



Review forum

Reading Peter Hopkins' The Issue of Masculine Identities for British Muslims After 9/11: A Social Analysis

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Introduction

Rachel Pain

Very soon after the World Trade Center attacks on September 11th 2001, political geography underwent something of a terror turn – a significant refocusing of attention on the war on terror that led to some important work on geopolitics, terrorism and securitisation. Every disciplinary turn has its emphases and omissions, and perhaps inevitably this turn has constructed the events it studies in unintended ways. In particular, there have been many assertions about the impacts of the war on terror on everyday life, yet relatively little attention to empirical evidence. The World Trade Center attacks were rapidly heralded as marking a sea-change for global politics and for local social, political and spatial relations, although recent interventions have emphasised continuities as well as breaks with the past (Gregory & Pred, 2007; Hopkins & Smith, 2008). Further, the flurry of work has been dominated by analyses that centre on 'big' politics and the global as the most pressing issue and scale of analysis. As political geographers, we have not always paused to reflect on what is taking place at other scales, as a part of, or despite, the 'big' processes. I have written elsewhere (Pain, 2009, 2010) about the dangers of ascribing fear as a taken for granted effect of the war on terror and securitisation; it has been a consistent theme in political geography since 2001. Hopkins' text is one of the first in a growing group of studies to question some of these assumptions and reorient our attention.

The book sits within a growing body of research which insists on the potency of the everyday for global political events and relations,

and unpacks some well-critiqued yet persistently rooted assumptions about scale in analysing the relations between the everyday and geopolitical (Dowler & Sharp, 2001; Hyndman, 2003; Pratt & Rosner, 2006). This body of work also helps to shift emphasis away from the spectacular event towards what we might call the potentially mundane. People's lives, spaces, and political identities are unlikely to be positioned within an epistemological hierarchy where they lie as absorbent matting, soaking up the implications of geopolitical machinations up above. They also have agency and effect, which circulate, pre- and post-date, and in the end are not fully discrete from state actions and structures, terrorist intents or media panics (Pain & Smith, 2008).

Peter Hopkins began his doctoral work shortly after the World Trade Center attacks. As such, his work, now widely published (e.g. Hopkins, 2006, 2007, 2008) and recently the subject of the monograph discussed here, provides an especially interesting insight into the issue of change and continuity. The book focuses on the everyday lives of young Muslim men in Scotland, demonstrating how political identities forged on the ground and in the neighbourhood relate to national and global events, policies and discourses. Hopkins shows clearly that geopolitical moments are already interwoven with everyday experience, embodiment, emotion and identity. Empirically, he skilfully cracks open and gets inside these issues using an intensive qualitative approach where the primary principle is listening to what others have to say. What comes across is his respondents' sense-making of their own experiences, and priority given by Hopkins to their own analyses of where these sit in relation to the wider national and global context, of which they are all sharply aware.

On this basis, the book charts the complex ways in which discourses about ethnic residential segregation, Muslim masculinities, national and religious identifications and global politics and events shape and are shaped by the lives of young Muslim men.

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Part of the consideration is given over to the events and aftermath of September 11th 2001. For these young men, geographies did change: with increases in Islamophobia and racism, with some young men restricting attendance at mosque, others withdrawing from social networks and still others choosing to spend more time in the private spaces of the family home. Although global and national issues provide an important context for the young men's senses of identities, politics and engagement, and are a cause for regular struggles over senses of belonging and attachment, the local also matters profoundly. These young men's senses of embodiment and everyday lives are the foci for their political engagements, senses of identities and anticipated futures.

However, the book affords rather more than a critical case study of the impact of geopolitics on everyday life; it unsettles any idea of the global/local as separate scales of activity, and addresses the complex and shifting intersections between the politics of race, place, religion, gender and age. What may first appear as certain particularities of the Scottish experience, which Hopkins is meticulous in bringing to the fore, in fact have significant implications for the effects of the war on terror on everyday life more generally. His work tackles difference and diversity head on: while not shying away from the violent and pernicious effects of Islamophobia, he explores the multiple identities and political views of his subjects, and exposes the ambiguity rather than fixity of their everyday spaces, in so doing challenging many widespread assumptions among academics, policy-makers and the general public.

