

“Please protect the Jews”: Ideology and Concealment in the *Britain First* Solidarity Patrol

Shani Burke, Teesside University

Department of Psychology, Sport and Exercise

Southfield Road

Middlesbrough

TS1 3BX

S.burke@tees.ac.uk

Author Biography

Shani Burke is a lecturer in Psychology at Teesside University. Her current research uses discursive methods to examine the responses of the far-right to the events surrounding the Charlie Hebdo attack. Her previous research focused on the social construction of prejudice, in particular with regards to asylum seekers.

“Please protect the Jews”: Ideology and Concealment in the *Britain First* Solidarity Patrol

Shani Burke

Abstract

This research examined Facebook comments in response to *Britain First's* ‘solidarity patrol’ video, in which *Britain First* is shown patrolling in Golders Green, North London, ostensibly to show support for the Jewish community after the shooting in the Kosher supermarket in Paris following the Charlie Hebdo attack. A Critical Discursive Psychological analysis was conducted on comments. Initial comments were identified as showing support and gratitude towards *Britain First*; however, comments become progressively anti-Semitic (e.g. by posing, rhetorically, the question, what benefits Jews have brought to Britain?). Results are discussed in light of how *Britain First* achieves anti-Islamic rhetoric whilst trying to maintain support from the mainstream. My findings show how the far-right have used the Charlie Hebdo attack to construct Jews as being vulnerable at the hands

of Islamic extremism, which has resulted in the transition from supportive to oppositional discussions about Jews.

Keywords: Solidarity, Computer-Mediated Communication, Critical Discursive Psychology, Far-right

1. Introduction

On 7th January, 2015, two gunmen shot eleven people in the headquarters of the French newspaper Charlie Hebdo, the attack motivated by Charlie Hebdo's cartoon depictions of Muhammad. Two days after the attack, a Kosher supermarket in Paris was also subjected to shootings (*The Independent*, January 9th, 2015). Millions of people showed unity with France over the attacks, and the slogan 'Je Suis Charlie' became an International symbol of support.

Other incidents in the UK such as the July 2005 London bombings and the more recent killing of the British soldier Lee Rigby (*The Independent*, May 25th, 2013) have facilitated the construction in the (mass and social) media of a global 'war on terror', in which Arabs and Muslims are positioned as being a threat to Britain (Foner and Alba 2008, 369; Wood & Finlay 2008, 712-718), in opposition to which Jews are positioned as the 'good other'. More recently, attacks by members of the so-called Islamic State (IS) in

Paris in November 2015 (*BBC News*, 9th December, 2015) and the killing of 84 people struck down in Nice on Bastille Day by a lorry driven by a man identifying himself as a “soldier of Islam” (*The Telegraph*, 17th July, 2016) continue to provide a resource for the construction of Muslims as a (global) threat. These events have fuelled support for the far-right even further and led to ‘*Islamophobia*’ becoming a prominent issue in contemporary British society (*The Guardian*, 23rd May, 2013). There have been Islamophobic attacks in the United Kingdom, particularly on public transport and towards women who are more visible as Muslims wearing the hijab, for example the anti-Islamic verbal abuse towards a pregnant Muslim female that was caught on CCTV on a London bus (*The Independent*, 13th November, 2015).

The events surrounding Charlie Hebdo and the attacks mentioned have encouraged far-right parties and organisations to focus on Muslims as a ‘problem’ in Britain, what they call the ‘*Islamification*’ of Britain (Richardson and Wodak 2009, 56). The challenge for far-right parties and organisations in the UK is to adopt and promote a fiercely anti-Islamic stance whilst appealing to the mainstream in British politics. Their solution to this challenge is, in part, a form of tokenism involving the visibility of people targeted in the streets and in the media through their appearance and dress (e.g. women in hijabs, the dress and personal appearance of Sikhs and/or Hasidic Jews). The far-right have to be cautious that they appear to

oppose Islamic extremism and ideology, and not all Muslims. Far-right organisations such as the English Defence League argue that they aim to campaign against extremist Islam only, rather than all Muslims (Treadwell 2012, 36; Treadwell and Garland 2011, 622). However, this distinction can become blurred in situations like English Defence League demonstrations, with anti-Islamic chants taking place (Garland and Treadwell 2010, 26).

Historically, the dilemma of the far-right is to uphold nativist nationalist values, but also reach out to the mass in order to gain mainstream support. Billig (1978, 130-131; 167) argued that the far-right resolve this dilemma by partially concealing their ideologies to reach the mass audience, whilst circulating propaganda. Billig proposed that far-right parties such as the National Front who historically had underlying anti-Semitic ideologies, attempted to disguise their extremist views and reject the fascist label (Billig, 1978 131-136; Eatwell 2000, 172). More recent research using parliamentary data has shown how the British National Party used strategies to mask their underlying racist ideologies, such as contrasting their own principles with more extremist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan, in order to appear to be (i.e. construct themselves as being) more moderate and rational and thereby appealing to mainstream audiences (Goodman and Johnson 2013, 102).

Britain First is a far-right political party that was founded in 2011. The party is committed to maintaining Christianity in UK society and openly

opposing Islam (as well as other political doctrines such as Marxism, Fascism and ‘political correctness’). *Britain First* is renowned for ‘Christian Patrols’, where they break into mosques and cause vandalism. The solidarity patrol video was posted on *Britain First’s* Facebook Page on 31st January, 2015, 22 days after the shooting in the Kosher supermarket in Paris (the solidarity patrol video was also posted on *Britain First’s* official website). The purpose of this patrol was, ostensibly, to offer support to Jews, thereby implying that Muslims are responsible for the anti-Semitic attacks that followed the Charlie Hebdo shooting, what *Britain First* refers to as “a steep rise in Islamic hostility” (<https://www.britainfirst.org/solidarity-patrol/>).

