

RIISING BRITISH ETHNO-NATIONALISM AND THE SALIENCE OF RACIALIZED DISCOURSE IN BRITISH MAINSTREAM NEWS MEDIA

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Introduction

Over the last two decades, the United Kingdom has grown increasingly hostile towards migrants. Within the same time period, the prominence of far-right figures in mainstream British news sources has grown exponentially, and they have brought along with them a distinctly racialized, anti-migrant discourse. The most visible far-right groups in the UK, notably the British National Party (BNP) and the UK Independence Party (UKIP), take not only a fierce anti-immigration stance, but adopt specifically anti-Muslim rhetoric in their racialized appeals to disgruntled, unsatisfied white Brits. This thesis is thus based upon the fundamental assertion that migration discourse in Britain is uniquely infused with Islamophobia, with much of the far-right's anti-immigration rhetoric based in racialized anti-Muslim appeals. The far-right employs this discourse to codedly hinge British citizenship on ideas of race and place immigration and immigrants--particularly Muslim migrants--as diametrically opposed to the concepts of Britain and Britishness. This racialized discourse purposefully obfuscates immigration debates with questions of "British identity" and national purity--who is British, what are British values, and who should be allowed to live in Britain.

In order to fully understand this troubling situation, we need a few points of context. First, we must examine the prevalence of the resurgent far-right in the UK. The far-right has made their way into the political limelight in recent years--even gaining seats in the British and European Parliaments--due to their fervent campaigning around immigration and rebranding themselves as honest "common sense" parties rather than radical fringe single-issue groups. We must also evaluate the British news media landscape as it stands today--including the tendency of popular news sources to frame Muslims negatively, the inclusion of far-right figures on their

platforms, and the extent to which the framing of issues like migration in the news tangibly influences public opinion. Finally, we can look at shifting public attitudes towards migration in the UK, and perhaps draw some conclusions about the relation between these three sets of facts. From these platforms, the far-right reaches much broader audiences and is able to manipulate whole swaths of the British population with racialized grievances; thus the salience of this racialized discourse in mainstream news must not go unquestioned.

Using an ethnographic discourse analysis technique from Wortham and Reyes (2015) along with key anthropological theories on the construction of difference and enmity, I analyze notable racialized speech events from top far-right figures in the UK's most-used television and print news sources to demonstrate how the British far-right racializes both migrants and Muslims as unwanted "Others" who threaten the notions of British indigeneity, national purity, and security. To provide the theoretical framework for my argument, I draw heavily from the anthropological theories of cultural fundamentalism and ontological security to highlight two key tactics the far-right uses to naturalize inherent cultural differences (and thus conflict) between populations and manufacture crises surrounding British security (Stolcke 1995; Lacey 2019). Through an analysis of excerpts from popular British news sources within the last ten years, examining the growth and influence of far-right groups in the UK, and highlighting recent anti-migration attitudes, we can see this discursive trend is affecting contemporary British politics in real time and is only worsening. This development should be a major cause for concern: millions of Brits are exposed to this harmful rhetoric on mainstream news sources, and these racializing discursive practices only encourage societal division and create fertile ground for exclusion, discrimination, and violence.

The Rise of UKIP and the New Far-Right

For years, the UK Independence Party has exacerbated anti-immigrant sentiments through propaganda campaigns pitting Brits against pretty much everyone outside of the UK seeking to “invade” the homeland--in other words, to immigrate there. To generate this animosity, UKIP and similar political groups have employed a racialized rhetoric of exclusion that has effectively created a dangerous discourse surrounding migration, framing immigrants and refugees as enemies of the state and declaring their movement as an international “crisis” that requires immediate political action. To appeal to Brits feeling frustrated with socioeconomic issues and distrustful of establishment politicians, UKIP has employed a “rhetoric enriched with elements of authoritarianism, populism, ethno-nationalism and welfare nationalism” targeting scapegoats (namely immigrants and Muslims, often conflating the two groups) for the UK’s problems (Lazaridis and Tsagkroni 2016: 240). Through their scapegoating and anti-migrant fear-mongering, UKIP has successfully promoted a harmful narrative that demonizes immigrants as job-stealers, a drain on the UK’s resources, and generally unfit to join British society. This narrative is ultimately what helped them gain electoral success in recent elections as well as push for the Brexit referendum, resulting in the UK’s decision to leave the European Union. In the 2014 European Parliament elections, UKIP garnered over a quarter of the popular vote, beating both Labour and Conservative parties and becoming the strongest represented party in the UK (Lazaridis and Tsagkroni 2016). In the 2015 general elections, while failing to gain any seats in Parliament, UKIP still amassed four million votes--25 percent of the popular vote--and 120

second-place finishes--a significant increase from their zero second-place finishes in the previous general election (Ayres 2015).

UKIP's considerable development between 2010 and 2015 has been seen as a breakthrough for populist politics and a breakdown of the UK establishment, as well as the catalyst that inspired the fateful 2016 EU membership referendum. A year before the vote, in 2015, Europe underwent what the far-right meticulously coined a "crisis": over one million refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants landed on European shores, fleeing conflict and poverty in their home countries. Hailing primarily from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq--Muslim-majority countries--the far-right, led by UKIP, immediately went to work associating this new wave of migrants and refugees with Islamic extremism, conflict, and an imminent threat to British safety (Spindler 2015). This 'crisis' proved fertile ground for UKIP to finally push for, and win, the EU referendum they had advocated for since the early 1990s. The Leave campaign, primarily engineered by UKIP, quickly catapulted a radical fringe group into the political limelight and turned the once-unthinkable British departure from the EU into an unpleasant reality by promoting a racialized discourse against migrants.

In political theory, there exists an "Overton window" of acceptability in any given political environment which frames political discourse and possibility (Russell 2006). This window constantly shifts, expands, and can be influenced in a number of ways by actors within and outside of the state. In fact, vested interests often have to first deliberately shift the window of political acceptability to encompass an idea and make it viable as policy before campaigning for it. A window of political possibility can encompass dialogues that may start far outside the mainstream, but after being repeatedly expressed and advocated for can cross from the

unacceptable political outskirts to the realm of viability (Lanchester 2016). One of the most important influences on this window in the modern world is news media. Scholars have suggested that the window of political possibility has shifted to the right in the UK throughout the 2010s due to increased inclusion of right-wing politicians in mainstream news sources (Morgan & Patomäki 2017). This theory of possibility helps explain how far-right, racialized discourse has infiltrated the mainstream, and even further how it has transformed British public attitudes towards migration.

We can identify this conservative political shift by examining the rise and revival of far-right British nationalist and neofascist groups. Since their Brexit breakthrough, both UKIP's leadership and general policies and rhetoric have shifted even further right, and the party continues gaining traction: UKIP membership grew approximately 50% in 2019 alone, rising once more after a lull since their peak in 2015 (Walker and Halliday 2019). With the ascendancy of UKIP, and in smaller numbers more outwardly radical groups like the British National Party, English Defence League, Britain First, and National Action, some scholars suggest that high levels of immigration to the UK have lent to the success of far-right groups (Davis and Deole 2017). While the overwhelming trend *is* that high levels of migration often go hand-in-hand with increased presence of far-right political groups, we must be wary of the reductive argument that the mere presence of immigrants explicitly causes far-right movements to take root. These far-right, ethno-nationalist ideologies rather have deep-rooted histories in British imperialism, colonization, and racism, and are able to gain exposure and traction by promoting their codedly racist rhetoric in mainstream political discourse and news. Groups like UKIP have essentially repackaged their prejudice and Islamophobia by framing their age-old racist beliefs as logical

policies to resolve manufactured crises (Lacey 2019). The most common examples of these apparent crises include keeping the UK safe from terrorism, bolstering the UK's strong economy, and protecting British jobs and services from needy economic migrants looking for handouts--all seemingly logical endeavors that have nothing to do with race or nationality. But this discourse, as I will analyze later, racializes whole groups of people as unwanted 'Others' and allows far-right, racist ideology to creep into the acceptable mainstream.

