Muslim Youth in Scotland: politics, identity and multicultural citizenship[1]

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Until recently, quite a lot of academic and policy research about Muslim youth and politics has tended to focus on issues of radicalisation and extremism (Bakkar, 2006; Hemmigsen and Andreasen, 2007; Home Office, 2005; Kuhne and Lindekilde, 2010; Spalek and Mcdonald, 2011) mirroring the political and policy landscape on this issue. While some of these studies attempt to disrupt popular conceptions of the link between Muslim youth and radicalization, others have assisted in fuelling perceptions of Muslim youth as taking a more politicized stance on religious belief than their parents (Policy Exchange, 2007 cited in Field, 2011: 160). Furthermore, some have attempted to categorize Muslim youth into those who are 'moderate', 'apartist' and 'alienated' (Field, 2011) that, whilst painting a more complex picture, remains rather rigid and does little to challenge homogenised representations of Muslim youth. Media representation of Muslim youth as either politically apathetic, radicalized or vulnerable to radicalization further contributes to misconceptions about young Muslim identities and their political agency. Such representations are gendered and embodied with Muslim young men, for example, read as the Asian 'new folk devils' (Alexander, 2000; Shain, 2010), as 'militant and aggressive' (Archer, 2003: 81) or as academic and effeminate (Hopkins, 2006).

Recent scholarship on the political participation of young Muslims in Britain has shown that young Muslims are politically engaged and developing new political subjectivities in diverse ways (O'Toole and Gale, 2013). Significantly, political engagement can also lead to a sense of belonging and inclusion in Britain (Mustafa, 2015). Hopkins (2007) has explored the ways in which young Muslim men in Scotland engage with mainstream politics and their understanding of how the political system operates. Rather than being apathetic, disengaged and inert, the young men involved in this study in the early 2000s were recognised as possessing a range of carefully considered political opinions particularly on matters relating to global politics. Building upon this earlier work, we discuss the political participation of young Muslims in Scotland, particularly in the context of the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum. In doing so we challenge problematic assumptions that see young Muslims as apolitical or that having political agency suggests vulnerability to radicalisation. We then report on youth perspectives of politics in the media focusing on the impact of media representations of geopolitics on young Muslims' everyday lives. Finally, we discuss how youth political subjectivities have been animated by narratives of multicultural nationalism in Scotland. More broadly, we argue for greater recognition of the diversity and hybridity of youth identities in media and policy landscapes.

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The Study

This study engaged with 382 young people from across Scotland from diverse ethnic and religious minority backgrounds. A three-year project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, aimed to (a) examine how Muslim and non-Muslim (i.e. those who 'look Muslim) young people experience and respond to Islamophobia and (b) explore how international, national and local events (geopolitics) impact on such experiences. For the purposes of this chapter we focus on the data collected from 12 focus groups and 45 individual interviews with young Muslims living in Scotland. The focus groups took place in Glasgow, East Renfrewshire and Fife, while the interviews were conducted in a range of places across Scotland including Edinburgh, Dundee, Glasgow, Aberdeen, East Renfrewshire, Inverness, Dumfries and Fife. Participants were recruited from secondary schools, colleges, universities, youth groups, community groups, voluntary organisations, religious groups and places of worship. We analysed the data using thematic coding through NVivo software. Those who participated in the research were given a gift voucher as a token of our appreciation for giving up their time to participate in the research. One school, however, preferred a donation to the school's hardship fund rather than individual vouchers for pupils who volunteered to take part in the research. Where we have used direct quotations from respondents in this paper, we use self-selected pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. Therefore, the pseudonyms used do not necessarily correspond to the ethnic background or religious affiliation of the participants.

Young Muslims and Political Participation in Scotland

There has been much academic discussion about the supposed political apathy of young people across the UK (Kimberlee, 2002; Henn and Foard, 2014). In response scholars have explore new forms of political engagement and participation amongst young people from more traditional (i.e. electoral, party politics) to newer (less formalised) forms of politics (activism, protest, boycotts, blogging, e-activism) (Brookes and Hodkinson, 2008; O'Toole and Gale 2013). Our research was conducted prior to and just after the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum. As such, this event stimulated politically charged discussions among the young people interviewed. The referendum marked an opportunity for young people in that for the first time in Scotland 16 and 17 year olds were given the right to vote. For many, the inclusion of youth voices in decision making at the national level was a positive and empowering opportunity, as a Muslim pupil from Glasgow suggests here.

