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Securitised Citizens: Islamophobia, racism and the 7/7 London Bombings.

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Abstract

The London bombings of 7 July 2005 were a major event shaping the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in Britain. In this paper we introduce the idea of ‘securitised citizens’ to analyse the changing relationship between British Muslims and wider British society in response to this and similar events. Through an analysis of qualitative interviews with Muslims and non-Muslims of a variety of ethnic backgrounds in the areas where the London bombers lived in West Yorkshire we examine the popular perceptions of non-Muslims and Muslims’ experiences. We show how processes of securitisation and racialisation have interacted with Islamophobic discourses and identifications, as well as the experiences of Muslims in West Yorkshire after the attacks.

Introduction

Fifty-six people were killed and several hundred injured in the attacks on London on the morning of 7 July 2005. This paper explores the views about Muslims and Islam amongst non-Muslims as well as the experiences of Muslims in West Yorkshire after the 7/7 bombings. Three of the four bombers grew up in Beeston and Holbeck in Leeds, whilst the fourth lived in nearby Dewsbury. A flat in the Hyde Park district of Leeds was used to assemble the bombs (Anon., 2006). The fieldwork reported here was carried out in these areas.

The discovery that the perpetrators of the 7/7 bombings in London were British born Muslims compounded reactions to the 9/11 attacks. In particular South Asian Muslim communities in Beeston and Hyde Park in Leeds and Dewsbury became the focus of much police, political and media attention regarding 'home grown terrorism'. This added to the recent history of fraught relations between British Muslim communities and other sections of British society that developed since the late 1980s (Abbas, 2005; Modood, 2005).

We begin by discussing the process by which British Muslims have become 'securitised', becoming increasingly viewed as a security threat by politicians, the media and many non-Muslims. Whilst it is usual to see the process of securitisation applying to social and political problems, so that civil liberties are sacrificed without the normal procedures of political debate (Zedner, 2009: 44-8), our claim is that the process applies to British Muslims. Our particular focus in this paper is on the popular, everyday dimension of securitisation (Husbands and Alam, 2011: 177) and how it relates to Islamophobia and racism. We show how anti-Muslim sentiments are to be found across

ethnic groups, and how these relate the process of securitisation that developed after 9/11 and intensified after 7 July 2005. We then examine the experiences of Muslims in West Yorkshire after the 7 July bombings showing how their experiences after the bombings have also been shaped by the process of securitisation.

A review of the findings of opinion polls between 1988 and 2006 (Field, 2007) concluded that the majority non-Muslim population became increasingly hostile towards Muslims, paralleling the developing discourse amongst politicians and the media. By 2006 a core of one in four had a strongly anti-Muslim perspective (Field, 2007). An ICM poll completed in May 2008 (ICM, 2008) found continued hostility towards Muslims and Islam. For example 30 per cent of the majority population felt that Islam is incompatible with Western democracy; 31 per cent thought that Islamic values are incompatible with British values; 51 per cent felt that Islam as a religion was partly or completely to blame for the 7 July attacks. Whilst 26 per cent of the sample described themselves as 'hostile' towards Muslims only 23 per cent of the working class interviewees declared this, compared to 32 per cent of middle class respondents contrary to the findings of those who have suggested that anti-Muslims attitudes are strongest amongst the working class (Field, 2007: 465). Overall from the opinion polls it appears that slightly less than one third of the UK population are consistently hostile towards Muslims and Islam. It is this hostility that is the focus of our analysis here. We want to examine how different ethnic groups and those from different religious or no religious backgrounds responded to the securitisation of British Muslims to explore the discursive contours of popular Islamophobia, and its interactions with popular racism. Equally we were interested in the experiences of the effects of securitisation amongst Muslims.

The Securitisation of British Muslims

The securitisation perspective analyses the process by which an issue or group comes to be defined as a security threat so that governmental and societal resources can be mobilised to counter it (Buzan et. al., 1998; Ingram and Dodds, 2009). This needs a degree of public support enabling exceptional state actions, and new legislation. Once an issue has been securitised it becomes 'common sense' that it is a threat (Buzan et. al: 25). This applies not just to the practices of the police and the security services, but also to political debate, media discourse and the level of popular beliefs. It becomes impossible to speak of the securitised group without implying the security threat. It is now well established how political discourse, the media and policy have constructed Islam and Muslims as a threat (Abbas, 2005; Bhattacharyya, 2008; Brighton, 2007; Fortier, 2008; Ingram and Dodds, 2009; Kundnani, 2009; McGhee, 2005; 2008; Moore et. al., 2008; Nickels et. al., 2010; Poynting and Mason, 2007; Werbner, 2009). These contributions have largely conceptualised this construction in terms of racism rather than securitisation. In contrast securitisation may apply to groups which are not racialised and directs our attention to the inter-relationships between policy, political debate and popular discourses.

