Sociology

Muslim Men, Racialised Masculinities and Personal Life

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Abstract

This article contributes to the study of Muslim men and masculinities by drawing attention to the usefulness of exploring the under-researched relational, emotional and intimate dimensions of Muslim men's lives. It argues that exploring personal life facilitates critical examination of Muslim men's affective ties by casting light on their emotional and intimate lives, beyond a narrow focus on negative emotionality. It highlights the private sphere as a domain of social life that has been neglected in understanding Muslim men's lived experience. The article presents findings from research exploring the impact on Muslim men of a child sexual exploitation crisis in Rotherham. Drawing on interviews with men to foreground their accounts, it shows how focusing on personal life enhances understanding of changing gender and generational relations in Muslim families and shifting masculine roles and identities. It highlights the impact of experiences of racialisation on men's personal lives within the private domain.

Keywords

masculinities, Muslim men, personal life, private sphere, racism

Introduction

The study of Muslim men and masculinities has paid little attention to personal life, including relations, emotions and intimacy. The aim of this article is to draw attention to the usefulness of exploring the profoundly under-researched relational, emotional and intimate dimensions of Muslim men's lived experience. It argues that exploring personal life facilitates critical examination of Muslim men's affective ties by casting light on their emotional and intimate lives, beyond a familiar, narrow focus on negative emotionality. The article shows how it provides a valuable window on men's lives, enhancing

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understanding of changing gender and generational relations in Muslim families and shifting masculine roles and identities. It reveals how experiences of racialisation impact on their personal lives within the private spaces of home and family. In doing so, it highlights the private sphere as a domain of social life that has been neglected with respect to understanding Muslim men's lives, and the corresponding dynamic relationship between public and private spheres.

The article presents findings from a research study exploring the impact on local Muslim men of a child sexual exploitation crisis in the South Yorkshire town of Rotherham. In the UK, public attention has been drawn to the involvement of Muslim men in cases of child sexual exploitation in areas with a significant Muslim population. The publication of the Jay Report on findings of a public inquiry into child sexual exploitation identified Muslim men as the main perpetrators in Rotherham (Jay, 2014). In addition to the report's publication, key components of the crisis included subsequent successful prosecutions of offenders, an increase in incidents of hate crime, sustained far right activity and unsuccessful prosecution of Muslim men charged with public order offences following a far right demonstration. Each contributed to a critical set of circumstances that had a sustained detrimental impact on local community relations.

The article draws on interviews with Muslim men to foreground their accounts and demonstrates how they challenged racialised Muslim masculinities by resisting dominant narratives emerging from the crisis. It shows how men's accounts go further in providing alternative constructions of Muslim masculinities, foregrounding caring roles and responsibilities and affective ties. These findings are unsurprising in that Muslim men can be expected to challenge racialising narratives and provide alternative accounts that portray their lives in a more positive, caring light. A key rationale for the study was the notable infrequency with which Muslim men have any opportunity to do so as a result of the persistent dominance of problematising accounts. These have centred on criminality, cultural dysfunction and social exclusion in order to position Muslims, and Muslim men specifically, as outsiders who pose a threat to public law and order, security and well-being (Abbas, 2005; Alexander, 2004; Fekete, 2009; Modood et al., 1997). The perspectives of local Muslim men were marginalised in media and public accounts of the crisis. The analysis presented in this article draws attention to personal life as a useful conceptual framework for critiquing these dominant accounts and providing insight into the lives of Muslim men. It advocates a shift in research focus to include the neglected private domain of Muslim men's lives as a way of advancing understanding of changing gender and generational relationships and shifting masculine roles and identities.

The focus of the article reflects that the category 'Muslim' dominated public and media accounts of the crisis. References to male perpetrators as Asian or Pakistani automatically invoked the category Muslim and the categories Muslim, Asian and Pakistani were conflated and used inter-changeably to identify the men involved (Cockbain, 2013). This reflects that Muslim as a category of self and other identification has become increasingly salient in recent decades, marking a shift from identifications based on ethnic and national origins and racial categories (Brubaker, 2013). The meaning of Muslim has taken on various competing public forms and those who use it do not limit it to a single, narrow meaning (Meer and Modood, 2013). The crisis in Rotherham demonstrated how, despite the complexity and multiple meanings of the category, Muslims are

identified and held accountable as Muslims by non-Muslims and other Muslims (Brubaker, 2013: 3). A sustained focus on cultural and ethnic differentiation resulted in reducing local Muslims to a separate, unassimilable grouping, even though the language of race was absent (Murji and Solomos, 2005: 11). The intersection of race, ethnicity and religion with masculinity featured prominently in accounts of the crisis, resulting in local Muslim men being subject to the racialisation of masculinity regardless of their personal characteristics and backgrounds.