> "…this shows the development of society, like they are relying on younger minds as well…not just people who are older" (Male, Muslim, 16-18, Glasgow).

While not all young Muslims felt fully engaged in the debate, most expressed an intention to vote and a voting preference. Many felt that extending the right to vote was an important step in Scotland's future, garnering a sense of responsibility for deciding Scotland's future.

"I think that's a really good idea because obviously it's our future, it's the teen's future that's going to after like 20 odd years we're going to be the adults and stuff like that…since it's our future I guess we should be making a decision about what we want to do with our lives" (Maalik, Pakistani Muslim refugee, male, 16-18, Fife)

Maalik's reference to 'our future' echoes some of the rhetoric on both sides of the Scottish Referendum campaign. Throughout the campaign those promoting a 'Yes' vote stressed the inclusion the youth voices or in the debate in Scotland's constitutional future. Much of their narrative for independence, for example, spoke of putting young people at the 'heart of the debate' and pledged 'opportunities' for young people through various schemes, such as the European Youth Guarantee (BBC News, 2014a). 'Generation Yes', a youth movement supporting independence, also claimed to be the 'largest youth movement Scotland has ever seen' (The Herald, 2014). There was also a number of events, such as the 'Big, Big Debate' at Glasgow's Hydro Arena, aimed at encouraging young people's engagement in the debate, particularly first-time voters (BBC, 2014b). Similarly, the 'No' campaign stressed the importance of preserving the Union for the sake of the 'life chances' of 'future generations' (BBC, 2014c). Sayeed, a young Pakistani Muslim man from East Renfrewshire also saw the vote as a duty for young people to claim their stake in society at a key historical moment.

"At the end of the day we need to recognise that young people are a vital part in society. They are the future and they are the leaders of today and not just tomorrow. By that meaning yes they will lead us in the future, but they are also able to lead us today and we need to empower them to do that one way to do that is by giving them the vote" (Sayeed, Scottish-Pakistani Muslim, male, 19-21, East Renfrewshire)

Despite some of these positive engagements around the referendum vote, young Muslims were not always clear on how to access politics and influence change. Levels of political engagement varied with some expressing disinterest, lack of awareness and mistrust of mainstream political parties.

"I don't think people have a say in general politics. I think this is there, I would like to say I am disappointed but I would actually say that I am not surprised" (Tariq, Muslim, male, 22-25, Aberdeen).

"I've never voted before because I've never really, I never got a letter or anything saying that I need to vote so I don't know whether I'm supposed to go somewhere to sign up for it" (Nuz, Scottish-Pakistani Muslim, female, 19-21, Dundee).

A lack of information on the practical aspects of voter registration was cited as an issue for some young Muslims, particularly first-time voters who expressed lower confidence levels due to a perceived lack of knowledge.

"I think it's been more directed to older people. I think even though young people are allowed to vote I think they've just sort of dismissed them in a way. So I think more

information should have went to them first and then sort of went to older people. Cause then the younger people were sort of, they were a bit confused" (Qasim, British-Pakistani, male, 16-18, Inverness).

"I think there should be a law against voting without knowing… I do think they need to simplify it and they do, and if they've widened the vote to 16 year olds you need to start targeting them" (Rahielah, Scottish-Asian Muslim, female, 16-18, Glasgow).

The language used and strategies employed to engage Muslim communities in politics, such as visits to Mosques and community centres by politicians, were also criticised as tokenistic, disingenuous and elitist by some young people.

"I don't know how inclusive they have been of 16 year olds generally, and especially of the Muslims because I am not sure if they are feeling very…I don't know, it is a tough crowd, it is a tough crowd. But an important crowd I think to get on board… I would say that not enough Muslims care, not enough Muslims are aware" (Afia, Scottish Muslim, female, 16-18, Glasgow)

Here Afia refers to a range of reasons for non-participation in politics among Muslim youth citing a lack of awareness and a lack of care. She links political apathy to the absence of knowledge and lack of inclusion. For others too, disinterest in politics appeared to be linked to feeling disconnected or lacking confidence in mainstream politics. Low membership of political parties also demonstrated weak association with Scottish/British national politics beyond the Referendum campaign and low levels of trust in mainstream politicians and political parties.