This suggests that it is useful to analytically separate racism and Islamophobia. The securitisation of Muslims is reflected in the widespread questioning by politicians and in the media of whether Muslims can be integrated into European society (Abbas, 2005; Fortier, 2008; Ingram and Dodds, 2009; McGhee, 2008; Modood, 2005; Werbner, 2009). Neckels et al's comparison of political violence and media reports of Irish and Muslim communities, suggested that the Irish were racialised on ethno-national grounds

and Muslims are constructed as a threat to Britishness on the grounds of homogenised religious identity (Neckels et al., 2010: 19). This distinction seems to have had longer term effects on public perceptions. Opinion poll evidence shows that anti-Muslim sentiment is now higher than in the 1980s (Bleich, 2009). In the UK the British National Party (BNP) refocused their attention on the ‘new enemy’ – Muslims. Its propaganda material began to distinguish between ‘good’ South Asians (non – Muslims) and ‘bad’ South Asians (Muslims) (Modood, 2005).

The policy dimension of the securitisation approach directs attention towards the Prevent programme, the principal domestic counter-terrorism initiative, which has embedded police officers gathering intelligence in the delivery of local community services. Voluntary organisations in receipt of ‘Prevent’ funding have been increasingly expected to cooperate with this process of intelligence gathering (Husband and Alam, 2011). Prevent became the principal way in which government related to British Muslims constructing them as a ‘suspect community’ (Kundnani 2009: 8).

Building on Hillyard’s (1993) work on the Prevention of Terrorism Act, Pantazis and Pemberton (2009) suggest that Muslims are the new ‘suspect community’. They have been defined as being ‘problematic’, and targeted by the police because of this. Media and political discourses and policies such as Prevent have played an important role in defining Muslims as a suspect community (Husband and Alam, 2011; Kundnani, 2009; Pantazis and Pemberton 2009: 650-1; McGhee, 2008: 69). Stop and search powers and powers of arrest without a warrant of those suspected of being a terrorist or concerned with terrorist activity have become broad and highly discretionary powers: ‘We contend that high-profile police raids, arrests and detention of ‘Muslim terrorist’ suspects have had a clear impact on the public consciousness’ (Pantazis and

Pemberton, 2009: 661). It is this impact on public consciousness that we seek to explore in this paper.

The concept of securitisation might be compared to that of a moral panic (Cricher, 2008), where the media exaggerates a social problem, providing the principal means by which an issue or group is spoken about, which relies upon the primary definitions of the state and its agencies, politicians, the police, etc. (Cricher, 2008, Hall et. al. 1978: 57). The media representation of Muslims has been primarily influenced by counterterrorism policy (Nickels et. al. 2010), so that these ideological constructions of Muslims provide a popular 'permission to hate' (Poynting and Mason, 2006: 367). However, what is distinctive about the securitisation perspective is the way it highlights how international security issues become constructed as requiring domestic policy responses in ways that permeate everyday life (Husbands and Alam, 2011: 87-9).

The fact that British Muslims are UK citizens has given their securitisation a particular dynamic that has thrown into question their relationship to Britain and Britishness (McGhee, 2005; 2008). In this respect securitisation interacts with processes of the racialisation and Islamophobia. Following Miles and Brown (2003; 163-7) we treat racism and Islamophobia as analytically distinct but often empirically inter-related phenomena. Racism entails the negative signification or cultural construction of biological or somatic characteristics, and it provides a meaningful description and explanation of the social world (Miles and Brown, 2003: 104-5). Islamophobia becomes racialised when religious belief is essentialised and seen as a result of birth (Miles and Brown, 2003: 163). Unlike racism Islamophobia constructs the distinctiveness of Islam and its representatives – Muslims – on the basis of belief and practice rather than supposed biological or somatic characteristics (Miles and Brown, 2003: 164). Thus

attempts to extend the concept of racism culturally which may make reference to religious belief (eg. Modood, 2005) would be criticised by Miles and Brown (2003: 58-66) as inappropriate inflations of the concept such that it loses its distinctiveness and specific empirical referents. There is not only a racist delineation of a valued self as opposed to a denigrated Other, but in the case of Islamophobia a reviled religious Other and a valued non-Islamic Self. Consequently Muslims find themselves excluded from the nation and the substantive rights of British citizenship, as well as culturally excluded from 'Western' civilisation as representatives of an uncivilised 'other' regardless of their ethnic origins (Miles and Brown, 2003: 167).

Central to conceptualisations of Islamophobia has been the work of Said (1978). Although he did not use the term Islamophobia he saw many features of Western representations of the 'Arab other' as based on a fear of Muslims: 'Lurking behind all of these images is the menace of jihad. Consequence; a fear that the Muslim (or Arabs) will take over the world' (Said, 1978: 287). Those discourses represented Muslims as systematically different from the 'rational, developed, humane, superior' West whilst the Orient is 'aberrant, undeveloped, inferior'. The Orient was seen as 'eternal, uniform, and incapable of defining itself' to be feared or controlled, and so must be represented by 'objective' Western intellectuals (Said, 1978: 300-1). Whether or not Orientalism sees ethnicity or Islam as most significant, Said concluded that it 'clearly posits the Islamic category as the dominant one' (Said, 1978: 305).