Racialised Muslim Masculinities

The image of the Muslim grooming gang predator is a recent edition to problematising accounts of Muslim men (Cockbain, 2013; Tufail, 2015). These increased following some Muslims' response to the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* (1998 [1988]), which raised concerns about the apparent incompatibility of Muslim culture with that of a predominately liberal, secular society (Modood, 1990, 1992). The 2001 'riots' and London bombings of 2005 contributed to the identification of Muslim men as a group requiring social control and regulation, due to their association with different forms of violence and criminal activities (Abbas, 2005; Bagguley and Hussain, 2008; Fekete, 2009; Hussain and Bagguley, 2012). The resulting research interest in Muslim men has mainly focused on youthful masculinities. Studies have drawn attention to the interrelation of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, class and place in the production of a range of masculinities (Alexander, 2000; Archer, 2001; Dwyer et al., 2008; Hopkins, 2004, 2006; Mac an Ghaill and Haywood, 2015; Rootham et al., 2015). Capturing the structural positioning and subjective experiences of Muslim men, these accounts provide insight into the racialisation of masculinity and show how problematising ideas about Muslim masculinities have become commonplace.

The relational construction of racialised Muslim masculinities positions Muslim men as self-interested defenders and chief beneficiaries of a deeply patriarchal, oppressive culture and religion (Razack, 2004). This reflects that hegemonic patterns of masculinity and compulsory heterosexuality are embedded in dominant cultural practices in Muslim families (Charsley, 2005; Charsley and Liversage, 2015; Yip, 2004). Evidence indicates that cultural ideals of purdah and honour regulating gender relationships affect men and women unequally, with attention paid to the detrimental impact on women (Samad, 2010; Shaw, 2000: 164). One result has been a focus on abusive, exploitative familial gender relations, seen as arising from culturally situated unequal power relations and leading to deviant cultural practices. The growing number of recorded incidences of forced marriages and so-called 'crimes of honour', in which victims are usually, but not exclusively, Muslim women and perpetrators are mainly Muslim men, has contributed to problematising Muslim men and masculinities (Razack, 2004; Samad and Eade, 2003). Issues such as female genital mutilation and veiling are either explicitly or implicitly associated with Muslims, resulting in a focus on problematic Muslim masculinities (Meer et al., 2010; Razack, 2004; Samad and Eade, 2003).

One consequence of the racialisation of Muslim masculinities is that Muslim men are problematised as lacking in or incapable of intimacy, with Muslim families portrayed as a site of gender and generational emotional conflict, rather than positive affective ties

(Alexander, 2000, 2004). Muslim men are rarely portrayed as vulnerable or as displaying positive emotionality. Muslim men who are subjected to acts of violence are less newsworthy than Muslim male perpetrators of violence (Britton, 2015). Men's relationships with significant others are seen to be characterised by emotional distance or negative emotionality. This is demonstrated by the portrayal of the Muslim male patriarch who prioritises the collective interests of the wider family, kinship group or community over the well-being of individual younger and female family members (Charlsey and Benson, 2012; Charlsey and Liversage, 2015; Razack, 2004). Problematising arranged marriages so that they are seen as in contrast to 'love' marriages reinforces the idea that Muslim men's familial relationships lack intimacy (Razack, 2004; Samad, 2010; Samad and Eade, 2003). Gender-based violence in Muslim families and sexual deviance in relation to cases of child sexual exploitation are interpreted as further evidence that Muslim men lack positive emotionality, affective ties and intimacy, reinforcing racialised Muslim masculinities (Cockbain, 2013; Tufail, 2015).