The reviews and author's response that follow are based on presentations and discussion in a session at the 2010 Association of American Geographers' Annual Meeting, which involved a distinguished group of geographers with interests in Muslim lives and politics in changing global circumstances and places. Together, our hope is that the forum will stimulate further productive dialogue across the findings of multi-layered empirical work and wider understanding of everyday geopolitics.

Masculine identities and the complication of 'Muslim minority' narratives

Caroline Nagel

The past several years have witnessed the proliferation of publications on Muslim minority groups, most of them offering a more complicated and sympathetic view of Muslim communities than that found in the mainstream media (e.g. Bowen, 2007; Cesari, 2004; Klausen, 2005). Geographers have participated in these efforts by, for instance, critically analysing controversies over the construction of mosques (Ehrkamp, 2007; Gale, 2005) and Muslim 'self-segregation' (Phillips, 2006), and by exploring the everyday contexts in which Muslims enact and negotiate identities (Dwyer, 1999; Mohammad, 2005). Peter Hopkins' book is in keeping with these recent efforts, though by focussing on masculinity, it moves us usefully beyond the perennial interest in Muslim women. Hopkins offers an in-depth, ethnographic account of the lives of young Muslim men in two very different urban neighbourhoods in Scotland: one, a predominantly ethnic-minority neighbourhood in Glasgow and the other a more integrated neighbourhood in Edinburgh. Hopkins frames his analysis as a counterpoint to traditional geographical studies of 'ghettos' and ethnic clusters – exercises in 'measurement, mapping, and monitoring', as he describes them – which have tended, however inadvertently, to pathologise minority spaces. Hopkins dwells very little on residential patterns, focussing instead on the diverse spaces of young Muslim men's lives and the different meanings that young men attach to these spaces.

Hopkins begins by describing the local places that are most significant to his interviewees, including the mosque, the school,

and the sports pitch. These are places that Hopkins calls 'anchor points', where his interviewees spend much of their time and where they perform various identities. Hopkins emphasises throughout, however, that these spaces are not exclusively 'local', but are situated, as well, in national and global spaces – a point made dramatically evident after September 11th 2001. The terrorist attacks of '9/11' (an abbreviation that Hopkins dislikes despite the book's title) did not present a complete change in circumstances for young British Muslim men; their 'assimilability' and willingness to adopt 'British values' was being questioned long before this date. But September 11th did place Muslims, and especially young Muslim men, under a microscope, forcing them to explain their identities and their faith to a sceptical public. Recent surveys showing a growing number of young British Muslims prioritising their Muslim identities over their British identities have attracted media attention; but such surveys, Hopkins argues, belie the complexity of views about national and religious identities. Hopkins' interviewees prioritise different identities depending upon circumstances, expressing feelings of both inclusion and exclusion vis-à-vis multiple places and identities. And while they express a sense of otherness vis-à-vis Scotland, they reject the view that it is impossible for them to belong.

A thoughtful tone runs through the entire book, distinguishing it from other recently published works about Muslims in the West. If many scholars seem intent on conveying a definitive understanding of Muslim minorities' motivations and their trajectories of integration, Hopkins is far more reluctant to make sweeping claims. Importantly, Hopkins recognises the salience of religious identities, but he hesitates to make religion the central explanatory factor in his respondents' lives. He makes clear that an analysis based on class, gender, or race/ethnicity is, in many instances, more relevant than one based on religion. In general, whether he is describing young men's views about women and gender relations or their feelings about Scottish identity, Hopkins highlights contradictions, inconsistencies, tensions, and variability.