"I don't know, 'cause even if you do go about it the right way and go through Parliament and stuff like the people higher up are always going to have the ultimate say" (Betty, British Muslim, female, 22-25, Edinburgh).

Furthermore, the growing media presence of right wing or 'racist' parties, such as UKIP, put some people off engaging with party politics, though this was seen as more of an issues in England rather than Scotland, as Flynn suggests here.

"I don't think there is a lot of right wing politics that, in Scotland. I mean I think the SNP now they are, they're quite big on social justice and equality… I did read about Conservatives in England focusing less on ethnic minorities, and focusing more on trying to obtain the voters that vote for UKIP, so more of the right wing people. That's kind of disheartening. When you know that more ethnic minorities are being, kinda, shoved to the side so that they can get more of the votes from people who are a bit, you know, a bit shady." (Flynn, Palestinian Muslim, male, 16-18, Fife).

Flynn sees Scotland as having a different political character to England emphasising values of social justice and equality associated with Scottish politics. Others also cited particular

policies, such as the Forced Marriage Bill, to demonstrated that Scotland were 'further ahead' than England in terms of promoting and managing multiculturalism. This echoes what Breeze et al. (2015: 429) found that 'the young people... offer[ed] more grounded and hopeful accounts [...] inspired not by "raving" or "romantic" nationalism, but by a desire for a just and equal Scotland'.

Young Muslims engaged in politics through a range of mediums. For example, Higher Education student associations, such as Islamic societies, were important spaces of political expression and student activism, particularly for Muslim international students living in Scotland. Youth political involvement in local organisations also fostered a sense of integration or inclusion among some young people as Azlan reflects here whilst talking about his activities with local trade union:

> "I think the trade union activity has really had, like, just in knowing more, because I didn't... I wasn't born here, so still sometimes I feel like an outsider. But I think getting involved with the trade union activity, meeting all these politicians and, you know, speaking at conferences and events and all that – that has really helped me become part of the society" (Azlan, Pakistani Muslim, male, 22-25, Dundee)

Many young Muslims who expressed interest in politics often referred to issue-based international politics they were involved with. Some international students and non-British Muslims tended to refer to the politics of their home countries or regions. Interest in Middle Eastern politics was highly variable, with some expressing views on issues such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and others having little awareness of geopolitical events in these areas.

> "The Palestine issue is something that I always like to have debates about. And also people have a lot of stereotypes about the Middle East that I tend to like to challenge a lot" (Esti, Sudanese-British Muslim, female, 19-21, Edinburgh).

For some, however, and in particular Muslim refugees and asylum seekers, there was intentional disengagement from home country politics through fear of upset.

> "I'm mostly interested in politics but there is some problems in Turkey lately. So I'm gettin' too much deep into politics so I'd rather like leave it. Cause it, it changes people, you know you can argue with your best friend an' everything for just, just for politics" (Nabi, Turkish Muslim, male, 22-25, Inverness).

Similarly, some young Muslims expressed reluctance to discuss international politics with British or Scottish friends at school or university, as Nabila discusses here.

> "I think people knew I was Libyan so they didn't really know what to say to me. So I tried to keep it like so I didn't really mention it at all. I didn't really get involved in all the debates [about the Libyan conflict]. But it is weird when people are debating

certain things when it involves your country. So they were like 'Oh no it is just because of the oil' or 'I don't think America should go into' and 'I don't think Britain should get involved…' Whereas I felt like they should …it stopped it by doing the no-fly zone and stuff…people kind of knew but they were that age where they didn't…like most of my friends are quite in a bubble I feel. They are…they are really nice, like I love them and stuff, but I just feel sometimes oh god. You just bring up like current events and they are like 'Oh I didn't realise that was happening' and you are like 'okay'.. ha ha …Yeah, I avoid definitely avoid. Like I would speak to my Arab friends maybe, Muslim friends, just because they could identify a bit more…But not really, not really with my British friends" (Nabila, British-Libyan Muslim, female, 19-21, Dundee).