Personal Life: Relations, Emotions and Intimacy

The conceptual framework of personal life is helpful in exploring Muslim men's lives as it contrasts with notions of atomised, autonomous individuals. Rather than being private, it requires the presence of others, allowing for exploration of the role of agency while retaining notions of connectedness to the social (May, 2011; Smart, 2007: 28). It encourages critical exploration of Muslim men's agency through a focus on investigating different forms of relationality and connectedness. This avoids overstating the role of culturally situated, unequal power relations in explaining changing family formations and relationships, as highlighted by the cultural pathologisation of Muslim families (Alexander, 2004; Alexander et al., 2013). Muslim men are simultaneously viewed as autonomous individuals who are free to exercise agency, and patriarchal authority, and as actors operating within the constraints of rigid cultural forms, including hierarchical Muslim families (Shaw, 2000; Yip, 2004). Focusing on forms of relationality and connectedness encourages exploration of the multifaceted, inter-connected ways in which Muslim men experience themselves in relation to others. This includes examining the various, changing roles and identities men assume within families, without presuming the significance of any, and highlighting shifting patterns of relationships (Mann et al., 2016).

Adopting the conceptual framework of personal life highlights the neglect of the private sphere as a domain of social life relevant to understanding Muslim men's lives. In contrast, the private sphere has been a consistent focus of attention with respect to understanding Muslim women's lives, depicted as the absolute locus of Muslim male patriarchal authority due to its role in controlling women's mobility and sexuality (Guru, 2009). Muslim men are seen as exempt from such restrictions through their enhanced freedoms and greater participation in the public sphere. Personal life encourages a focus on Muslim men's involvement in the private sphere beyond examining the dynamics of patriarchal authority. It promotes investigation of how public and private intersect in Muslim men's experiences and perspectives because it does not regard family life as distinct from other social spaces and structures (Smart, 2007: 29). It seeks to overcome exaggerated distinctions between public and private spheres, promoting the fluid boundaries and tensions

between them as an insightful area of investigation (Smart, 2007). Focusing more intently on the private sphere, and the dynamic relationship between public and private sphere, includes considering how what happens in the public sphere impacts on the private sphere and how men shift between different and potentially contradictory forms of masculinity as they move in and out of each sphere (Robinson and Hockey, 2011).

A greater focus on the private sphere also illuminates the relational, emotional and intimate dimensions of Muslim men's personal lives. These were previously slightly below the sociological radar, and remain so with respect to Muslim men (Smart, 2007: 29). Exploring personal life facilitates critical examination of Muslim men's affective ties by casting light on their emotional and intimate lives, beyond a narrow focus on negative emotionality. It gives recognition to the role of emotionality and intimate relations in men's lives and how these shape ideas of how to be a good man (Smart, 2007: 29–30). It creates interest in the emotional labour men engage in and intimacies they share with significant others. This includes paying attention to men's involvement in caring and nurturing as part of generational and familial roles. Feminised and associated with positive emotions, caring and nurturing are overlooked in the lives of Muslim men.

The Study

The article draws on some findings from a study for which I carried out all data collection. Because of its scope and focus, only data collected from interviews with Muslim men are included. The research also included observational work carried out over a two-year period. Extensive field-notes were taken during observations and typed up into fuller reports afterwards. I collected evidence of the cumulative detrimental impact of the crisis on local people in Rotherham, which reinforced that the research involved significant ethical and political sensitivities. Ethical concerns were paramount in the research's design and execution. In addition to obtaining ethical approval from my university's research ethics committee, I addressed them through collaborating with local Muslim women. The women were integral to the conceptualisation, design and execution of the study, made possible by relationships of mutual trust and understanding developed gradually. They invited me to sit in on meetings of local women's groups and individually gave up their time to collaborate in the research. This included acting as gatekeepers by suggesting suitable participants, introducing me and providing contact details. It also included suggesting questions to focus on in interviews. None of the men interviewed were relatives of the women.

Through collaboration with local Muslim women I eschewed hierarchical relationships in favour of democratising research practice. In pursuit of greater equality, I relinquished control over the selection of appropriate participants. I was aware that women channelled me towards some local men and, by implication, away from others, reflecting the influential position of gatekeepers and collaborators in shaping research. It was clear that women regarded suggested male participants as positive representatives of the local Muslim community, raising questions about the representativeness of research participants. The interviews involved men who were actively engaged in the social and political life of the town and did not include the more marginalised of local Muslim men. Like the study overall, this article does not aim to provide a generalisable account of men's experiences but rather to offer insights into the construction of Muslim masculinities.