Hopkins' thoughtfulness and his ability to take on the messiness of 'real life' are most evident in the methodology. Hopkins dedicates an entire chapter to methodology, discussing the challenges he experienced recruiting interviewees, conducting interviews and focus groups, and interpreting the material he collected. This is a rewarding chapter and a must-read for post-graduate methodology courses. Hopkins is forthright about the role of adult gatekeepers in shaping the research process, despite his best efforts to conduct youth-centred research. Most telling is his account of his recruitment efforts at a college, where one such gatekeeper invited him to sit in the school cafeteria and to approach young Muslim men about participating in the study. Hopkins remarks, 'I then sat for approximately one-and-a-half hours thinking about what young Muslim men look like. I was looking for markers of Muslim identity, but what were they?' (p. 27)

Like all scholarly ventures, Hopkins' book does have its shortcomings. While Hopkins offers a richly detailed account of young Scottish Muslim men, he does not always make the jump from description to broader theoretical concepts. Hopkins draws on critical theorisations of identity and space, which have fostered the development of geographical scholarship on youth, masculinity, and religion; but the book does not necessarily set out to advance these theorisations. Each chapter addresses its own set of issues ranging from ethnic clustering to youth political apathy to transnationalism and globalisation, such that the book overall lacks theoretical focus and seems quite descriptive. A second criticism is that the geographical analysis at times is a bit thin. As Hopkins notes, social geographies matter; the specifics of a place – its demographic composition and the way it is organised, controlled, surveilled, and assigned meanings – influence how young men

(and women) construct, negotiate, and perform their identities. But I was left wondering about many of the places mentioned in the book. Hopkins, for instance, points to the school as an important space in which young men experience and perform masculinity. But we do not learn much about actual school spaces or the ways that the young men use and perceive them. We also hear about the mosque as an important anchor point for the young men in the study. But how, I wondered, do their identities inform the ways they use mosques, or the ways they may use pubs, shopping malls, and other 'ordinary' spaces? I finished the book not really knowing where these young men hang out, where they avoid going, or how they relate to the city overall. The lack of photographs, moreover, made it difficult to visualise the spaces that are meaningful to respondents.

Reading the book also raised questions for me about Hopkins' intended audience and his own sense of the potential impact of the book. The book is very accessible, yet it does not go out of its way to engage with other disciplinary perspectives. One can ask why it should engage with other perspectives; after all, sociologists don't write with geographers in mind, and political scientists don't write with anthropologists in mind, and so on. Yet (and I say this at the risk of resurrecting turgid debates about geography's disciplinary identity), geography creates an important bridge between different disciplinary perspectives by bringing into focus the linkages that exist between people and places. Hopkins' book certainly opens a window on the lives of young men whom we tend to hear about only in the media. But how, I would like to ask Hopkins, might an understanding of young men's relationships to their neighbourhoods inform debates about (for instance) inter-group contact and 'tolerance' (see, for instance, [Valentine, 2008](#); [Wise, 2005](#))? How might it speak to theoretical models of assimilation, integration, and migrant transnationalism? What might it tell us about the lived experience of multiculturalism in Western societies ([Nagel & Hopkins, 2010](#))? Of course, I would not expect Hopkins to address every theory that might relate to young Muslim men in Scotland – the theoretical focus of the book, as I indicate above, is already quite diffuse. But I would like to press Hopkins to articulate the broader theoretical ramifications of his research.

Performing citizenship: the place of young Muslim men in local and national imaginings

Deborah Phillips

In an era of global mobilities and growing transnational allegiances, questions about minority ethnic attachments, integration and settlement have risen up the political and policy agendas of many European states. Following September 11th, the so called 'war on terror' has heightened anxieties about how best to incorporate the alien 'other' into the national consciousness and placed Muslim minorities, and young Muslim men in particular, at the centre of discourses on national security, citizenship and belonging. The research that underpins Peter Hopkins' book on young Scottish Muslim men was conducted in 2002/3, a moment when both global and local events (including urban disturbances in England in 2001 involving young Muslim men) played a significant role in reshaping the political landscape of multi-cultural Britain. Set against a backdrop of growing Islamophobia, an ongoing racialisation of nationhood, mounting moral panic about asylum and immigration and the heralded failure of state-sponsored multiculturalism, questions about the place of young Muslim men in the national imagining had never been more apposite.