The patrol took place in Golders Green, an area in London with a large Jewish population. *Britain First* is shown handing out leaflets, occasionally to people who appear to belong to the Hasidic Jewish community in Golders Green. Jayda Fransen (*Britain First’s* deputy leader), standing in front of the camera, begins by expressing “heartbreak” over Jewish people fleeing from Britain as a result of an increase in anti-Semitism. Paul Golding (the leader of *Britain First*) then turns to talk about protecting the Jewish community, and claims that nothing is being done to protect Jews from Islamic extremism due to “political correctness”. Finally, Fransen again faces the camera and reads aloud ‘anti-Jewish’ quotes from the Qur’an.

In the solidarity patrol, *Britain First* aim to show that they are supporting British Jews (who they refer to in the video as “the Jewish community”) who are presented as being under threat from Islam. *Britain First* then work to keep themselves separate from Jews by differentiating between being Jewish and being British. This anti-Islamic patrol is being portrayed by *Britain First* as a patrol to show solidarity with Jews, leaving the audience to make the link between anti-Semitic attacks and opposing Islam. *Britain First* is targeting Islam only indirectly, in contrast to other far-right movements such as the English Defence League, who hold anti-Islamic demonstrations known to be aggressive and violent in nature (Garland and Treadwell 2010, 24-25).

This research aimed to analyse critically:

-how *Britain First* attempted to disguise an anti-Islamic patrol as being a patrol demonstrating support for Jews

-how users on Facebook responded to *Britain First's* solidarity patrol

2. Data and Methods

The data for this study are from a corpus collected between March 2014 and February 2015. The project here focuses on how the far-right responded to the events surrounding the Charlie Hebdo attack, and so these particular posts are from January-February 2015. All data are in the public domain

and can be accessed without the need for a Facebook account, therefore profile pictures and avatars have been left as they originally appeared on Facebook, but names have been omitted. Whilst some information about identity might be lost through omitting names, in some contexts authors have explicitly self-identified as Jewish, often in the context of a comment about their appreciation “as a Jew” for *Britain First’s* support (on the use of last names as ways to identify the person named as Jewish, one might recall the publication of the names of those convicted of economic trials in the Soviet Union in the 1950s, as a means to indicate that Jews were responsible for these crimes, whilst doing so only indirectly and thereby forestalling accusations of anti-Semitism; see Sacks 1992, 582). At any rate, information about identity is still available despite names being omitted.

Communication on Facebook pages is asynchronous, i.e. users do not need to be online at the same time in order to communicate, and therefore there can be a delay in responses to previous messages (Burke and Goodman 2012, 21). When opening Facebook pages, the Timeline is visible, which displays the posts in descending chronological order. There is also an ‘About’ Section, containing information such as when the pages were set up, a short biography of the organisation, contact details, and links to other websites (often the organisation’s official website). There is a tab to access photos, as well as other features such as future events taking place.

Facebook pages are a significant and advantageous form of communication

for far-right parties and movements such as *Britain First*, as it is free both to set up and use. *Britain First* in particular has a significant following on Facebook, and as of September 2016, have 1,480,334 ‘likes’ on their Facebook Page.

This research used Critical Discursive Psychology (henceforth CDP; Wetherell and Edley 1999, 4-5) which focuses on the formation of identities and interactional work that is performed through discursive accounts. The premise of this approach is that psychological phenomena are socially constructed through language, so it is beneficial to study discourse in practice rather than as an internal state. The focus is on the “action orientation” of talk or text (Edwards and Potter 1992, 2), which is to say that analysis focuses on what actions people are trying to achieve through talk, rather than what this tells us about what people think.

CDP is beneficial for accounting for the variation that takes place in discourse, what Billig et al. (1988, 8-15) refer to as the ‘dilemmatic’ nature of talk. CDP is a suitable method for analysing talk surrounding controversial issues, as the focus is on action, for example, how individuals justify the harsh treatment of minority groups or create accusations (Augoustinos and Every 2007, 124).

CDP was used to examine how identity is mobilized through discourse. I focus on the identity work surrounding *Britain First* supporters helping people like ‘us’, and how identities such as ‘*us and them*’ are constructed in

this particular context as well as the construction of Jews as the 'good other'. This is in line with previous research examining the construction of asylum seekers as 'just like us' (Masocha 2015, 3), which in turns challenges the counter-position that asylum seekers are different to 'us' and therefore a threat (Capdevila and Callaghan 2008, 9).

This formation is known as the '*us and them*' interpretative repertoire (Lynn and Lea 2003, 437), in which an out-group is constructed as the 'other', and a binary opposition is created of a group being different to 'us', usually on cultural grounds (Masocha 2015, 6-7). This is in line with Van Dijk's (1995, 2) notion of 'us versus them', in which 'they' are associated with negative attributes and threatening the identity and values of 'us'.

Construction of 'the other' can be related to structures of power and reinforce inequality between groups (Dyers and Wankah 2012, 237-238).

The separation of '*us and them*' allows the speaker to shift agency and responsibility; for example, the problem of integration in a community can either be attributed to those inside or outside of a community, another example of the construction of 'otherness' (Kirkwood, McKinlay & McVittie 2014, 379-382).

Another strategy I focus on is Goffman's notion of *footing*, defined as "the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance" (Goffman

1981, 128). This means that in the suitable context, speakers can shift their alignment to speak on behalf of other people.

The first comment to the solidarity patrol video started on the same day that the video was posted onto Facebook (31.1.15), one minute after the video was posted; and the final comments were posted on the 14th February: a total of 436 comments made in response to the solidarity patrol were analysed for the purpose of this research (comments may have been added since data collection ceased, that are not included in the corpus). Extracts have been numbered according to where they appear in the corpus (ordered chronologically ascending by date), and are presented exactly as they appeared on Facebook so any spelling and grammatical errors remain.

3. Analysis

The first comments congratulate *Britain First* and display support for Jews, some of which were posted by users who identified themselves as Jewish, and who also expressed gratitude towards *Britain First*. Following on from this, progressively over the next fourteen days the comments became more hostile towards Jews. Debates arose about the benefits that Jewish people bring to the UK, with authors drawing upon perceived historical evidence for support as well as anti-Semitic rhetoric (such rhetoric shares features

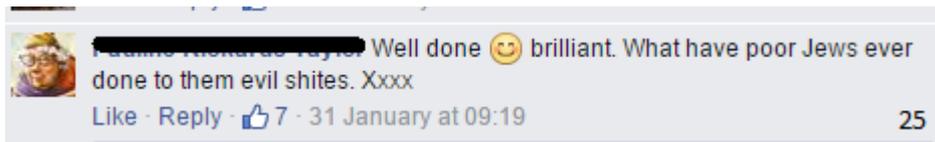
with anti-immigrant and/or nativist rhetoric, which are thereby features of a distinctive rhetorical genre; see Pilar 2010, 57-63).