In keeping with the reflexivity of the ethnographic imagination, it is important to acknowledge that my deep familiarity with Pakistani Muslim culture and traditions shaped all stages of the study, including findings and conclusions (Arber, 2006). This reflects that ethnography is deeply personal, positioned and subjective (Campbell and Lassiter, 2015). My insider knowledge and sensitivity reduced the risk of me being seen as another unwelcome critic, increasing people's willingness to participate and what they felt comfortable sharing. Co-experience of culturally specific gender and generational relations enabled rich exchanges with female collaborators and male participants. This closeness was countered by my lack of familiarity with the research setting, both Rotherham and the local Muslim population, as I had no personal contacts or involvement in the town prior to the study.

The average age of the eight participants in the interviews was 39, ranging from 26 to 52. They were from a variety of public and private sector occupations, including a councillor, taxi driver, ophthalmologist and youth worker. All but one was married with children, and the ages of their children ranged from six weeks to young adults. Six described themselves as 'born and bred' in Rotherham and the other two had lived in the town since they were young children. Participants identified their ethnic background as either Pakistani or Azad Kashmiri. Interviews were carried out at a location chosen by them. Four were interviewed in their workplace, one at a public library, one at his home, one at my office and one, remotely, by telephone. Interviews were organised around several topics including the impact of the crisis on men, families and the town generally. They were digitally recorded, transcribed and anonymised.

I was surprised by the openness with which men disclosed difficult and intimate personal details about their lives and by the richness of the data elicited. I approached the interviews with trepidation because of the sensitive, difficult nature of the topic. The duration of each was longer than I had anticipated as a result of men's willingness to talk at length about the impact of the crisis. I suggest a range of factors contributed to the success of the interviews. I was careful to establish a rapport so that participants were comfortable. This included respectfully following Muslim etiquette regarding, for example, shaking hands, eye contact, removing shoes on entering homes and accepting refreshments. I disclosed the relevance of my academic and personal background as part of rapport building, although the degree of self-disclosure varied between interviews. I listened without interruption, loosely adhering to the semi-structured interview schedule in order for participants to have space to discuss what was important to them. I attempted not to assume an authoritative position and this was facilitated by gendered power dynamics, with men comfortable to take more control of the interview situation (Gailey and Prohaska, 2011). I did not, at any time, feel vulnerable as a consequence of these gendered interactions. I also suggest that, due to the problematisation of local Muslim men as a result of the crisis, it was unusual for participants to have an opportunity to express their views and for someone to listen to what they had to say, without critical comment. Lastly, while I do not wish to overstate the therapeutic value of participating, I suggest that the interviews were successful because they were conducted with empathy and compassion (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007).

The sensitive, difficult nature of the research topic influenced my interpretation of the data. Because of time constraints, I used a professional transcription company to

transcribe the interviews so missed an important first step in data analysis. To compensate, I listened to interview audio files several times and checked them against transcripts to ensure accuracy. Listening to and reading transcripts facilitated interpretation of the data, particularly as it enabled me to reflect on difficult, emotionally challenging aspects of men's accounts to a greater extent than was possible during the interviews. The impact of racialisation on men's personal lives and the prominence of affective ties involving caring became clearer at this stage of the analysis. I took an inductive approach to thematic analysis, focusing on themes that emerged as most prevalent in the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Three prominent themes identified in men's accounts are explored below.

Responding to the Child Sexual Exploitation Crisis

Men in the study resisted racialised constructions of Muslim masculinities through drawing on and responding to prevailing narratives emerging from the crisis. They explained how the crisis had profound, enduring consequences for Muslims locally. One commented that the publication of the Jay Report amounted to 'our 9/11', emphasising the localised impact. A notable feature of men's accounts was critical reflection on dominant narratives that local Muslims colluded in the exploitation by either actively protecting the perpetrators or wilfully ignoring it. These narratives incorporate racialised notions of isolated Muslim communities lacking a sense of loyalty or responsibility towards outsiders and, in doing so, draw on wider public discourses regarding the failure of multiculturalism to facilitate integration of Muslim minorities (Abbas, 2005; Fekete, 2009). Men challenged the view that most local Muslims were aware of the exploitation and could be held to account for the actions of those responsible. In explaining the impact of the crisis on themselves and other local Muslims, they criticised culturally essentialist, reductionist ideas of a Muslim community. Their criticisms highlight similarities between localised impact of the crisis and the documented racialising impact of major terrorist incidents (Bagguley and Hussain, 2008; Hussain and Bagguley, 2012):