Said's work has produced a considerable body of secondary work (for a recent review see Poole, 2002: 28-37). His account of the fear and loathing of Islam in the 1970s refers largely to Muslims racialised as Arabs (Said, 1978: 284-8). Given that much contemporary Islamophobia, in the UK at least, is now predominantly attached to

South Asians, especially Pakistanis (e.g. Bhattacharyya, 2008), strongly supports our more general point that Islamophobia and racism are analytically distinct and that the racialisation of Muslims when it occurs depends upon the historical, national and international context. These relationships cannot be identified in some apriori theoretical fashion by defining Islamophobia as some form of cultural racism or Muslims as an ethnic group; rather they have to be investigated in their specific historical and political contexts. Fortier for instance has pointed to a new ‘moral racism’ where religious belief has become the primary marker of difference and some ethnic groups are seen as more religious than others (Fortier, 2008: 66). In other contexts Islamophobia may be routinely attached to other ethnic groups, and Muslims of different ethnic and national origins might be racialised in very different ways within an overarching tendency to homogenise them (Poole, 2002: 178-180). For example in Australia the ‘Arab other’ and in the UK the ‘South Asian other’ are principally identified with Islam and Muslimness (Poynting and Mason, 2007: 63). It was their identification as Muslims not their racialisation as Lebanese that motivated opposition to mosque building in Australia: ‘The representations of Islam lie at the core of the problems that Muslims in Sydney have encountered in establishing places of worship’ (Dunn, 2001: 306). Their alterity is constructed in relation to their religion, not their racialised identities.

However, Islamophobia remains a hotly contested term in social science. Attempts to define it in the 1990s (Runnymede Trust, 1997) were met with public and intellectual scorn. Responses have ranged from Joppke’s (2009) outright dismissal of the concept, through accepting its empirical reality, but questioning the utility of the term (e.g. Halliday, 1999), to seeing it as a form of cultural racism (e.g. Modood, 2005).

We broadly follow Miles and Brown (2003) in conceptualising Islamophobia as distinct from but interacting with racism on both theoretical and empirical grounds. For Miles and Brown treating Islamophobia as a form of racism risks treating all Muslims as an ethnically homogenous minority. Even culturalist conceptions of racism still make reference to some notion of somatic or ethno-national difference and Muslims and Islam fit neither of these categories (Miles and Brown, 2003: 164-5). Additionally there is empirical evidence that Muslims experience significant discrimination on religious grounds (Allen, 2005; Weller et. al., 2004), and that the media reproduce Islamophobic representations (Poole 2002; Richardson, 2004). Bravo Lopez rejects the notion of Islamophobia as a form of racism, cultural or otherwise, because it is ‘... devoid of any of the biological or cultural determinism...’ (Bravo Lopez 2011: 559) of racist discourses. Islamophobia may reference somatic characterisations, but typically it refers to representations of supposedly Islamic beliefs and practices. Alternatively racist discourse about a Muslim minority may not entail any reference whatsoever to their religious beliefs and practices (Bravo Lopez, 2011). Whilst these are theoretical claims, the empirical realities of everyday popular discourse are more complex and contradictory and may entail an inter-meshing of Islamophobia and racism.

Our data below show that popular Islamophobia may be found amongst some from ethnic minority groups as well as amongst some White Britons. It is not just a feature of elite discourses and the media. Some people from all non-Muslim religious and ethnic groups expressed views consonant with seeing Islam and Muslims as a threat to them that illustrates the wider securitisation of British Muslim citizens. However, the details of these discourses differed primarily around ethnicity. There is evidence not of one Islamophobia but many. A major source of variation is ethnicity which we show

affects how people with different ethnic identities draw upon the same broad national and historically specific discourse of Islamophobia in different ways. We explore how Islamophobia is expressed by non-Muslims and then experienced and responded to by their Muslim neighbours.

Global national and international events and processes are seen by both Muslims and non-Muslims to have a local manifestations and expressions. This connection that people made between events 'elsewhere' and local experiences often provided the means by which a local narrative was constructed through which many non-Muslims made 'Islamophobic sense' or 'racist sense' of these 'bigger questions' which were beyond their immediate experience and control. The analytical distinction between Islamophobia and racism enables us to distinguish the often quite disparate reasons given by different people for their hostility towards Muslims. We shall show how at times that some non-Muslims highlight religious identity, only sometimes racialising Muslims as 'Asian'. This distinction also enables us to recognise the distinctively racist sentiments that anti-Muslim feelings can take amongst a significant minority of the White community. There are complex and variable combinations of Islamophobia with racist sentiments.

The experience of being a 'securitised citizen' is strongly gendered, as many Muslim women choose to wear forms of dress such as the hijab that mark them out publicly as Muslims. Fortier (2008: 84) refers to how these forms of dress have become a 'disciplining technology' used to mark out Muslims as being insufficiently British, and as having gendered norms that are 'inferior' to those of the liberal West. Furthermore, they may be interpreted as meaning that they are in some way 'fundamentalist' and therefore associated with or supportive of politically motivated

violence. Choosing these forms of dress is a more complex social process and involving interpretations of religious codes, as well as an increasingly strategic political and moral decision (Dwyer, 1999; Franks, 2000; Hussain and Bagguley, 2007: 49-54; Modood et. al. 1997: 326-8). For instance Franks (2000) found that white Muslim women wearing the hijab in the 1990s challenged the dominant public gaze of White heterosexual men. At the same time it made them visible and vulnerable to anti-Muslim discrimination inviting ‘... an examination of the intersection between racism and religious discrimination.’ (Franks, 2000: 927). More recently Muslim women who wear the niqab and one might add the hijab are increasingly seen as symbolising difference in the ongoing construction and reconstruction of the intersections between religious, national and racialised difference. Previously wearing the niqab, hijab or jilbab was not an issue of political concern and wearing them was seen as an exercise of the multicultural right to ‘ethnic dress’ (Meer et al 2010: 85).