3. 1 “*What have Poor Jews ever done*”: *Showing Support for Jews*

In the early comments to the video viewers are displaying signs of being convinced by the message in the solidarity patrol. Comments are often written in an informal and affectionate manner towards *Britain First* (e.g., ending a comment with kisses), with authors shifting their footing (Goffman 1981, 128) to talk about how Jewish people feel. The focus is the vulnerability of the “Jewish community” and the threat to Jews from Islam; this involves a construction of separating Jews from ‘us’, the British, thereby invoking the ‘*us and them*’ interpretative repertoire (Lynn and Lea 2003, 427) and marginalising Jewish people.

These authors are mirroring *Britain First*’s inclusive and exclusive discursive strategy of forming an alignment with an ethnic minority, who are like ‘us’, thus using Jews as a scapegoat in order to construct Muslims as an out-group. Some authors distanced themselves from actively supporting Jewish communities, and instead pleaded that *Britain First* continue to do so on their behalf. The first comment directly mentions the vulnerability of Jews:

Extract One



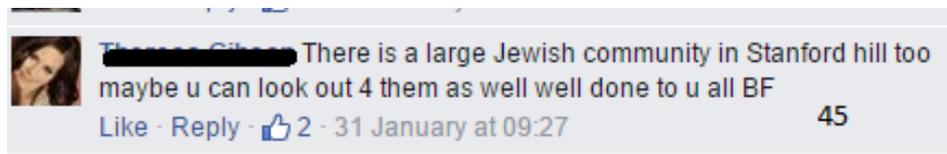
This comment has three components: 1) “Well done”, 2) the smiley face, and 3) “brilliant”. The “Xxxx” which are used as kisses along with the smiley emoticon work to make the account affectionate and thus less formal, with the author visually expressing pleasure at the video through the use of the smiley. The account is forming an affiliation with *Britain First* and has a friendly tone, thus drawing *Britain First* into the position of friends of the author. The term “poor” works to place Jews into a category of being vulnerable. Note that the author’s interrogative construction of “what have poor Jews ever done...” is used to make a declaration rather than to ask a question, and can be seen as a form of complaining on someone else’s behalf (Drew and Walker 2009, 2405-2408).

The vulnerability of Jews is implied through the juxtaposition with “evil” Muslims. The term “evil shites” is cohesive with the ‘*us and them*’ construction. The use of “shites” does not explicitly mention or refer to Muslims, yet the categorisation implies Muslims. The derogatory term downgrades and objectifies Muslims, as well as presents them as dirty. The term also generalises beyond extremist Muslims, and constructs all Muslims as one category through concealment. Jews are presented as an out-group category of “poor”, along with Muslims also being constructed as an out-group, while British people are an in-group. This juxtaposition constructs Jews as

being under threat from Islam, and Muslims causing Jewish people to be fearful.

The next extract demonstrates that not only does the viewer show agreement with the solidarity patrol, but also inserts their own suggestion for *Britain First* to widen the support beyond Golders Green to other Jewish communities:

Extract Two



Here the author constructs a link between location and a religious community (Drew 1978, 8-19). Note that the author herself uses the term “community”, though of course Jewish identity displays a complex hybridity between religion, ethnicity, race, history, memory and more; so from a Jewish perspective, “a large Jewish community” might be considered an oversimplification tending already to a form of othering – note also that the author refers to “them”. This is the only point where the link between being in Golders Green and showing support for Jewish communities is made salient, particularly through the use of the term “too”. The author is referring to (but has misspelt) Stamford Hill in North London, an area with a large Hasidic Jewish community. This comment shows that people are giving accounts of being convinced by the video. The author

addresses *Britain First* as BF; using an abbreviation makes the author's account friendly and informal, and emphasises this friendliness in an environment where cues such as eye contact and nodding are absent (e.g. Fozdar and Pederson 2013, 379).

Following this, the comments continue the line of supporting and thanking *Britain First*:

Extract Three

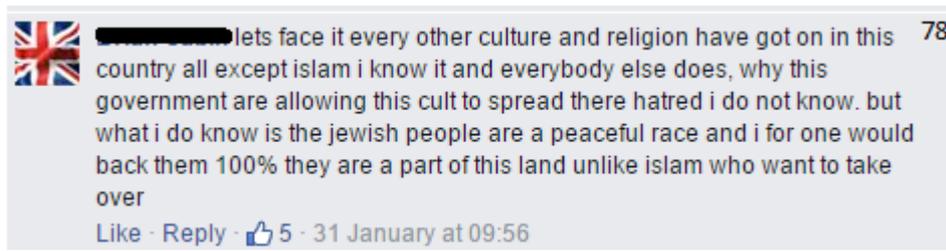


Here too the author changes his footing to speak on behalf of the Jewish community, presenting that community as being in debt and grateful to *Britain First* for the solidarity patrol. An extreme case formulation (Pomerantz 1986, 219) is invoked that *Britain First* helping the Jewish community will have long term effects, and the notion that the event will have historical importance in terms of Jewish people actively appreciating *Britain First's* cause. Note the author directly addressing *Britain First* by name as with extract two. *Britain First* has been 'tagged' in this post, meaning that Facebook users reading this comment can click on '*Britain First's*, name, and will be taken to the *Britain First* Facebook page. *Britain First* will also receive a Facebook notification about this comment. This

suggests that the author intends to directly draw *Britain First's* attention to the comment, and be seen to be actively showing support for *Britain First*.

Next is a comment comparing Jews and Muslims:

Extract Four



The author uses the argument that Islam is the only religion that is not getting on with other religions, and thus is the cause of the problem.

