

Intersections of 'race', class and gender in the social and political identifications of young Muslims

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Policy context

- Educational Underachievement ; criminality

Alienated from processes of local democracy:

- 'Parallel lives'-integration
- 'extremism'

Contest 2 Home Office (2009)



Pursue

Protect

Prepare

Prevent

The principal current terrorist threat is from radicalised individuals who are using a distorted and unrepresentative version of Islam to justify violence. Such people are referred to in this paper as Islamist terrorists. They are however, **a tiny minority** within the Muslim communities here and abroad. Muslim communities themselves do not threaten our security; indeed they make a great contribution to our country. The Government is therefore working in partnership with Muslim communities to help them prevent extremists from gaining influence here.

- (HM government 2006:p1) .

Few terrorist movements have lasted long enough without a **supportive community**. A supportive community does not necessarily condone violence, and certainly , most people in it would not want to become personally involved... whether or not they condone violence they see terrorists as sharing their world view part of the struggle to which they belong.(John Denham cited in McGhee 2008:69)

...its about the stay-at-home mum, the taxi driver, the neighbour, the student – all of those whose decisions and actions contribute towards making an environment in which extremism can flourish or falter.

(Blears 'Many voices' LSE lecture in 2009 – 25 Feb)

'tacit' support (John Denham 2009)

Cameron (2011) speech to Munich security conference – even wider definition of 'extremism'

Academic literature:

‘turn to religion’- (Werbnier 1996; Eade 1990, 1994; Samad 1998; Saeed, Blain and Forbes 1999; Archer 2003; Ramji 2007).

Radicalisation: Choudhury 2007; Glees and Pope 2005; Buijs, Demant and Hamdy 2006

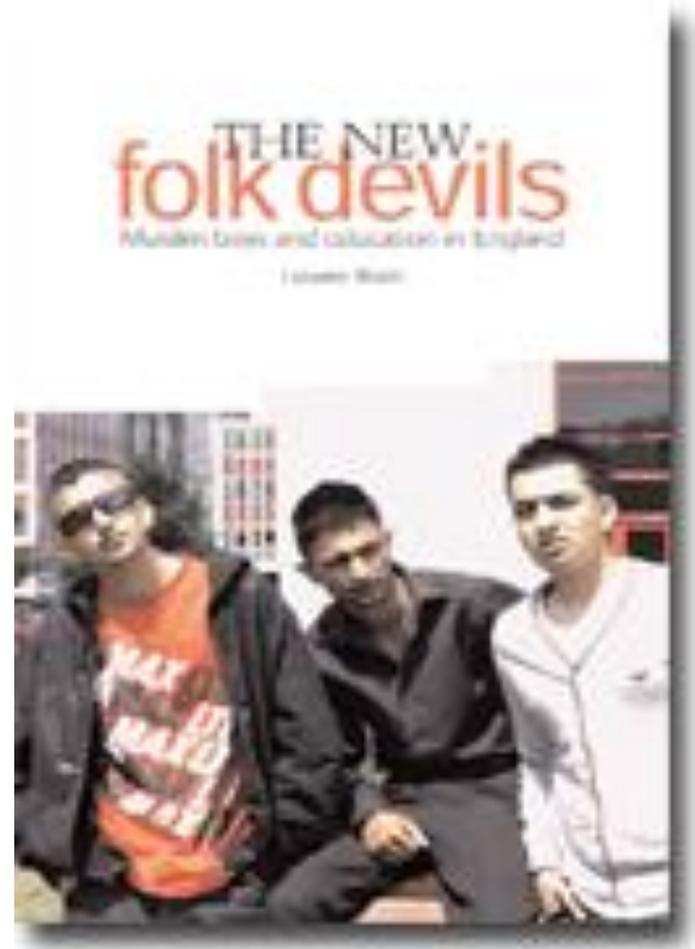
Performance of Muslim masculinities: Archer (2003) ; Hopkins 2005; 2006); Ramji (2007)