> For me, it's, sort of, the collective guilt of the whole Pakistani community, Muslim community but, in particular, of men despite the actions of a tiny minority, dare I say it, a significant minority. But it's the idea that still how each and every single one of us was culpable or somehow responsible for some of the horrible stuff that went on. You know, it's the, sort of, innuendo comments from liberals, from people, from politicians to outright racist comments from bigots who don't know any better. But it's that, sort of, collective tarring of us all. And whenever I'm out and about, you know, it's odd, I always think, you know, what do other people think of me? How do they class me? Do they think I'm involved? I'm somehow a paedophile? Or, you know, that's, sort of, been the biggest impact for me personally. The idea that somehow we were all responsible, somehow we were all guilty or negligent, or whatever, and now we must all pay the price for that. (Samir)

Like other men in the study, Samir expressed an awareness that he was subject to the racialisation of Muslim masculinities as deviant and dangerous. His comments indicate the personal impact of a local social and political context in which he is categorised, problematised, stigmatised and held accountable as a Muslim man.

A major theme of men's accounts was the racialised scapegoating they identified as resulting from the crisis. They argued that maintaining a focus on problematic Muslim masculinities and communities provided a convenient distraction from documented failings of key statutory agencies, such as the police. This focus was reinforced by a lack of public and media interest in local hate crime incidents in which Muslim men were attacked:

> So them [the police] failing to do their job resulted in them failing to protect us the Muslims. We had Mushin Ahmed. We had no statements of condemnation on his death. We had no media coverage of his death nationally. He was murdered. You know, a taxi driver was left fighting for his life. We haven't had the police come out and say, 'hang on, we are dealing with the CSE crisis. We've got the NCA [National Crime Agency] working here. We're going to get the perpetrators, but the majority of the Muslim community weren't involved or did not know.' But they can't do that. (Umar)

Umar's account resists the racialisation of Muslim masculinities by drawing attention to Muslim men as victims of violence. It contrasts with dominant narratives emerging from the crisis that reinforce the positioning of Muslim men as perpetrators of violence. It also suggests that police failure to support local Muslims amounted to collusion in dominant narratives.

Men further resisted racialisation of Muslim masculinities by distancing themselves from those involved in child sexual exploitation, denouncing their behaviour and claiming no personal association. Riaz's assertion that 'none of my relatives have got nothing to do with these guys. I wouldn't have a clue if I met them on the street' was representative of all of the men except Nasir, who mentioned that he had been at school with a convicted offender. He went on to discuss the offender and offender's brother, who had also been convicted:

> They were drug dealers. Their business was peddling drugs. And who have been subsequently taken to court. It seems very clear, oh right, oh yeah, this is like the Mafia now. The Mafia, with a little involvement around children. But you only find that out when you find it out. So, as a community what do you know? Yeah, he used to be in and out of jail. What do you know about him? Oh yeah. There was something mentally wrong with him, and, have you ever read his name, have you ever been taught his name? Mad Ash. Well, it says everything. (Nasir)

Nasir's account works to distinguish between the problematic masculinities of these offenders and the masculinities of other Muslim men by emphasising individual criminality and deviance and positioning these men outside of the Muslim community.

Finally, the men's accounts challenged racialised constructions of problematic Muslim masculinities by drawing attention to the universality of child sexual exploitation. They provided examples of other well-publicised cases in which perpetrators were not Muslim, referring to a racialised double standard in how these were reported:

> Recently, just yesterday, I was reading the news and there was a Romanian guy who had been harbouring 30 or 40 sex slaves in Ireland. So would you say that was a religious issue? Would you say it's a Christian issue? Would you say Jimmy Saville was a Christian issue? Would you

say it's a white issue? Ironically, when I spoke to the CYPS [Children and Young People's Service] at the time when this was all going on, they said to me, to put it into perspective, that there was men raping their daughters, and these were Caucasian men. (Riaz)

The racialisation of Muslim masculinities as dangerous and deviant was seen to result in a disproportionate, unfair emphasis on the ethnic or religious background of offenders who are Muslim, obscuring problematic masculinities more generally.

This section has shown how men's accounts oppose racialised constructions of Muslim masculinities by challenging prevailing narratives emerging from the crisis. The following sections show how their accounts go further in presenting alternative caring forms of masculinity, highlighting neglected emotional, intimate and relational dimensions of Muslim men's lives.