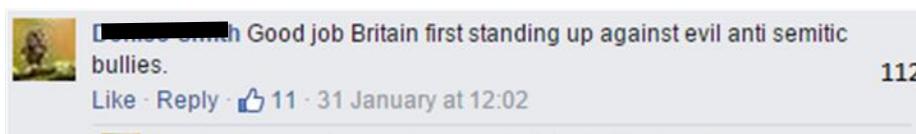
“Everybody else does” is an appeal to common knowledge (Edwards & Potter 1992, 117) to add credibility to the author’s argument. This change of footing to speak on behalf of others means that the author cannot be held personally accountable for the view that he/she expressed. The use of “let’s face it” also suggests that the problematic character of Islam is obvious, but people are not opening their eyes to the issue. Islam is presented as a threat and a problematic cult (rather than a religion), that is trying to take over.

Constructing Jews as a “peaceful race” serves to heighten the contrast between Jews and the aggression and threat associated with the problematic “cult” of Islam. The author refers to Jewish people as “them”, again invoking the interpretative repertoire of *‘us and them’*, thereby separating

Jewish people from British people. Note the user's profile picture of the United Kingdom flag, displaying a patriotic emblem in order to represent their British identity.

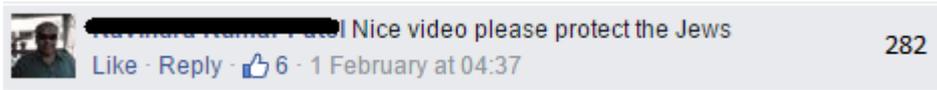
The next two extracts present Jews as vulnerable at the hands of Islamic extremism:

Extract Five



This extract positions Islam as threatening and bullying Jews, again addressing *Britain First* by its name. The construction of Muslims as anti-Semitic underlies the author's use of the term "evil" to describe Muslims, and has a substantial impact, as anti-Semitic is a term that carries historical significance. This term also implicitly refers to Jews, and the idea that Muslims aim to target Jewish people specifically over other groups. Jews are thereby being constructed by the author as needing assistance in "standing up" to Islam.

Extract Six



This statement demonstrates that *Britain First* has convincingly constructed Jews as being in danger at the hands of Islamic extremists, and that there is something that *Britain First* can actively do in order to keep Jewish communities safe. The term “protect” implies that Jewish people are vulnerable, again emphasising the construction of Jews as the good ‘other’. By pleading that *Britain First* protects Jews, the author is being non-committal in terms of actively showing support for Jewish communities, and instead identifies *Britain First* as being the only source of support for Jews. The use of the term “the Jews” is a form of othering Jews into a lesser category.

Extract Seven



The first author in extract 7 is drawing a contrast between Muslims and Jews; the opposition to Muslims is escalating. Saying what Jewish people don't do creates an implication about what Muslims do, and is an indirect accusation towards Muslims, again using strategic concealment. The use of

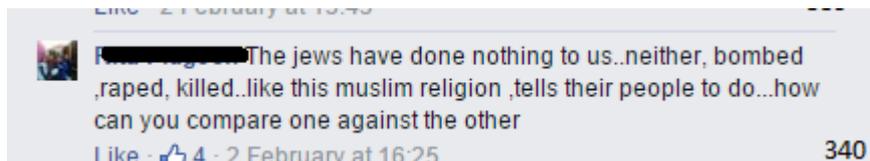
“this” allows the author to distance themselves from and not affiliate closely with Jews, whilst nevertheless emphatically align with a religion that they have named at the start of their account.

The response to the first comment begins with “oh yes”; displaying emphatic agreement and treating the first author’s statement as being obvious and self-evident. The statement is formed as though the first author had asked a question, and is a similar strategy as saying ‘of course’ in an emphatic manner (see Heritage 1998, 308-309). An extreme case formulation is used through referring to “ww3”. The second author refers to the more generalised identity of “Muslims” rather than ‘Islam’ or ‘Islamic extremism’, which suggests that it is less problematic to oppose Muslims in an online setting. This could be due to users being less accountable online than in other settings where individuals are more likely to be guarded with how they talk about other groups (e.g. Augoustinos and Every 2007, 125-137). Similar findings have been reported by Burke and Goodman (2012, 28-29), who found that users online found it less problematic to oppose asylum seekers in comparison to politicians and individuals in face to face settings. Again we see the use of dots, indicating that there is more that could be said about this issue, particularly in the case of the first author where they have mentioned “beheadings”. The use of dots in this case allows the author to refer to common knowledge events such as the murder of Lee Rigby, without explicitly stating so, reflecting, as discussed earlier,

the events that have led to the perception that Muslims are a threat to Britain.

The next extract challenges previous comments that have been making comparisons between Muslims and Jews:

Extract Eight



This statement responds to debates surrounding the “damage” that Jews have done to Britain (see comments in the third section). The author invokes his/her own three-part list (Jefferson 1990, 63) of criteria of what counts as damage (1; bombing, 2; raping 3; killing). The author criticises the action of comparing Jews to Muslims, yet imposes his/her own comparison by stating what Jews don’t do in comparison to what Muslims do, in a similar manner to extract seven, this constructs Muslims as violent ‘others’ and encompasses a feature of a genre (Pilar, 2010, 57-63).

Referring to the religion as Muslim rather than Islam invokes more of a personal attack towards individuals rather than the religion generally, as research has shown that politicians make the distinction between opposing the religion and not Muslims as individuals in order to appear more reasonable when making anti-Islamic arguments (Verkuyten, 2013, 346).

This suggests that it is less problematic to oppose Muslims as individuals online in comparison to offline settings. There is a conflation of “Muslim” and “religion”, implying that the lines between individuals and religion have been blurred. There is some orientation to the religion being problematic and people choosing to follow the religion. We see the use of “this” used to emphasise hostility (Jackson 2013, 313). The notion that Jewish people have not done anything to “us” constructs Jewish people as inherently different to and isolated from British people, but not causing trouble. This again separates being Jewish and being British as two different things, and also works to present Jewish people as impassive; again we see the formation of ‘*us and them*’.

