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Publisher: Routledge

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## Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cjms20>

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Available online: 09 Jan 2009

To cite this article: Dr Christopher Kyriakides, Prof Satnam Virdee & Prof Tariq Modood (2009): Racism, Muslims and the National Imagination, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 35:2, 289-308

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13691830802586443>

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# Racism, Muslims and the National Imagination

Christopher Kyriakides, Satnam Virdee and Tariq Modood

*This qualitative study investigates the relationship between racism and nationalism in two multi-ethnic British neighbourhoods, focusing specifically on the construction of ‘the Muslim’ as a racialised role sign. Through in-depth interviews with 102 ‘white’ and ‘non-white’ participants in Glasgow (Scotland) and Bristol (England) we investigate the extent to which ‘the Muslim’ is being demonised as an oppositional identity in the construction of English and Scottish codes of cultural belonging. We find that, whilst Scottishness and Englishness draw on historically founded racialised (e.g. biological, phenotypical) referents of ‘whiteness’ at the level of the ‘multi-ethnic’ neighbourhood, such racialised codes of belonging are undermined in everyday life by hybridised codes: signifiers such as accent, dress, mannerisms and behaviours which destabilise phenotype as a concrete signifier of national belonging. However, those signifiers that contest the racialised referent are themselves reconfigured, such that contemporary signifiers of cultural values (e.g. terrorist, extremist) reinforce, but not completely, the original racialised referent. We conclude that a negative view of ‘the Muslim’ as antithetical to imagined racialised conceptions of nationhood cannot easily be sustained in the Scottish and English ‘multi-ethnic’ neighbourhood. The sign ‘Muslim’ is split such that contemporary significations perpetuate the exclusion of the ‘unhybridised foreign Muslim’.*

*Keywords: Racism; Nationalism; Muslims; Ethnic Identity; Fundamentalism*

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## Introduction

This study explores the relationship between racism and nationalism in two multi-ethnic British neighbourhoods, focusing on Muslims as a racialised group. In-depth qualitative interviews with 102 'white' and 'non-white' residents uncovers not only a destabilisation of nationalist anti-black exclusion (Back 1996; Billig 1995; Cohen 1988), but also a subversion of the exclusionary impulse (Malik 1996) underpinning racialised nationalism. Just as Britishness, originally a product of the modern era (Colley 2003), can no longer be accepted uncritically as 'white' (Back 1996), so 'whiteness' has become an unstable identifier of Scottishness and Englishness in some 'multi-ethnic' neighbourhoods. Additionally, processes of cultural syncretism, which previously included blacks whilst excluding people of Asian descent (Back 1996; Modood 1997), are fragmenting. We find that Muslims, demonised as incompatible with membership of the nation (Modood 1992), are also subject to inclusive discourses. There is interplay between *racialised* and *hybridised* codes of national belonging, with two effects. First, any stereotypical notion of a monolithic Muslim identity is challenged, such that it is 'foreign Muslims', not Muslims *per se*, who are deemed antithetical to Englishness and Scottishness. Second, both national identities are reconstructed in opposition to historical processes of racialisation.

## Background

Racist nationalism has played a key role in the reception of 'non-white' migrants coming to Britain in the postwar period. Drawing on historical associations with Empire, the boundary of the imagined British nation (Anderson 1991) and the boundary of race (Miles 1993a) coalesced, such that the settlement of 'New Commonwealth' migrants from the Caribbean and the Indian sub-continent in the 1950s and 1960s was received by an explicit 'white' racism: a previously external 'non-white' presence threatened the imagined British way of life from within (Joshi and Carter 1984: 66). In the 1960s and 1970s this 'race and nation' couplet crystallised, in that blackness and Britishness were reproduced as mutually exclusive categories (Gilroy 1987).

However, the above studies have neglected Scotland, its 'national story' subsumed and silenced within an English/British identification. Recent studies of Scottish national identity (McCrone 2001), although not explicitly focused on racism, highlight important developments for consideration. First, in Scotland, Scottish self-identification has increased dramatically since the 1970s, whereas Britishness has significantly decreased. Second, this change is much more marked in Scotland than any comparable processes in England and Wales (Bond and Rosie 2005). Moreover, Hussain and Miller (2005) have recently found England to be more 'islamophobic' than Scotland. Racism may therefore take different forms in different national formations within the UK, even if Britain has been the historically dominant racialised national formation. Key to this research, then, is an investigation of these apparently conflicting national narratives, especially the conceptual grounds on

which national inclusion/exclusion is defined (e.g. skin colour, culture, both or neither).

We adopt a two-tier investigation of the place of race in nationalist discourse *vis-à-vis* Asian Muslims by focusing our attention on the local as well as the national. Drawing on Back's (1996) conceptualisation of 'neighbourhood nationalism', we explore the specificities of nationalist inclusion/exclusion in areas of high Asian Muslim settlement. The rationale for focusing on Asian Muslims is important in two respects. First, there is now ample evidence to suggest that different 'non-white' groups are subject to different forms of racist and sexist stereotyping (Brah 1996; Cohen 1988; Modood *et al.* 1997). Second, Asians are the largest racialised minorities in England (Modood *et al.* 1997), and especially in Scotland (Netto *et al.* 2001), yet they have rarely been the central focus of research when exploring constructions of 'race and nation'. We can no longer ignore the specificities of the Asian, and especially the Asian Muslim, experience.

### **Conceptualising Racialised Nationalism**

Whilst any notion of a simplistic relationship between racism and nationalism should be questioned (Anderson 1991; Arendt 1973; Miles 1993a; Smith 1979), investigation is complicated by a lack of consensus on the specific conceptual meanings of 'nation' and 'nationalism' (cf. Tishkov 2000). First, opinions diverge on whether nations and nationalisms are modern (Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Smith 1998). We concur with Breuilly (1993) and conceptualise nationalism as a political ideology. 'Nation' represents some form of imagined collectivity (Anderson 1991). Second, academic understanding of nationalism has focused on two main forms—civic versus ethnic. Consequently, important conceptual problems emerge when investigating the presence or absence of 'racism' (cf. Miles 1993b) if 'ethnicity' or the 'ethnic group' are taken as primordial or perennial foundations of nation (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992).