Caring Roles and Responsibilities

Caring roles and responsibilities and affective ties are a notable, consistent feature of men's accounts. Men morally distinguished themselves from men who engage in abuse and exploitation by drawing attention to their own intimate gender and generational relationships. The prominent role of taxi drivers was identified as a common thread running through cases of child sexual exploitation (Casey, 2015; Jay, 2014). While discussing the detrimental impact of this on the livelihoods of local taxi drivers, Nasir explained why he continued in this line of work. His explanation reveals life shaping caring responsibilities and shifting dynamics of gender and generational relationships as his parents become less independent. He was late for our interview as he had been delayed at the hospital where his mother was having treatment:

> I don't choose to be a taxi driver. By qualification I'm a computer programmer. My life has been in computer programming, yes most of my programs have been till role receipts and so forth […] Now, where it comes to, this is the job that suits me down to the ground. I'll still apologise why I was late, 'cause of my mother's appointment, I'm a carer for my mother, I'm a carer for my father. They live next door […] and what is my lifestyle about? My father is living with dementia, he has been living with dementia for a number of years […] My father also has been diabetic for around 20 years. And the constant in and out of hospital, the constant looking after him, and now my mother in the last year has been living with a reduced rate of kidney function, and she's basically borderline with dialysis, to be taken account of as well […] so I choose to be a taxi driver, yeah, it's the only job that can facilitate me dropping everything at a moment's notice.

Affective ties and associated caring responsibilities to family members shaped decisions Nasir made about employment. His commitment to meeting the everyday needs of his parents indicates how culturally situated ideas of how to be a good son inform his intimate familial relations and provides an example of his involvement in caring as part of his filial role. His account draws attention to how he creatively manages the fluid boundaries between home and work life and associated tensions between public and private domains. The following account features similar caring responsibilities for parents, as part of the relational, emotional and intimate dimensions of personal life. Khalid recalled

an incident at a hospital where he had obtained the permission of the consultant, who was treating his sick mother, to visit her before work:

> I used to go 7 in the morning, make sure mum eats breakfast, whatever, and then Monday to Thursday I was going there then coming to other meetings, and on Friday I was wearing the traditional dress […] And as soon as I walked in, I got stopped, and I just [laughs] thought you can't make this up. So I thought, hold on, and it was the month of Ramadan, so I was fasting as well. So I goes to the head nurse, I goes, 'excuse me, it's not something I want to come here and sit with mum for three hours when I'm fasting. It's because I care about my mum and I want her to get better so then she comes home.' And just because of my traditional dress somebody's stopped me when the four days before […]. (Khalid)

This account reveals how Khalid's personal life intersects with the public domain, indicating the part played by racialised hyper-visibility and increased surveillance in Muslim men's everyday experiences. Nasir's account also reveals how his caring responsibilities extend beyond his family to include those he encounters while taxi driving. The incidences recalled included children who were unable to phone their parents because their mobile phone had no credit:

> But these were children, and I handed my phone over to them. 'You speak to your heart's content.' I have children of my own. Now, another thing, where I've found somebody in a takeaway, early on at night. 'I need something to eat.' It's a child, or it's a group of children. 'I need something to eat.' So what do you do? You say, 'well whatever they want, just serve them, right, I'll pay, so they can get off'. When somebody comes to your taxi later on at night, distraught, 'my dad's going to kill me'. 'Why is he going to kill you?' 'I should have been in. Well, to be honest with you, I shouldn't have even been out.' What are you supposed to do? They've got no money but you take them home. (Nasir)

Both Nasir and Khalid's accounts present alternative Muslim masculinities, foregrounding caring while challenging racialised constructions. Khalid's account draws attention to how constructions of problematic Muslim masculinities play a part in everyday experiences of discrimination as a Muslim man. Nasir's account of caring for children in vulnerable situations contrasts with the dangerous, deviant masculinities of taxi drivers reported to be involved in child abuse (Casey, 2015; Jay, 2014).