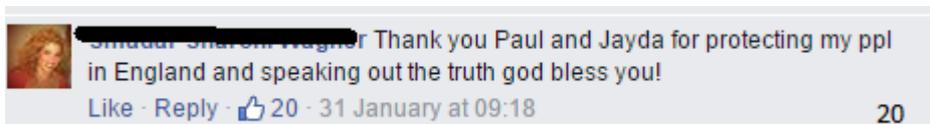
This section has explored comments in support of the solidarity patrol, displaying affiliation with Jews and agreement with *Britain First*’s cause. These extracts differ from the solidarity patrol itself in that *Britain First* emphasised that as a Christian organisation, Christians have also faced persecution at the hands of Islamic extremism. These comments construct only Jews as threatened, thus opposition to Islam is based more on cultural grounds (i.e. not being ‘British’), rather than on religious grounds.

The next section highlights how support also comes from people who identified themselves as being Jewish. Comments have the same friendliness and exaggerated nature as those in the previous section, and some authors used the same strategy of separating being Jewish from being

British (note that outside of Facebook, the support from Britain First was not welcomed by Jews, see Jewish Times 2015).

3.2 “I say this as a proud British Jew”: Comments from authors who identify themselves as Jewish

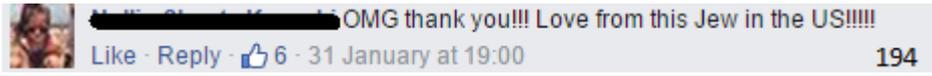
Extract Nine



This author is using the rhetorical technique of separating herself from *Britain First*, and using the term “my people”, rather than something more collective like ‘us’. This emphasises that this author has the ‘right’ to speak as a representative of Jews thus exerting an epistemic kind of authority (See Sacks 1992, 171-172 on the use of categories of groups used by group members and ‘outsiders’). This is a similar strategy to that used by *Britain First*, distinguishing between and thereby separating Jewish people from British people. The use of exclamation marks indicates excitement and addressing Paul Golding and Jayda Fransen by their first names invokes a sense of familiarity.

We see similar strategies used in the following extract:

Extract Ten



Here the author discloses him/herself as Jewish (although note that unlike the other posts, the author has stated that they are from outside of the UK). The account is emphasised through the use of triple exclamation marks and the hyperbolically ecstatic OMG (“Oh my God”), and as has been seen before in previous comments supporting Jews, the account is more informal and friendly. While the exclamation marks and the expression of love make this account affiliative towards *Britain First*, the account is less affiliative than the posts in the first section where authors ‘tag’ *Britain First* in their posts, so that other Facebook users can click on the link and be taken to *Britain First’s* Facebook homepage (refer to extract three for an explanation of ‘tagging’). The exclamation marks depict exaggerated enthusiasm about the video.

The following extract uses the same strategy used by *Britain First* to differentiate being Jewish from being British:

Extract Eleven



This comment is addressing another user on Facebook, who had expressed the opinion that British laws and values should be enforced in ‘Sharia zones’ (not included in this paper). The author has taken what was a statement about Islam, and shifted the focus to be about Jewish people keeping their values and customs separate. The author is using the common strategy found in other areas of this research, of making his/her account about Muslims rather than Islam or Islamic extremists. The author begins self-disclosing him/herself as being Jewish, and separating the subject position of a British Jew, into two parts of Jewish and British, in a similar way to *Britain First* in the solidarity patrol video. The author rejects the Jewish label (perhaps orienting to *Britain First*’s notion that being Jewish is a negative subject position) and emphasises his/her British identity, but the account ends by integrating the two into the subject position of “proud British Jew”.

The ‘*us and them*’ interpretative repertoire (Lynn & Lea 2003, 437; Van Dijk, 1995, 2) is drawn upon by the author through keeping Jewish traditions separate from British culture. “Forgetting I’m Jewish” may be an orientation to the author wanting to be identified and listened to as a British

person rather than a Jewish person, or possibly the author having lapsed in his/her observance. This is a common strategy in Jewish secular discourse to symbolise solidarity with Judaism (observance) whilst not actually being observant. This orients to the notion from *Britain First* that being Jewish and British are separate things, and the author constructs his/her identity as a British person rather than a Jewish person in order to make their argument. This also shows that the identity distinction between being Jewish and being British is also made by a Jewish individual. However, the author switches between “the Jews” (distancing him/herself from the Jewish identity) and “our identity”, he/she switches back and forth between Jewish and British, showing the complex relationship between being British and being Jewish.

In this section I have discussed how authors who identify themselves as Jewish respond to the solidarity patrol, although none appear to self-identify as being Hasidic Jews. The authors displayed gratitude towards *Britain First*, and used similar strategies such as the use of ‘this’ to invoke the category of Jewish people being strangers, and differentiating between being Jewish and being British.

The following section examines how the discussion turns from support for the Jewish community, to a more oppositional nature and questioning what contribution Jews have brought to Britain:

3.3 “Who cares about the Jews?” Comments displaying *Anti-Semitic Discourse*

Here we see the transition from comments being pro-Jewish and contrasting Jews with ‘evil’ Muslims, to now being anti-Semitic, questioning the contribution that Jewish people bring to Britain, and what Jews have done for ‘us’, British people. Arguments opposing Jews often focused on historical evidence and what Jewish people have either contributed, or the damage that Jews have done to Britain in the past. We also see some orientation to the solidarity patrol video being a cover up. Note how the topic remains focused on Jewish people and the distinction between Jews and Christians, but not on either Islam or the Charlie Hebdo attack.

The following extract challenges a comment of support for Jews:

Extract Twelve



Notable here is once again the use of the ‘*us and them*’ interpretative repertoire, separating Jewish people from British people, but also aligning with ‘peaceful’ Jews to emphasise Muslims as the aggressors (see Van Dijk

1995, 2). The statement “never bothered us” constructs Jews as people who are inherently incompatible with the British culture, but choose not to be a problem. Jews are peaceful, but still not ‘us’, the British. The term “bothered” implies that Jews should not integrate with British people and it would be problematic to do so. The author is dealing with the ideological dilemma (Billig et al. 1988, 1) of constructing a positive case for Jewish people without directly aligning with Jewish people. Again we see the author addressing *Britain First* by name, and tagging *Britain First*, meaning that *Britain First* will receive a notification on Facebook that they have been tagged in the post.