Peter Hopkins' book provides a rich and engaging account of how the everyday lives and identities of young Muslim men living in Edinburgh and Glasgow have, in part, been configured by this

changing geopolitical landscape. Hopkins skillfully illuminates the meaning and importance of being Muslim and male in Scotland at this critical juncture through an exploration of young men's engagement with nested scales of belonging; the local sphere of family, neighbourhood and community, their embrace of a national Scottish identity, and, following September 11th, their repositioning as marked Muslim bodies in geopolitical space. Hopkins' book is particularly successful not only in conveying the complexity and multiplicity of ways in which these young men perform their masculinity in this racialised context, but also for revealing how minority religious group identities can become essentialised and naturalised. In so doing, he provides an important counter-narrative to prevailing dominant discourses that are so often infused with negative stereotypes of young Muslim men. So we see throughout the book an exploration of how these young men's identities are constructed and contested as they intersect with discourses around age, class, gender, masculinity, place and nation.

This book raises important and timely questions about the experience and performance of citizenship, at various intersecting scales, in the context of real and imagined difference. Throughout the past decade, the London bombings, the Glasgow airport attack and other high-profile security alerts have re-invigorated the moral panic constructed around young Muslim men living in Britain and given fresh impetus to debates about national unity, core values and minority ethnic and religious group loyalties. Although the Scottish-born and raised young men interviewed in Hopkins' study have the full formal rights of citizenship, their narratives of 'self' suggest that racialised discourses infused with Islamophobia effectively place them on the margins of nationhood. This finds expression through their everyday lives. I found Hopkins' reflections on young Muslim men's use of space and the impact of September 11th on their routine mobility particularly insightful, especially their desire at certain times for 'invisibility' as they negotiate different parts of the city. This erosion of rights to traverse the city freely probably has parallels throughout Britain. On a personal level, I am reminded of how several Muslim women, set apart by their embodied difference in dress and appearance, felt forced to withdraw from a multi-ethnic survey team in the weeks following September 11th because of racialised abuse in the 'white' suburbs of an English multi-cultural city. Their departure signalled a more wary performance of citizenship; one rooted in the perceived need to retire to safe places (where their difference could be privatised) and to retreat from social and economic participation in 'white' public spaces. Other embodied performances that spoke of anticipated and real exclusions in a changed post-September 11th urban landscape followed in this city – a young Pakistani Muslim man barred from entering a sports shop because he was carrying a rucksack, and a middle-aged Iranian Muslim woman who, in the face of politicised discourses around security and terror, forsook her briefcase and carried a transparent carrier bag on the bus.

Importantly, Hopkins' account of young men's everyday lives and performances of masculinity in Scotland reveals that the story is not simply one that casts young Muslim men as victims. Young men are also seen at times to claim an urban citizenship through performances of 'hegemonic masculinity' as they negotiate their neighbourhoods. These claims are situated in, and bolstered by, their sense of local and national belonging. Despite discursive constructions of young Muslim men as marginal citizens with mixed allegiances, Hopkins' research directly challenges constructions that depict young Muslim men as emotionally detached from Scotland. Transnational connections were found to be intertwined with identities deeply rooted in Scottishness.

Hopkins' research thus makes a notable contribution to an emerging body of work that asserts the strength of both local

attachments and national belonging for those often cast as outsiders with dubious loyalties. Parallels may be found in Alam's (2006) book *Made in Bradford*, which paints a vivid picture of everyday life and imaginings of young Muslim men living in this northern English city. Like Alam, Hopkins points to the importance of family, home and community as anchors for the construction of British Muslim identity and a source of social capital with which to negotiate a sense of belonging to both city and nation. Taken together, Alam's and Hopkins' parallel research projects reveal certain commonalities of experience across places and similar enactments of citizenship in the face of shifting geopolitical relations, but there are also differences inflected with the distinctiveness of locality. A sense of belonging for Bradford's young Muslim men, for example, has also been shaped by a post-2001 riot landscape saturated with the 'parallel lives' discourse and politicised claims that Muslim communities have opted out of active British citizenship. More recently, this social field has been complicated by the entanglement of the English community cohesion agenda with counter-terrorism strategies centred on preventing 'violent extremism' and the radicalisation of Muslim youth. A growing critique of this state response to anxieties about national and geopolitical security suggests that it has framed young Muslim men's lives in Bradford, and elsewhere, in ways that are seen by many as undermining a sense of citizenship and belonging.

