and December 2006. In this time span France passed legislation banning hijab and other religious symbols in the public sector and Britain's political leaders debated the appropriateness of wearing niqab in public. The stories were retrieved from the *Lexis Nexus* database between February and March 2007. Multiple search terms were used to retrieve stories. The terms veiling, hijab, headscarf, and niqab were used alone and in combination with country names (e.g. France, Britain, Germany, USA), Europe, Muslims, Muslim women, and Islam. The searches yielded 72 newspaper articles. The *NYT* and *WP* were selected because of their prominence among American newspapers and the middle-class profile of their readership.

From 2004 through 2006 the *NYT* and the *WP* placed third and fifth, respectively, among the top 100 American newspapers ranked by circulation (BurrellesLuce 2004, 2005, 2006).[7] Of the *NYT's* national readership 60% had completed four or more years of college, 59% had incomes of $75,000 or above, 18% held management, business, or financial operations jobs, while 27% were employed in professional or related jobs (Audit Bureau of Circulations 2006a). The demographic profile of the *NYT* readership in New York City and its surrounding suburbs was solidly middle class: 64% had completed four or more years of college, 64% had incomes of $75,000 or above, 19% held management, business, and financial operations jobs, and 28% were employed in professional and related occupations (Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2006a). The same was true for the readership of the *WP* in the District of Columbia and its surrounding suburbs: 52% of the readership was college educated (four or more years), 65% had incomes of $75,000 or above, 19% were employed in management, business, and financial operations jobs, while 27% held professional and related occupations (Audit Bureau of Circulations 2006b).[8]

The circulation rankings of the *NYT* and *WP* in combination with the demographic profiles of their readership indicate the papers' ability to influence a segment of the American population that was likely to be politically engaged. Census data on the voting age population showed that those with bachelors or advanced degrees were the segment of the American population that was most likely to be registered to vote in 2004 and 2006 (78.1% and 79.9%, respectively), and to report that they voted in the 2004 presidential election (74.2%) and the 2006 congressional elections (59.5%) (US Census Bureau 2008: 256). My point is not that voters and the papers' readers were the same people, but that they were similarly situated at a time when the Bush administration was carrying out its policy responses to the attacks of 9/11. It is reasonable to assume that the paper's readers had varying perspectives on the Bush Administration's policies and varying interpretations of *NYT* and *WP* stories. However, when education level and professional status are combined with voter participation rates they signal the likelihood that the papers' readers had the savvy to recognize the ideological implications of the stories about veiling, especially as they related to securing Western interests and hegemony.

Analyzing Newspaper Stories as Discourse

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used to evaluate the newspaper stories in my data set. The analytical focus was discourse-as-social-practice or 'the ideological effects and hegemonic processes in which discourse is a feature' (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000: 449).[9] In other words, the ideology and hegemony of the West were supported by newspaper stories where representations of hijab and niqab were refracted through the prisms of the national identities of Western nations, their concerns about the assimilation/integration of Muslim minorities, and their efforts to combat Islamic terrorism.

Van Dijk (1993: 249–50) argued that the objective of CDA is to examine power, dominance, and social inequality as they are produced, reproduced, and challenged through discourse.[10] Inequality is legitimated in the discourses of group attitudes and ideologies, organizations, institutions, and nations (the meso and macro level of discourse), as well as in the conversations of everyday interactions (the micro level of discourse) (Van Dijk 1993). Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000: 448–9) maintain that 'discourse is an opaque object of power in modern societies' because elites control communicative contexts and events where their interests are advanced through socially shared representations (Jacobs and Sobieraj 2007; Van Dijk 1993, 1997). Discourse, then, is an element of social structure, and the media is one type of elite discourse that constructs meaning and understanding for the public (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000; Van Dijk 1997). Media is the interface between the interests of the powerful and the public mind (Van Dijk 1997).

Analyses of the media have found that they use discourse to construct knowledge, interpretations, and social representations that support dominance and inequality by making them appear to be natural common sense (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000; Riggins 1997; Van Dijk 1993). Media representations construct socially shared knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms, and values that inform the public mind thereby creating common sense (Van Dijk 1993). *NYT* and *WP* stories created the common sense knowledge that veiling was, at best, not expected or, at worst, not acceptable in France, Britain, and the USA.

In the analysis that follows, I present three prominent themes in *NYT* and *WP* stories about hijab and niqab: the national identities of Western nations, the assimilation/integration of Muslim minorities, and the threat of Islamic terrorism. My primary focus is on stories about hijab legislation in France and the niqab debate in Britain, although stories about other European nations inform my interpretations and conclusions. Furthermore, although the themes that structure my analysis are presented as analytically distinct, they often worked together in a single story to demonstrate the problems hijab and niqab posed in Western nations. Finally, I turn my analysis to the USA, noting the difference in how the *NYT* and *WP* stories represented veiling there. As noted above, France, Britain, and the USA held similar ideals about religious freedom, but their political and policy responses to veiled Muslim women in their public spheres after 11 September 2001 were different. Did this lead the media to position the three nations as ideologically different or similar in representations about veiling? Media representations formulated the same common sense about this particular symbolic representation of Islam: veiling by Muslim women should be limited in each nation's public sphere.