If we adopt Miles' (1989: 79) definition of racism, which includes a process of racialisation where there is 'signification of some biological characteristic(s) as the criterion by which a collectivity may be identified . . . as having a natural, unchanging origin and status, and therefore as being inherently different', and add the understanding that 'culture' and/or 'ethnicity' have been taken, in the post-holocaust context, to act as homologues of race (Malik 1996), then any nationalist appeal to cultural or ethnic origins in legitimation of sovereignty claims can covertly exclude racialised individuals from imagined national boundaries. Racialisation need not be synonymous with racism. For Miles (1989), an additional negative attribution must be present whilst, for Winant (1994), the self-adoption of racialised criteria has provided a means of challenging racism.

From a critical universalist perspective, racism implicitly fixes human populations outwith history. In part, this befits Malik's (1996: 130–3) anti-culturalisation thesis. Due to the ascendance of Romanticism in the nineteenth century, 'through which the

concept of culture as envisaged by Enlightenment *philosophes* was transformed, many nationalists adopted Renan's (1990) particularist conceptualisation, withholding national belonging from those of another 'national culture'. Nations were the culmination of historical evolution in contrast to revolutionary democratic conceptions of nation built on the rights and choices of individuals—stepping-stones to a universal society. The modern 'Enlightened' idea of autonomous choice, which is implicit in the belief in human-determined social change (Castoriadis 1991), was undermined in Renan's culturalist transhistorical conception of nationhood. Renan's formulation shared an anti-humanist conservatism inherent in doctrines of racial determinism—rejection of the universal human capacity for change, in favour of a culturally fixed 'end state'—the culmination of an evolutionary pre-destined process. The elusive interplay between racism and nationalism is, therefore, made more transparent if we consider Greenfeld's (1995: 11) definition of 'ethnic nationalism' as 'inherent—one can neither acquire it if one does not have it, nor change it if one does; it has nothing to do with individual will, but constitutes a genetic characteristic'. If race, not human will, determines an individual's existence in the world, and ethnicity can stand as a homologue of race, then Anderson's imagined community can easily accommodate racism if national belonging is ethnically determined, beyond an individual's capacity to choose.<sup>1</sup>

For Balibar, 'new racism' in the 'era of decolonisation' (1991a: 21) presents a 'need to purify the social body to preserve "one's own" or "our" identity from all forms of mixing, interbreeding or invasion'. Such representations are 'articulated around stigmata of otherness (name, skin colour, religious practices)' (1991a: 17–18). Additionally, 'theoretical racism' incorporates 'a philosophy of history which makes history the consequence of a hidden secret revealed to men about their own nature and their own birth' (Balibar 1991b: 55). It 'makes visible the invisible cause of the fate of societies and peoples'. An 'ideal synthesis of transformation and fixity, of repetition and destiny . . . substitutes the signifier of culture for that of race', attaching the secret 'of heritage, ancestry, rootedness' (1991b: 57). There is congruence between culture as homologue of race and what Cohen (1988) has termed 'codes of breeding', which subsume practices of sexual reproduction, proposing hierarchies based on language, customs and history/memories as homologues of natural essence. It is the latter, 'natural essence', that is important for our study.

Through stigmata of otherness, social creations such as 'name' or 'religious practices' are reified. Social relations assume a naturalised form, placing individuals outside the human community of autonomous actors. Natural determinacy finds its homologue in signifiers of transhistorical bonds which preclude the national membership of individuals construed as 'ethnically fixed'. Their 'ethnicity', as identified by names and/or religious practices, dictates that they have no choice but to remain within their 'ethnic' group, and thus outside/inside 'the nation' in question. Thus, anti-universalist ethnic fixity provides a philosophical premise for explanations of nationally acceptable social practices and concurrent discourses of national belonging. Nationalist discourses of cultural purity invoke codes of breeding

which in turn fuse the identity of race, ethnicity and nation. Our analysis therefore investigates the logic of racial determinacy, but interrogates this logic outwith the parameters of biology. We seek evidence that individuals are being grouped, either by skin colour, or by assumed ethnic identity and practices which are deemed to *permanently* separate and exclude their national membership. We operationalise 'racialised national exclusion' as

[a] negative process of attribution which includes self–other ascriptions of cultural fixity presumed to determine human action, such that the parameters and hence membership of nationhood are discursively restricted to 'visibly identifiable' individuals, and subsequently experienced as such by those individuals so identified.

### **Investigating Racialised Nationalism: Methodological Rationale**

Our interest is not just in the character of racism, but also in the negotiation of racialised national inclusion/exclusion as a defensive strategy. Of central importance is the understanding that racialised groups can define themselves both in opposition to national identities and as distinctive members of an internally differentiated nationality (Commission for Multi-Ethnic Britain 2000; Hall 1998; Modood 2001). We investigate the 'combination of practices, discourses and representations in a network of affective stereotypes which enables us to give an account of the formation of a racist community . . . and also of the way in which, as a mirror image, individuals and collectivities that are prey to racism (its "objects") find themselves constrained to see themselves as a community' (Balibar 1991a: 18). Consequently, we seek the constituents of national image as experienced in the 'multi-ethnic neighbourhood'.