The UK News Media Landscape

Each year Brits increasingly rely on internet and online news sources for political information. Yet according to the latest 2019 Ofcom report on news consumption in the UK, television remains the number one source of news for 77% of UK adults. The next most popular platforms are internet news sources (66%), printed and online newspapers (49%), and social media (49%) ("News Consumption in the UK: 2019"). While the increasing use of social media as a news source is acute and slightly concerning--research has shown that social media websites, especially Facebook, are quickly becoming a platform for targeted misinformation campaigns throughout the world, including in the UK--I focus my analysis on traditional sources of news, including television news broadcasting, print newspapers and their online counterparts (Bradshaw and Howard 2019; "Vote Leave's targeted Brexit ads released by Facebook"). The most popular news sources across all information platforms in the UK (as measured by the percentage of adults aged 16+ using each source for news) are BBC One (58%), the BBC News Channel (23%), and the BBC website/app (25%), ITV (40%), Facebook (35%), and Sky News Channel (23%) ("News Consumption in the UK: 2019"). This means television news should be

one of our primary foci of analysis, particularly the BBC and its subsidiaries, which comprise seven of the top twenty most popular news sources in the UK. As such, I draw specific data from these particular sources to illustrate the racialized discourse they provide a platform for.

Contemporary media and communication scholars have conducted numerous studies on what has been termed ‘Foxification,’ or the creeping influence of the conservative US television news corporation, Fox News, on other news broadcasting services’ reporting styles.

‘Foxification’ is the general development of right-wing “sensationalism, a tabloid style, speculation rather than reporting and partisanship rather than balance and objectivity” that poses a serious threat to journalism and impartial press (Cushion and Lewis 2009: 132). Because of Fox News’s commercial success, many competitors--both domestic and abroad--have resorted to using similar reporting techniques to compete for viewership. The Communications Act of 2003 reintroduced strict guidelines enforcing impartiality and public service broadcasting in UK television news reporting, which makes claims about the total ‘Foxification’ of UK television news difficult to substantiate. The regulatory institution Ofcom exists to rightfully prevent ‘Foxification’ from occurring and to protect public service journalism. However, in the name of “due impartiality” enforced by these regulations, UK television news sources have increasingly given a platform to far-right politicians and ideologies, broadening their exposure, shifting the window of political possibility further to the right, and deepening the far-right’s impact on political discourse (Ofcom Broadcasting Code 2019: 30). ‘Foxification’ *is* occurring in the UK, as demonstrated by the fact that mainstream television news platforms now increasingly include speculation, sensationalist views, and frequent far-right guests. And Foxification is not only happening on television. A similar development in print news can be measured by the

proliferation of tabloid, sensationalist, right-leaning newspapers since Fox Corporation owner Rupert Murdoch's acquisition of *The Sun* in 1969, which are, notably, not held to the same standards and regulations as UK television news (McNair 2003).

Communication studies have shown both that news media outlets' effects are conditioned by their content, and that how an issue is framed in news reporting is equally as important as core facts when it comes to public perception of that issue (McCombs and Shaw 1972; Goffman 1974; Moy and Pfau 2000; de Vreese 2004). This means that whoever is framing a given discussion holds a significant amount of power over their audience's understanding of an issue and subsequently how they might establish a perception of the world. In a Reuters Institute study conducted after the 2016 referendum on newspaper coverage of Brexit, researchers found there was a dominant pro-Leave bias in six out of nine of the most popular national newspapers, with 41% of all newspaper articles covering the referendum pushing a pro-Leave agenda during the four weeks of the campaign (Levy et. al. 2016). Taking into consideration the circulation of each newspaper, this produced an approximate 'coverage gap' of 80% pro-Leave to 20% pro-Remain exposure (Deacon et. al. 2016). Dozens of scholars have suggested that this coverage gap and clear pro-Leave bias among the UK's newspapers had an undeniable influence on the outcome of the referendum (Deacon et. al. 2016; Levy et. al. 2016). Less than an hour after the historic Leave victory was announced, editor Tony Gallagher of *The Sun*, a Murdoch-owned, pro-Leave, right-wing newspaper, said to *The Guardian*: "So much for the waning power of the print media" (qtd. in Martinson 2016). In smaller but still significant numbers, a few newspapers remain among the top 20 news sources used by adults in the UK: *The Daily Mail* (18%), *The Guardian* (11%), *The Sun* (11%), and *Metro* (9%) ("News Consumption in the UK: 2019"). It would be

misleading to suggest that newspapers are the most influential of all news sources in the UK; the circulation of national newspapers has fallen by over half in the last decade, and studies have shown that UK citizens are less likely to trust print newspapers for impartial news reporting (Martinson 2016). Nevertheless, the influence that newspapers hold on public political discourse remains tangible, with the most popular national newspapers still reaching millions of readers every day. With over half of the UK newspaper market owned by conservatives and the highest-circulated papers being expressly right-wing or sensationalist--and keeping in mind the apparent influence newspapers held over the 2016 referendum--we should consider how and to what extent the coverage of and discourse within British newspapers affects public opinion simply through salience (Newsworks Circulation 2019).

Increasing Acceptability of Anti-Migrant Sentiments

As the UK news media progresses into the folds of the far-right, so too does the body politic. The far-right's presence in the political mainstream, facilitated by popular news media, has evidently guided public perception of migrants in a negative direction. With UKIP and other far-right groups' insistence that migrants are the cause of the UK's domestic troubles, their narrative pushes an explicitly anti-migrant agenda and has put pressure on the British establishment to enact stricter migration laws. A detailed survey conducted in both 2017 and 2018 asked a weighted sample of 1,668 Brits their opinion on whether immigrants from various countries would make a positive or negative impact on the UK. Western countries, including the U.S., Australia, Ireland, and Germany, received overwhelmingly positive responses, with almost 50% of people responding they believed immigrants from those countries would benefit the UK.

When asked about non-Western countries, however, the results started to shift significantly, and were largely negative. Results were particularly unfavorable for Muslim-majority countries: Pakistan and Bangladesh received negative responses from up to 25% of respondents, and Somalia up to 38% (“YouGov Survey Results April 2018”). The discrepancy between these results should raise questions about how the British public perceives migrants from Western and non-Western Muslim countries: why is a potential migrant from Somalia viewed with more skepticism and contempt than one from Australia? As exemplified by the racialized appeals apparent in British mainstream news media, the far-right has long been working to essentialize difference between the West and the rest of the world, to assert Western superiority, and to demonize non-white, non-Western peoples, declaring their unworthiness of entering the UK.