Since the 2001 ‘riots’ in the North of England South Asian Muslim young men have been increasingly constructed in many media, political and policy discourses in terms of their supposed involvement in violence, drug abuse and crime in the context of a cultural conflict with their parents and religious fundamentalism (Alexander, 2004; Bagguley and Hussain, 2008). They are widely represented in these discourses as being unable to achieve economic and social success. As a result they are thought to rely on a mythology of masculine strength as expressed through violence and involvement in criminal activities. This ‘re-imagination’ of South Asian young men expresses long term societal concerns about them (Alexander, 2004; Bagguley and Hussain, 2008; Bhattacharyya, 2008; Dwyer et. al., 2008; Hopkins, 2004; 2007). In many respects 9/11 was the key turning point, however, the reactions to the 7/7 bombings take the

‘evolution’ of British South Asian masculinity further as part of the process of the securitisation of British South Asian Muslim communities.

Whilst we want to highlight the Muslim/non-Muslim dichotomy at one level, we want to problematise it at another. There is a tendency in both public discourse and some recent academic contributions to speak unproblematically of Muslims when many of the political concerns and issues are specifically about British Pakistani Muslims. Very few authors have adequately highlighted this complexity and specificity (e.g. Lewis, 2007; Modood, 2005).

Finally, it might be suggested that ‘Whiteness’ is becoming more ‘visible’ as an ethnic identity, especially in those locations that have experienced ethnic conflict (Hewitt, 2005). How far do the some sections of the White community see the 7/7 events as an attack upon specifically White British or English identities? How might these responses shape their future relationships with other ethnic minority groups? What we see in some of the evidence presented below is an embattled sense of British-White identity that takes as its most immediate opponent the ‘threat from Islam’. However, in support of our view that anti-Muslim feeling is more generalised these claims may also be found to some degree among non-Muslim ethnic minority groups. This illustrates the way Islamophobia speaks to non-white ethnicities, and highlights the significant point that securitisation requires a degree of popular legitimacy by cutting through other social divisions to be politically effective (Buzan et. al., 1998: 31).

Methodology

The research examined the impact of the London bombings on 7th July on the local communities in Leeds and Dewsbury associated with the bombers. Beeston, Hyde

Park and Dewsbury are largely residential, close knit and densely populated with back to back terraced housing, much of which is in poor condition. The area of Beeston is particularly deprived with the average income quite low, over 10,000 of the 16,000 residents having living standards which are amongst the worst 3% nationally (Anon, 2006). In the town of Dewsbury Muslims make up around 22% of the population, but only 8% in Beeston and 6% in Hyde Park (Office for National Statistics, 2003).

Semi-structured interviews (141 in total) funded by the University of Leeds and the British Academy were completed with members of the Pakistani, Bangladeshi, White, African-Caribbean and Indian communities between September 2005 and September 2006. The interviews addressed many of the issues that had arisen in subsequent public discussions around the London bombings: perspectives on the London bombings; the role of Islam for British Muslims; extremism and Islam; relationships between generations in South Asian communities; South Asian masculinity; South Asian women; integration of South Asian communities; the fear of backlash against Muslims; how the bombings affected day to day relationships between communities; citizenship and identity; views about media reporting of the bombings and Muslims; leadership of the Muslim communities in Britain.

Men and women aged 16-35 and 36 and over were identified as groups for interviewing. The first is significant as it covers many who are likely to be British born Muslims and non-Muslims. Older ethnic minority people are more likely to have migrated as adults and subsequently taken up British citizenship. Thus we might expect different perspectives from the different age groups. All of the Bangladeshi interviewees aged 36 or over were born in Bangladesh, 57 per cent of older Indian Interviewees were born in India and 35 per cent in East Africa reflecting onward migration, and 75 per

cent of older Pakistani interviewees were born in Pakistan. This partially verifies this sampling decision. Given that the experience of being a securitised citizen is likely to be strongly gendered we were concerned to interview sufficient both men and women.

Table 1Age, Gender, Religious and Ethnic Characteristics of the Sample

	White		Black		Bangladeshi		Indian		Pakistani		TOTAL	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Aged 18-35	33	7	44	7	55	6	25	12	69	27	43	59
Aged 36 +	67	14	56	9	45	5	75	37	31	12	57	77
TOTAL	100	21	100	16	100	11	100	49	100	39	100	136
Men	38	8	38	6	55	6	47	23	46	18	45	61
Women	62	13	63	10	45	5	53	26	54	21	55	75
TOTAL	100	21	100	16	100	11	100	49	100	39	100	136
Muslims	14	3	6	1	100	11	8	4	100	39	43	58
Non-Muslims	86	18	94	15	0	0	92	45	0	0	57	78
TOTAL	100	21	100	16	100	11	100	49	100	39	100	136
Ethnicity	15	21	12	16	8	11	36	49	29	39	100	136

Table 1 presents the age, gender, religious and ethnic characteristics of the achieved sample for which we have all this data (136 out of 141 interviewees). We sought minimum numbers of interviewees from the different principal ethnic and religious groups, men and women, and each age group from each locality. We were especially interested in interviewing Muslims and non-Muslims from different ethnicities in order to examine the analytical questions regarding the interactions between Islamophobia and racism. Sampling was via local contacts, community centres and groups and snowballing from these. The overall sample was from 41 per cent working class occupations, 29 per cent middle class and the remainder from intermediate occupational backgrounds.