We begin from the understanding that meaning is made, as consciousness adapts to and changes through the interpretation of circumstances. Interpretation and meaning are contextually contested. Our interest is in inferences of national group belonging; that is, 'role signs' created through self/other assignment in the neighbourhood. A 'role sign' fuses relational inferences and expectations about behaviour (Banton 1997: 15). We could infer, for example, that because someone wears a turban he is a Sikh; this might produce an ascription of expected behaviours, either negative or positive—'a good man of high religious principle' or 'a terrorist'. By comparison the role sign 'Englishman' may be created in opposition to a 'Sikh', if the Englishman is imagined as a 'white', non-turban-wearer who is prone to neither religious nor terrorist behaviours. This entails three analytical questions:

- What phenomenological criteria (if any) are ascribed significance in the imaginative creation of signs—'Englishness/Scottishness/Muslim'?
- What evaluative expectations (if any) are being derived from the sign 'Muslim'?
- To what extent do the imagined signs 'Muslim/English/Scottish' contradict?

If the nation is an imagined community, then it is within the imagination that racialised constructs of nationhood will be found. We interviewed in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods in order to ascertain the extent to which imagined conceptions of English and Scottish national belonging exclude Asian Muslims. Questions took the form of thought experiments where respondents 'imagined' themselves in a number of interactive scenarios with people residing in their immediate locale. We explored how residents interpret and make meaning from their experiences of self-other interaction and how national belonging is conceptualised in the imaginative formation of role signs. Are those experiences, meanings and interpretations influenced by racialised nationalism? Is there a racialised English and Scottish 'self-identification' formed in opposition to a Muslim 'other'?

The significance of racial exclusivity in the construction of national identity at the local level was investigated via 102 in-depth semi-structured interviews in Glasgow and Bristol.<sup>2</sup> With no adequate database of Asian Muslim individuals from which to select our respondents, a snowballing technique was adopted (Bryman 2004).<sup>3</sup> Across the southside of Glasgow, mainly in Pollockshields, 52 interviews were undertaken, made up of 27 'whites' and 25 'non-whites'. A gender balance was also achieved: 15 of the 27 'whites' and 13 of the 25 'non-whites' were female.<sup>4</sup> In Bristol, snowballing generated 50 interviews across the Easton area, comprising 26 'whites' and 24 'non-whites'. Fourteen 'whites' and 12 'non-whites' were female. All had been resident in their respective areas for 10 years or more and were aged 20 to 40.<sup>5</sup>

### Neighbourhood Codes of National Belonging

Oppositional identities in relation to neighbourhood nationalist representations of Muslims were first explored through a series of 'housing' questions. Determined by the vast literature on racially discriminatory residential practices in the UK (Brown 1984; Harrison 1995; Smith 1989; Smith and Whalley 1975; Somerville and Steele 2002), the following question places the respondent in the position of imagining him/herself with the power to include/exclude potential neighbours based on preferred characteristics. Respondents were asked:

If the house/flat next door to yours became vacant and you were given the opportunity to select your prospective neighbour, for example, through a newspaper advertisement, what characteristics would you list as important in your new neighbour?

The question allowed us to ascertain if racialised criteria were spontaneously offered in selection. Whilst it was found that they were *not* spontaneously offered, neighbour selection did take on a racially exclusive form when respondents were asked to

[i]magine two people phone you, and they are both interested in the house. Let's say one is called John Smith and the other is called Faisal Mohammed. Do those two names give you different impressions?

We aimed to uncover negative evaluations based on presumed practices associated with Asian Muslims. In providing the signs, 'John' and 'Faisal', our objective was to uncover comparative role evaluations in favour of 'John', based on an anglicised name. More specifically, are there perceived attributes associated with 'Faisal' that make him a less desirable neighbour, and if so, what are they? Unsurprisingly, respondents immediately offered an impression of different ethnicity. When probed—'Would the two names give you different concerns?'—role-sign inferences emerged to illustrate a complex picture.

### *Constructing Zones of Hybridity*

A 'white' Glaswegian male, who described himself as pro-nation, but 'anti-flag', voiced concerns about 'extremism'. Initially, neighbours are racialised and identified negatively.

John Smith makes me think English and white; Faisal Mohammed makes me think Muslim and not white, dark skinned. [...] John Smith might make me think bulldog, right-winged fascist. Faisal Mohammed might make me think ... Muslim terrorist. I like to think I have a very humanist outlook on life, I like to judge people as I see them, but I feel that the terrorists involved in 11 September, if the whole point of their idea was to crystallise world opinion, to a certain extent I think it has worked.

Postwar Scottish nationalism self-consciously defined itself as 'anti-racist', presenting Scottishness as an 'oppressed identity' in opposition to an 'oppressive imperialist' English nationalism. Throughout the 1970s the presence in England of the right-wing National Front (NF), branded as nazi, was continuously contrasted with the absence of NF mobilisation in Scotland. This Scottish 'national story' posited English nationalism as its 'extreme, right-wing and authoritarian' other (Kyriakides 2005). As is illustrated here, the respondent's discourse reproduces the idea of 'right-wing bulldog fascist': a signification of authoritarianism is extended to Muslims. The dual association with 'Muslim terrorist' draws on representations of immorality associated with the apocalyptic side of modernity, e.g. Holocaust (Bauman 1991). Muslims are imagined to be potentially problematic neighbours. However, the respondent is uncomfortable with his thinking.

I know it's a wrong opinion to stereotype and judge people based on this guy's name, I mean he could be my twin brother that's changed his name by Deed Poll, but definitely I just feel as though I'm finding it harder and harder to sympathise with people who are stereotyped as a result of the Muslim religion.

Muslims are victims of stereotypes. The signification of 'victim' distances Muslims from previous associations with fascism, such that the identification 'Muslim' conjures an image which seemingly contradicts that of extremist. One cannot be fascist and 'victim' simultaneously (although see Kyriakides 2008 for a discussion of how these tropes are currently being paired in UK immigration and anti-racist



policy). Moreover, Muslim and non-Muslim can be genetically identical, phenotypically 'white', undermining previous racialised associations of Muslims with 'the dark-skinned'. As the discussion progresses, the role sign associated with 'Muslim extremist' is further destabilised when the respondent is asked to imagine a telephone enquiry from 'Faisel with a Scottish accent'.