Men in the study presented alternative masculinities by contrasting their own intimate relationships with those of men who engage in abuse and exploitation. Hassan's account acknowledges the importance of emotional literacy in forming relationships with women and places emphasis on forming positive affective ties. It is critical of culturally situated ideas about family honour, which he views as limiting men's agency:

> I think people should just talk about how Muslim and Pakistani men relate to women? Do they socialise with women? Do they form relationships with women before they get married or they see that as a […] like you talk about shame and not just go out with girls or anything like that? I've no problem with that. I went out with girls before I got married but for me it was forming relationships, understanding women, socialising with women, not to manipulate the woman to do what you want. It's actually building friendships with women, respecting women, all these life skills that […] all these skills we need to learn. (Hassan)

Hassan's account also highlights the agency of his wife as he described her as 'confident. She does what she wants. She earns, she works. We've built a life together, not because she's had help from an organisation, because she's gone out there and done it.' It challenges culturally situated ideas limiting women's participation in the public domain, drawing attention to changing patterns of gender relationships and the impact on emotionality and intimacy.

By foregrounding caring roles and responsibilities and affective ties, men's accounts present alternative forms of masculinity in contrast to dominant racialised constructions. In doing so, they challenge the view that men are constrained by rigid cultural forms and face insurmountable difficulties in reconciling the contrasting cultures of public and private spheres. They illuminate shifting dynamics of gender and generational relationships as well as drawing attention to how private and public intersect in men's experiences of racialisation.

Fears and Anxiety

Expressing fears and anxiety in relation to the safety and welfare of family members was another way for men in the study to present alternative caring masculinities. When considering the impact of the child sexual exploitation crisis, men reflected on their emotional, intimate relationships with children. Umar concluded that he had become more willing to discuss topics that are seen as culturally taboo. His account suggests that being a good father involves adopting new parenting practices in order to care for his daughter, with a view to protecting her from abuse:

Umar: I mean, I don't know about the impact it's had on them, but the impact it's had on me is I have totally dropped my guard with regards to my daughter, so she's completely free to […] because she could be the victim of grooming. She could be the victim of bullying. She could be the victim because she's, she's, so I've totally changed my parenting style, where I've become, come and discuss things with me, tell me if there's any issues at school, you know, and that. And she knows what I'm driving at because I am going the long way about it, make sure you don't get blackmailed, they're going to tell your dad, you know, all the tricks and all that. So I'm a lot more aware as a parent. With regard to the […]

Int.:   So you have to be more open with your children?

Umar: We have to. We can't, we're traditionally very, very conservative as a society with regard to […] And I am, I've let my guard totally down so she feels completely open, come and speak to me. But I know that's not even enough. Because these groomers and these people, they work on, they find a fear point and they use that for the children.

Umar's account provides another example of changing gender and generational relationships in Muslim families, revealing the emotional labour he engages in as part of greater involvement in intimate dimensions of his daughter's life. It also indicates the impact of the crisis in shaping Umar's caring role and responsibilities as a father.

As well as considering the possibility that children in their family could experience abuse and exploitation, men also reflected on an increase in hate incidences and crime experienced by the local Muslim population. They attributed this to a combined impact of the crisis and wider anti-Muslim sentiment. They expressed anxiety about the safety and welfare of women and children and their accounts include examples of incidences from their everyday lives:

> My brother and sister-in-law went to Hajj [Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca] so my two nieces were living with me, and one's 17 now and the other one's 15, and they can look after themselves. But when I used to drop them off in [local shopping centre], I used to worry till I picked them up because of […] and they goes 'Uncle, we're okay.' I go 'look, you're okay, but I don't know if somebody says something to you or you might be in a vulnerable situation'. So that fear, how can you measure it? And also my son used to walk from [home] to his uncle's in [another neighbourhood], not very far, and then a couple of times he got […] you know, 'oh you paedophile' and this, that and the other. So now when he goes I say 'look, get your cousin to drop you off, or I will drop you off'. I never used to do that before actually. So that sort of fear, safety issue for your children is worrying. (Khalid)

Khalid's account shows how his personal life, and that of children in his family, is connected to public issues related to anti-Muslim sentiment and hate incidents. It reinforces how public and private domains intersect in Muslim men's everyday experiences in diverse, and discriminatory, ways, with fluid boundaries between private and public lives. It reveals the emotional labour he engages in and the impact of the crisis in shaping his familial caring roles and responsibilities.