Nabila reflects on the discomfort of talking openly about Libyan politics with her friends, suggesting that they don't 'identify' as closely with her own experience. So she deploys a strategy of self-silencing in order to negotiate this discomfort. This 'discursive insecurity' around current affairs places limits on engagement and reduces possibilities for meaningful youth dialogue on a range of important political issues (Botterill et al., 2016). Similarly, Parveen also sees having a political voice on international issues as a 'risk' in Scotland.

"It would be different if I was in Pakistan. I would be like very much into the debates and everything but here I am just like, no. Let's not risk it. Because you never know what is going to happen. It is not like…I don't know it is just better to be safe than sorry" (Parveen, Pakistani Muslim International Student, 19-21, Dundee).

Despite such reservations, the levels of young people's engagement in the referendum has had, what McLaverty et al. (2015) describe as, the 'referendum effect' on young voters. In other words, young people from all different backgrounds seem to be more engaged in politics. As a result, on 18 June 2015, the right to vote in Scottish elections was extended to 16- and 17-year-olds by MSPs. Supported by the SNP government, the Scottish Election (Reduction of Voting Age) Bill lowered the voting age – 86 MSPs across parties voted in favour of the bill and eight against.

Youth perspectives on politics in the media

Most of the young people interviewed engaged with some form of media as a source of information about politics. Within the critical literature on media representation of Muslims is a widespread perception among scholars and commentators that there is a link between media-propelled representations of Islam and Muslims and the everyday Islamophobia experienced in communities (Ansari, 2002; Alexander, 2000; Gardner et al., 2008; Poole, 2002; Saeed, 2007). Some have argued that Muslims, particularly young Muslims, have been pathologised in media discourse as the 'new folk devil' (Shain, 2011; see also Poynting et al., 2004; Alexander, 2000). In our study, young people frequently criticised the mainstream media for associating Muslims with a discourse of threat and violence.

"I think everything; anything a Muslim does [in the news] - even if they've just got a Muslim-sounding name. Like, these people that killed Lee Rigby – I don't know what kind of Islam they were following. 99.9% people would say that's wrong…people are bound to look at you in a different way if they know you're Muslim and then they're reading all this in the news every day" (Azlan, Pakistani Muslim, male, 22-25, Dundee,)

"Some people misunderstand [Islam] for like terrorism and in Somali where we are from, pirates. There is pirates and terrorists so they take it too far and say, 'haha, look at you pirate.' And it is not like that" (Somali Muslim male, 12-15, Glasgow)

In December 2015, Humza Yousaf, Scotland's Minister for International Development and MSP for the SNP, noted that, '[f]rom my perspective this is as concerning as it felt in the days after 9/11. There was a tangible feeling of fear and it was very tense for the Muslim community. I've not felt that since - even after 7/7 it still didn't feel as tense'.[i] For him, today racism and Islamophobia have become less pernicious and subtle; instead it is more obvious and direct. We found that for young people media representations impacted directly on their everyday experiences of racism and Islamophobia. Whilst the intensity of these experiences were contingent on age, gender, nationality and place, young Muslims reported a universal experience of feeling targeted and misrecognised as a threat as the following extract shows.

"No matter how nice you are, they are sometimes, just because you are Muslim and you came from another country. They said we are terrorists, but we are not terrorists!" (Muslim female, 12-15, Glasgow)

Many of the young people we interviewed, however, were hopeful about the capacity of the general public to see beyond simplistic stereotypes of Muslim communities. Some highlighted that people understood that media representation of Islam did not accurately reflect the reality particularly those who had experienced multicultural interactions and encounters in local communities.

"I kind of understand from their point of view watching that like in the news or whatever and everything, and their family believing the same thing, that can have a strong impact on them believing the same thing. But I think with going to school with Muslim people and they should know our personalities and we are not like that. They should understand that is not the case, and grow up about it really. To start to think for themselves and don't really believe anything they hear" (Senior Muslim FG, Glasgow).