I warm to him . . . I like the whole idea of Scottishness not being that your name's Jock McTavish, I like the whole idea of a modern country with modern ideas . . .

The respondent indicated that Faisel with a 'Pakistani accent', on the other hand, 'would mean that I didn't warm to him as much'. Scottish Muslim and non-Scottish Muslim are differentiated by phenomenological signs. The former is more acceptable. For this respondent, Scottishness can be ethnically hybridised. Whilst a historically racialised conception of Scottishness is broken but partially re-instated by the negative attribution he associates with a Muslim identity (e.g. 'terrorist'), the ascriptions are not fixed. He is cognisant of thinking 'erroneously', such that the racial referent is destabilised, at least at the level of neighbour preference/selection. Analytically we can say that 'race' does not present a stable barrier to the inclusion of Muslims within Scottishness. Racialisation is destabilised, and nationality rooted in 'whiteness and history' is rejected. It is the perception that Muslims can be 'extreme' that leads to the de-selection of 'Faisel'. Because Muslims can be associated in the popular imagination with an oppressive modern identity form, 'anti-extremist' exclusion occurs, but not if the ascription which a Scottish accent as code of hybridity denotes accompanies the identification of Muslims. 'Muslims' are excluded when identified as 'foreign'.

In a similar vein, the following 'white' Bristolian female illustrates how significations of 'terror' and foreignness merge to influence neighbour selection. She originally voiced no concern about John or Faisel, because

[y]ou can't really tell, can you, from a name? At the end of the day you got people who are white with different names, and you've got people that are black with English names.

Black is not English: a racialised national identifier. But race can syncretise with anglicised names such that blackness and Englishness merge. 'Name' does not stand in as a racialised code of breeding (Cohen 1988). A negative judgement is made only when she imagines telephone interaction if 'Faisel had a Pakistani accent', i.e. if he was a 'foreign Muslim': 'I'd give them both a chance . . . well I'd probably want to meet them first.' The respondent does not wish to discriminate; both should be given a fair chance. However, the addition of a 'Pakistani accent' requires further 'investigation', possibly in order to ascertain the presence of negative behaviours.

As long as they kept themselves to themselves, it wouldn't bother me if he was white or black, it wouldn't worry me. But if they did start trouble it would get on my nerves.

John or Faisal are welcomed as long as respectful neighbourly boundaries are maintained, but 'trouble' could arise. Concerns remain generalised and not explicitly tied to 'Faisal'. However, the signification of 'disrespect for boundaries' is harnessed around 'foreign terror':

Well, now, in this day and age, and what we live in now . . . Bombs going off, people being found in backstreet houses making them, I don't want that next to me. Look on the news now, and going back to July with the bombs going off in London [this is a reference to the 'London bombings' of 7 July 2005]. They [the police] went to people's houses and it was just normal streets. And you don't know what's going on behind their doors, just like they don't know what's going on behind mine. That probably would concern me, but the thing with a white man, the IRA [Irish Republican Army] aren't black. The IRA are white, but they still can do as much damage as other people can, but I suppose I'd have more concerns for a Pakistani man than I would for an English man, I suppose putting it that way, I would have decided [on her preferred neighbour] before I met them, and probably, yeah it would be a white man.

The respondent logically deduces that 'white' and 'black' have the same '(in)capacity for terror'. Nevertheless, 'English and white', perceived as synonymous, do not conjure suspicion. The desire not to discriminate culminates in the exclusion of 'non-white' *foreign* Muslims. Role signs draw on negative appraisal to produce inferences about behaviour. Exclusion results from racialised conceptions of nationhood and the conscious projection of negative attributions. However, being 'black', or being identifiable as Muslim, are not sufficient conditions for exclusion. Only when 'Faisal' has a foreign accent does his 'non-whiteness' raise concerns. He is more readily imagined as 'not English' and hence not fit for the hybridised English 'multi-ethnic neighbourhood'.

One could deduce that Scottishness is comparatively more fluid than Englishness. However, this would reinforce the problematic view that Scottishness is less ethnically fixed than Englishness (Kiely *et al.* 2005). Both respondents begin from the premise of not wanting to exclude at the level of 'name' as code of cultural belonging. They each recognise *and* respect the presence of hybridity. Whilst Englishness seems more definitely 'white' than Scottishness, the dominant discourse excludes when 'foreignness' and 'Muslim' are paired. 'Extremist' as identified with 'terrorism' provides a negative attribution deemed antithetical to national belonging. 'Foreign Muslims' are de-selected from the hybridised neighbourhood. Being Muslim is not a sufficient condition for exclusion. As is next illustrated, 'non-whites' indicate that they, too, believe their neighbourhoods could be adversely affected by 'foreign Muslim' neighbours.

### *Negotiating Hybridity*

A 'non-white' Glaswegian female illustrated why role signs associated with 'Asians' would negatively influence her choice.

As long as Faisal Mohammed wasn't coming to borrow green chillies and onions and all that [...] wasn't moving in with 13 people [...] if it's not lack of privacy, lack of space, shouting, screaming at each other [...] non-Asians just think 'Well, this is what Asian people do. There's always millions in the one house'. Non-Asian neighbours don't really understand [...], dislike starts and then it escalates into something else and I wouldn't want to live next door to that again.

In her experience, stereotypical practices associated with being 'Asian' draw a negative reaction. Privacy is disrupted such that the racial referent is assumed to extend to the respondent's racialised group. 'Asianness' escalates into a public issue at the neighbourhood level. However, when asked if she thinks Faisal's presence would have a negative impact on her, she differentiates herself:

They would be more looked upon than I would [...] If there's any problems or any arguments, they're focused on them because the noise is coming from them, not from myself.