Analysis

National Identity

Two stories vividly represented national identity as central to France's ban on hijab, Jewish skullcaps, and large Christian crosses in public schools and state institutions. One, in the *WP*, questioned whether the French would go too far, curbing individualism, if the ban was extended to bandannas – because Muslim girls could use them to replace hijab – and beards because they might be a religious symbol for Muslim boys (Givhan 2004). Yet, the story maintained also that France's secular identity was endangered by religious symbolism in state institutions, if not public space more generally. The story said:

> President (Jacques) Chirac proposed the ban to protect the French tradition of secularism from a rising number of religious and ethnic divisions and antagonisms. In particular, the veil worn by many Muslim women was singled out as a sign of the encroachment of religion into public life. The troika of items initially targeted for the ban has unquestionable religious connotations … (Givhan 2004)

It went on:

> The veil, the yarmulke and the cross enter the room a few steps before the wearers, identifying them as part of a group before they have an opportunity to define themselves as individuals. They are among the few garments whose meaning comes through with no distortion. The sincerity of the message is all that is left to debate. (Givhan 2004)

The story provided two representations of individualism as it related to France's ban; one concerned construing non-religious clothing as religious thereby raising the possibility that those items might be banned too. The other signified that religion itself limited individualism and that this was especially problematic when people wore religiously symbolic clothing. The story initially targeted a core American value, individualism, in a way that would have appealed to American sensibilities: banning what might be religious infringed upon people's choices. However, it then used individualism – that is, the ability of religious symbols to interfere with an individual's self-presentation – to rationalize France's definition of itself as a secular nation and to legitimate the hijab ban.

The second story, published in the *NYT*, covered the French National Assembly debate on hijab and highlighted the importance of nationalism and Christianity to the legislation. The first line said that according to the French Prime Minister 'Muslim head scarves must be banned from public schools because they undermine the French republican ideal of freedom and equality' (Sciolino 2004). According to the story, another member of the assembly 'called the measure "the flag of France whose colors we want to raise today, once again, above the schools"' (Sciolino 2004). The French Prime Minister was quoted and paraphrased as referring to the increased number of girls in French schools wearing the Islamic veil and then arguing that religious symbols in schools were

taking on political meanings. The story reported that he said, '"Religion cannot be a political project"', and went on to '[frame] the debate on the banning of religious symbols [by] singling out Islam … [I]n "us against them" language, [the Prime Minister] spoke of France as "the old land of Christianity", and he called on France's Muslims to behave like good citizens' (Sciolino 2004).

The discourse of this story tied together national identity, secularism, and religious identity: France's national identity was based on freedom and equality; France eschewed using religious symbols for political purposes; and, Muslims were not just religiously different, they threatened freedom and equality, the separation of religion and politics, and Christianity. Like the French, many American readers may have thought of themselves as Christians. For the readers, the images of France would not have been unlike those of the USA in terms of valuing freedom, equality, and the separation of church and state. Furthermore, the story signified that not only did Muslims in France threaten these values, but also for them to be French they could not be visibly Muslim.

Through the images in both stories, France's national identity, religious freedom, and secularism were secured by protecting the French population from witnessing expressions of Muslim identity in the form of hijab. Just as the *WP* story associated visible religious differences in France with social conflict – 'Chirac proposed the ban to protect the French tradition of secularism from a rising number of religious and ethnic divisions and antagonisms' (Givhan 2004) – newspaper stories signified that niqab was a threat to Britain's social harmony.

According to reports in the *NYT*, concerns about niqab and whether Muslim women should be prohibited from covering their faces in public came to the fore in Britain in response to two events. One was the dismissal of a teaching assistant (Aishah Azmi) because she wore niqab. It was reported that although she removed it while teaching and in front of other female teachers, wearing it in front of male teachers resulted in the loss of her job. An employment tribunal found that she had suffered an 'injury to her feelings', for which she was awarded just over $1800, but not harassment or discrimination (Cowell 2006d). The other event, as described in the *NYT*, was an article written by the leader of the House of Commons (Jack Straw) in his local newspaper saying that he asked women to remove their veils when talking to him in his office because it was '"such a visible statement of separation and of difference" as to jeopardize British social harmony' (Cowell 2006a). According to the story, Straw argued that it prohibited communication and the ease of interaction among communities and strangers in public places. It was reported that British Prime Minister Tony Blair initially avoided direct comment on Straw's words but he eventually said niqab was a 'mark of separation and that's why it makes other people from outside the community feel uncomfortable' (Cowell 2006c). In a *NYT* story that covered his entry into the debate Blair was quoted as saying he could '"see the reason" for Azmi's dismissal' (Cowell 2006c). The article went on: '"We have to deal with the debate," Mr. Blair said, "People want to know that the Muslim community in particular, but actually all minority communities, have got the balance right between integration and multi-culturalism"' (Cowell 2006c). The news story also said:

> Non-Muslims say the veil-wearing shows a reluctance among the estimated 1.6 million Muslims – 3 percent of the population – to compromise for the sake of social harmony. David Davis, the Conservative opposition spokesman on home affairs, said last weekend that British Muslims risked 'voluntary apartheid' by displays of separateness like the full veil. (Cowell 2006c)

As noted above, multiculturalism provided the parameters of Britain's niqab debate. The policy's protection of the cultural identities and practices of the nation's minorities was similar to American cultural pluralist ideals. Also, stories situated Britain's problems with niqab within a discourse that had been used in reference to American minorities. Specifically, British politicians and American political conservatives used a similar logic when they argued that social inequality resulted from the actions, cultural or otherwise, of minority individuals or communities (Brown et al. 2003). Finally, discomfort with Muslims was more than a sign of the times following 9/11. The disruption of 'social harmony' that the attacks caused and 'everyone' witnessed was firmly attached to Muslim identity; expanding the representation of disruption of social harmony to the face veil worn by Muslim women was not a huge leap. Newspaper reporting on British politicians' fear that niqab was emblematic of social disorder signaled its threat to a characteristic of the nation's identity: its social harmony.