Identity strategies:

the public performance of particular coping strategies formed in ongoing negotiations between internal and external definitions of identities or 'modes of being' (Brah 1996). External/objective definitions arise from complex interrelationships that exist between various structural factors (race/religion/class/gender) in particular socio-historical contexts; internal definitions from the young people's subjective experiences of these situations

IDENTITY STRATEGIES:

- Muslim first
- 'Asian boys run the school'
- Newtown vs Belstone..it's a territorial thing
- 'I'd support anyone other than England...except Germany'
- It's ok to marry a white English girl



9/11 and take up of Muslim identities

Since like that incident happened 9/11, they think all Muslims are terrorists when they haven't even got evidence that it was him (Bin Laden). They're just accusing him because they're scared of him.
(Arshad, Newtown)

They started being more sickening in their attitudes towards Asian people they look at every other Asian as a terrorist...they judge the whole crowd by ...they judge the majority by the minority. [Before 9/11], it was bad but not that bad. That just triggered it. They didn't used to call us terrorists then they used to call us Pakis. (Shahid, Newtown)

It just got worse....it's everywhere we go because every time some war kicks off on the TV or anything like that. Or anytime a bomb goes off in any country, they think Bin Laden's behind it. Everything that goes on they think it's Muslims.

(Saleem, Newtown)

To mix in with the English you need to be very different, like in our culture we don't move from our parents' house until we're married and we've got kids of our own but they move out when they're eighteen. But then we're not like that because we respect our parents much more than these people. We take care of them. English parents are always in the homes and you never see an Asian Pakistani or an Indian... Everybody just likes their parents to live with them. (Zahid)

media

You know that's the media, they twist everything ...it's always the white people who turn out to be good guys. Like in the films the Asians and that are always the bad. Whether it's Asian black, Chinese, they're still like that. It's always the Americans that are good.
(Asad)

Media is bad news. You know because at the end of the day who's running the media? Americans and all the British and they're the ones that hate Muslims. And at the end of the day, Muslims are going to take over one time and they ain't gonna like it. They'll come in numbers. (Arshad, Newtown)

Zahid:It was just like all everything was going bonkers basically. Like everyone was talking about it and taking the wrong idea because it was not the English people's fault it was the media's fault because they give the wrong idea to the public (Zahid)

- Whatever they've been fed by the press that's what they've been repeating. Because they're white they class themselves as being the same culture as the Europeans and the Americans. I don't see any belonging.. Growing up, Asian people have got this togetherness ... white people don't have in their own families let alone in their communities. (Yacoub, Youth worker, Newtown Youth group)

Teaching and the 'war on terror'

In English we do war as part of our syllabus, but there hasn't be anything on Iraq. (Ibrahim)

They did every now and then, in assemblies but they always made Iraq out to be the bad side and straight away pointed to Osama bin Laden. They haven't got no proof he did it. They got all these tapes but they could have been made. Anyway, the CIA intelligence could have done anything so you don't know who's telling the truth these days. (Asad)

.....

- ▶ Hamid: Some of the history teachers talk about now yeah saying asking me and this other Asian in the class, yeah ..he goes 'what are you going to do after you leave school?' yeah, and the other Asian friend, for a joke said ' we'll join the Taliban' and then we had a whole lesson, instead of doing work, yeah, we were talking about 'why do young Asian men want to join the Taliban'
- ▶ FS: What kind of things were you saying?
- ▶ Hamid: We were saying that er Muslims say, that all Muslims should stick up for each other and stuff like that
- ▶ FS: Do you believe that...would you?
- ▶ Hamid: Kind of yeah...I wouldn't actually go to war and that...I don't want to get killed ...but if my own friends have a fight then I would

Asad:..we're always made out to be the bad guys ..

FS: By who?