"So yeah, something like that gets reported, it gets put all over the News, this guy's Muslim he's just killed a British soldier, get them. It has a big effect, you know it has a lasting effect. But you just hope that people kind of have the capacity to learn that that's not the truth" (Adam, White Scottish Muslim convert, male, 19-21, Inverness)

Young Muslims are active in disrupting media stereotypes of Islam be it through educating others about the meaning of Islam in everyday conversations, or through activist networks that challenge Islamophobic discourse. For example, AMINA – a Muslims women's resources centre in Dundee, have developed campaigns to promote understanding of Muslim women in schools, working against media stereotyping. Indeed, similar to other scholars (e.g. Abu-Lughod, 2002; Afshar et al., 2005; Sanghera and Thapar-Bjorkert, 2012), we found that young Muslim women who wear the headscarf also talked about how they respond with resilience to racism and Islamophobia, using dress as a performative act to disrupt assumptions about Muslim women as 'oppressed'.

> "I think, well, I'm wearing this hijab, yeah, as I mentioned previously, it's made me focus on why I want to wear it more and is to defeat all these stereotypes which have been created from all these 9/11 bombs and everything like that" (Amber, Scottish Muslim, female, 16-18, Dumfries).

These acts of resistance have worked to neutralise young people's experiences of racism in some local spaces yet there remains a troubling pressure on the part of young people to be resilient and let racism 'bounce off'. Whilst many felt there was less racism and more understanding of Muslim communities in Scotland compared to England, most reported experiencing some form of racism growing up in Scotland, ranging from relatively innocuous 'banter' to the more aggressive forms of physical violence. Equally, young people's responses to racism varied depending on the context and intensity. For example, in a senior Muslim boys focus group in Glasgow, one participant reflected:

> "Some people don't even know they are doing something bad or saying something bad. Like I mean if someone says to me like, calls me Paki I wouldn't really mind it sometimes" (Senior Muslim boys FG, Glasgow).

For others too, racism is acknowledged as 'there' but not as bad as in other places. In the following narrative, Afia, A Scottish Muslim from Glasgow, remarks on the shifting emotional landscape of media-fuelled racism in Scotland. While Scotland is perceived as a more welcoming space, it is not immune from media-fuelled racism.

> "I think thankfully in Scotland I have not perceived this whole idea that wearing a headscarf is an oppressive thing…But it is there unfortunately, it is there. It doesn't really make sense for us I suppose, but obviously media and all the rest of it. You know, I know a lady that she used just veil a little bit, she had cigarette butts burnt into her in Glasgow…Maryhill, but you know I don't think- Lady at Central Station got the headscarf ripped off her…There was a man that made comments to me about 'oh you know...' He was looking at me and was like 'oh is that a woman'. These kind of silly remarks, I mean for me obviously it just bounces off… I have been in the subway sometimes and there is a feeling you get. That is what I say on the whole that my Scottish experience has been fantastic, but there is a feeling you get definitely of, they are looking at me in a way that they shouldn't be looking at me because I am dressed like this…You tend to find that you are always in a position where you have to be apologising. You are meant to be uncomfortable…it is always in the back of my

mind. You always aware of it you know…And the media feeds it" (Afia, Scottish Muslim, female, 16-18, Glasgow).

Afia's narrative darts from revealing a deplorable act of racism that she has witnessed to her own experiences and resilient responses to everyday 'comments. And while she praises Scotland in one sense, she also tells of the underlying discomfort in everyday interactions and public spaces. The negotiations Afia is discussing suggest, as Humza Yousaf has observed, that racial and religious tensions are 'felt' by young Muslims and they deploy a range of resilient strategies to cope.

Youth political identities

Many of the young people in the study expressed resistance to Islamophobia through national identity. When asked 'what does it mean to be Scottish?', young people reflected positively on their affiliation with Scotland and Scottishness irrespective of ethnic or religious heritage.

> 'I think I would use Scottish Muslim on my Instagram actually, [both laugh], yeah I would say I'm proud to be Scottish and Muslim at the same time. So if I go to England I'm automatically the minority and doesn't matter if I'm Muslim or not I'm still Scottish' (Amber, Scottish Muslim, female, 16-18, Dumfries).

Many felt that Scottishness related to 'fairness' and 'diversity' making direct comparisons with English people as money-oriented and exclusionary, as these two extracts reveal.