In representing the problems hijab and niqab posed in the public spheres of France and Britain newspaper stories referenced secularism and multiculturalism. In other words, the stories did not fail to note the policies that informed each nation's ideals about religious freedom. However, newspaper stories also positioned France and Britain as ideologically alike in that veiling challenged their national identities. Moreover, newspaper reports created the common sense understanding that veiling by Muslim women posed a threat to the national identities of Western nations. Beyond national identity, newspaper stories indicated that Britain and France shared another concern about symbolic representations of Muslim identity in public space: the assimilation and integration of their minority populations, particularly Muslims.

Assimilation /Integration

Newspaper reports conveyed that Britain's multiculturalism policy was central to that nation's concerns about niqab. Representations politicized niqab in terms of its impact on social harmony, as noted above, and as an assessment of the 'success' of multiculturalism. According to *NYT* reports, the niqab controversy raised questions about whether the policy had failed because it legitimated maintaining distinctive cultures and identities among minority communities. The potential failure of multiculturalism was put forward in the article that covered Jack Straw's initial comments about niqab:

> Mr. Straw's remark underscored increasing worries among public officials that the country's 40-year-old policy of multiculturalism – protecting each minority's right to its

> distinctive languages and customs – has faltered by fostering division and social dislocation. (Cowell 2006a)

This short quote signaled that political protection of minority identities meant that they were out of place in British society. The image of Muslims as out of sync with the rest of Britain was emphasized also in a story that only referenced the niqab debate. Its focus was Britain's Islamic schools, their struggle for funding, and the likelihood that Muslim children lived in poor neighborhoods and attended segregated public schools. The report said:

> But the visible differences – the way female teenagers wear the full-length dress and head-covering and the boys wear black robes and skullcaps – play into a ferocious debate about the sense of separateness or readiness to integrate Britain's estimated 1.8 million Muslims, about 3 percent of the population. (Cowell 2006b)

According to the story, the chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality felt that segregation was so extreme that Muslim children were not prepared for the real world, and it quoted a Pakistani born Anglican priest as saying, 'If you are going to have Islamic schools, the question is whether they are going to embrace Western values' (Cowell 2006b). The story pairs practices that make Muslims identifiable with the failure to adhere to British values. How Muslims enacted multiculturalism was a social problem because, according to this report, it prohibited their integration into British society.

For American readers the idea that minorities who failed to conform were dislocated and experienced lives marked by inequality was a familiar one given the prevalence of the association of these images with the non-white, urban poor in the USA (Wilson 1987, 1996). Stories about British Muslims underscored themes in American narratives about the immigrant experience and minority groups: assimilation was best and anything short of that marked groups as different and, therefore, unequal. In addition, the increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the USA included a more visible Muslim population (Smith 2002). *NYT* stories reinforced the legitimacy of assimilationist conformity with images of British politicians who were left to struggle with the 'social problems' that had arisen from multiculturalism and a Muslim minority. The stories suggested that assimilation was an option that British leaders wished they had. Just as reports on the niqab debate in Britain used multiculturalism as a lens for viewing the problems veiling caused for Muslims' integration/assimilation, those about banning hijab in France used secularism in the same way.

Representations of integration and assimilation were woven together with those of secularism in newspaper stories about banning hijab in France. The implicit assumption and common sense created by these images was that removing obvious signs of religious identity from state institutions ensured that France's citizens shared national identity; that they existed together in a single, integrated society. In the *NYT* story that covered the National Assembly's debate of the hijab legislation the Prime Minister was paraphrased as having said 'France's Muslims [should] behave like good citizens' (Sciolino 2004).

The story also quoted him as saying, '"Today, all the great religions in the history of France have adapted themselves to that principle," of secularism ... "For the most recently arrived, I'm speaking here of Islam, secularism is a chance, the chance to be a religion of France"' (Sciolino 2004). This discourse so effectively paired secularism with integration that secularism became integration; French Muslims must be secular to be French. Moreover, other religious communities had integrated into French society by conforming to secularism and the ban on hijab would insure the same outcome for Muslims.

The logic of immigrant conformity and the idea that today's immigrants should follow the path of past immigrants to social integration were not unheard of in the USA. Unlike France, what was required for new US immigrants rested more on language – i.e. the increasing number of Spanish speaking new immigrants (Portes 2007) – than on religion, but conformity to English usage opened doors for migrants, both past and present. So again, the subtext of media discourse created a familiar common sense understanding for readers that legitimized France's legislative ban on hijab.

Stories in American newspapers positioned France and Britain similarly on the issues of the assimilation and integration of Muslim minorities and the veiling practices of Muslim women. The stories took into account the secularism of France and the multiculturalism of Britain, yet they arrived at the same conclusion about veiling: the practice was a visible marker of the failure of Muslim communities to conform to the societies where they lived. A *WP* story presented this ideological position as one that was shared with other European nations. The story brought into relief images of Europe's push to assimilate Muslim minorities. It opened by describing a Muslim woman in Belgium who stopped wearing hijab and then quit her job because of death threats against her employer unless he fired his 'fundamentalist Muslim employee' (Malik 2005). The article said,

> [I]n Denmark, France, Germany and the Netherlands, programs have been launched to assimilate Muslims into national mainstreams. German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder has demanded that Muslims learn 'Enlightenment values' and not live in 'parallel societies'. Other European politicians and intellectuals agree, excoriating proponents of multiculturalism and advocating instead an assimilationist policy. (Malik 2005)

What the media had represented as a problem for Britain and France was also a problem for Europe, generally. This story made clear that assimilation would insure that Muslims shared the values of other Europeans. And, it was multiculturalism that had come under fire and led to the denunciation of political leaders who supported it.