Asad: Everybody ..the white people. The teachers you know they're ...you know they always take the side of white people ..and they'll try to make us out to be wrong saying Saddam Hussein killed his own people and he did this, he did that.

FS: Are there any teachers who are sympathetic, understand...?

Asad: Yeah there are most of 'em are sympathetic anyway but they still think Saddam's in the bad and George Bush is in the right.

FS: Do they actually say that?

Asad: They don't say it but they say it in a certain way. They imply it ..cos in this school, everything's crafty

FS: Crafty?

Asad: They say it in a certain way ..they know what they're trying to say but they won't say

National and local politics – cohesion and integration

Aziz: I just think [Blunkett's] just talking shit basically. Because actually when you look at Asians, they have white friends and some people do hate white people, they have real hatred for them. But, we do have white friends. Some have a real hatred for white people that's what causes the trouble... Me and all my mates hang out with white boys but if someone calls us 'Pakis' then I don't get really offended, my mates get offended and stuff like that, cos I'm like 'so what! You call me Paki but I'm from Britain', but my mates get offended

FS: Why do they get offended?

Aziz: They're Asian .and they hate it when people call them Pakis

[B]ut that's our way of living. They've got to cope with it. We don't tell them to get married in a church, so they shouldn't tell us... I think every white persons' a racist..They won't show it but they are inside ... They say like look at that Asian there ..if they see more than two Asians they say look at them doing drugs ...causing trouble. That's what everybody thinks (Asad, Leyton)

Hamid: No Asians and whites do mix but there's like some who think there should be all white in England and no brown people like BNP pocket

FS: What do you say to those people?

Hamid: I hate 'em man

FS: You wouldn't talk to them

Hamid: No they just want to beat me up

FS: What's the best way to deal with racism?

Sajid: Just really get on with white people and make sure you're contributing. Get on with them and if they're not like good to you. If they're not contributing back you just leave them and go to the next person. That's what I've been doing and I've been getting on with them really well. They cause me no hassle

Neighbourhood identities

- The only common factor was that we're Muslim ... But the differences [in perception between the youth of both neighbourhoods] were ... Right, from Belstone ... 'The thing about Newtown is that they all dress like niggers'. Newtown, 'The thing about Belstone is that they're all well-behind ... proper typical Pakis' so this is what these are labelling theories that come from the European side ... We call it area-ism. (Yacoub: youth worker, Newtown)

- We play five a side in tournaments but we the thing is you know what the problem is with the ... it's a territorial thing. Newtown v Belstone ... (Arshad, Newtown)

- When we went [to another youth group], they [white boys] weren't better than us in table tennis, they weren't better than us in pool and when we played football against them they thought they were better than us but then we proved 'em wrong. And we beat 'em at that. That just topped it off that just put the cherry on the cake. (Arshad, Newtown)

- We would talk to the girls but the boys wouldn't talk to us and they didn't like it that we were talking to their girls and Tariq was doing something naughty with one of 'em so [FS: So, what happened?] It all kicked off didn't it? (Nadim, Newtown)

- The young kids are treated as foreigners so they're seen as different. So they're seen as something else. The young girls then are looking for their kicks and so they're heading for the Asian lads and white lads don't like stuff like that because they've again become European and territorial about their girls and suddenly they care about them. So it causes a whole range of everyday realities for the Asian lads. (Yacoub, Newtown)

- Sajid: My mate Hussein there he might go out with a girl [laughs].
- FS: Would you?
- Sajid: I've been out a few girls.
- FS: Are they English or Pakistani?
- Sajid: English, and I won't go with Pakistanis because end of the day you know the brothers ... [laughs] you get beat up. It's not worth it [laughs].
- (Leyton)

- I stick up for anybody ... white, Asian, I've got a lot of white friends ... I stick up for them .My friends are white boys and Asian boys but if someone cusses my sisters' friends or Asian girls then I get a bit offended they're like my sisters init? I get offended ... (Aziz, Leyton)