Both Hopkins' and Alam's studies are also notable for the way in which they avoid treating young Muslim men as objects of research, and endeavour to give voice to their understanding of social and emotional citizenship. This voice has until now been relatively neglected in academic research as in the political sphere. Absence of recognition, or misrecognition, of group's voices and rights of citizenship, argues Taylor (1992), are central to the construction of people's identities. Hopkins and Alam seek to redress the 'politics of non-recognition' (Fraser, 2000), whereby groups are either rendered invisible through institutional, discursive and authorial practices, or marginalised through representations of 'otherness'. Alam's publication is unusual in giving authorial control to the young men who took part in his research in Bradford. Hopkins goes further in that he not only gives young Muslim men a voice through his presentation of rich narratives, but he also offers a powerful interpretative perspective. While the hermeneutic task inevitably raises challenges associated with authorship, Hopkins offers sensitive reflections on methodology and positionality that are informative and reflexive. His claims to be pursuing an anti-racist project (p. 36) could have perhaps been more fully articulated from a political and policy perspective. Nevertheless, the value of his interpretation undoubtedly lies in his disruption of a negative dominant discourse on Muslim masculinity to reveal multiple voices and nuanced subject positions.

Hopkins' book has the virtue of being both scholarly and readable. His situated accounts bring the term young Scottish Muslim male, with all of its contradictions and complex positionings, to life. The implications of his research, however, are wider: we see how political discourse and embodied performances of citizenship and belonging are interwoven, the power of discursive constructions to place marked bodies and impact on understandings of 'self' and community, how the enactment of local, everyday lives is nested in national and geopolitical spaces, and how racialised and religious differences have to be negotiated on a daily basis. The social and political terrain has in some ways changed since Hopkins' research, not least with the expansion of the European Union in 2004. This has brought new labour migrants, including many young males, with different citizenship rights and expectations to settle alongside established British Muslims in the deprived inner areas of many cities. We have yet to see how expressions of masculinity will evolve in these new spaces of citizenship and how narratives of

belonging will be reworked as more recent international migrants lay claim to local resources.

(Re)locating Muslim masculinities in post 9/11 Britain

Robina Mohammad

This study, grounded in empirical research with young Muslim men in Scotland, is timely in the contemporary geopolitical climate when Muslims around the globe have come under such intense scrutiny. In Britain youthful Muslim masculinities in particular have found themselves the focus of government policy initiatives as part of the 'proliferating agenda of securitisation' (Lewis, 2006: 335). This scholarly perspective brings a welcome critical take on a population scripted within popular and political discourses as 'militant and aggressive intrinsically fundamentalist "ultimate others"' (Archer, 2001: 81). However, the book's engagement with political and governmental discourses, policies and practices around the figure of the 'outsider' within the nation remains implicit. Neglecting the geopolitical context within which a) the focus on Muslim masculinities has emerged, and b) which also signals a shift in the representation of South Asian Muslim communities more widely, and those of masculinities in particular, risks naturalising this focus and these representations as timeless. Yet as Alexander (2000) points out, the 'war on terror' has signalled a regendering of South Asian Muslim communities as masculine that is marked by this study.

Hitherto the scholarly focus on gender issues within Muslim communities has prioritised femininities, and so this work redresses the balance to consider the impact of gender on the lives of Muslim men. It also builds on the burgeoning field of scholarship on youth at the intersection of gender and ethnicity. The author takes a series of cuts into an exploration of the production of youthful, racialised, Muslim masculinities in the post-September 11th world and the socio-spatial processes through which religious, gendered and national identities cohere. A central focus of the study is the locality and spaces in which masculinities are 'at home'. In particular it explores the impact of racial and social exclusion with reference to local communities and the residential clusters that are home to the respondents. Place and scale are brought to bear on questions of belonging and exclusion, which are also the focus of the British government's initiatives for managing what are regarded as the problematic effects of excessive diversity and its distribution across space. These are underlined in British Prime Minister David Cameron's speech at the Munich Security Conference in February 2011 in which he argued that "[u]nder the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and the mainstream" weakening the fabric of the nation (Cameron, 2011). The speech reaffirmed the notion that Muslims' socio-spatial isolation is central to the issue of national security.