For the American reader assimilation was the unquestioned ideal that intuitively signaled the process of becoming and being American. It was the major paradigm behind the idyllic national narrative of the USA as a nation of immigrants. Thus, when discourse in newspaper reporting noted the failure of multiculturalism it affirmed what was familiar, common sense knowledge in American society: the logic and rationality of assimilation. There was yet another allusion in *NYT* and *WP* stories about the veiling practices of Muslim women – one that linked veiling to the fear and threat that were provoked by the attacks of 11 September 2001 and Islamic terrorism.

Fear and Threat

Newspaper stories connected legislating the ban on hijab in France to security concerns that arose following 11 September 2001 and the subsequent terrorist attacks in Europe. In the *NYT* story about the debate in the French National Assembly to ban hijab the reporter wrote, 'With passion and anguish during the debate, which is expected to last four days, some speakers defended the measure as a necessary step to stop the spread of radical Islam, while others predicted it would be impossible to enforce.' (Sciolino 2004) In the *WP* story that said the meanings of religious symbols are unquestioned, the reporter also wrote, 'It is clear that the veil, the yarmulke and the cross each has the power to incite or to soothe. And when religious differences spark debates that turn into arguments or violence, one can understand, although not necessarily endorse, the logic in trying to remove all identifying, volatile markers' (Givhan 2004). While the *NYT* story noted the difficulty of actually stopping women from wearing hijab with legislation, the *WP* story acknowledged American values that opposed restrictions on religion and, therein, symbols of religious identity in public space. Yet, in each case the images unambiguously linked veiling to terrorism and violence. According to the *NYT* story the hijab ban would stop the spread of radical Islam; according to the *WP* story the power of religious symbols to incite violence made the logic of efforts to remove them from the public sphere reasonable, if not just plain common sense.

Moreover, in the post-11 September context US ideals about religious pluralism could give way to the logic of French secularism that would try, as stated in the *WP*, 'to remove all identifying, volatile markers' (Givhan 2004) like hijab from the public sphere. Media reports made France's legislated ban on hijab a normal response to threat, one that American readers could 'understand, although not necessarily endorse' (Givhan 2004). Newspaper reports about the niqab debate in Britain placed it in the same light as hijab in France, one that assumed that veiling by Muslim women should be limited in public space.

The bombings in Britain in July 2005 meant that the nation's debate about niqab was taking place at a time when terrorism by Muslims was an immediate reality for Britons. The July 2005 bombings, in combination with 11 September and the Madrid bombings, made the tethering of Muslim identity to fear and threat easy. In the *NYT* story that reported on Jack Straw's request that women not wear niqab in his office, the reporter wove in a reference to protest among Muslims because Britain's Home Secretary John Reid had cautioned Muslim parents to 'watch their children for "telltale signs" of radicalism' (Cowell 2006a). Refrains about homegrown terrorism were common in the reports about the niqab debate, as well as stories that described conditions in poor and working class Muslim neighborhoods. Media representations of British politicians' concerns about the symbolic meanings of Islamic dress, and especially niqab, in combination with segregated Muslim communities implied that multiculturalism had opened a terrain for terrorism. Media reports signified that it was not simply that multiculturalism had failed to integrate British Muslims into the society where they lived; it had also nurtured an identity that posed a threat to the nation.

It is reasonable to assume that those who read *NYT* and *WP* interpreted the papers' stories in the light of what was familiar to them. If they did, then segregated public schools, and poor and working class neighborhoods were characterized by violence and crime (Brown et al. 2003; Wilson 1987, 1996). Although in the US context these images were racialized and not religious, the other class signifiers in newspaper stories about British Muslims and niqab reinforced the images of violence, fear, and threat that were fastened to Muslims following 9/11. So, newspaper stories represented France and Britain similarly. Both nations faced the same security concerns that legitimated restricting veiling by Muslim women. Yet, stories signaled that fear and threat were not just about security; Western cultural hegemony was also at stake.

A *WP* story, under the headline 'A Woman's Head Scarf, a Continent's Discomfort' was telling about the threat Muslims posed to European cultures. The story said:

> Islam has been put on Europe's social map by these increasingly visible cultural symbols: halal butchers' shops (which sell ritually slaughtered meat), Arabic and Urdu store signs, women in head scarves, men in Arab robes, mosques and Islamic schools abound in Europe's traditional power centers. These symbols reflect the rapid growth of the EU's Muslim population. In 20 years, between 30 and 40 percent of the populations of about a dozen European cities will be Muslim. These changes have prompted fears among Europeans that their continent is becoming 'a colony of Islam', as Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci put it. (Malik 2005)

Although terrorism provoked concerns about security and safety, the other side of what rationalized restrictions on hijab and niqab was that they are visible symbols of the religious and cultural differences of Muslim populations. As such, they provoked other fears: that in Europe, European cultures would have to compete for prominence with Islamic cultures and that Muslims, in spite of diverse immigrant origins, might see themselves as a single community united by religion. As this *WP* story indicated, Muslim minorities in Western nations challenged Western culture in a way that was just as threatening as global terrorism.

As in Europe, the Muslim American population was a visible minority and terrorism was America's single most important national security concern. Yet, there was no political debate in the USA about the appropriateness of wearing hijab and niqab. Nor was there a blatant suggestion in the media that symbolic representations of Muslim identity be removed from American public space. Why not? Did the USA share Europe's dilemmas about veiling?