The far-right has largely dominated the contemporary discussion of what defines the “good” and “bad” characters of immigrants. They have effectively characterized migrants as a drain on British resources, erasers of traditional British culture, and even dangerous due to their purported proximity to Islamic extremism. And the British public appears to be believing them. At the peak of the migrant crisis in 2015, a weighted YouGov poll of 1,581 Brits revealed that 75% of people believed that the level of immigration to Britain over the previous ten years was too high, and 36% believed that immigration has been bad for the UK on the whole. 22% of those surveyed responded that UKIP was the party they trusted most to make the best decisions regarding immigration (“YouGov Survey Results February 2015”). The percentage of those who believe levels of immigration to the UK are too high and should be reduced has decreased to 70% in August 2016, 65% in March 2017, 63% in April 2018, and 44% in 2019 (Blinder and Richards 2020; “YouGov Survey Results April 2018”). This decline suggests that anti-migrant

attitudes are softening to an extent. These numbers, however, still reflect a very large portion of the population that perceives immigration and migrants negatively, and demonstrates an alarming widespread acceptability of anti-migrant attitudes. The fluctuation of these poll results with the concurrent waxing and waning prominence of far-right figures in politics and news media suggests that the public is quite vulnerable to far-right discursive influence. And while UKIP's presence has relatively declined in the last few years, the racialized, anti-migrant discourse they promote is still very much present in the UK.

Manufacturing Difference and Enmity

The following literature on manufactured enmity and racialization illuminates clearly the inherent racism in the far-right's discursive portrayal of migrants and Muslims in mainstream news. I rely on this literature to build a theoretical framework through which to analyze far-right speech events that effectively cast migrants and Muslims as "Others" who threaten national-ethnic British identity and security. I explore various theories regarding the construction of difference and enmity among populations, which the far-right exploits to essentialize a unique British identity and stoke fear of supposed cultural outsiders who tear at the social fabric of the UK. I also map out historic and contemporary discursive practices and rhetorical tools the far-right uses to racialize unwanted groups of people and codedly advertise their ethno-nationalist ideology to the broader public. Lastly, I survey various media and communications studies of British news sources and their tendency to vilify Muslims and minority identities, homogenize the Islamic world, and associate Muslims with terrorism and

cultural conflict, working in tandem with far-right figures in news reporting to produce a biased perception of migrants and Muslims.

Arjun Appadurai explores the paradoxical dilemma of the nation-state and its inherent tendency toward conflict and exclusion in *Fear of Small Numbers*. The very system of representative democracy invariably creates a majority/minority dichotomy between political interests; it is a structure that produces tension and inevitable exclusion of political minorities. Further complicating this divide, the modern nation-state has also evolved to self-identify with a unique national ethnos, fusing national-ethnic and political identities to inform its majority identity. In the context of globalization and unprecedented migration, ethnic minorities now almost always represent political minorities as well; not only are minority identities politically marginalized, but they are ethnically excluded from a nation's idealized model of national citizenship. Simply by existing in the same space, minority identities simultaneously threaten the majority identities' sense of national purity and their entitlement to political rights--specifically, the right to goods and protection offered by the state. This "anxiety of incompleteness" and impurity translates to a general fear, suspicion, and hostility towards minority identities--identities which become imagined obstructions to unity (Appadurai 2006: 8). Exactly who comprises this majority group varies depending on the cultural contexts and political interests of a given nation-state, and belonging to this underclass often poses a grave threat to the wellbeing of its members. Within the UK, white Christians form the majority of the population while non-white Brits comprise the minority. Non-white Brits are thus excluded from Britain's "national ethnos," subjecting them to targeted discrimination, persecution, and demonization, particularly at the hands of the far-right. Outside of the UK, all potential migrants are seen as an

ethnic minority on the grounds of not being British, and further aggravate white British anxiety surrounding their privileged majority status and their right to state goods as well as their nation's ethnic purity. The far-right has long capitalized on imagined threats to the UK's white Christian majority identity and British national purity, often calling for crusades to protect 'British culture' and denouncing the failures of multiculturalism.

Minority identities, then, are perceived as a threat to white Christian Brits in material, cultural, and political senses. They are often treated with hostility, contempt, and even violence, both by fellow citizens and by the state. Judith Butler proposes that this mistreatment of minority identities is acceptable to the majority identity because their lives are made to be ungrievable. "Without grievability," she asserts, "there is no life" (Butler 2016: 15). In her book *Frames of War*, Butler attempts to explain how war is made possible: essentially, certain populations must be made ungrievable so that state violence against them is sanctioned. Nation-states must divide populations into grievable and ungrievable lives "in order to defend the lives of certain communities, and to defend them against the lives of others" (Butler 2016: 38). As white Christians form the majority identity in the UK, they are the standard referent for grievable life; they are the "certain communit[y]" the nation-state must protect from incongruous, potentially disruptive outsiders (Butler 2016: 38). All who do not fit within this frame of reference, then, are immediately subject to suspicion and vulnerable to persecution. The British far-right has made it their mission to defend the white Christian majority's "way of life" that they claim is being eroded by immigration, multiculturalism, and Islamification of the UK. The majority identity communities set the norms of life--define what constitutes truly living--and those who live outside these norms, or all minority identities, become a "problem to be managed... whose living

status is open to apprehension,” subject to suspicion, and justifiably eliminated if necessary (Butler 2016: 8). Butler’s thesis applies not only to war on the international stage, but exclusion and violence among populations within states and especially at their borders. Giorgio Agamben explores the function of ungrivable life, or what he terms *Homo Sacer*, in modern politics: he who has been forcibly removed from his political life and exists only as bare life, or a life which is othered into the “state of exception,” and thus may be killed with impunity (Agamben 1998: 12). Because the nation-state solely wields the legitimate power to kill, its decision on who is reduced to bare life--who is othered--is critical and highly consequential. Killing is, of course, the most extreme assertion of state power: bare life may also be treated poorly, denied services, or systematically disadvantaged with little to no protest from the majority identity. We can point to the many instances of racial inequality and injustice, religious discrimination, and economic and political marginalization of ethnic minorities and immigrants in the UK as evidence of their categorization as bare life, and even more so for the thousands of migrants currently in detention centers throughout the UK and various migrant camps along its borders (Bacon 2005; Silverman and Griffith 2019).

The question remains unanswered as to exactly why majority identities grow actively hostile towards minority identities instead of passively letting them suffer the brunt of persecution as Butler and Agamben suggest. Some anthropologists argue that the simple anxiety of maintaining dominance is not enough to produce violence; Carolyn Nordstrom proposes that the state must first instill in its citizens “a fear of oppression, a belief in force, and a willingness to use violence... [and then place] these fears and beliefs in a framework that specifies friend and foe, political alliance and alienation” in order to breed hostility and perpetrate violence against

identified threats to the unity, peace, or status quo of the nation-state (Nordstrom 2008: 181). That is, the majority identity must be urged to face minority identities with hostility and suspicion by some state power, like a political group. These flames are fanned by far-right nationalist parties that constantly reinforce the idea that minority identities are to blame for the UK's problems, and in growing frequency that migrants are to blame for rising levels of crime and instances of terrorism. These frameworks of friend and foe create a pervasive sense of anxiety about belonging; one is only truly safe, of course, when they belong to the majority identity group, and so one must remain vigilant against those perceived as threats to their dominance. Michael Taussig calls this new precarity and anxiety about belonging a modern kind of terror. He argues that the "state of emergency" under which nation-states are granted absolute authority to use violence against threats has become the rule rather than the exception, and has allowed states to pursue more extreme measures to eliminate perceived threats--most notably, as the far-right insists, "terrorists" and unwanted migrants.