Muslims have been charged with self-segregation, expressed on the ground in the form of residential clusters which are taken to signify their disengagement from the mainstream of British society. Moreover these clusters are regarded as fertile ground for the growth of 'oppositional' values promoting social tensions and extremist activities. To counter these threats the UK Government has sought to develop social cohesion through a series of strategies for 'integrating' non-white ethnic groups within mainstream society and nurturing and bolstering a sense of belonging and attachment to the nation. This raises questions about the everyday practices and spaces of boundary-making through which belonging is constituted and expressed, which are explored here.

Hopkins' study illuminates these practices through a focus on respondents' views and feelings about the residential clusters in

which they reside and the ways in which these areas function to spatially bound an 'us' from a 'them'. Residential clusters segregate South Asian residents from mainstream society, but in doing so offer a line of protection from racially different others in a wider climate of suspicion, hostility and fear: by forming a zone of comfort, of familiar faces, sights and aromas (see Law, 2001) in a shared space which fosters a sense of community and collective experiences. For some respondents, living amongst a large group of fellow South Asians is viewed as particularly beneficial. The author highlights the perception amongst some respondents that when Asians are present in larger numbers the majority community becomes more familiar with and accepting of their presence, and thus may be less likely to provoke tensions or scapegoat them as 'outsiders'.

On the other hand, other respondents feel that it is the presence of South Asians in large numbers that can risk overwhelming majority white communities. It can suggest a South Asian 'invasion', a 'taking over' of 'their' country/nation and thus generate a sense of fear and threat, in the cultural sense of changing/diluting the majority culture and values (see Goodhart, 2004) but also in a physical sense. These feelings underline a sense of being 'out of place', 'outsiders' within the nation. They are 'fed' by perceptions amongst Muslims, particularly men and particularly when they are in the vicinity of mosques, of how their presence generates very real fears and expectations of violence within majority communities.

The fear of the 'other', of difference, however, is not unidirectional – it is not only evident in the majority community directed towards the Muslim/Asian community. Some of the respondents expressed concerns that spatial seclusion within relatively homogenous Asian/Muslim spaces and at a geographical distance from the wider community could promote fear in young Muslims who have little direct experience of areas which "...are demographically, culturally and politically dominated by persons from the white majority" (Watt, 1998: 688). Children who are insulated against difference can grow up believing that the majority community is full of hate and hostility for the non-white population. This insularity can also serve to promote racism towards the majority community.

There is recognition of the ways in which the spatial concentration of South Asians fosters a sense of belonging and identification with Islam and South Asian culture which political and popular discourses pathologise and regard as evidence of 'outsider' status and isolation from the mainstream. The constraining gaze of the community on the other hand can also prove to be stifling, particularly when the lives of youthful Muslim masculinities are largely lived under its scrutiny in the public arena, the spaces of the mosque, education, paid work, leisure, sports/clubbing and socialising with friends. This offers considerable opportunities for transgressing strict cultural and religious norms, albeit with the risk of moral disapproval and loss of reputation (although this is far less serious than for women). The author notes that a number of respondents admitted that they had girlfriends, even though intimate, heterosexual relationships outside of marriage are forbidden (as are non-heteronormative sexual relationships).

These illicit relationships are often conducted away from community spaces. Thus areas away from the community gaze offer the freedom to engage in behaviours that are unacceptable at home. They provide opportunities to perform different personas and engage in a localised form of sex tourism. By contrast with the community's expectations of women, with young men there is an unspoken acknowledgement that they will seek to fulfil their desires scripted as 'naturally rampant' by engaging in illicit activities, and that as long as these are conducted away from the community gaze such adolescent misdemeanours can be

overlooked. This is common in South Asia where a façade of respectability must be maintained to cover a multitude of desires deemed 'illicit'. This is what Khan (1997), in his account of being gay in Karachi, refers to as the quiet, unspoken worlds of the city.