Accent signifies neighbourhood national belonging. Muslims brought up in Scottish 'multi-ethnic' neighbourhoods understand the necessity of hybridity and the consequence of being linked through stigma with foreignness. Bereft of hybridity codes, Faisal, even if Muslim, is excluded. This indicates an imagined distance between Scottish and non-Scottish Muslims on the part of some 'Scottish' Muslims. Hybridity codes disrupt the racialised link between the descendents of New Commonwealth migrants and new migrants, even if both are Muslim.

The following Bristolian 'non-white' female illustrates how a similar process is at play in the English 'multi-ethnic' neighbourhood. 'John' is preferred over 'Faisal', because the cultural norms of 'some Asians' override respectful codes of conduct, allowing behavioural styles that can cause neighbourhood 'trouble'. Such behaviour extends negative stereotypes to racialised individuals who 'properly' adhere to Islamic codes as *distinct* from 'Asian' behavioural norms. Concerns regarding 'respect for neighbourly boundaries' mirror those voiced by 'white' Bristolian residents.

I think I would have a fear if he had a wife knocking on my door 24/7, the privacy factor ... I think young Asians actually do respect other people ... we're not intrusive, but I would be very, very worried about intrusion, not having that boundary. Some people forget the boundary. I think Asians would find that very hard to take [she means 'hard to respect boundaries']. Yet, in our faith it's very different, you don't intrude on anybody's life, but how many people actually understand that, I don't know.

A generational distinction pertains to accepted norms in the English neighbourhood. Older or first-generation Asian migrants (new or old) do not have the requisite hybridity. Additionally, those who adhere to correct Islamic practices are favoured. 'Asianness', not Islam properly practiced, can override codes of good neighbourly conduct. The perceived need to maintain correct neighbourhood codes leads this 'non-white' Muslim to exclude 'Faisal' as behaviourally problematic.

I think it's ruining the reputation with the neighbourhood, 'cause you get that name pinned on you, 'Oh you pakis'. So I think we're careful of that 'cause we've seen it in the past . . . I know what other people would think, and they would say to me 'Can you go and tell him?' because he's my sort or my kind. They would see the skin colour as relating to me . . . yeah that would probably become a barrier between me and the neighbours.

'Non-white' Muslim residents 'comfortably' settled in both Scottish and English 'multi-ethnic' neighbourhoods practice hybridised codes of conduct. Hybridisation is a necessary condition of inclusion. Hybridised identities are congruent with neighbourhood codes of national belonging, whereas 'foreign Muslim norms' are culturally problematic. Drawing from memory of racialised national exclusion, 'non-whites' are aware that the attribution of 'Asianness' can reflect negatively on them such that the social gains made through syncretism (Back 1996), can be lost. Consequently, the 'foreign Muslim' is excluded through the attribution of a negative role sign. When compared with the responses of 'white' residents an interesting picture emerges. The signification of Muslims creates an inclusionary and exclusionary dynamic. Muslims who display *perceived* hybridised cultural norms of Englishness and Scottishness are included; Muslims who display perceived foreign cultural characteristics are excluded by both 'whites' and 'non-whites' alike. Hybridised discourses of nation destabilise, not only the racialised referent of Englishness and Scottishness, but also the power to nationally exclude Muslims as a homogenous social group. The dynamic does not preclude the exclusion of those 'unhybridised foreign Muslims'.

### The Racialisation–Hybridisation Dialectic

In the following question, we extend the thought-experiment approach to the respondent's immediate experience of the neighbourhood. We asked:

Imagine you are standing in a room with 20 people you do not know, all of whom live in the area of (subject's locale). If a stranger from the same area was asked to pick out the Scottish/English people from the group without speaking to or overhearing them speak, do you think you would be picked?

If race were not salient in the identification of Scottishness and Englishness, then skin colour, as a visual identifier, would not influence selection.<sup>6</sup> We introduce 'the stranger' in accord with Anderson's (1991: 6) imagined national community of strangers who ' . . . will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'. The 'imagined stranger as resident' therefore maximises the possibility of drawing out the respondent's experience of national inclusion/exclusion *vis-à-vis* his or her locale. Our aim is to ascertain not only the possible role signs which a respondent imagines would be attributed to him or herself by the stranger, but also those role signs which the respondent attributes to the 'local stranger' as selector. The dual construction of

roles illustrates how imagined aspects of national membership are dialectically configured within limited 'multi-ethnic' neighbourhood boundaries.

### *Contesting Representations of Racialised Nationhood*

One 'non-white' male Eastonite captured the complexities involved in picking the English. He explained why it depends on the 'picker'.

No, definitely not. I think the first thing they would probably look at is colour. You know, when you conjure up the word English, straight away you're talking of white. . . . I think even the concept nowadays is not there.

Englishness is imagined as 'white'. Discourses of Englishness include an anti-universalist component—Englishness is racially closed. However, racially determined Englishness is challenged by 'whites' with knowledge of hybridity:

If they are people who are illiterate, haven't got good education, they'll be biased in so much as they'll just look, having a sort of, I would say a racial sort of view and they'll just pick the whites. If they are well-educated, well-to-do people then it might occur to them.

Some 'whites' do not 'just look'. They have a more sophisticated understanding of hybridity and a less racially closed view of English national belonging. This is particularly the case with Easton residents:

Because of the atmosphere around they ['white' residents] know . . . also it depends on what age the people are within that room. If you've got people who are over 40–50 they have a tendency to say 'Oh that is definitely an Asian', but if you've got kids who are about 18, 19, 20, because that is the new generation, it would definitely make a difference.

'The stranger' has multiple roles. Some strangers might pick the respondent as English, some might not. The generational distinction indicates that, whilst Englishness is historically racialised as 'white' and closed to phenotypically signified 'Asians', knowledge of the contemporary 'ethnically-mixed' neighbourhood breaks racialised national signifiers. 'Non-whiteness' does not exclude: hybridity interrupts the exclusive racialised role sign of modern ethno-nationality. 'Asian Muslims' can be English, albeit in a narrowly defined space.