This permanent state of emergency normalizes the abnormal, creates everyday terror--in fact, relies on it--and elicits a "state of doubleness of social being[s]" in which we must somehow accept this new norm of everyday violence and conflict, distance ourselves from it, and yet constantly remain fearful and vigilant of both outsiders and becoming an outsider ourselves: "paranoia [becomes] social practice" (Taussig 1992: 18, 21). In the world post-9/11, this paranoia has been exploited by Western states to completely transform war, security, and international relations with little to no scrutiny and massive Western support in the crusade against "terrorism." Taussig's theory helps explain how the West was so rapidly able to expand their militarized efforts against "terrorism," not limited to war, but also by massively increasing

border control and surveillance of migrants and Muslims both abroad and at home. According to Derek Gregory, terror itself has become an essential part of the state's repertoire to create, categorize, and destroy enemies, drawing on an established Western framework of good and evil. In the words of U.S. President George Bush at the start of the Afghanistan War, "either you are with us or you are with the terrorists," a new category of "barbaric" outsiders that pose a threat to all "civilized" nation-states (quoted in Gregory 2003: 48). Far-right groups and nationalists are quick to racialize this dichotomy, promoting antagonisms between the white West and non-white East--supposedly between good and evil. Since 9/11 and the resulting War on Terror, the British far-right has spearheaded a protracted movement against Islamic extremism in all its potential forms. Often warning that the UK is becoming "Islamicized," they insist that the British way of life is in danger by encroaching Islam, high levels of Muslim migration, and even secret jihadists entering the country. The far-right's all-encompassing, stereotypical, and demonizing anti-Muslim rhetoric embodies the West's typical Orientalist behaviors as outlined by Edward Said. Said, in critiquing Samuel Huntingdon's proposed "clash of civilizations" which forewarns the inevitable conflict between the Western and non-Western world, notes that the supposed "fundamental disagreements" between nations are really Western ideological justifications for unending war and hostility against "non-White, non-European, and non-Christian civilizations" (Said 2002: 524). He also proposes that these justifications are founded on the ideological and discursive practice of reducing all nation-states to their national ethnos or "culture," one which is bounded, impermeable, and incommutable. In building this "conceptual framework around the notion of us-versus-them," hostility and conflict between nation-states--between us and them--thus becomes a "natural" response (Said 2002: 529). The British far-right has taken this

notion of “natural” conflict among nations and crafted a populist nationalist movement against multiculturalism and immigration, relying heavily on cultural racism and Islamophobia, disguising this ideology and broadcasting it to the public through coded racialized discourse.

Rhetorical Strategies of the Far-Right

With difference among nation-states now essentialized in the modern world, fear and suspicion of “outsiders” is assumed to be natural. However this naturalization of national-ethnic and cultural difference is what Verena Stolcke has termed “cultural fundamentalism,” a purported effort of global political conservatives to indoctrinate its citizens with the idea that each nation has its own unique ethnos and culture and is predisposed to cultural isolation and dismissal of outsiders (Stolcke 1995: 4). The far-right has been working for decades to essentialize difference tied to nationality and to naturalize fear, suspicion, and rejection of the “cultural “other,” the immigrant as foreigner, alien, and as such a potential “enemy” who threatens “our” national-cum-cultural uniqueness and integrity” (Stolcke 1995: 8). This essentialization of difference is a very intentional political project orchestrated by conservatives worldwide, particularly in the West, and the normalization of this rhetoric and discourse of exclusion has been a global project since the atrocities committed by Germany’s Third Reich. In fact, modern far-right nationalists have taken lessons directly from the National Socialist party. In *Doublespeak*, Roger Griffin explores the borrowed and novel linguistic tools that far-right extremists use to make their ideas more agreeable to the broader public. Instead of outright announcing their plan to exterminate the Jews, the Nazis rather advertised their actions as a “service” to the nation, as a valiant and noble cause to “purify” the Motherland, and so forth.

They systematically downplayed their crimes against a targeted ethnic minority by using euphemistic and duplicitous language to obscure their clearly fascist ideology.

Imitating such language, far-right politicians are essentially able to repackage their dangerous ideology for public consumption. Griffin later draws parallels between Nazi rhetoric and that of Nick Griffin's, leader of the notoriously extreme British National Party, in his rejection of multiculturalism by calling to protect "indigenous British people" and their "national existence" (quoted in Griffin 2014: 54). Griffin and similar nationalists are able to invoke a sense of racial and ethnic loyalty by using coded language to appeal to white ("indigenous") British voters. Employing such deceitful tactics, the British National Party successfully revived a "discourse of indigeneity" throughout the 2000s and 2010s which helped promote and legitimize racism and nativism within mainstream British political discourse (Williams and Law 2012).

These sort of racial appeals are what Ian Haney-López has termed "dog whistle politics": hidden, racially-coded messages prejudiced against ethnic minorities. While fiercely denying their prejudice towards any specific racial or ethnic group, and by never explicitly mentioning race, the far-right espouses messages of nationality and patriotism that are encoded with "subliminal racial grievances and appeals to color-coded solidarity" (Haney-López 2014: 4). This racist rhetoric often goes hand-in-hand with what Joseph Lacey calls the far-right's interest in creating a crisis surrounding a nation-state's "ontological security," or a citizen's perception of their "ability to maintain the material, social and political conditions to continue their way of life, either in the present or some future time" (Lacey 2019: 97-98). By manufacturing crises of perceived security, the far-right is able to create moral and political antagonisms specifically against "*foreign agents* and their supporters," typically immigrants or foreign governments

(Lacey 2019: 98). After generating this sense of insecurity among the White British majority, the far-right is able to assuage it by launching campaigns against the “foreign agents” who allegedly threaten their livelihood--namely, Muslims, ethnic minorities, and migrants.

Orientalism, Islamophobia, and Anti-Muslim Reporting

Britain has maintained a particularly authoritative role in the Orient not only as a colonizing force, but also an arbiter of knowledge about the Orient. Edward Said’s grand thesis *Orientalism* outlines the West’s tradition of referring to, presenting, and consequently defining the Orient to reflect its own interests. Through its political and cultural discursive practices, the West manipulates reality and produces facts about the Orient, essentially producing a “cultural hegemony” wherein European peoples and cultures are superior to all others (Said 1978: 15). Later returning to expand his work on the portrayal of Islam, Said argues that Western “experts” in the news and media representations of Islam have come to dominate the way the West perceives the Muslim world. This Orientalist framework portrayed in Western media simplifies, homogenizes, and, especially post-9/11, vilifies Muslims. This representation of Islam is congruent with the West’s interest in waging war against “terrorism,” which has, due to the efforts of the Western far-right front, now become synonymous with Islam.

Orientalism has become a key framework that anthropologists and sociologists use to analyze Western news media and portrayals of Muslims and Islam. British media analysts have long criticized the discursive representation of Muslims in the news, arguing that their portrayal is frequently biased against Islam. News sources from both progressive and conservative outlets all tend to use linguistic and visual juxtapositions of the West and the Islamic world as being on

two sides of a moral spectrum. Seemingly simple lexical choices in addressing the audience as “we” while referring to the opposition (the Islamic world) as “they” create “textual binary oppositions” that subliminally signal to the audience that the UK is on the right side of this spectrum (Faimau 2013: 21). These binary oppositions often reinforce the perception of the West as being more free, rational, and moral, while Islam is portrayed as constrained, irrational, and immoral--the very antithesis of the white Christian UK. In various analyses of British newspapers, researchers have found that Islam is commonly framed as a “threat to British society and its ‘Western values’,” injecting a sinister Islamophobic bias into British political discourse and news reporting (Kabir, Alkaff and Bourk 2018: 179). This bias has only been exacerbated by the invitation of far-right ideologues to justify their beliefs on primetime television news bulletins and debate programs, such as ITV’s Good Morning Britain and the BBC’s Question Time. Supposed cultural and ideological differences are emphasized through a purposeful juxtaposition of the West and the Islamic world via exaggeration, oversimplification, and manipulation of facts and visual images to “establish a perception of cultural clash” (Kabir, Alkaff and Bourk 2018: 179). This is not unprecedented behavior in British media history. Studies emerging in the 1960s and 1970s claimed that Black and other ethnic minorities were consistently subjected to criticism and portrayed as sources of conflict, controversy, and deviance. Today’s discourse surrounding migrants, “asylum seekers[,] and British Muslim communities appears to follow this trend of problematising non-white communities as un-British,” a project pioneered by the British far-right and aggravated by resurging discourses of British indigeneity and nationalism (Saeed 2007: 445).