The interrogative question used by the second author highlights the moment of transition; prior to this comment talk had been about the vulnerability of Jews, but at this point we see a challenge to this notion and an introduction to the Jewish-Palestinian conflict. This question is used to mock the first author and provides a gloss over historical events, as well as an anti-Zionist statement. This is similar to a strategy used by the National Front, who argued that they were ‘anti-Zionist’; this allowed them to make anti-Jewish arguments without being accused of being anti-Semitic (Billig, 1978, 132; 166). The use of dots implies that there is more to be said on the issue, but that it does not need to be said. This is a form of delicacy so that the author can avoid giving specific examples of why Jews are not “peaceful people”.

The next comment is in opposition to Jews, and is different to the previous comment in that the author invokes historical ‘evidence’ in the Bible:

Extract Thirteen



The first author constructs Jews as a problem making inferences from the Bible, and thus presenting Jewish people as an exclusionary group, based on religious differences. Unlike the previous comment, this is an example of an anti-Semitic argument being Christian in nature, another example of discourse that has a ‘genre’ nature. The author provides a ‘factual’, chronological account of Jesus’ crucifixion. Jews are being constructed as assailants, contrary to earlier extracts where they have been portrayed as victims. *Britain First* presents itself as a Christian organisation so this author’s account is in line with their Christian principles (note though that the author does not acknowledge that Jesus was Jewish). This also allows the author to distance herself from making a direct oppositional statement about Jewish people. “In this case”, implies that there are other instances of

Jews harming Christians, and note the dash, to construct this part of the statement as providing extra information.

The second author uses multiple exclamation marks to represent disbelief, and the author uses the metaphor of the first author being “blind” to emphasise her ignorance. The second author confirms the first author’s inferences as being based on the Bible, despite the first author not referring to it, suggesting that there is a common knowledge repertoire of *Britain First* supporters (and thus Christians) being familiar with the Bible. The author is making an indirect inference to being sceptical. The original author deals with the accusation and manages her own position through treating the second author’s response as an intention to be humorous and not serious.

Next we see similar oppositional comments towards Jews that convey scepticism about the contribution that Jewish people have made to Britain:

Extract Fourteen



The first author displays irony by structuring a declaration into an interrogative question. The author makes his/her point and opposition to Jews through the use of a rhetorical question, and thus constructs the notion of ‘ignoring damage’ to be unreasonable. Again, the use of the word “damage” shows that a transition has taken place, from Jews being constructed as victims, to now being shown as the aggressors. Note the use of dots before the question mark, which indicates that there is more that could be said, but the dots allow the author to be ambiguous and avoid elaborating about the “damage” that Jews have done. There is also the use of “just”, used to imply that something is unreasonable (Goodman and Burke 2010, 333-334), in this case ignoring the damage that Jews have caused is displaying an unreasonable action. The account is about “Jews” as people rather than “Judaism” as a religion, in a similar way that the

construction of opposition towards Muslims as people rather than the religion has been discussed in extract seven.

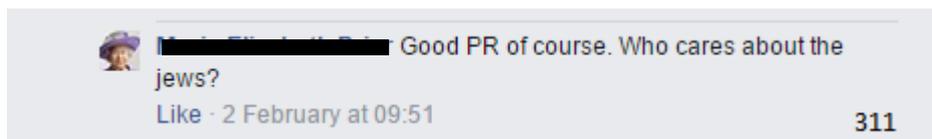
The second author engages with the first, asking for clarification as an attempt to challenge the first author (this clarification is not provided). Note how the second author uses dots in a similar way to the first author, this time to indicate pauses, providing the original author with a cue to provide an answer. The third author mocks the first author's question and the use of absurdity creates consensus and humour amongst the second and third authors (Antaki 2004, 91-92), in order to suggest that oppositional arguments towards Jews are not taken seriously. The second and third authors are building their accounts together, using humour and the anticipation of conspiracy theories. As conspiracy theories are a standard anti-Semitic argument, both authors are anticipating the next development of this genre. The third author constructs a pre-emptive response to the original post, drawing upon prehistoric conspiracies to highlight the irrelevant nature of the first author's theory.

The final author is attempting to expose the authors and has tagged another Facebook user to draw their attention to the argument (who has not posted on here). The author insults the original author through the use of an upgraded form of the term 'nut job'. The author distances him/herself from and dismisses the right-wing category, and associates being right-wing with being crazy (similar findings have found the notion of being a far-right

supporter to be linked with lack of intelligence, Burke and Goodman 2012, 24).

In the following extract the author orients to the idea that the solidarity patrol is a cover up to promote *Britain First* rather than show support for the Jewish community:

Extract Fifteen



This author presents the notion that the video is a cover up, indicating that the patrol is good for *Britain First's* publicity rather than showing support for Jews. While *Britain First's* attempt to promote anti-Islamic rhetoric by showing support for Jews, the author shifts this rhetoric and implies that Jews are being scapegoated in order to help *Britain First's* cause. Note that the author's first comment generates three likes, while the second comment does not generate any likes, suggesting that the first comment was somewhat ambiguous in its meaning. The comment could be taken as sarcasm, but nonetheless another author has asked for further clarification, suggesting that it has been taken as sincere by other users on Facebook.

This account shows that while some users are claiming to be convinced by the solidarity patrol, other users orient to it being a cover up to generate anti-Islamic rhetoric. This extract shows that standing up for the Jewish community has not lost *Britain First* their supporters, as despite displaying that he/she is not convinced by the message, the author is still in agreement with *Britain First*. Note also the user's profile picture of the Queen, a patriotic identity.

The final extract is from the discussion towards the end of the comments, about who *Britain First* will 'target' next:

Extract Sixteen



The first comment begins with an accusation towards *Britain First*. 'Dealing' in quotation marks implies a challenge of the argument that Muslims are problematic. The use of this interrogative question is an explicit threat that *Britain First* is violent and threatening towards minority groups, implying that Jews will be "next", after Muslims.