Another 'non-white' male Easton resident illustrates that knowledge of hybridity defines the spatial parameters of localised national inclusion. Would he be picked as English?

No, but it depends on how they perceive 'to be English'. Would they see it as a colour thing, or would they see it as a dress thing, would they see it as certain features that are classed as English? If they just had to pick me out of the blue then they would most likely think I'm a foreigner. I mean there's white people live in this area have a good understanding of what Asian people are like, if somebody's never

met an Asian or a black person then they would perceive them to be a foreigner without even considering it.

Easton residents could exhibit two contradictory discourses of national belonging. Englishness is 'white', but the experience of Easton residents breaks the 'racial' codification of Englishness. Racialised 'non-white' Asian Muslims living in Easton can also be English. There is a dissonance between racialised and hybridised codes of national belonging. As will become evident, such dual discourses of nationhood also exist in the Scottish 'multi-ethnic' neighbourhood.

One 'non-white' male Pollockshields respondent (a taxi driver) explained that knowledge-producing interaction breaks the racialised 'whiteness' of Scottishness in the neighbourhood: 'No... straight away because of my colour. [...] Because other than that, a person wouldn't be able to tell, until I spoke'. This respondent expects that phenotype will signify non-Scottish identity. Scottishness can share the same anti-universalist code as Englishness—both are racially closed. However, the original racial referent of Scottishness is over-ridden via social interaction which precipitates consensus based on hybridity codes.

If I spoke, straight away. [...] It happens to me all the time. It would have to be a Scottish person who looks out for particular things, only he could pick other Scottish people... only a person with a feeling, who knew these identities and knew these tags who lived among Scottish-Asians before could identify people like that. [...] or if he lived in this area before or if he had contact with Asians before, only he could tell...

National belonging is presumed to require a prior knowledge of hybridity identified via 'tags' developed through interaction. Some 'white strangers' have such knowledge. As is demonstrated next, phenomenological signs of hybridity (tags) provide defence against the negative experience of stigma, splitting the racialised role sign 'Asian Muslim':

As soon as I speak, many a time it's a life-saver for me. [...] I go into some areas where they've never seen an Asian before, or with a beard [...] certain people will think they can take you for a ride, or that I will use them, and certain times it has come to a stage where they start abusing me if I don't say anything, and then... I put on the brakes and say 'Listen mate, either shut up or I'm putting you out here'. It helps!

Accent and mannerisms are acquired multi-ethnic tags that become mechanisms for negotiating racialised Scottishness beyond the neighbourhood zone of hybridity. Language provides the 'authority to speak', accent commands an inclusive validity. Through interaction the subject legitimises him- or herself via hybridised codes that disturb the inferred relationship between genetic differences and national belonging, to create a new zone of inclusion/exclusion.

If there is an 'ideal synthesis of transformation and fixity' (Balibar 1991b: 57) substituting the signifier of culture for that of 'race', then how could exclusion

premised on codes of 'racial purity' be undermined, as is evidently the case? For 'non-white' respondents, hybridity tags operate through neighbourhood interaction and experience, displacing racialised demarcations of nationality. 'Being Muslim' is not a totalising experience antithetical to being English or Scottish. Hybridity works with the expression of an individual's will (a universalist concept) to partially challenge and contest racialisation. Next, we explore the extent to which these perceptions are reciprocated by racially signified 'white' neighbours.

### *The 'White' Construction of Neighbourhood Belonging*

One female 'white' Easton resident drew out the complexities involved in 'picking the English'.

I could pick quite a few, but not them all. It wouldn't be just white, it be black, white and Asian, and mainly around my age [she is 25 years old]. 'Cause what does English mean? Does it mean you're born here or your parents were born over here? English, it could be any colour really. [...] If someone tells me that they classify themselves as English, then I'll take it like that.

Englishness can be chosen. Choice, according to Greenfeld (1995), is an important indication that nationality is not ethno-genetic. Thus, Englishness does not stand in strict opposition to universalism; that is, English culture is not a homologue of race. National belonging is not determined by factors external to human agency. Englishness includes that element of modernity which imbues nationalism with a political identity premised on social change through wilful choice.

This discourse of national belonging was mirrored by a 'white' female Pollockshields resident. Demographics associated with Pollockshields in Glasgow break racial referents of Scottishness.

If they're all from my area then they must all be Scottish. [...] An Asian woman, I would just assume if she's walking down the street that she is a Scottish national and therefore I would hope that she would consider herself Scottish; maybe that's a very naïve view. I know that a lot of Asians who are here, they speak their own language, they wear their own clothes. That is just a preference, a personal choice.

In congruence with 'non-white' expectations, *local* 'area' is imagined to complicate national belonging. Hybridity is the dominant code. The idea of choice is also introduced. *Tags of non-Scottishness do not over-ride a person's free choice to be Scottish..* In the 'multi-ethnic' Scottish neighbourhood, 'race' does not fix the individual beyond the will either to choose or to disregard Scottishness. 'Race' does not determine nation. Nationality tags are homologues of hybridity. We are therefore able to uncover at least one discourse of inclusion *vis-à-vis* Englishness and Scottishness. There is nothing in this discourse to preclude the national inclusion of 'non-white' Muslims.

*Anti-Fundamentalism as Code of National Belonging*

Following on from the question above, we asked ‘white’ respondents to imagine a female standing in the room wearing a *Hijab*. Significations of ‘terrorist’ and ‘fundamentalist’ as ‘extremist’ begin to exert an exclusionary impulse on national identification such that the universalist component of hybridity is partly challenged by a new particularist referent—anti-fundamentalism. Could she be Scottish?