While the demonization of Muslims, ethnic minorities and migrants is not a new trend in the UK, their prominence in political discourse has risen steadily over the last two decades concurrent with the ascendancy of far-right groups in both political and news media spaces. Since the turn of the century, “immigration, asylum, and cultural, religious and ‘racial’ difference” have become some of the most frequently cited electoral issues in British news media, soaring to the forefront of political discussions and agendas (Richardson 2009: 358). A significant portion of this coverage, especially in the print press, has consistently been negative, frequently associating Muslims with terrorism, fundamentalism, danger, and the failure of multiculturalism (Lewis, Mason and Moore 2011). Unfortunately, due to the efforts of the far-right, these negative associations now form a large part of the broader political discourse surrounding British nationality and consequently, immigration and asylum. When Islam is established as antithetical to British values, Muslims are perceived at best as un-British, and at worst dangerous enemies to the nation. With a large portion of migrants and asylum seekers to the UK being Muslim, the far-right has opened up huge numbers of people to hatred, violence, and exclusion.

Methodology

Processes of racialization are critical to the radicalization of modern politics and the mainstreaming of a dangerous nationalist ideology and discourse we see happening in the UK today. This discourse includes language that “sorts some people, things, places, and practices into social categories marked as inherently dangerous and Other,” often utilizing race and/or ethnicity to create a “universalizing social imaginary” about groups of people (Dick and Wirtz

2011: 2, 5). Because racialized discourse is often coded, the speaker is able to simultaneously negatively characterize whole groups of people while denying that what they are saying is harmful or racist at all (Hill 2008; Dick and Wirtz 2011; Haney-López 2014). These processes, due to the efforts of some of the most far-right nationalist groups in Britain, have insidiously seeped into mainstream news and present an alarming shift in modern politics evident not only in the UK, but around the world.

To understand the mainstreaming of racialized discourse in the UK, I will be employing an ethnographic discourse analysis technique from Wortham and Reyes (2015). Discourse analysts have long theorized that speech is not just a tool to communicate information, but also to create meaning and cause social action. Understanding the nuance of speech events depends on context and interpretation of what often goes unsaid, which can be harmful coded messages that ascribe negative connotations to groups of people that can have damaging material effects. Though there are many ways to analyze discourse, key to my approach is attention to personal deictics and evaluative indexicals invoked by British nationalists when discussing migration. While deictics have very limited denotational meaning on their own, the way they are used according to context can establish a connotational meaning which carries a higher consequence. Personal deictics, such as pronouns, can be used to create imagined communities and boundaries among groups of people, as in referring to one group as “us” and another as “them.” This may not seem explicitly harmful on the surface; it is the context as well as other speech in combination with personal deictics that can have a negative impact. Evaluative indexicals are also used to create connotational meaning, often ascribing positive or negative qualities to who or what is being spoken about and grant authority to who is speaking. These indexicals are “signs

that presuppose some evaluation of the people or objects being described” and “associate people or objects with some recognizable social type and evaluate that type” (Wortham and Reyes 2015: 52). Indexicals can be both culturally informative and helpful in understanding social relations; it is when they are coded with racialized connotations that creates division and inspires antagonism.

Within these parameters of ethnographic discourse analysis, I will be focusing specifically on the coded racialized discourse that has cropped up around migration in the UK. The data I’ve selected are various speech events by prominent far-right, nationalist British politicians that have been broadcasted or printed in major British news sources over the last ten years. To map this discourse’s movement into the accepted mainstream of British politics, I will be analyzing speech events that appear in the most popular and trusted British news sources, including the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Independent Television (ITV), Sky News, the *Daily Mail*, and the *Sun*. I have categorized this discourse into three sections: the notions of British indigeneity, the invasion of British land, and the Islamic threat to British Christian Safety. To help clarify the specific language I analyze in the forthcoming sections, I have underlined the particular words and phrases in the speakers’ quotes to focus the reader’s attention to them.

I. British Indigeneity: “Skin Color is Irrelevant!”

A turning point in British political discourse, as well as the starting point of this analysis, occurred in October of 2009 with the BBC’s invitation of Nick Griffin to express his views on their flagship political TV program, Question Time. Question Time is one of the BBC’s most

significant political programs, which is aired weekly and features prominent political and media figures on an hour-long debate panel that is open to questions from both a live audience and via telephone and email submissions. At the time of his appearance, Nick Griffin was the leader of the British National Party who was notoriously outspoken in his nationalist, racist, and Islamophobic beliefs. This was the first time in history the BBC had ever featured such a far-right guest on the program. Despite protest from concerned members of the public at his invitation, the BBC proceeded with the program as scheduled. Due to the UK's strict "impartiality laws" when it comes to television news reporting, the BBC's stance is that they are mandated to represent politicians active in UK politics proportional to their support (which is typically measured by the prominence of their political party in the British and European Parliaments). During the segment, Griffin explained what he and the BNP are attempting to protect by curbing immigration and multiculturalism: British indigeneity.

NG: The entire political elite [which] has imposed an enormous multicultural program--experiments--on the British people without so much as buy-your-leave, all we've got out of it is tax bills... the government's own figures, according to demographers at Oxford University, show that the indigenous British, the people who've been here--"

[Interrupted by panelist Jack Straw: "The whites?"]

NG: "--skin color is irrelevant, Jack... no one here, Jack Straw wouldn't dare to go to New Zealand and say to a Maori, 'what do you mean indigenous?' You wouldn't dare to go to North America and say to an American Red Indian, a Sioux or whatever, 'what do you mean, indigenous? We're all the same.' The indigenous people of these islands, the English, the Scots, the Irish and the Welsh--the color is irrelevant--it's the people that have been here overwhelmingly for the last 17,000 years. We are the aborigines here. If you want to look at the scientific evidence online or whatever, read the books by various scientists, the simple fact is the majority of British people are descended from people who've lived here since time immemorial. And it's extraordinarily racist. This is genuinely racist when you seek to deny the English--you people wouldn't even let us have our name on the census form--that is racism! And that is why people are

voting British National Party, because we feel shut out in our own country (“BNP Nick Griffin on BBC Question Time Part 4”).