Interviews were conducted by ethnically, religiously and in some circumstances by gender matched interviewees. The ethnic and gender matching of interviewers and interviewees can be problematic as it clearly reifies and fixes the very categories that we might want to interrogate (Gunaratnam, 2003: 80-6). We nevertheless chose this strategy for a number of reasons. Sending South Asian female interviewers into largely white residential areas where we expected hostility towards South Asians would have simply been irresponsible. Furthermore, some white people are much less likely to be 'honest' about their views on race and religion when people from ethnic minorities are present. Methodologically Whiteness was not an unproblematic norm, but required strategies of matching just as much as other ethnic groups. For white working class interviewees we used a trained interviewer from a local working class background, where a local accent is frequently used as a cultural marker of both local and class identity in the region. For some interviews it was necessary for the interviewer to be fluent in the first language of the interviewee. In some cases we expected that

interviewees would prefer to be interviewed by a woman, and indeed we found that this was the case in a minority of instances. Matching helps to build cooperation, rapport and trust, although we recognise this might only be along the lines of ethnicity, religion, gender or class and locality. Nevertheless, we felt that given the principal obstacles to both access and data quality and the issues of the project matching was desirable. Whilst we recognise the limitations of ethnic and gender matching and the risks it brings of reifying questionable categories, not to have attempted this might have put some of our interviewees at risk, limited the range of people we could have interviewed, as well as producing data of more limited quality, validity and reliability.

Interviewees were selected through local contacts and community centres, which were selected on the basis of the access they could provide to potential interviewees from specific ethnic and religious groups. This facilitated the negotiation of the matching of interviewees with interviewers. Interviews were transcribed and if necessary translated. The transcripts were anonymised with the use of pseudonyms, and analysed thematically. Quotations were selected on the basis of their relevance for the overall analytical argument and the processes we are considering (Hammersley, 1990: 107). We have sought to compare themes between groups of different ethnic origins, religion, gender, locality and class. For this particular paper our analysis highlights the comparison between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Popular non-Muslim Views About the 7/7 London Bombings

The interviews show a concern with the Iraq War as a reason for the 7/7 bombings. However, Islam was seen as leading to violence of this kind, and Mosques were identified as the sites where 'terrorism' was organised. Connected to these views were

concerns about immigration and multiculturalism as well local questions about resource distribution and welfare services. Taken together these quite disparate themes constitute a complex uneven but more or less coherent pattern of popular Islamophobia which characterised all Muslims as a potential threat. These combined in some cases with wider racist concerns which validate for us the analytical distinction between racism and Islamophobia. Furthermore, some key themes echoed those promoted by leading politicians and commentators from the liberal-left, as well as Government and opposition spokespersons as part of the process of the securitisation of British Muslims (Fortier, 2008: 2; McGhee, 2008: 87-8; Modood, 2007: 11). Despite their hostility towards the bombers we found evidence amongst both our White and non-White respondents where they disagreed with the government's insistence that the situation in Iraq was irrelevant to the bombings. For example:

I think it all originates from that 9/11 in America. I think it's probably been going on before that but I think that and the Iraq war with all the British troops in - that's what's sort of set things going. (Maggie, white, no religion)

Four bombs on the train is happening every day in Iraq. They wanted to get the message over.., this is what you are doing in Iraq. (Jagger Singh, Indian, Hindu)

Whilst at one level these views diverge from certain dominant political discourse laying open to question some of aspects of the securitisation perspective, our interviews also revealed that non-Muslims of all ethnicities had a narrow and negative of Islam consistent with the effects of Islamophobic securitisation. One possible interpretation of this is that some non-Muslim ethnic minorities might be seeking to identify with what

they perceive to be dominant anti-Muslim discourses. These views saw Islam as specifically justifying these kinds of terrorist action, as providing psychological fulfilment for the perpetrators:

What I have heard with the suicide bombers they get a higher place in their heaven and they have got six virgins waiting for them when they get up there and it is an honour for them to do it. This is what their religion is as I see it...

(Doreen, African-Caribbean, Christian)

Although these comments seek to ‘explain’ the motivation of individuals committing acts of violence, they do so solely with reference to religion and not with reference to ethnicity or any racialised constructs which vindicates the need to distinguish racism from Islamophobia. Furthermore such popular discourse seem to be related to what are constructed in the media as central facets of Islamic beliefs (Moore, et. al., 2008; Nickels et al., 2010; Poole, 2006). In contrast White non-Muslims talked about the changing face of Britain resulting from migration, criticising an ‘occupation’ of Britain and multiculturalism. Many worried about their own position within Britain as found in previous accounts of local White racism (Back, 1996, Hewitt, 2005). Articulated in a narrative of white national self-blame, this illustrates how some themes from traditional white racist discourses have been popularly reconstituted by the process of securitisation. As illustrated in the following quote Islamophobia and racism seem to be combined with reference to ‘we’re the minority’ implying White Britons being illustrated with the erroneous example of Leicester becoming ‘the first Muslim city’:

The trouble with this country now is that we’re the minority aren’t we? I mean Leicester, you go to Leicester and that’s going to be the first Muslim city - give it another couple of years. We’ve been getting’ too soft with them all. We’ve let

it escalate so its our own fault, we should tell them you're not doing this, you're not doing that, you do as we say if you don't like it then just go away. (Jim, white, no religion)

It was hardly surprising such individuals were lending their support to the far right British National Party (BNP). Some of our White respondents were supporting the party's agenda and had been for some time. This kind of rationalisation of support for the BNP in terms of a wider racist hostility illustrates the importance of distinguishing it from Islamophobia. Indeed this kind of support for the BNP was one of the things that really distinguished those white respondents from the ethnic minority respondents who also shared anti-Muslim views:

I support them (the BNP) full stop....., they (ethnic minorities) live like pigs, give them a tent, stick them in a muddy field and let them get on with it. I said just send the bleeding lot back and bomb them. We don't want them.

(Alice, white, no religion)

Some interviewees were also suspicious of where Muslims obtained money to sustain the lifestyle they supposedly had. In probing these sentiments we discovered this was partly rooted in the perceived allocation of public funds towards ethnic minorities generally, but more specifically the Muslim community. In this way local experiences and grievances against ethnic minorities generally but Muslims in particular were linked into the wider national and global 'security' concerns about Muslims, in short how Muslims have been securitised. There was criticism that Muslims were 'demanding too much' and were 'getting their own way'. This was linked into the view that Muslims were somehow exceptional and unique in their unwillingness to integrate into British society. For example one of our non-Muslim South Asian respondents told us: 'The

Muslims want to stay in Britain, want to use facilities but don't want to be part of the society at large.' (Davinder, Indian, Hindu) Like the other instances of Islamophobic sentiments this has a denigrating implication towards Muslims representing them as some sense 'fickle' wanting the advantages of British society but refusing to fully be part of it. These sentiments might also reflect a desire to identify with the dominant non-Muslim character of British society, so that Islamophobia is not just the preserve of the White majority.

Non-Muslim residents told us of conflicts between White and South Asian men nearly resulting in 'riots', and controversy over a merger of the two local high schools resulting in their racial desegregation. Whilst reflecting the findings of other research into localised racisms (e.g. Hewitt, 2005), these localised political issues are now entirely framed in terms of the 7/7 bombings and the perceived 'threat from Islam'. An aspect of well established racism has now been re-articulated within the securitisation of Islam and British Muslims. Local council policies were criticised by some for being 'too much in favour of Muslims' and allowing the practice of Islam:

From what I see in and especially because I work for the Council, there's so much political correctness now that everybody's too frightened to not let them practice in work or in the community. (Jenny, White, no religion)

This suggests that whilst people are blaming the Muslim community and their religious leaders in part for failing to deal with extremism, they do not consciously think of this as Islamophobic. However, there is not only condemnation of Muslims in general, but also of mosques in particular, especially the role that they believed mosques had played in perpetuating extremist groups. This aspect of Islamophobia has been constructed through the securitisation of specifically Islamic public spaces (Werbner, 2009). Not

only were people critical of mosques, but also sanctioned exceptional action against them, being critical of the freedoms they had abused. Mosques had now become ‘suspect places’:

... when they are going to the Mosque instead of them praying they are just trying to do things to plan terrorism. But all along they have had that freedom there are Muslims and Mosques in places that you cannot imagine you know.

(Neema, African-Caribbean, no religion)

These kind of Islamophobic sentiments seem to reflect a concern with not really knowing what happens in mosques: ‘... you cannot imagine you know’. Everyone – Muslim or not - acknowledged there had been a serious impact on social cohesion within the Beeston, Hyde Park and Dewsbury areas: ‘Everyone is more wary now, there is a bit more hatred, everyone is a bit more afraid..., frightened in a sense.’ (Kulwant, Indian, Sikh). Generally Muslims were perceived to be lacking in integration and segregating themselves from others reflecting but one aspect of the media and politicians’ securitisation of Muslims. Whereas ‘blacks’ and ‘whites’ were seen as ‘integrating’, Asians, by which Veronica in this case means Pakistani Muslims, are seen as not integrating and not wanting to integrate:

If there’s this integration that everybody keeps going on about why it isn’t a mixture of Blacks, Whites, Asians, but no it’s always Asians. Whereas you’ll see Whites and Blacks together, Asians it’s always Asians... You always get your Asians together. (Veronica, African-Caribbean, Christian)

These kinds of argument racialise Muslims as ‘Asians’. This may also be reflecting a desire to identify with the dominant non-Muslim and ‘non-Asian’ White and Black Britain which ‘Asians’ have been constructed as threatening in these discourses. It is

important to note here that the term ‘Asian’ for many of our interviewees refers to Muslims of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage. These are ‘common sense’ enunciations of official community cohesion discourses, which first emerged as an official response to the 2001 riots (Bagguley and Hussain, 2008). Since 2005 they have become a central part of the government’s counter-terrorism strategy, (Husbands and Alam, 2011). We can see how Muslims can be variously ‘Othered’ on religious or racialised grounds or on some combination of them. There is no simple general anti-Muslim cultural racism evident here. One of the outcomes of the process of securitization at the level of popular discourse is to see Muslims as effectively being discursively excluded from Britishness on these varying grounds, and that this is done from various ethnicised self positionings – White British as well as a variety of ethnic minority non-Muslim British positionings.