Yes, but this is the whole 9/11 terrorism, Muslim, that immediately I’m not happy with . . . I’m concerned . . . as much for the girl’s sake as for my own preconceived ideas . . . I disagree with the view that fundamentalist Islam has of woman, this whole *Burqa* thing . . . I think it’s an infringement on these women’s . . . I know I’ve watched programmes where the woman has a *Burqa* on and they say they’re happy with their lot. I understand that this woman could be Scottish, but I don’t want her to become Scottish. I’m not interested in that, I want her and I don’t want to impose on her beliefs, but I want her to try and integrate. [. . .] If I moved to Pakistan with my wife . . . she would need to dress according to the local beliefs in a way that’s still helped her beliefs . . . so it might be a knee-length skirt as opposed to a mini. I just think ‘When in Rome’ to a certain extent.

The respondent does not object to Islam or to Muslims being Scottish. He associates a rigid belief system with the *Burqa*. The wearing of the *Burqa* implies fundamentalism, a cipher of oppression that encrypts phenotype with an exclusionary potential. In the following statement the respondent introduces a Sikh–Muslim comparison, based on previous approval of the ‘turban’, in order to demonstrate his antipathy towards fundamentalism. In so doing, the instability of racialised referents of Scottishness as ‘white’ is suggested, while Scottishness is reconfigured as anti-fundamentalist:

There is something more cultural about the Sikhs than there is about the *fundamentalist* Muslims. I think there is a difference there because the Pakistanis are Muslim . . . let’s not judge them. The Pakistanis are well integrated into society as well I would say . . .

‘Sikh’, ‘Pakistani’, and hence, ‘Asian’, but not ‘fundamentalist Muslims’, can culturally integrate. This signification does not place ‘Pakistani’ or ‘Sikh’ beyond the boundaries of national inclusion. ‘Fundamentalism’ is placed outside those boundaries. Extremism is associated with fundamentalism, but neither is singularly paired with phenotype. The preceding discussion of ‘the *Burqa*’ indicates that attributions of foreignness can be spontaneously generated when imagining the place of Islamic garments. ‘Fundamentalism’ symbolises ‘oppression’, which becomes a code of ‘foreignness’. The *Burqa*-wearing female does not possess freedom of choice. The respondent imagines Scottish national identity to be universally non-ethnically fixed. Anti-universalism, opposed by the respondent, informs the signifier ‘fundamentalism’, represented by the *Burqa* as sign, such that anti-fundamentalism becomes a new particularist code of national belonging. Absence of freedom of choice problematises the social space occupied by such females. However, there are two discourses operating simultaneously. The *Hijab/Burqa* signification does not exclude



the *possibility* that the wearer could still be Scottish. It is fundamentalism which is opposed, and fundamentalism cannot be ascribed to 'all Muslims' as a homogenous group. Islam is not a sufficient condition for Scottish national exclusion. Hybridised codes of cultural belonging work dialectically to break the phenotypical signification of Scottishness as 'whiteness' in the 'multi-ethnic' neighbourhood. However, the 'role sign' 'extremist' obtains an exclusionary potential against 'foreign Muslims'.

This pattern is to an extent mirrored in reverse in the English 'multi-ethnic' neighbourhood. The following 'white' female explained why a *Hijab*-wearer could be English: 'Yeah, 'cause there are some white women that will marry Pakistani men'. Englishness is immediately racialised as 'white', but this does not stop 'the English' from being Muslim. However, a 'non-white' *Hijab*-wearer draws a different reaction. If the *Hijab*-wearer was not 'white',

[t]hen I probably wouldn't speak to her [she means she would not pick her as English] I don't think she'd interest me, it's just not my way, I've got Pakistani people living down the road from me and I just don't bother ... [] Yeah ... it's mainly black people I got as friends, but not Pakistanis and Somalians. I just don't wanna know.

When a Muslim is Pakistani or Somali, culture becomes homologue of 'race', but 'black' is not negatively signified. 'Whiteness' as phenotypical signification is not a concrete premise for national exclusion. The respondent has 'black' friends. Back (1996) found that, through processes of cultural syncretism, 'blacks' were included as British, whilst boundaries hardened to exclude 'Asians'. Here the phenotypical signification of *Englishness* coalesces with perceived cultural attributes to form a national code of belonging which excludes Asian *Muslims*. The reason? It soon becomes clear that the latter is associated with an oppressive identity.

The black men I know don't want to own you, and they let you speak your mind, not that I do all the time [laughs], but, I keep my opinions to myself, but once something starts I have got to say something.

'Blackness' as a phenotypical signification is not sufficient to warrant exclusion from Englishness. The role sign 'masculine oppressor' attributed to Muslims complicates neighbourhood codes of national belonging. Asian Muslims are deemed to be against female autonomy. 'Pakistani' signifies 'oppressive masculinity', the hallmark of fundamentalism. Asian Muslims are excluded from Englishness because they are considered oppressive, i.e. against freedom of choice. Oppression and extremism are contrasted with hybridity, which entails free choice. Hybridity codifies 'foreignness', placing the signified '*Asian Muslim*' outside the imagined limits of the nation.

Anti-fundamentalist discourses of nationhood evident in the Scottish 'multi-ethnic' neighbourhood exist in England. Both 'nations' are racially gendered according to culturally expected forms of masculine behaviour. However, complex codes of cultural belonging operate dialectically to undermine the exclusionary force

of racialised anti-Muslim codes. Neighbourhood national codes of belonging exclude the unhybridised 'foreign Muslim'.

## **Conclusion**

Previous studies of racism and nationalism have drawn our attention to a relationship between Britishness and 'whiteness'. Additionally, the literature suggests that British national identity has changed to include 'black' but exclude Asians. This study investigated the dynamic of such processes in English and Scottish multi-ethnic neighbourhoods by focusing specifically on Asian Muslims.