The second author explicitly expresses what the first author implicitly suggested, and adds Jews to the threat. Note that both authors refer to “the Muslims” and “the Jews”, a form of othering. The author is orienting to a common historical anti-Semitic outlook from the far-right that Jewish people control the news and the media. The author asking the original author if they are ‘scared’ appears to be mocking the author’s accusation towards *Britain First*.

These extracts have shown opposition towards Jews, invoking historical and religious “evidence”, standard anti-Semitic constructions of a genre of anti-Semitic discourse. We have seen an author orient to idea that the solidarity patrol is to use the Jewish community to promote good publicity, and the final extract showed a complex combination of opposition to *Britain First* through the use of threats and orientation to common anti-Semitic arguments.

4. Discussion

This research aimed to use Critical Discursive Psychology to analyse the responses to the *Britain First* solidarity patrol from users on Facebook, as well as the discursive construction of in-groups and out-groups. I have demonstrated that comments started in support of both Jews and *Britain First’s* cause, and that users on Facebook differentiate being Jewish from

being British; this mirrored the strategy used by *Britain First* to separate being Jewish and being British as two different things. This nativist construction works to present Jews as not a part of Britain, and thus as outsiders. Authors on Facebook shift their footing to report how Jews feel and orient to the idea that Jewish people will be grateful towards *Britain First* for the solidarity patrol. The supportive comments suggest that Facebook users exhibit being somewhat convinced by *Britain First's* claim that Jews are vulnerable and under threat from Islam, and thus *Britain First* have achieved anti-Islamic rhetoric from their supporters.

Next I focused on extracts from authors who are Jewish, expressing gratitude towards *Britain First* for the solidarity patrol. Finally, I discussed the comments that transitioned to disagreement with supporting Jews. This shows that anti-Islamic rhetoric from *Britain First* has extended to anti-Semitic discourse and debates about the contribution that Jews bring to Britain. What is novel about these discussions (and this is also seen in the solidarity patrol itself) are that neither the Charlie Hebdo attack nor the shooting in the Kosher supermarket are mentioned in these accounts, despite the events being directly linked to the attack.

Britain First is sending out a prejudicial message whilst attempting to position themselves as a tolerant benefactor for the “good” outsider (i.e. Jews) in order to appear reasonable in their anti-Islamic stance, and thus boost their social capital. *Britain First* is managing the tension and

Ideological dilemma (Billig et al. 1988, 1) of showing support for the Jewish community whilst not positioning themselves as “one of them”. Prior research found the ‘us’ and ‘them’ distinction to be used in order to present a group as undeserving of support, but in this case the construction of British Jews in a positive light is for the purpose of gaining social capital for Britain First.

Britain First aimed to achieve opposition to Muslims through their solidarity patrol, but this has also resulted in anti-Semitic discourse, which they have achieved by leaving the commentators to draw their own conclusions. This means that despite not directly attacking two minority groups, both have been targeted in the wake of the Charlie Hebdo attack by *Britain First* and by commentators of the Facebook Page. *Britain First* has to manage the dilemma that is common for far-right organisations, of appealing to the mainstream without presenting ideas that will lose them their original supporters. In prior research such as Rhodes (2009, 142) it has been shown how the far-right gained support by displaying concerns for British citizens about immigration and ‘Islamification’. Now *Britain First* has progressed to also show concern for other groups being ‘affected’ by Islam.

Conclusion

This research has examined the responses by users on Facebook to the *Britain First* solidarity patrol. In the solidarity patrol itself, *Britain First*

created a conspiracy that Muslims are attacking Jews in order to show support for Jews whilst constructing Jews as different from ‘us’, the British. Here we see that this conspiracy has transitioned to anti-Semitic discourse. This analysis has shown how one religious group can be used as a scapegoat to achieve opposition to another religious group, and has discussed how various social identities in conflict (i.e. Muslims, Jews, British and Islamic extremists) can be constructed in online interaction. The result is that *Britain First* has not only achieved its objective of anti-Islamic discourse, but this has also resulted in the marginalisation of Jews by users on Facebook.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Paul Drew for his helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper. This research was funded by the Glendonbrook Doctoral Scholarship from the school of Social, Political and Geographical Sciences at Loughborough University.

References

Antaki, Charles. 2004. “The Uses of Absurdity.” In *Analysing Race Talk*, Edited by Harry van den Berg, Margaret Wetherell, and Hanneke Houtkoop-Steenstra, 85-102. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Augoustinos, Martha, and Every, Danielle. 2007. "The Language of 'Race' And Prejudice: a Discourse of Denial, Reason, and Liberal-practical Politics". *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 26 (2): 123–141. doi: 10.1177/0261927X07300075.
- Billig, Mick. 1978. *Fascists: A Social Psychological View of the National Front*. London: Academic Press.
- Billig, Mick, Condor, Susan, Edwards, Derek, Gane, Mike, Middleton, Drew, and Radley, Alan. 1988. *Ideological Dilemmas: A Social Psychology of everyday Thinking*. London: Sage.
- Burke, Shani and Goodman, Simon. 2012. "'Bring Back Hitler's Gas Chambers': Asylum Seeking, Nazis and Facebook: A Discursive Analysis." *Discourse and Society* 23 (1): 19-33. doi: 10.1177/0957926511431036.
- Capdevila, Rose, and Callaghan, Jane E. M. 2008. "'It's not Racist. It's Common Sense'. A Critical Analysis of Political Discourse around Asylum and Immigration in the UK." *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 18:1-16. doi: 10.1002/casp.
- Drew, Paul. 1978. "Accusations: The Occasioned use of Members' Knowledge of 'Religious geography' in Describing Events." *Sociology* 12 (1): 1-22. doi: 10.1177/003803857801200102.
- Drew, Paul, and Walker, Traci. 2009. "Going too Far: Complaining, Escalating, and Disaffiliation." *Journal of Pragmatics* 41:2400-2014. doi: 10.1016/j.pragma.2008.09.046.
- Dyers, Charlyn, and Wankah, Foncha John. 2012. "'Us' and 'Them': The Discursive Construction of 'the Other' in Greenmarket Square, Cape Town." *Language and Intercultural Communication* 12 (3): 230-247. doi: 10.1080/14708477.2012.659186.
- Eatwell, Roger. 2000. "The Extreme Right and British Exceptionalism: The Primacy of Politics." In *The Politics of the Extreme Right*, ed. by Paul Hainsworth, 172-192. London: Biddles Ltd.
- Edwards, Derek, and Potter, Jonathon. 1992. *Discursive Psychology*. London: Sage.
- Foner, Nancy, and Alba, Richard. 2008. "Immigrant Religion in the US and Western Europe: Bridge or Barrier to Inclusion?" *International Migration Review* 42: 360–392. doi: 10.1111/j.1747-7379.2008.00128.x.