One of the ways in which the negotiation of other worlds is articulated in this study is through the discussion of the issue of positionality and to a lesser extent the politics of representation. Here young men's negotiation of Muslimness and non-Muslimness, whiteness and non-whiteness, is evident in the particular versions of themselves they choose to present to each other, to the author and by extension to us in the academy and beyond. In Asian societies there is a greater level of conscious presentation of multiple selves because these societies are less open and because the cost of transgressing social norms is high and so they must be negotiated carefully. Respondents who are older with greater life experience and some sense of life outside of their community recognise the ways in which the community, through a variety of regulatory technologies and practices, seeks to closet its members from the 'outside' to contain change. In doing so, it also undermines innovation, creativity, development and social, economic and cultural progress and betterment.

We learn in this book about young men's experiences of their localities and their views on residential clustering, yet there is a neglect of intra-community structures and politics and the place of young masculinities within these. In recent years there has been recognition of the ways in which the 'internal' power hierarchies and dynamics between first and second and subsequent generations within the community are implicated in social tensions that erupt between the non-whites and South Asians in a context of racial discrimination and economic exclusion. Kundnani (2001) notes how the state has drawn on earlier strategies to contain racial unrest, an approach perfected within the Black community, to cultivate community elders from within the hierarchical South Asian communities to manage internal issues and conflicts and act as representatives of their respective 'ethnic' communities. Yet such community leaders, in order to retain their own position, neglect internal grievances and tensions by simply glossing over these. This means that, often, youth from South Asian Muslim communities who are suffering economic marginality due to high levels of unemployment (South Asian Muslim youth in Britain as a whole experience the highest levels of unemployment in comparison to other ethnic groups) also find themselves socially marginalised within their own communities. Community leaders deny them a voice to express their frustration and be heard (Kundnani, 2001). It is in this context that the urban unrests of 2001 in Britain's northern cities can be read as an assertion of citizenship and belonging, strengthening Muslim youth's sense of entitlement to equal rights. In an environment of capitalist competition this brings them into conflict with working class white youth in competition for scarce resources producing social tensions.

In summary, this study offers valuable insights on ethnic differences underlined by differences of religion and culture as they are ordered across space and the ways in which they sit alongside a strong sense of belonging in Britain, but it neglects to explicitly excavate the ways in which intra-community, intergenerational relations might articulate with wider power relations to impact on localities.

Muslim identities: meanings and methods

D. James McLean

The events surrounding September 11th 2001 mark one of many shifts in the ways in which Muslims and non-Muslims alike have repositioned themselves, or been repositioned by others – both in

their local everyday geographies and in global geopolitics. These shifts are particularly salient for Muslims who live as a minority in what are typically referred to as non-Muslim nations or non-Muslim spaces (though Peter Hopkins' work is at the forefront of dismantling such boundary myths). Across Western Europe and in Canada, the Muslim presence continues to be marked by exclusion, fear and suspicion, and as inherently 'other', particularly with regards to Muslim men's identities.

The geographies of Muslim communities and identities have been the subject of a number of books in the UK and Europe (e.g. Modood, Triandafyllidou, & Zapata, 2006), the United States (e.g. Abdo, 2006), Canada (Bakht, 2008) and across the diaspora (Falah and Nagel, 2005; Moghissi, Rahnama, & Goodman, 2009). Such collections make important contributions with particular case studies from across the diaspora, but perhaps lack a sustained exploration of the everyday negotiations of Muslim being and belonging in the West (but see Eid, 2007).

In his book, Peter Hopkins presents one of a very few pieces of research that engages in a sustained exploration of Muslim identity as complex, layered, and multi-dimensional. Hopkins' youth-centred approach robustly details the geographies of Muslim men's identities and experiences living in Glasgow and Edinburgh by exploring the landscapes of gender, generation, race, and religion. As such he traces the ways in which young Muslim men's identities are constructed, experienced, and negotiated through multiple scales – the local, national and global.

By paying close attention to his respondents' narratives, Hopkins teases out the sometimes subtle lines of identification through which daily life plays out at the local scale. For example, Hopkins' comparison of everyday life, belonging and a sense of place for young Muslim men in two communities, one segregated and one integrated, deepens our understanding of the lived experience of ethnic minorities in relation to residential patterns of living. Hopkins notes that while many of these men ascribe to normative assumptions about masculinity in Scotland, race, class, religion and family 'disrupt' such performances and highlight the multiple and sometimes contradictory positions through which young Muslim men negotiate masculine identities.