Veiling in the USA

How did newspaper stories represent veiled Muslim women in the USA? In terms of Europe, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* presented fears about terrorism as justified. The stories wove together secularism, social harmony, and national identity making prohibitions on hijab and niqab seem reasonable. Moreover, assimilation rather

than multiculturalism was the preferred objective for Muslim minorities. However, the stories also implied that Europe might be going too far, possibly stifling individualism, if not inciting bigotry. Some stories contained the not always subtle accusation that European nations were not *doing* assimilation quite right. A *WP* editorial under the headline: 'Intolerance in Europe; Prostitutes and Drug Dealers are Welcome in the Netherlands Just Don't Wear a Veil' (*Washington Post* 2006) criticized European nations generally and the Netherlands specifically for increasing tensions with their Muslim populations. The editorial ended with these lines: 'But attacking Muslim culture – as opposed to those who practice or promote violent acts – is no way to diminish the threat. It won't be surprising if more Dutch Muslims respond to their government by putting on burqas – or by answering intolerance with intolerance' (*Washington Post* 2006). Although intolerance was not an image that was associated with the USA, stories still managed to represent America as ideologically like France and Britain.

Two stories contained very powerful images of the American response to veiling. The first was from the *NYT* and described a rebound in Muslim immigration to the USA. The article began with the narratives of two new immigrants. One was Nur Fatima from Pakistan who, according to the reporter, declared, 'I got freedom in this country … Freedom of everything. Freedom of thought' (Elliott 2006). The article was detailed, combining images of American freedom and opportunity with demographics about the size of the US Muslim population, and noting the increased political organization of Muslims following 9/11. The end of the story returned to Nur Fatima:

> 'This is a land of opportunity,' Ms. Fatima said. 'There is equality for everyone.' Five days after she came to Brooklyn, Ms. Fatima removed her head scarf, which she had been wearing since she was 10. She began to change her thinking, she said. She liked living in a country where people respected the privacy of others and did not interfere with their religious or social choices. 'I came to the United States because I want to improve myself,' she said. 'This is a second birth for me.' (Elliott 2006)

Although there was no national political debate about veiling in the USA, this newspaper story represented American Muslim women as removing their veils. The representations were as powerful as those about hijab in France and niqab in Britain. The story evoked images of a visible and politically organized Muslim population, along with the symbolisms of American national identity: freedom, equality, opportunity, and choice. Starting over, leaving behind whom she had been, including how she dressed, was emblematic of Nur Fatima's assimilation and integration into her new nation. Moreover, her religion was respected because it was private; it need not be a part of who she was in public. The very meaning of the freedom and opportunity that she sought through immigration was enacted because 'she removed her head scarf' (Elliot 2006).

Additionally, *NYT* and *WP* stories implied that the USA shared the concerns that France and Britain had about the connection between veiling and terrorism. A *NYT* story described a CIA classification scheme where the objective was to determine when, in fact, Muslims were terrorists. It said,

> As the war on terror enters its sixth year, its longest battle – over how to define the enemy – rages on. That there is a large difference between Muslims wearing veils and those wearing suicide belts may be obvious, but a clear understanding of that difference remains elusive. (Shainin 2006)

The story described the CIA's development of a pyramid classification scheme (i.e. the Ziggurat of Zealotry) where Muslims at the lowest level were 'peaceful people' who were 'dutiful and pious Muslims'; the second level were devout Muslims who organized 'to effect change in their societies'; the third were those with a 'more radical political agenda' who sought to overthrow governments that they viewed as oppressive to their prescribed practice of Islam; the fourth level were Muslims who 'abandon politics for violence exclusively'; and the 'top level covers only those who extend this mandate of violence globally and seek to destroy the Western nation-state system' (Shainin 2006). According to the report, 'The task for counterterrorism, then, is to disrupt the "elevators" that pull individuals and resources up the ziggurat without taking steps to incur the ire of lower levels and nudge them upward.' (Shainin 2006)

The story said that the goal of counterterrorism was to differentiate between those who were veiled and those who were terrorists, yet veiled Muslim women could be found at every level of the CIA classification scheme. Furthermore, Nur Fatima's story was the essential ethnic narrative of becoming American, a process that included losing external symbolic representations of one's pre-migration identity. Newspaper stories such as these created and reinforced the common sense understanding that Muslim women in the USA could and, very likely, would choose not to veil. They would do so not because they were forced to by legislation or public political debates, but because they were free too.

Newspaper stories used images of national identity, the assimilation/integration of minorities, and the fear and threat of terrorism to position France, Britain, and the USA as ideologically alike with regard to veiling by Muslim women. The stories made clear that the values and ideals of each nation were consistent with women not veiling, and that in order to fit into their cultures, Muslim women would not veil. Stories about France highlighted secularism, those about Britain highlighted multiculturalism, and for the USA religious pluralism was the subtext of stories that noted the increasing size and political organization of the nation's Muslim population. Still, representations of veiling by Muslim women that appeared in *NYT* and *WP* stories created the same common sense about veiling among Muslim women: this symbolic representation of Islam would not be customary in the public spheres of Western nations.