Muslim Perspectives

Werbner (2009) maintains that Britain is marked as a site where British Muslims have mobilised and are continuing to mobilise as citizens. Likewise Jacobson (1997) and Samad (1996) demonstrate how identification with Islam is strengthening amongst some of the younger generations of Muslims both as a reaction to racist hostility and a deeper understanding of Islam. This is reflected in how our respondents talked about the role of Islam within their lives and how it was central to their existence.

As the practice of Islam is growing, so is the strength of identification with the global Muslim diaspora. Being beyond the nation-state with its fixed boundaries Muslims may be geographically scattered, but are connected by ties of co-responsibility across the boundaries of nations. Muslims in Britain are part of this global Muslim transnational network of dispersed political subjects (Werbner, 2000). The first Gulf

War (1990-91); the genocide in Bosnia (1993-6); the conflicts with the Taliban in Afghanistan (1997-2002); and the War in Iraq (2003); have all played a part in creating a transnational Muslim solidarity. Muslim diasporic transnational mobilisations, including the conflicts surrounding the Rushdie affair and the Gulf War, have been key moments in the development of a trans-national Muslim British consciousness (Modood, 1990; Werbner, 2000). This transnational Muslim consciousness amongst British Muslims is supposedly specific to British South Asians (Lewis, 2007), and possibly reflects British South Asian Muslims' history in the anti-colonial struggles in the Indian sub-continent. From this perspective we can make sense of how our Muslim respondents talked about how issues in Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan were affecting Muslims in Britain:

Muslims we are more alert because we tend to discuss those kinds of issues more openly with our friends and colleagues and we are at times more aware of what is happening than the white community... There is the injustice and the difficult position that other Muslim brothers and sisters are faced with and they are unable to support these people... that's what gets them enraged and angry.

(Pavel Ahmed, Bangladeshi)

The government denied the invasion of Iraq was a factor contributing to the rise of extremism within the British Muslim community (Rai, 2006). All our Muslim respondents pointed to the invasion of Iraq rather like the non-Muslims, but from a very different positioning. For Muslims this expressed identification with Muslims internationally, as Salina a Pakistani woman told us: 'Britain was side by side with [George W.] Bush... , Tony Blair didn't listen when people said 'we don't want to go to war!'

Whilst the overwhelmingly majority of respondents criticised foreign policy, the fact that the bombers came from their local community could not be doubted. All of the interviewees overwhelmingly condemned the bombings by what they all referred to as a small minority of Muslims.

... suicide is completely forbidden in Islam..., whoever says Islam says a suicide bomber is a martyr is completely wrong these people are just fundamentalists and extremists and people who might have been brainwashed thinking this and that. (Kani, Pakistani)

Religion had nothing to do with the bombings; no religion tells anyone to bomb..., we have no right to kill anyone. (Shabana Begum, Bangladeshi)

Our respondents criticised the way in which the actions of a small minority had been represented in some quarters as representing the inclinations of Muslims generally. We often encountered instances of how the process of securitisation was having an effect on how British South Asian Muslims see their location in Britain changing. People spoke of a very difficult to describe and define ‘feeling’ that they were being treated by non-Muslims as ‘one of them’. As such they felt there were now increasingly defined as in generic negative terms, rather than as individuals:

...the way you sort of feel and you hear around, like I said now it’s more recognised and people do seem to think of you as being one of them and they don’t seem to think that you as an individual. (Sophia, Bangladeshi)

It is significant that these experiences are interpreted through the framework of Muslim identity. It is their identity as Muslims that they see as being threatened and denigrated. By implication it is Islamophobia and not racism that is operating here and hence the importance of analytically recognising the differences between them.

Soon after the 7/7 bombing in London the perpetrators were very soon identified as Muslims. Afterwards Islam and Muslims were predominantly represented in the media only in relation to terrorism and major international conflicts (Nickels et al., 2010) reflecting longer run trends in the media reporting of Muslims (Poole, 2006) and the overall securitisation of Muslims. The issue of media bias thus needs to be considered seriously, as the extent of coverage of ‘extremist groups’ and ‘Islamic terrorisms’ has increased significantly (Moore, et. al., 2008; Nickels et al., 2010; Poole, 2006). Arabic words (such as ‘jihad’) are appropriated into a universal journalistic vocabulary, and they have been invested with new meanings, with connotations of extremism and violence. Furthermore words such as “fundamentalist”; “extremist”; “radical,” are regularly used in headlines across the British press regardless of their political inclinations (Moore, et. al., 2008; Nickels et al., 2010). Unlike the non-Muslims, our Muslim respondents resisted these media representations of Islam and Muslims:

What does an extremist mean and what does a fundamentalist mean? There’s no such thing as extremist and fundamentalist in Islam. (Shabana Begum, Bangladeshi)

These are just words they don’t mean anything. They are just using these words to make Muslim look evil and bad. It’s the media and stuff that use these words. (Mohammad, Pakistani)

What these interviewees seem to be identifying is Islamophobia rather than racism. They interpreted much media and political discourse after the 7/7 bombings as

specifically anti-Muslim as specifically Islamophobic rather as being racist. These perspectives thus reinforce the claim that the securitisation of British Muslims has a specifically Islamophobic dimension rather than a racist dimension. However, this does not mean that racism did not feature at all, as Muslims are frequently identified using racialised criteria.