Discourses of indigeneity have long existed within far-right circles, creating a hierarchical social imaginary that is tied to a people’s attachment to national soil. Over time, however, the far-right has evolved to present their nationalist messages to the public in more coded ways, as exemplified here by Griffin, who insists that his beliefs have nothing to do with race (Haney-López 2014). While referring to “the British people,” “the indigenous people of these islands,” “the aborigines here,” “the majority of British people,” and “the English,” Griffin repeatedly uses the personal deictic “we,” as well as in conjunction with “our” in his claim that “we feel shut out in our own country.” As a white British man himself, “we” is characterized as a white group, and one that is represented by the BNP’s policies. And while explicitly denying that race has nothing to do with his beliefs--“skin color is irrelevant”--his choice of words actually conveys the opposite message. By naming the inhabitants of the UK up to 17,000 years ago as the ancestors of true, “indigenous” Brits, Griffin is referencing a time when the islands were largely populated by Celts, Romans, and later Anglo-Saxons--peoples believed to be of Caucasian descent. Indigeneity to Britain is then immediately associated with being historically and ethnically white, and Griffin’s complaint is actually an expression of racial grievance. In typical nationalist fashion, he lays white claim to Britain--“our own country”--in a message that attempts to appeal to an “indigenous” audience--a white one. He is attempting to naturalize the national-ethnic and cultural difference between indigenous Brits and the rest of the world; anyone who hasn’t historically belonged to British land is an outsider. The cultural outsider threatens British national integrity, and as such it is natural and expected of indigenous Brits to treat them with suspicion, if not outright rejection (Stolcke 1995).

In another 2009 interview, Griffin breaks down his categorization of indigeneity and Britishness further on Good Morning Britain, ITV's daily morning news program:

We recognize there are three different groups of people in this multicultural Britain now. There's the indigenous Brits, people like you and me; there's settled ethnic minorities, populations who are here legally, legitimately, and they're clearly civically British, and we've got no problem with them at all. And then we've got the third block, which is the colonists, people wanting to change our country into something completely different (“[1/2] Nick Griffin On Sky News (18th October 2009)”).

Griffin's referral to his white interviewer as “people like you and me” subliminally reinforces the concept of British indigeneity as a specifically white category, while referring to “settled ethnic minorities” as “them” creates a textual binary opposition differentiating the two groups as white and non-white, and the latter as expressly not “indigenous,” rather only “civically British” (Faimau 2013). While admitting that ethnic minorities settled in Britain are in fact British in some way, this makes the only viable distinction between “indigenous” and “civic” Brits one of ethnicity--a racial distinction that is hierarchical, with white Brits at the top.

According to this explicitly racial configuration of British citizenship, Britain is then divided between indigenous white Brits, civic non-white Brits, and, per his last comment, non-British and thus non-white “colonists.” Here Griffin finally reveals an answer to the question of who exactly is threatening British indigeneity: migrants, or so-called “colonists.” Griffin's argument aligns with multiple anthropological theories on the foundations of modern nationalist extremism, but namely Appadurai's assertion that nation-states have irrevocably tied their nation's majority identity to a unique national-ethnic one and Stolcke's theory of the far-right project of cultural fundamentalism. In the UK, it is white Christians--or the forgotten “indigenous peoples” of the country that far-right nationalists like Griffin claim to defend--that

form the majority identity and are made to feel their national-ethnic uniqueness and culture is under attack (Appadurai 2007; Stolcke 1995). Within these strict and exclusive ideological frameworks of national belonging, all non-white, non-Christian, and thus non-British people are perceived as potential threats to the majority identity's position, privilege, and power.

Individuals who belong to the majority group, then, are susceptible to prodding by nationalists into believing and adopting these racialized perceptions of the world that on the surface might seem logical instead of deeply racist and dangerous.

II. Colonizing Britain: The Foreign Threat to British Ontological Security

In his infamous Question Time appearance, Griffin speaks on behalf of a forgotten indigenous British audience: "We feel shut out in our own country" ("BNP Nick Griffin on BBC Question Time Part 4"). His message is one that conveys a sense of threat: non-indigenous peoples are encroaching on British territory, tainting British national purity, threatening to topple thousands of years of British history and culture, and pushing "real" Brits out of privileged political, cultural, and economic circles and positions of power--it seems the very livelihoods of all indigenous Brits are at stake. Griffin creates the perception of a crisis of representation--real Brits are not being heard or protected by those in power--and the indigenous British's ontological security is threatened (Lacey 2019: 97). This is a constant theme among British far-right circles: immigrants are blamed for the economic, political, and cultural crises within the nation-state, and become a problem to be managed--if not eliminated.

Since Griffin's appearance on Question Time, even more far-right politicians have been invited to share their concerns about the UK's immigration policy and security, and some

repeatedly. Another rising far-right figure and frequent Question Time guest, Nigel Farage, has appeared on the program for a record of 35 invitations throughout his career as the leader of UKIP (1993-2018) and later the Brexit Party (2019-present)--he had been on Question Time in the year leading up to Brexit more instances than even the Prime Minister (Lockett 2018). In November of 2014, Farage appeared on Question Time to once again promote UKIP's anti-immigration policies and call for an EU membership referendum in order to protect the British "quality of life."

"...if you have a country in which the population goes up as a direct result of immigration... you find congestion, whether it's on the roads or the London underground or wherever you go. And what you find is that actually you're constantly playing catch-up, and really, the general quality of life for the massive population has gone down... It's quite interesting to think that, you know, in 1990 the population of this country was 55 million. It is now between 62 and 63 million. That is a massive, massive increase and I think ordinary folk going about their lives are feeling it. And I think having a proper immigration policy, controlling the numbers, doing what nearly 200 countries in the world do, namely controlling the numbers that come and the type of people that come is the answer" [applause from the audience] ("Russell Brand & Nigel Farage clash over immigration on Question Time (11/12/2014)")

Who are the "ordinary folk" Farage claims are suffering from increased migration to the UK?

Likely it's the same "indigenous" white Brits that Griffin suggests are under siege by

"colonists." Juxtaposing "ordinary" Brits against migrants characterizes the latter as abnormal and Other, even detrimental to the "normal" Brits peacefully going about their lives. These

"normal" Brits now must deal with the "massive" problem of "congestion"--indexes which imply there is overpopulation occurring in the UK due to migration, particularly migration by people who are abnormal. Suggesting that the UK must control the "type of people" who enter the country further reinforces the far-right's unspoken ideal of the migrant, one that Farage does not

say explicitly but is picked up on by his audience: that the migrants who are entering Europe and the UK are bad people, are contributing to the country's economic and political problems, and must be weeded out, if not stopped completely. This is a typical retort of far-right nationalists: immigrants and "Others" tear apart the material and social fabric of the country. They disrupt the norm and dampen the "quality of life" for the majority of Brits--they pose a threat to the nation's ontological security, or ability to maintain the status quo for the majority identity (Lacey 2019). Thus Farage's appeal to control "the type of people that come" is made to seem a logical security measure, when in fact it is another racialized grievance from the far-right's playbook targeting non-white migrants.

According to this racialized framework, migrants must be kept out completely or allowed in on a case-by-case basis, according to their benefit to British society and whether their background complements the nation's supposed traditions and values (Lacey 2019: 99). One of UKIP's and Farage's main campaign points, unsurprisingly, is reformation of the British Points-Based System of immigration, which raises an important question of who exactly has the power to determine a migrant's potential benefit to the country and what those qualifications are. In the last two decades, it has gotten substantially more difficult to enter the UK as a non-British citizen, let alone apply for legal work status, residency, or citizenship. In equal measure it has gotten harder to live and work in the UK as an immigrant, especially those who are undocumented, due to both legal restrictions and social pressures originating from the far-right. As of 2008, the current Points-Based System of immigration was introduced to vet migrants based on "their qualifications and potential benefit to Britain," categorizing migrants in tiers from "skilled workers" (more preferred) to "unskilled workers" (less preferred). The following

year, the 2009 Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act dedicated an entire provision to the “good character” requirement and English language proficiency of potential immigrants and naturalized citizens (Girvan 2018). The inclusion of a “good character” requirement in this act is a testament to the far-right’s influence on the discourse surrounding migration: it suggests that there is a significant portion of migrants with “bad character” in the first place, that there is a real threat they are coming to the UK, and there is a large consensus that they must be kept out to maintain British integrity, normalcy, and security.