Discussion

The media contextualizes, stages, and provides social definitions that construct reality just as co-present interactions do; yet, media representations are frequently taken for granted (Altheide 2000; Cerulo 1997; Gamson et al. 1992). Furthermore, the media

create socially shared information and images that advance the ideological and hegemonic interests of elites. The foregoing analysis of stories from the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* demonstrated that media assigned meanings to hijab and niqab that extended beyond Islam and the identity of Muslim women to include the social and political interests of Western nations with Muslim minorities. In reporting on Europe's political debates and legislation about hijab and niqab, the stories in American newspapers wove together the themes of national identity, the assimilation/integration of Muslim minorities, and Islamic terrorism to create knowledge about veiling for the American public. Although newspaper stories criticized the legislative methods of European nations, they also presented their goals as reasonable, understandable, and like those of the USA. Even though reports represented American assimilation and integration as voluntary rather than legislated, the end result for Muslim women would be the same: they would not veil.

When media create the common sense understanding that veiled Muslim women will not be a part of the American public sphere it has significant implications for how religion informs minorities' participation in American public life. With a degree of conformity to Protestant congregationalism, minorities have been able to take their religious identities with them as they developed social and political organizations to advance their interests (Smith 1978; Warner 1993). Additionally, Williams (2007: 48) has argued that 'religious organizations and institutions are a part of civil society in the USA'; they are where the individual is connected to community and community is connected to national public life. If media representations create a socially shared common sense that excludes representations of Muslim identity from American public life, then that community is limited in its ability to use its identity, like other religious groups, to advance its interests. Moreover, a media (or political) discourse that blatantly advocated prohibiting veiling in the USA would challenge key ideological repertoires about American inclusion and pluralism. However, a discourse that questions the legitimacy of such restrictions in Europe, all the while painting them as 'understandable' has the same ideological impact on the media consumer.

It is obvious that terrorism in the name of Islam has had serious implications for the interests of Western nations, especially the USA. It is important for research to attempt to tease out the obvious and not so obvious responses to 9/11 that support, reinforce, and protect Western cultural, economic, and political hegemony. The media is just one site where the ideological perspectives of the West are blatantly and subtly used to advance the interests of the powerful. As demonstrated with this research, stories that appeared in American newspapers reinforced that nation's ideals about religious pluralism through reporting on legislated bans and political debates about veiling in Europe. Combined with images of American Muslim women who voluntarily removed their hijab, newspaper stories effectively created a common sense for readers: symbolic representations of Islam would not be common in the American public sphere.

Notes

1 Hijab refers to the headscarf or hair covering worn by Muslim women. Niqab is the face veil that is added to hijab. It covers all facial features below the eyes. Veiling can refer to a range of different clothing from hijab to burqas (a large loose fitting head to foot covering that includes netting over the eyes). Here, veiling refers to hijab and niqab.
2 The global social and political consequences of terrorism for Western nations were reaffirmed by bombings in Europe after 11 September 2001 (for example, in Madrid on 11 March 2004 and London on 7 July 2005).
3 States enacted religious garb statutes to prohibit nuns and priests from teaching in public schools (Moore 1998).
4 The US Third Circuit Court heard arguments for appeal of this decision on 9 September 2008 (Webb v. City of Philadelphia 2008).
5 Two cases filed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) concerned discrimination by employers in accommodating hijab. The EEOC's charges of discrimination were found to be valid in EEOC v. Alamo Rent a Car (2007). The discrimination charges were found invalid in EEOC v. Regency Health Associates (2007).
6 According to CAIR, 19 states 'were silent' on face coverings. Also, in the late 1800s and early 1900s local ordinances, in New York and Georgia for example, restricted wearing masks in public in order to control assemblies of the Ku-Klux-Klan. If these ordinances have not been repealed they could be applied to niqab.
7 BurrellesLuce rankings were based on figures supplied by the Audit Bureau of Circulations.
8 All readership profile figures for the *NYT* were from the period February 2005 to March 2006. For the *WP*, they were from March 2005 to February 2006. The figures refer to readers of the Monday to Friday papers.
9 Two other conceptual and analytical foci of CDA are discourse-as-text and discourse-as-discursive-practice (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000: 448–9; see also Fairclough 1992). In the case of discourse-as-text analyses address the linguistic organization of discourse in terms of vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure. For discourse-as-discursive-practice the focus is on the production, circulation, distribution, and consumption of discourse.
10 Discourse theory has sought to identify the connections between discourse structures, mental representations, and shared social cognitions (Van Dijk 1992, 1993).

References

Ahmed, L. (1992) *Women and Gender in Islam*. Yale University Press: New Haven, CT.

Altheide, D. (2000) Identity and the Definition of the Situation in a Mass-Mediated Context. *Symbolic Interaction* 23(1): 1–27.

Anway, C. (1998) American Women Choosing Islam. Y.Y. Haddad and J.L. Esposito (eds) *Muslims on the Americanization Path?* pp. 145–60. Scholars Press: Atlanta, GA.

Audit Bureau of Circulations (2006a) *The New York Times*. URL (consulted 22 June 2007): http://abcas3.acessabc.com/readerprofile/release.asp

Audit Bureau of Circulations (2006b) *The Washington Post*. URL (consulted 22 June 2007): http://abcas3.com/readerprofile/release.asp

Blommaert, J. and Bulcaen, C. (2000) Critical Discourse Analysis. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 29: 447–66.

Brown, M.K., Carnoy, M., Currie, E., Duster, T., Oppenheimer, D.B., Shultz, M.M. and Wellman, D. (2003) *White-Washing Race: The Myth of a Color-Blind Society*. University of California Press: Berkeley, CA.

Bullock, K. (2000) Challenging Media Representation of the Veil: Contemporary Muslim Women's Re-Veiling Movement. *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 17(3): 22–53.