> "We are less driven by money, whereas I think that England and especially London, everything is to do with money. And nothing is to do with what is right and what is morally right. Whereas I think Scotland is a more just society". (Male, Senior Muslim FG, Edinburgh)

> "We live in Scotland and there's a community, you talk to all different types of people, Sikhs, Hindus you can even talk to some atheists, you talk to everybody and that's what I like about being Scottish. We're very diverse…" (Malcolm, Scottish Pakistani Muslim, male, 16-18, Glasgow)

Whilst the discourse of Scotland being a fair and equal society was a key theme in many of the interviews, it nevertheless has been problematised (Morton 2011). For example, the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2015: 1) highlighted that 'the top of Scottish society is significantly unrepresentative of the Scottish population – though less so than the top of British society'. Indeed, there is a 'glass ceiling' that locks out people from less advantaged backgrounds.

The extent to which Scottish nationalism has penetrated the political identities of young Muslims is not clear from this research. Few of those interviewed explicitly called themselves Scottish nationalists. However the association of the Scottish National Party (SNP) with a

'fair' and 'just' society was evident from many of the narratives. In particular, young people who participated in focus groups referred to free healthcare, free education and race equality as key policies that enhance Scottish society.

> "Scottish nationalism, the one that Alex Salmond and that lot are selling, is a nationalism based on inclusion, civic nationalism his argument is regardless of your race, your religion, your class there is a Scottish identity. The thing about the nationalism that Nigel Farage is talking about is a nationalism based on difference. So surely in an independent Scotland then would be a bit more attractive, this inclusive nationalism where everyone has a place regardless of your skin colour and your race and your ethnicity and your religion." (Male, Scottish-Bangladeshi Muslim, senior school pupil)

Single issue campaigns, like the referendum, were more likely to gain interest among young people than broader party politics. Scottish Government 'No Racism' campaigns, for example, were referred to on a number of occasions as fostering a sense of inclusion and national belonging among young Muslims:

> "Whenever I think of a Scottish flag I think 'No Racism', because it's always been like that. There was just in the past few years you see it on TV, 'No Racism', then you see it on billboards and posters outside like, promoting 'No Racism'" (Nuz, Scottish Muslim, female 19-21, Dundee).

The association between Scottish nationalism and anti-racism was also referred to in discussions about nationalism more broadly. Here, Betty and Tariq talk about the differences between Scottish and British variants of nationalism, marking out the racialized nature of British nationalism.

> "what I would consider someone being Scottish and I said heritage I think SNP's more like that, where they don't, it's not race, it's just being proud of being Scottish, regardless of how you look and all that sort of stuff. Whereas BNP you've got, when you think of BNP… you have a vivid image of what that BNP guy looks like, maybe not for a girl but you know that guy with the skinhead and the tattoos walking down the street like very cockney accent, I don't know whether, obviously it's a very stereotypical view but when you look at the marches a lot of them look like that. And that's the kind of thing they want…they just want jobs for like the English and put like no one coming across the border type thing" (Betty, British Muslim, female, 22-25, Edinburgh)

> "SNP is a lot more…based on people, their values, whereas the BNP are based on opinions, I would say extreme opinions…Obviously the wrong reasons I would say because they…And I think SNP have actually got something credible, like could possibly be able to run a government, it could possibly look after its people, whereas BNP I don't think really at all" (Tariq, Muslim, male, 22-25, Aberdeen).

In an analysis of White Scottish youth responses to the 'One Scotland, many Cultures' campaign, Ross et al (2008) found that many White Scottish young people Scottishness is perceived as an inclusive category. The research also found, however, that although young people were positive about multiculturalism in Scotland, some racial tensions arose in the local community context, particularly relating to anxiety over asylum seekers and refugees amongst those living in recently mixed areas. Furthermore, an Ipsos MORI poll of attitudes to Muslim integration in Scotland found that while most majority non-Muslim respondents (of all ages) felt that Muslims were integrated in Scotland (58% generally and 69% of 18-14 year olds), 26% of these agreed with a statement that more Muslim settlement would dilute Scottish identity, thus undermining the notion of 'One Scotland, Many Cultures' and the achievement of 'multicultural nationalism' (Arshad, 2010). Hopkins (2004:265) asserts that young Scottish Muslims navigate and negotiate different markers of Scottishness, 'simultaneously include[ing] themselves in the perimeters of Scottishness, whilst also excluding themselves from belonging completely within the boundaries of Scottishness'. While characteristics like place of birth, accent and schooling gave young Muslims a sense of Scottishness and inclusion in the nation, non-participation in perceived Scottish cultural practices, like drinking and clubbing were more likely to generate a feeling of exclusion. Similarly, in this study Scottishness was frequently referred to as a means of validating national belonging. This was reproduced through young people's encounters with formal institutions and the rights afforded to them by the state. Betty discusses the civic dimensions of her 'connection' to Scotland.