Local Muslims of South Asian origin experienced the backlash from the 7/7 bombings due to their skin colour and also their Islamic dress. This reflects local tendencies to identify Muslims using racialised criteria illustrating how Islamophobia and racism interact in locally specific and gendered ways. Bana lives in Beeston and talked at length about the hostility she had heard others had experienced and for fear of reprisals herself did not travel out of Beeston: 'I didn't go out in 2 weeks in case something happened, if you go out this area you get stared at cos I wear the hijab.' (Bana, Bangladeshi) This self-policing of personal mobility was not just some ungrounded fear, but was based on the real experiences of publicly enacted forms of Islamophobia. These typically took a form directly shaped by the status of British Muslims as 'securitised citizens'. For example, Salina a Pakistani Muslim talked about walking with her children and being verbally abused: 'You get drivers going past screaming at you... "terrorists" or "Bin Laden."' Whilst Muslims might be identified using racialised criteria it is notable that verbal insults reported here are specifically inferring the Islamic identity of their targets. The women that we interviewed were experiencing such hostility, yet they were adamant on retaining their religious identification, we noted the women had suffered more due to their dress highlighting the gendered character of Islamophobia (Franks, 2000; Hussain and Bagguley, 2007; Meer

et al., 2010). This was especially the case for those who had chosen to wear and continue to wear hijab. But these women knew of women who had stopped doing so:

It is quite fearful but I am not going to stop wearing my hijab whatever happens.

Some people are taking off their hijab cos they fear for their lives. (Bana

Khatun, Bangladeshi)

Whilst women experienced negative reactions due to their Islamic dress, men were also conscious of this, as some forms of their dress and physical appearance marked them out as visibly Muslim. Furthermore, these visible markers are often taken to indicate that they are also in some way 'fundamentalist'. For example, according to Pavel Ahmad: '... My beard and my Muslim look is threatening to them they may assume I am a fanatic and maybe a suicide bomber'. Our respondents felt it was getting increasingly difficult to declare themselves as Muslims. In some extreme cases this becomes a version of 'passing' as many oppressed minorities have done and continue to do so in many examples from around the world.

Conclusions

We have argued for the introduction of the concept of securitisation to help understand the changing relationship between British Muslims and non-Muslims and that this usefully synthesises and encompasses the insights from other literatures associated with the idea of moral panic and suspect communities. We have argued for an approach that treats securitisation, racialisation and Islamophobia as analytically distinct. This is necessary firstly in order to recognise that various groups may be securitised, and that securitisation is not necessarily logically tied to racism. It is also important to recognise

that Islamophobia, racialisation and racism interact in specific historical and political circumstances. In this way we have argued against some recent tendencies either to dismiss the existence of Islamophobia or to treat it as a special instance of cultural racism. As a result we are able to tease out the coming together of processes of securitisation, racism and Islamophobia in constructing British South Asian Muslims as an existential threat to British society in terms of the outcomes for the views of some non-Muslims and the experiences of Muslims. The construction of Muslims as a threat was not simply a case of racism and Islamophobia, these pre-dated 9/11 and 7/7. The securitisation of Muslims through political practices and media discourse has had clear effects through some non-Muslims' views of Muslims.

Whilst others have previously documented various aspects of this process in the media (Nickels et. al., 2010; Poole, 2006), public policy (McGhee, 2008), public attitudes (Bleich, 2009), and the longer term interactions between Muslims and British society (Modood, 2005); we have sought to examine them as they were experienced in the aftermath of a 'key event' (Nickels et. al. 2010). Such key events act as 'construction moments' precipitating the emergence of discourses and definitions of social groups as a security threat.

There is considerable evidence from our interviews of anti-Muslim identifications amongst some non-Muslim ethnic minorities. What distinguished these from the Islamophobic identifications amongst some of the White respondents was that some White people's claims were articulated with a wider racism and nationalistic white identity. These findings support our contention that Islamophobia and racism are analytically separable and coalesced in concrete discourses and identifications in specific ways. This is not of course to suggest that all non-Muslims expressed

Islamophobic views that was far from the case. The focus here has been upon these instances of Islamophobia in order to analyse the phenomenon and its relation to securitising and racialising discourses.

We have also examined the impact of securitising, racialising and Islamophobic processes on local Muslims, especially the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. One reason for this is simply the ethnic composition of local Muslim communities. Here we found evidence of a positive identification with a global Muslim community that resists the connection with violence and especially suicide terrorism. From men and women and from Bangladeshi and Pakistani Muslims we found instances of a sense of being made to feel ‘other’ as a consequence of the securitised, racialised and Islamophobic climate in response to the 7/7 bombings. Rather than blaming non-Muslim individuals for this, people typically cited the media as the source of these problems.

The events of 7th July 2005 were quite exceptional. How the wider society such as sections of the media, agencies of the state and politicians respond to such key events is critically important to how the social groups deemed responsible are defined and treated in the long run. This is not just a matter of media reporting and public policy, but is also enacted in specific local contexts between different racialised and religiously defined groups. These local enactments and experiences are the final outcome of broader processes of securitisation, racialisation and Islamophobia.

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