Migrants with “bad character” seem to be those who don’t align with the far-right’s view of citizenship and supposed British values. In his 2009 Good Morning Britain interview on ITV, Nick Griffin goes into detail about how the UK must stop this block of “colonists” from changing their country “into something completely different” (“[1/2] Nick Griffin On Sky News (18th October 2009)”). The use of this indexical is significant in many regards. By labeling migrants “colonists” in this context, Griffin completely (and ahistorically) inverts the British colonial order, framing the British as victims and migration as a new system of colonialism he critiques. Casting this role of “colonizer” on UK-bound migrants invokes in his audience the image of a barbaric invader: he characterizes the migrant as someone who is coming to Britain without consent, seeking to settle permanently, and, as historically has been associated with colonization, to dominate and wreak havoc on the indigenous population of Britain. By invoking this negative association and characterizing the migrant in this way, Griffin’s appeal to curb immigration seems logical to white audiences, and the “invasion” of British land and destruction of British culture evokes the sense of a real, justifiable crisis.

Since Farage stepped down as the party leader in 2016 after the Brexit vote, UKIP has cycled between many different interim presidents who have faced much public scrutiny for their incendiary comments on immigration and what must be done to protect British citizens from allegedly “bad” migrants. Interim president Henry Bolton in 2017 announced the party’s new manifesto, which focused extensively on preserving “British culture.” *The Sun* covered and reprinted Bolton’s main concerns, among them being:

“There is a concern amongst the population writ large that there is an undermining through general immigration and the weight of numbers that we’ve got--and Islam as well--that our culture is being buried by this, being sort of pushed aside” (qtd. in Tolhurst 2017).

“Population writ large” indicates right away that Bolton is talking about and appealing to the UK’s majority identity, white Christians. Bolton makes two assumptions here: to the majority of white Christian Brits, immigration is a problem, and there is a sense of white Christian British culture being “undermined.” Throughout the rest of the announcement, Bolton declares that high levels of immigration are “overwhelming” British public services and “swamping or displacing our own British culture... [immigration] is harming our culture, traditions and way of life. Some talk of multiculturalism, but are we not permitted to preserve our own British culture?” (qtd. in Tolhurst 2017). He links British ethnic-citizenship--whiteness--with its own unique culture and tradition, and suggests it is being deteriorated by the mere presence of immigrants in the UK (Stolcke 1995). On top of white British cultural erasure, immigrants are denying white Brits their right to public resources by overwhelming these services, raising anxieties about scarcity and privilege (Appadurai 2007). In this statement Bolton also quite blatantly reveals a large part of UKIP’s platform. One of the main issues the far-right takes with migration is nonchalantly laid bare: it’s not just overpopulation, straining of public resources, or British cultural erasure--it’s

“Islam as well.” “British culture” is not only being undermined by large waves of immigration, but the very presence of Islam in the UK; Islam is established as incompatible with and detrimental to British culture, and should be rejected—as well as migrants who practice the supposedly anti-British religion.

III. The Islamization of “Other”: An Antithetical Enemy

Through racialized appeals, UKIP has been working dutifully for years to tie negative connotations to Islam. They also codedly associate these negative stereotypes of Islam with UK-bound migrants, suggesting all migrants must be treated with suspicion as they have proven to be detrimental to British security and national-ethnic purity. Since the West’s War on Terror began in 2001, the British far-right has worked to Islamicize the threat of “Others” invading the UK. Islamic terrorism, it seems, has provided the perfect cover for the far-right’s racialized campaign to prevent “bad” migrants from entering the UK. Appearing on the BBC’s weeknight political news program *Newsnight* in September during the 2015 ‘migrant crisis,’ Nigel Farage explained his stance on the Syria conflict and number of migrants seeking to enter Europe, and potentially the UK:

“...my concern, my real concern with what is happening across the Mediterranean is not about the religion of people that come, it is that we are opening our doors to jihadism. And that I think is the single most serious threat from this whole crisis” (“Nigel Farage on migrants, EU and the Syria crisis (FULL UNCUT) - *Newsnight*”).

Farage urges his interviewer that religion has no relation to UKIP’s calls for halting immigration (echoing similar strategies of disavowal like “skin color is irrelevant”). Yet in the very same sentence he associates migrants with religious “jihadism,” a form of Islamic extremism, which poses a “serious threat” to Britain. He equates all migrants with jihadis, making every single

migrant a potential threat that must be treated with suspicion, though there is no real evidence to support this claim. Earlier in the year after a series of tragic deaths of migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea, Farage made another comment published in the *Daily Mail*, claiming “jihadis” were using the migrant crisis as an opportunity to disguise themselves as refugees in order to enter Europe (qtd. in Stevens 2015). In fact, he alleged that the unchecked allowance of migrants into Europe “could lead to half a million Islamic extremists coming to our countries and posing a direct threat to our civilisation” (qtd. in Stevens 2015). He repeats these claims without offering any evidence to this supposed threat, and again ties the negative associations with terrorism and violence to all migrants, including refugees in the midst of a humanitarian crisis. Without even dissecting the assumptions and lack of evidence to back up Farage’s estimates, his use of the personal deictic “our” in reference to “our countries” (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland), and “our civilisation” tells the audience a lot about what message he’s sending. “Our countries” hearkens back to far-right notions of indigeneity and rightful ownership of British land; these boundaries, imagined or not, belong to a certain bounded, impenetrable community. “Our civilization,” on the other hand, makes a larger implication about the UK belonging to a broader Western civilization, one directly opposed to the civilization from which these “jihadis” spring. This juxtaposition presupposes that the UK is on the right side of a moral spectrum, opposite of Islamic countries with their “extremists” and threatening ideology that puts the West in danger. “Our” countries (of the UK) and “our” civilization (European, Western) are not only under the “direct threat” of Islamic extremism, but opposite to and incompatible with Islam in general--it is superior to the Islamic world in all ways. This reproduction of falsified knowledge about Muslim countries and oversimplifications

and exaggerations about Islam are a classic Orientalist technique that characterizes all Muslims as a homogenous bloc, and above all, inferior to the West (Said 1978). But the main point Farage tries to drive home here and throughout UKIP's campaigning is the migrant's proximity to terrorism: these migrants are not only outsiders who do not mesh well with traditional British culture and norms; they are dangerous by virtue of being Muslim--of belonging to the religion of "jihadis."

Gerard Batten, in the first week of his UKIP interim presidency in 2018, was interviewed on Sky News to discuss the new direction he'd be taking the party in. He begins this segment with his disapproval of new mosques being built in the UK and alleges that the reason why the UK has "such a problem with literalists and radical and extremist Islam in our country now is because it's actually financially supported and exported to us by those types of countries" ("Gerard Batten smashes sky news in first interview as leader"). "Those types of countries" references the Muslim-majority countries where many migrants to the UK originate, and where, allegedly, extremists are funding terrorist activities abroad. This indexical homogenizes the entire Islamic world as one culture bound by a singular ideology which produces and exports "literalists and radical[s] and extremist[s]" worldwide. Thus it is reasonable, Batten insists, for Brits to be skeptical of Muslims entering the UK and settling there. The majority of Batten's interview is dedicated to his personal opinions on Islam, including his policy proposal for Muslim British residents and potential Muslim migrants to sign a sort of pledge of loyalty to the UK. Later in the interview, Batten actually pulls out a draft of a document that he ideally would require British Muslims and Muslim migrants to sign. It is a renunciation of "violent texts" of the Quran and an "affirmation" of Western and British values, including equal rights for women,

religious freedom and tolerance, and rejection of religious discrimination and violence, among others. When asked by the interviewer if this is a reasonable request, he replies:

“...I don’t think it’s unreasonable to think that people who come and live in our country should reject these dark age ideologies which many of them bring with them... We invited people to reject those texts and accept those principles, which I think any reasonable person in a Western liberal democracy would accept, you know, equality of people, et cetera. They’re the ones with the ideology, they’re the ones with the problem, because it’s their extremist ideology... That’s their ideology, so they’re the ones that have to address it and start actually understanding the problems that have been brought into our country. It isn’t us who created the problems” (“Gerard Batten smashes sky news in first interview as leader”).