> "Having lived most of my life here, I've got quite a connection with Scotland, so and being able to like, 'cause I've got the right to vote here, my tuition fees they were paid for by the Scottish government and like, yeah Scotland has helped me, I've lived like I've gone into Uni [university] in Scotland, I've just got quite a yeah I think I would connect myself to being Scottish more than anything else" (Betty, British Muslim, female, 22-25, Edinburgh).

Betty links being Scottish to civic participation formed around distinct opportunities in Scotland for her compared with that of her home country. Similarly, for other refugees, asylum seeker and some international students from Commonwealth countries gaining the right to vote in the Scottish Independence Referendum fostered feelings of inclusion and national belonging. This, coupled with the pro-migration policies of SNP, symbolised a politics of hope for many of those seeking greater rights and recognition for migrants in Scotland. Az, an Arab asylum seeker living in Glasgow, refers to her experience when registering to vote.

> "I… remember asking them that 'you know we are asylum seekers and you know our nationality is still Indian' and they're like, 'but you are living here, you're a Scot, you're from the Commonwealth, you are Scottish'. And that made me realise somebody else, I didn't have to say it, somebody else said it and we signed in and we go to elections and stuff" (Az, Arab Muslim Asylum Seeker, female, 22-25).

These examples suggest that mainstream political participation is one route to integration, yet there are limitations placed on non-EU and non-Commonwealth migrants to political participation in this context. As such, those positioned at the boundaries of electoral participation are excluded from the national conversation resulting in a segregated political debate. Furthermore, the everyday misconceptions over who is and isn't 'foreign' undermine state-sanctioned inclusion strategies.

> "I think of myself as [Scottish], I would say, if someone asks me, I got this a lot when I was travelling actually, like, where are you from. And I would say Scotland, and they would say no, but where are you really from". (Flynn, Palestinian Muslim, male, 16-18, Fife)

This seemingly banal and commonplace question – 'where are you from?' has more serious implications when seen a form of 'identity denial' (Cheryan and Monin, 2005). Despite its intentions, being questioned in this way serves as an interrogation of one's location, mobilities and histories, its undertone – often either fuelled by intrigue of the exotic or suspicion of difference – leaves one feeling out of place, outcast as 'stranger' or 'foreign'. Going further, questions regarding accents, dress and the duration of their residency in Scotland were all mentioned by young people in discussions of the barriers to inclusion. In a focus group with Pakistani Muslim young people, for example, the different aspects of prejudice are made clear.

> "I think they don't have a problem straight away with most things, but still in their heart or something they don't accept …we are not like Scottish, you know Scottish have got their own tartan names, and they have got their own clan as they say. Like we are classed as different, like we are outsiders. Like some people … even English people say 'how long have you been here?'…'you have got quite a Scottish accent'. It is a bit…like obviously at the end of the day the youngsters, how are the youngsters going to learn? And if they hear Paki and all this, they say I am going to the Paki shop for a packet of fags. I am going to the Chinkis for a Chinese… Yeah, just the way they categorise". (Pakistani Muslim FG, Fife)

The assumption that non-White equals non-national also affected young Muslims expressions of nationalism in Scotland. Malcolm, a Muslim 'Yes' voter and self-identified 'nationalist' experienced racism on social media after tweeting a pro-nationalist message. An older man responded arguing against his right to 'be a nationalist' because of his skin colour and 'foreign' name.