Men's accounts also include examples of how wider events involving Muslims impact on their personal lives, leading them to express fears and anxiety regarding their children's developing identity and sense of belonging. The interview with Anis took place the day after Donald Trump's US election victory:

> He was sat in school talking to his friends about Disneyland, because he's an eight year-old, and his friend said, 'you can't go because Trump won't let you'. Now yesterday, he's seen the election. Now he was quite upset about it. Now he believes he can't go to […] he can't visit Mickey Mouse because he's a Muslim. The effect is […] the effect of disassociation with the rest of society isn't it, with the rest of the community? Because you are different, you can't have the things that the others have, because you are different. (Anis)

The account draws attention to Anis's caring role as a father and the emotional labour he engages in to support his son in a society in which both experience racialisation as Muslims. Umar revealed that he was considering moving overseas 'because I do not want my children to be the subject of hatred or make someone the subject of hatred. And I do not want my children hating anybody on a blanket basis, and they will.'

Articulating fears and anxiety regarding children in their family for whom they are responsible was another way that men's accounts present alternative caring masculinities. They illuminate changing gender and generational relationships and problematise the idea that the private sphere is a non-racialised space and haven from racism, revealing how what happens in the public sphere impacts on the private sphere.

Conclusion

Drawing on the conceptual framework of personal life, the article has highlighted the usefulness of exploring the relational, emotional and intimate dimensions of Muslim men's lives (May, 2011; Smart, 2007). These are profoundly under-explored with respect to Muslim men even though they are very much part of their lives and are integral to understanding changing Muslim masculinities. The accounts presented here draw attention to how Muslim men's personal lives are connected to public issues, such as ethnic and gender inequality and forms of racism (May, 2011). In doing so, they counter the neglect of the private sphere as a domain of social life relevant to understanding Muslim men's lives, demonstrating the significance of intersecting public and private domains. For example, the accounts document how men responded to anti-Muslim sentiment and discrimination and give an insight into the impact of forms of racialisation on their personal lives. This suggests that the far-reaching, multi-dimensional consequences of racism require more attention than is usual in policy debates about how to facilitate social cohesion and integration of Muslim minorities.

The article advocates the conceptual framework of personal life as a sound basis for further theoretical consideration of and empirical research on changing Muslim families. The findings encourage critical engagement with key arguments about both the enduring conservative nature of Muslim families and the weakening of family and kinship ties as relationships change. They contribute to research evidence of changing patterns of social and emotional relationships and changing dynamics of gender and generational relationships, contrasting with pathological accounts problematising Muslim men and families (Babb et al., 2006; Charsley, 2005, 2006; Charsley and Liversage, 2012, 2015; Qureshi et al., 2014; Yip, 2004). Men's accounts reinforce how Muslim men, and women, are using new, creative strategies that make use of diverse social and cultural resources to adapt to changing circumstances.

The findings suggest the emergence of new masculine subject positions that are adjusting to a changing gender order and raise important questions about the extent to which Muslim men's involvement in caring facilitates greater gender equality. They do so by casting light on dynamic gender and generational relations in Muslim families, providing evidence of Muslim men's changing involvement in caring as part of familial responsibilities. Appreciating positive aspects of Muslim men's lives risks understating the 'patriarchal dividend' that all men can draw on to legitimise their privileged position, despite a diversity of masculinities (Connell, 2005). This is recognised in studies of masculinity, which have acknowledged how a critical stance involves not only viewing men negatively (Robinson and Hockey, 2011). The findings promote paying more empirical and theoretical attention to Muslim men's personal lives to enhance understanding of both changing dynamics of power relations in Muslim families and how to involve men in efforts to address gender-based violence and gender inequality.

There are potential pitfalls in paying closer attention to the relational, emotional and intimate dimensions of Muslim men's lives. Although it helps to challenge the racialisation of Muslim masculinities by countering the dominant focus on negative emotionality, it can contribute to racialisation by reinforcing culturally deterministic Orientalist perspectives of Muslims as governed by the irrational (Rahman, 2010). Placing

emphasis on affective ties also risks reinforcing the idea that Muslim men prioritise family and kin relationships at the expense of pursuing integration in the public domain. In addition, drawing attention to positive aspects of Muslim men's lives can be seen as underplaying social problems related to radicalisation. Reflexive engagement with such potential limitations is integral to researching these under-explored dimensions of Muslim men's lives.

A sustained research focus on personal life is challenging as it involves reflexive examination of some of the most private aspects of people's lives. This is particularly the case with respect to Muslim men, who are seen as hard to reach, socially conservative and wary of researchers as a result of stigmatisation and surveillance. This article has shown that the benefit of doing so is a more nuanced, multi-dimensional approach that resists problematising Muslim men's lives and is alert to Muslim men's various, changing masculine roles and identities within the different domains of social life.

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