Bullock, K. (2003) *Rethinking Muslim Women and the Veil: Challenging Historical and Modern Stereotypes*. The International Institute of Islamic Thought: Herndon, VA.

BurrellesLuce (2004) *Top 100 Daily Newspapers in the US by Circulation, 2004*. URL (consulted 22 June 2007): http://www.burrelleslyce.com/top100/2004_Top_100list.pdf

BurrellesLuce (2005) *Top 100 Daily Newspapers in the US by Circulation, 2005*. URL (consulted 22 June 2007): http://www.burrelleslyce.com/top100/2005_Top_100list.pdf

BurrellesLuce (2006) *Top 100 Daily Newspapers in the U.S by Circulation, 2006*. URL (consulted 22 June 2007): http://www.burrelleslyce.com/top100/2006_Top_100list.pdf

Byng, M. (1998) Mediating Discrimination: Resisting Oppression among African American Muslim Women. *Social Problems* 45(4): 473–87.

Byng, M. (2004) Sexism, Racism, and African American Muslim Women: What does Wearing Hijab Mean to Them? R. Coates (ed.) *Race and Ethnicity Across Time, Space, and Discipline*, pp. 351–64. Brill Academic Publishers: Boston, MA.

CAIR (2005) *Religious Accommodations in Driver's License Photographs: A Review of Codes, Policies and Practices in the 50 States*. Council on American-Islamic Relations: Washington, DC.

Cerulo, K.A. (1997) Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions. *Annual Review of Sociology* 23: 385–409.

Cowell, A. (2006a) British Leader Stirs Debate with his Call to Raise Veils. *New York Times* 7 October 2006: A8.

Cowell, A. (2006b) Islamic Schools Test Ideal of Integration in Britain. *New York Times* 15 October 2006: 8.

Cowell, A. (2006c) Blair Criticizes Full Islamic Veils as 'Mark of Separation'. *New York Times* 18 October 2006: A3.

Cowell, A (2006d) World Briefing: Britain: Veiled Muslim Loses Discrimination Case. *New York Times* 20 October 2006: A6.

CRE (2006) Integration, Multiculturalism and the CRE. URL (consulted 9 June 2008): http://83.137.42/sitearchive/cre/diversity/integration/index.html

Deutsche Welle (2004) Court Upholds Headscarf Laws. 25 June 2004. URL (consulted 3 June 2008): http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,1245372,00.html

Deutsche Welle (2006) Another German State Bans Headscarf for Teachers. 1 June 2006. URL (consulted 3 June 2008): http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,2040124,00.html

Deutsche Welle (2007) Bavarian Constitutional Court Upholds Headscarf Ban. 15 January 2007. URL (consulted 3 June 2008): http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,2310985,00.html

EEOC v. Alamo Rent a Car (2007) *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Alamo Rent a Car* (LLC. No. CIV 02–001908- PHX-ROS [D. Ariz.] June 2007).

EEOC v. Regency Health Associates (2007) *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Regency Health Associates* (No. 1:05-CV-2519-CAP-CCH [N.D. Ga.] August 2, 2007).

Elliott, A. (2006) More Muslims Are Coming to US after a Decline in Wake of 9/11. *New York Times* 10 September 2006: 1.

Epstein, C.F. (2007) Great Divides: The Cultural, Cognitive, and Social Bases of the Global Subordination of Women. *American Sociological Review* 72(1): 1–22.

Ezekiel, J. (2005) Magritte meets Maghreb: This Is Not a Veil. *Australian Feminist Studies* 20(47): 231–43.

Fairclough, N. (1992) *Discourse and Social Change*. Polity: Cambridge.

Fernea, E.W. (1998) *In Search of Islamic Feminism: One Woman's Global Journey*. Doubleday: New York, NY.

Franks, M. (2000) Crossing the Borders of Whiteness? White Muslim Women Who Wear *Hijab* in Britain Today. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23(5): 917–29.

Gambardello, J.A. (2007) Judge: Police Can Ban Religious Muslim Garb. *Philadelphia Inquirer* 14 June 2007: B09.

Gamson, W.A., Croteau, D., Hayes, W. and Sasson, T. (1992) Media Images and the Social Construction of Reality. *Annual Review of Sociology* 18: 373–93.

Givhan, R. (2004) The Latest Taboo in Paris. *Washington Post* 2 January 2004: C02.

Haddad, Y.Y. (1998) The Dynamics of Islamic Identity in North America. Y.Y. Haddad and J.L. Esposito (eds) *Muslims on the Americanization Path?* pp. 19–46. Scholars Press: Atlanta, GA.

Jacobs, R.N. and Sobieraj, S. (2007) Narrative and Legitimacy: US Congressional Debates about the Nonprofit Sector. *Sociological Theory* 25(1): 1–25.

Jiwani, Y. (2005) The Great White North Encounters September 11: Race, Gender, and Nation in Canada's National Daily, The Globe and Mail. *Social Justice* 32(4): 50–68.

Karim, K.H. (1997) The Historical Resilience of Primary Stereotypes: Core Images of the Muslim Other. S.H. Riggins (ed.) *The Language and Politics of Exclusion*, pp. 153–82. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Killian, C. (2003) The Other Side of the Veil: North African Women in France Respond to Headscarf Affair. *Gender and Society* 17(4): 567–90.

Liederman, L.M. (2000) Religious Diversity in Schools: The Muslim Headscarf Controversy and Beyond. *Social Compass* 47(3): 367–81.

Lorber, J. (2002) Heroes, Warriors, and Burqas: A Feminist Sociologist's Reflection on September 11. *Sociological Forum* 17(3): 377–96.