> "'cause I'm a Nationalist some people might be like, 'oh 'cause I'm brown I can't be a Nationalist'…Even if somebody's not from here okay if they call Scotland their home they have a right to be here as well. People have rights as much as we do you can't just say to that person they didn't have a right because they've got a different skin colour. That's not right" (Malcolm, Scottish Pakistani Muslim, male, 16-18, Glasgow)

Affiliations and associations with Scottish national identity shape youth engagements with Scottish politics. These narratives show that such engagements are also affected by the attitudes and behaviours of others – the everyday encounters that make young people feel out of place, unwelcome or devalued in spaces of national politics and society more generally. Many have bypassed such hostile atmospheres and express 'pride' 'in being Scottish, for others there was more reluctance to identify as Scottish and relinquish another national identity, as Talia says here.

> "I've been here for like nearly 15 years, everything like whatever, but I wouldn't say I was Scottish. Like I speak the language I go to school, to Uni and stuff but I wouldn't say I was Scottish. I was born in Kosovo and see if Kosovo was good, I'd be living there. The only reason I moved here was because war" (Talia, Kosovan Muslim, female, 19-21, Glasgow)

Political exclusion in Kosovo through war has left Talia in a liminal political space, unsure of where to practice her political agency, feeling connection to her home country but without rights there or in Scotland as a refugee. Her interest in politics however, is not muted by the limits of her migration status.

As discussed, many young people engaged in international politics, particularly those who held loyalties to more than one nation state. These interests most often reflected transnational heritages and were re-worked to form hybrid or transnational political subjectivities. Moreover, faith and language also played a role, intersecting with national identity to shape young people's sense of belonging and political beliefs.

> "Obviously living with my parents who are very strong with their Pakistani heritage who watch Pakistani television and you know so have hung onto their Asian heritage. And then it's like when I go to school, okay you could say I feel Scottish with my friends and you know the way we talk. Soon as I come back home, speaking in Urdu and you know it's like I'm back in Pakistan, just speaking casually to my parents in Urdu and stuff like that" (Maalik, Pakistani Muslim refugee, male, 16-18, Fife).

> "…because our religion have very, very big impact… Muslim follow their religion very strictly…That make a Muslim different from a Scottish people, but if you put the religion aside then yes, I do feel like a very much a Scottish like a long lie on a Sunday, going out on weekends and all these kinds of things, and going on a, in summer enjoying, especially barbeque and stuff, all these kind of stuff you know" (Nadeem, Muslim international student, male, 22-25, Glasgow)

These narratives show that young people negotiate their Scottishness according to different contexts. Being Scottish, for them, is a fluid category relating to specific times, places and activities. This is affected, not only by symbols of national identity but also the social relationships and practices that make up particular communities.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the political participation and identities of young Muslims in Scotland in the context of the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum. We have reflected upon qualitative data collected from one hundred young Muslims in Scotland in twelve focus groups and forty-five interviews. This sample is diverse and includes Muslim youth with Scottish Pakistani heritages as well as international students and asylum-seekers and refugees. We have demonstrated that the Referendum coupled with the opening up of the vote to 16 and 17 year olds provided a platform for some young Muslims to take an active role and interest in political issues. Student associations – such as student Islamic Societies – were important places for engendering an interest in political matters. Moreover, a number of young Muslims were particularly interested in global political issues. However, others articulated a lack of trust in politics and politicians and felt uncertain about the possibility that any engagement with politics would make a difference. More broadly, a lack of information and ineffective communication on the details and impacts of the referendum for young Muslims meant that whilst many were hopeful for change, they were unclear on how exactly their lives would be affected by such change.

Muslim young people have diverse multi-ethnic and multi-heritage backgrounds and their political agency and participation is contingent on a range of factors, and context specific. The broader political narratives of 'multicultural nationalism' in Scotland has been effective to some degree in cultivating a sense of inclusion for young Muslims but young people are also acutely aware of the barriers to participation. Everyday racism and Islamophobia continue to undermine young Muslims' political agency in complex ways. Young people felt that their entitlement to participate in politics was, in some cases, denied through a process of othering. We also found that political disengagement due to fear of misrecognition or misunderstandings brought about by anti-Muslim political discourse in the media, and everyday experiences of 'discursive and embodied insecurity.

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