Racialised national exclusion is disturbed by the hybridity codes of the multi-ethnic neighbourhood. Consequently, if culture is a homologue of race, and race is a means through which the purity of the nation is maintained, then racialised codes of cultural belonging cannot sufficiently exclude Muslims from either English or Scottish national identities in these neighbourhoods.

Race has played a historical role in the construction of Scottishness and Englishness as 'whiteness'. At the level of the imagination this takes the form that 'non-whites' feel less inclined to believe they would be considered Scottish or English unless there is knowledge-producing interaction which demonstrates a hybridised cultural identity. Such perceptions are validated by the responses of 'white' residents. A sophisticated picture emerges in which racially exclusive identifiers of Scottishness and Englishness are destabilised.

Two discernible codes infuse discourses of national belonging. Hybridity discourses presumes fluidity and freedom of choice ascribed to the national identity in question and to those identified as nationals. In this universalist discourse, national culture does not act as homologue of race. A racialised code is also evident. Drawing on historical constructions of 'whiteness', culture is a particularistic homologue of race. However, neither code exists in isolation. Hybridised codes of cultural belonging fuse the biological fixity of 'race' and the fluidity of willed action such that the former is partly disrupted by the latter. This dialectical interplay produces discourses of national belonging which inform the role sign ascribed to Asian Muslims.

Whilst it is clear that role signs pertaining to Muslims include significations of threat associated with 'terrorism', racialisation is destabilised in the 'multi-ethnic' neighbourhood. Hybridity codes of belonging break the homogenising force of anti-Muslim stereotypes such that racialised nationalism is challenged, while the presumption of a moral national community reformulates the boundary of English and Scottish nationhood in opposition to 'fundamentalist foreign Muslims'. The boundaries of anti-fundamentalism reconfigure the imagined national constituents of the 'multi-ethnic' neighbourhood.

## **Acknowledgements**

Thanks go especially to those who agreed to be interviewed, without whom this paper would not have been written, and to the *JEMS* editors and two anonymous referees

for their helpful comments. This study was funded by the ESRC (Award No. RES-000-23-0556).

## Notes

- [1] 'Racialised nationalism', as conceptualised in this study, is premised on an anti-universalist ethnic foundation. This foundation in turn underpins the perception of ethnic fixity. 'Fixity' provides the bridge between 'race' and 'ethnicity' when the latter is used to signal the perceived impossibility of identity change through choice. The critique offered in this paper stands in direct contrast to Foucauldian conceptions of racism (see Goldberg 2002) which implicate the expression of free will in 'modernity's racism'.
- [2] These cities were chosen because they contain neighbourhoods with relatively high concentrations of 'minority'—especially Asian Muslim—settlement, including Pollockshields in Glasgow and Easton in Bristol. We aimed to sample from among those residents whose parental national origin was Pakistani. In doing so the possibility of interviewing residents who have been both racialised as 'non-white' and who are also Muslim in faith was maximised. It is important to note that this research pairs phenotype and culture in its methodology, not because we begin from the belief that phenotype determines culture, but because we want to explore the extent to which phenotype and culture are homologised via inclusionary and exclusionary discourses pertaining to neighbourhood and nation. We therefore compare the responses of 'non-whites' and 'whites', not because we begin from the assumption that they constitute culturally closed objective groups, but because we begin from the assumption that racism in contemporary postwar Britain has operated along lines of phenotype, such that skin colour has been associated with 'racial belonging'. Additionally, the 'non-white' sample is narrowed specifically to 'Pakistani', not because we begin from the assumption that peoples signified as 'Asian' believe themselves to be, or are, Pakistani, but because we want to ascertain the extent to which the demarcation 'Pakistani' is experienced as exclusionary at the neighbourhood and national levels. This approach entails an understanding that peoples signified as hailing from the New Commonwealth have been historically stereotyped as culturally antithetical to Britishness, and further that the boundary demarcation 'Pakistani' has expanded to include an association with Islam. The latter criterion additionally enables us to explore the extent to which the association is experienced as inclusionary or exclusionary.
- [3] In Glasgow, two gatekeepers acted as the catalyst for this snowballing approach: a journalist on a local community newspaper and an individual working for the West of Scotland Racial Equality Council. The solicitation of 'whites' was undertaken more randomly in an area known locally as 'the southside', where Asian Muslims were located, including impromptu solicitation with a 'white' taxi driver which generated further respondents. In Bristol, contacts were initiated through an individual at Bristol City Library, and two gatekeepers at an Adult Education Centre known as the Beacon Centre, located in Easton.
- [4] Gender quotas were incorporated into the sample in recognition of the relevance of sexism to the politicisation of ethnic identities in Britain. In critiquing monolithic views of 'minority culture', Asian women face dilemmas of identification if gender and ethnic identities make incompatible demands on them (Brah 1996; Sahgal and Yuval-Davis 1992). However, our preliminary analysis has indicated that the interplay between gender, Islam, 'race' and nation requires a full discussion in and of itself. Consequently, whilst we introduce aspects of a gender interpretation in this paper we do not offer a comprehensive analysis.
- [5] To minimise the possibility of the research structuring responses along racialised lines, only the gatekeepers were made aware of the aims of the study. Interviewees were informed that the study was about 'identity and the neighbourhood' and therefore we avoided the danger

of pre-empting answers by identifying the focus of the study as that of 'race and nation'. In accordance with the British Sociological Association's (BSA) Code of Practice, anonymity was guaranteed and the informed consent of respondents was obtained; however, this was after the interview was completed. Respondents were also told in advance that they did not have to answer any question which they felt made them uncomfortable. All Glasgow interviews were conducted between February and April 2005; Bristol interviews were conducted between January and March 2006. All interviews were recorded and analysed with the aid of the NVIVO computer-assisted qualitative programme.

- [6] It could be argued that 'whites' would not necessarily have any experience of being identified by appearance, so an extra question was added for the 'white' group as follows: 'Imagine that it is you who is doing the picking. Could you pick the Scots/English from the room?'

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