- Fozdar, Farida, and Pederson, Anne. 2013. "Diablogging about Asylum Seekers: Building a Counter-Hegemonic Discourse." *Discourse and Communication* 7 (4): 371-388. doi: 10.1177/1750481313494497.
- Garland, Jon, and Treadwell, James. 2010. "'No Surrender to the Taliban!': Football Hooliganism, Islamophobia and the Rise of the English Defence League". *Papers from the British Criminology Conference 10*, 19–35. http://britsoccrim.org/new/volume10/2010_Garland_Treadwell.pdf.
- Goffman, Erving. 1981. *Forms of Talk*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Goodman, Simon, and Burke, Shani. 2010. "'Oh you don't want Asylum Seekers, oh you're just Racist': A Discursive Analysis of Discussions About whether it's Racist to Oppose Asylum Seeking." *Discourse and Society* 21 (3): 325-340. doi: 10.1177/0957926509360743.
- Goodman, Simon, and Johnson, Andrew. 2013. "Strategies Used by the Far Right to Counter Accusations of Racism." *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines* 6 (2): 97-113. http://www.cadaad.net/files/journal/CADAAD%202013_Goodman%20and%20Johnson.pdf
- Heritage, John. 1998. "Oh-Prefaced Responses to Inquiry." *Language in Society* 27:291-334. http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/heritage/Site/Publications_files/OH_PREF.pdf
- Jackson, Clare. 2013. "'Why do these Peoples' Opinions matter?' Positioning Known Referents as Unnameable Others." *Discourse Studies* 15 (3): 299-317. doi: 10.1177/1461445613480587.
- Jefferson, Gail. 1990. "List Construction as a Task and Resource." In *Interaction Competence*, Edited by George Psathas, 63-93. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Jewish Times 2015. "British Jews say 'no thanks' to Nationalist Group's Support." Last modified 14th February. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/british-jews-say-no-thanks-to-nationalist-groups-support/>.

- Kirkwood, Steve, McKinlay, Andy, and McVittie, Chris. 2014. "Some People it's very Difficult to Trust': Attributions of Agency and Accountability in Practitioners' talk about Integration. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 24 (5):376-389. doi:10.1002/casp.2178.
- Lynn, Nick, and Lea, Susan. 2003. "A Phantom Menace and the New Apartheid': The Social Construction of Asylum-Seekers in the United Kingdom." *Discourse and Society* 14 (4): 425-452. doi: 10.1177/0957926503014004002.
- Blitvich, Pilar G.C., 2010. A Genre Approach to the Study of (im) politeness. *International Review of Pragmatics* 2, 46--94. doi: 10.1163/187731010X491747.
- Masocha, Shepard. 2015. "Construction of the 'Other' in Social Workers' Discourses of Asylum Seekers." *Journal of Social Work* 15 (6): 569-585. doi: 10.1177/1468017314549502.
- Pomerantz, Anita. 1986. "Extreme Case Formulations: A new way of Legitimizing Claims." *Human Studies (Interaction and Language Special Issue)* 9: 219-230. doi:10.1007/BF00148128.
- Rhodes, James. 2009. "The Banal National Party: The Routine Nature of Legitimacy." *Patterns of Prejudice* 43 (2): 142-160. doi: 10.1080/00313220902793898.
- Richardson, John E., and Wodak, Ruth. 2009. "The Impact of Visual Racism: Visual Arguments in Political Leaflets of Austrian and British Far-right parties." *Controversia*, 6 (2): 45-77. <http://controversia.idebate.org/sites/live/files/23573%20Int%20Deb%20Contro.pdf>
- Sacks, Harvey. 1992. "Category-bound Activities; Programmatic Relevance; Hinting; Being 'Phoney.'" In *Lectures on Conversation Vol I, II* edited by Gail Jefferson, 578-583. United Kingdom: Blackwell.
- Sacks, Harvey. 1992. "'Hotrodders as a Revolutionary Category.'" In *Lectures on Conversation Vol I, II*. Edited by Gail Jefferson, 169-174. United Kingdom: Blackwell.
- Treadwell, James. 2012. "White Riot: The English Defence League and the 2011 English Riots." *Criminal Justice Matters* 87 (1): 36-37. doi: 10.1080/09627251.2012.671016.

- Treadwell, James, and Garland Jon. 2011. "Masculinity, Marginalization And Violence: A case study of the English Defence League." *British Journal of Criminology* 51: 621-634. doi:10.1093/bjc/azr027.
- Van Dijk, Teun. 1995. "Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis." In *Language and Peace*. Edited by Christina Schäffner and Anita Wenden, 17-33. Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing.
- Verkuyten, Maykel. 2013. "Justifying Discrimination against Muslim Immigrants: Out-group Ideology and the five-step Social Identity Model." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 52 (2): 345-360. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8309.2011.02081.x>.
- Wetherell, Margaret, and Edley, Nigel. 1999. "Negotiating Hegemonic Masculinity: Imaginary Positions and Psycho Discursive Practises." *Feminism and Psychology* 9 (3): 335-356. doi: 10.1177/0959353599009003012.
- Wood, C, and Finlay, W.M.L. 2008. "British National Party Representations of Muslims in the month after the London Bombings: Homogeneity, Threat, and the Conspiracy Tradition." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 47: 707-726. doi: 10.1348/014466607X264103.