Batten reinforces the juxtaposition between himself, a “reasonable person in a Western liberal democracy” who is aligned with progressive concepts such as the “equality of people,” and Muslims, who belong to the opposite end of this moral spectrum, invariably associated with archaic, anti-democratic beliefs (Faimau 2013). There is no room for nuance in UKIP’s crusade against extremism: all Muslims are automatically associated with a “dark age” and “extremist” ideology which must be renounced in favor of a set of superior Western ideals. By suggesting British Muslims and Muslim migrants sign this pledge of loyalty, Batten implies that all Muslims are in some way disloyal to Britain. Not only are they untrustworthy, but they are members of a “violent,” “dark age ideolog[y],” clearly inferior to and incompatible with the Western values underpinning the UK (Said 1978). He urges that it’s only reasonable for anyone who wants to live in “our country”--the very bastion of progressive, democratic values--to accept this dichotomy between East and West as truth, and rearrange themselves so that they align with the “right” side of this divide.

Continuing his fixation on Islamic extremism with a statement published in the *Daily Mail* in 2016, Farage repeated his claim that up to “5,000 jihadists have entered Europe by posing as migrants in recent years,” adding that “EU countries are now experiencing more migrant-based crime” (qtd. in Hawken and Matthews 2016). He also says that due to the UK’s lax immigration laws and border security, high levels of migration in recent years have been “bad for social cohesion,” and that it is “cultural issues” that are at the root of conflict between migrants and Brits (qtd. in Hawken and Matthews 2016). Lastly, he reminds the audience not to forget that “ISIS promise[d] to flood the continent with jihadists” (qtd. in Hawken and Matthews 2016). Yet again, Farage’s goal here is to solidify the negative association between migrants and Islamic extremism, characterizing all migrants as dangerous, violent, and suspicious. He ties them not only to extreme cults of terrorism, but rising levels of crime; he urges the audience that it is migrants who are at fault for disrupting British social cohesion (and not, say, far-right nationalist groups that exist only to manufacture notions of difference and enmity and further division). The “cultural issues” Farage references here echo the sentiments of Samuel Huntington, who proposed an eventual “clash of civilizations” between the East and West, whereby the two worlds are completely incongruent and incompatible, and therefore bound for conflict. This perspective has been critiqued endlessly for its oversimplification of historical and cultural facts, one of the most important being that this careless and problematic tradition of reducing all states to an incommutable national ethnos is a practice that originated in the West. Another crucial, oft-neglected fact is that the “cultural issues” the UK finds with the Islamic world have historically been used as ideological justifications for inflicting British imperialism and violence upon non-white nations, rooted in a deep belief of Western superiority (Said 2002).

These same justifications are now used to fuel the racialized exclusion and discrimination against migrants and Muslims alike, both outside of and within the UK's borders.

As it stands, mainstream British news media is complicit in promoting a far-right racialized discourse of Islamophobia and anti-migrant rhetoric by featuring far-right speakers and ideologies on their platforms. The sheer volume of news coverage that centers Muslims and migrants in the last decade indicates a clear shift in the British media establishment's agenda; the abundance of negative and stereotypical coverage of these groups, as well as the increased invitation of far-right speakers to discuss them, should alarm us of dangerous political and discursive developments. These far-right narratives purposely misrepresent the Islamic world and the reality of migrants in a negative way for their own political gain, exposing white Brits to dangerous ethno-nationalist ideology and putting migrants and Muslims in harm's way.

Implications and Conclusions

The incorporation of far-right speech into mainstream British news media indicates an alarming development in the discourse that surrounds migration in the UK, which now embodies implicitly and explicitly racist, Islamophobic, and xenophobic language and messages. In many ways, news media helps construct reality for its audiences. Journalism is, after all, the business of reporting what's "true." In the best interests of all, but particularly for ostracized communities like migrants and Muslims who already face high levels of discrimination and violence, the reality that the British media promotes should be one that is as unbiased as possible. For that to happen, the news cannot provide platforms for the far-right that aim to popularize this racialized, divisive discourse. As anthropologists, discourse analysts, and communications scholars have

shown, the way groups of people are portrayed in the news guides the public's perception of those groups, delineates how they might be situated in our broader social imaginary, and ultimately determines how those people should be treated. The use of this racialized discourse in the acceptable British mainstream can thus have real, harmful--and sometimes lethal--effects on its "othered" targets.

As "debates concerning terrorism, immigration, and cultural identity have increasingly become a focal point in public discourses," anti-Muslim hate crimes have simultaneously risen sharply (Atta et. al. 2017: 84). In 2012, the British Parliament supported the launch of an independent project called Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks (Tell MAMA) to record the increasing number of anti-Muslim incidents occurring across the UK. Each year, Tell MAMA produces an annual report in which they recount the number and nature of racially- and religiously-motivated hate crimes that have taken place, as well as suggest possible motivations and explain the cultural context for such attacks. Tell MAMA explicitly names the UK press as complicit in promoting negative Muslim stereotypes, homogenizing Muslim communities, and associating Islam with cultural conflict and terrorism--promoting discursive violence against an already-marginalized community. In the eight years since its founding, Tell MAMA has documented well over ten thousand cases of anti-Muslim hate crimes--though this number only reflects the crimes which are reported directly to the organization. These crimes range from discrimination, vandalism and property damage, on- and off-line verbal abuse, and even physical attacks. So-called 'retaliatory' and 'defensive' crimes are executed by perpetrators who seem to act "on behalf of the majority group (in this instance the 'White British' ethnic group), for whom they feel their cultural identity is 'under threat' from minority communities" (Atta et. al. 2017:

84). Indeed, it seems that the far-right is making great progress convincing a broader public audience that “British culture” is at risk of extinction, and that Islam is one of the key aggressors degrading the British way of life.

As the far-right’s racialized discourse moves further into the mainstream, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiment is aggravated in the body politic. The mainstreaming of this discourse exposes the public to both misleading information and dangerous ethno-nationalist ideology which essentializes national-ethnic and cultural difference between the UK and the rest of the world. This exposure not only primes the broader, less outwardly “radical” public to perhaps mimic far-right language and its underlying racist beliefs, but may also embolden the already-extreme, as evidenced by unfavorable public opinion polls towards immigration and the increasing rate of hate crimes against Muslims. Ultimately, the inclusion of far-right ideologues who spout this racialized discourse on mainstream television and print news sources exposes millions of Brits to a rhetoric of exclusion that associates migrants and Muslims with Islamic extremism, danger, and conflict. This development has already pushed punitive migration laws to the forefront of the British political agenda, and will continue to have real effects on migrants, Muslims, and anyone else in opposition to the far-right’s vision of British citizenship, unless otherwise confronted and rejected.

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