Malik, M. (2005) A Woman's Head Scarf, a Continent's Discomfort. *The Washington Post* 13 March 2005: B02.

Mernissi, F. (1987) *Beyond the Veil: Male/Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*. Indiana University Press: Bloomington, IN.

Mernissi, F. (1991) *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*. Translated by M.J. Lakeland. Perseus Books: Cambridge, MA.

Moaddel, M. (2002) The Study of Islamic Culture and Politics: An Overview and Assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology* 28: 359–86.

Mohanty, C.T. (1991) Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse. Chandra Talpade Mohanty et al. (eds) *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, pp. 51–80. Indiana University Press: Bloomington, IN.

Moore, K. (1998) The Hijab and Religious Liberty: Anti-Discrimination Law and Muslim Women in the United States. Y.Y. Haddad and J.L. Esposito (eds) *Muslims on the Americanization Path?* pp. 105–27. Scholars Press: Atlanta, GA.

Muscati, S.A. (2002) Arab/Muslim 'Otherness': The Role of Racial Otherness in the Gulf War and the Continuing Crisis with Iraq. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 22(1): 131–48.

Muscati, S.A. (2003) Reconstructing 'Evil': A Critical Assessment of Post-September 11 Political Discourse. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 23(2): 249–69.

Portes, A. (2007) The New Latin Nation: Immigration and the Hispanic Population of the United States. *DuBois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 4(2): 271–301.

Read, J.G. (2003) The Sources of Gender Role Attitudes among Christian and Muslim Arab-American Women. *Sociology of Religion* 64(2): 207–22.

Read, J.G. and Bartkowski, J. (2000) To Veil or Not to Veil? A Case Study of Identity Negotiation among Muslim Women in Austin, Texas. *Gender and Society* 14(3): 395–417.

Reynolds v. United States (1879) *Reynolds v. United States* 98 US 145 [1879].

Riggins, S.H. (1997) The Rhetoric of Othering. Stephen Harold Riggins (ed.) *The Language and Politics of Exclusion*, pp. 1–30. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Said, E.W. (1997) *Covering Islam: How Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*. Vintage Books: New York, NY.

Sciolino, E. (2004) Debate Begins in France on Religion in the Schools. *New York Times* 4 February 2004: A8.

Shadid, W. and Van Koningsveld, P.S. (2005) Muslim Dress in Europe: Debates on the Headscarf. *Journal of Islamic Studies* 16(1): 35–61.

Shainin, J. (2006) The Ziggurat of Zealotry. *The New York Times* 10 December 2006: 90.

Shakeri, E. (1998) Muslim Women in Canada: Their Role and Status as Revealed in the *Hijab* Controversy. Y.Y. Haddad and J.L. Esposito (eds) *Muslims on the Americanization Path?* pp. 129–44. Scholars Press: Atlanta, GA.

Smith, C.A. (2005) President Bush's Enthymeme of Evil: The Amalgamation of 9/11, Iraq, and Moral Values. *American Behavioral Scientist* 49(1): 32–47.

Smith, T. (1978) Religion and Ethnicity in American Life. *American Historical Review* 83(5): 1155–85.

Smith, T.W. (2002) Religious Diversity in America: The Emergence of Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and Others. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 4(3): 577–85.

Stowasser, B.F. (1994) *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation*. Oxford University Press: New York, NY.

Todd, S. (1999) Veiling the 'Other', Unveiling Our 'Selves': Reading Media Images of the *Hijab* Psychoanalytically to Move beyond Tolerance. *Canadian Journal of Education* 23(4): 438–51.

US Census Bureau (2008) *The 2008 Statistical Abstracts: National Data Book*. URL (consulted 12 December 2007): http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2008edition.hmtl

US v. Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia (1990) *US v. Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia* 911 F.2d 892 3rd Cir. [1990].

Van Dijk, T.A. (1992) Discourse and the Denial of Racism. *Discourse and Society* 3(1): 87–118.

Van Dijk, T.A. (1993) Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis. *Discourse and Society* 4(2): 249–83.

Van Dijk, T.A. (1997) Political Discourse and Racism: Describing Others in Western Parliaments. Stephen Harold Riggins (ed.) *The Language and Politics of Exclusion*, pp. 31–64. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Wadud, A. (1999) *Qur'an and Women: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*. Oxford University Press: New York, NY.

Warner, R.S. (1993) Work in Progress toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States. *American Journal of Sociology* 98(5): 1044–93.

Washington Post (2006) Intolerance in Europe; Prostitutes and Drug Dealers Are Welcome in the Netherlands. Just Don't Wear a Veil. *Washington Post* 26 November 2006: B06.

Webb v. City of Philadelphia (2007) *Webb v. City of Philadelphia* E.D. Pa., no. 05–5238, June 12, 2007.

Webb v. City of Philadelphia (2008) 3rd Cir, no. 07–3081, Sept. 9, 2008.

Williams, R.H. (2007) The Languages of the Public Sphere: Religious Pluralism, Institutional Logics, and Civil Society. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 612(42): 42–61.

Williams, R.H. and Vashi, G. (2007) *Hijab* and American Muslim Women: Creating the Space for Autonomous Selves. *Sociology of Religion* 68(3): 269–87.
Wilson, W.J. (1987) *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL.
Wilson, W.J. (1996) *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. Knopf: New York, NY.

For correspondence: Department of Sociology, Temple University, 713 Gladfelter Hall, 1115 West Berks Street, Philadelphia, PA, USA 19122. Email: mbyng@temple.edu