Hopkins further reveals narratives surrounding identity and belonging as well as the extent to which respondents are engaged politically across scales. Hopkins foregrounds the ways in which young Muslim men 'discuss, describe and disclose' their identity to reveal the ways in which a sense of national belonging and 'being Scottish' is contextual. Intertwined with these narratives are those of religious identifications that focus on 'doing Islam' and 'being Islamic' within the context of being Muslim in a non-Muslim space and as expressions of 'being Scottish'. Respondents' narratives highlight the diversity within that category in terms of differing understandings of, and significance attached to various practices. As such, the fixed stereotype of being Muslim is countered by what Hopkins notes are the 'flexible and contestable boundaries' of doing Islam.

Hopkins also reveals the everyday political geographies of young Muslim men, despite his respondents' own expressions of disengagement. The events of September 11th 2001 act as a global reference point through which young Muslim men express their awareness and connection to local, national and international politics. Respondents revealed their political subjectivity through their experiences in daily life as they faced and countered increased racism and Islamophobia. In the context of increasing conservative sentiment expressed through the British National Party, these men also expressed personal and political stances that countered anti-Muslim rhetoric in national politics while also re-engaging with and re-affirming faith, brotherhood, and the true meaning of Islam.

In the remainder of this review I want to reflect on some aspects of Hopkins' methods and methodology, as these resonate with my

own position as a white, non-Muslim researcher studying the everyday lives of Muslims living in Halifax, Canada. Accompanying a rich set of empirical contributions in this book is a thoughtful and reflective study based on principles of social justice and equality and grounded in feminist methodology both in sensibility and practice. His writing, reflections and research confronts us with a complex routing through the practice and politics of his fieldwork.

In Chapter 2, Hopkins details the pragmatics of research in a clear and pedagogical style and, thus, provides a sound model for future researchers. Moreover, he presents the complex unfolding of the research process and the ways in which he found himself renegotiating his work – with himself, respondents, and importantly, with those with whom he negotiated access to young Muslim men.

Conscious of his own location as a young white Scottish academic, Hopkins carefully traces the lines of identification through which he negotiated his positionality in focus groups and interviews. Despite what initially seem like identifications of difference that mark 'outsideness' – particularly whiteness – Hopkins details numerous points of connection through which he engaged with respondents as a kind of 'insider'. Through this reflexive process Hopkins reveals the ways in which various social markers, personal values and characteristics can become points of similarity. His own identifications as Scottish, as a student, and as a young man with, at times, similar interests, created moments during which difference and 'outsideness' became less important. Hopkins therefore suggests that negotiating insider/outsider status is better seen as a process where the researcher's relationship to the project and to respondents is always shifting in ways that can allow one to create and take advantage of moments to connect with respondents.

Hopkins joins others' calls to examine more openly the practice and politics of conducting focus groups as a valuable aspect of qualitative research both in and outside of human geography (e.g. Houston, Hyndman, Mclean, & Jamal, 2010). In addition to his attentive discussion of what a focus group is, he explores the politics of access through adult gatekeepers and the potentiality of youth-centred and radical focus groups that attempt to diffuse power and reposition the lens to the perspective of the respondents. His reflections on the decisions made by adults – teachers and volunteer project workers, for example – about access and the terms under which youth respondents came into the project provide a clear and critical examination of the challenges and opportunities of doing youth-centred research. Less clear are his thoughts on whether or not respondents found their acts of participation empowering in ways that might lead to greater social change in the neighbourhoods and communities studied. Hopkins notes the difficulty in assessing such potential successes of 'radical focus groups' in the moment of fieldwork. Subsequent follow-up interviews with respondents, however, might allow for the distance and time needed to internalise such experiences in ways that might then be rearticulated into the politics and practice of social change; such potential outcomes might further our understanding of conducting youth-oriented focus groups that attempt to rework power.

Hopkins' book makes key contributions to a growing body of work on the social and political geographies of ethnic and religious minorities living in a Western context. In particular, he directs attention to the everyday lives of Muslims as they negotiate discourses, events, and media representations as well as local neighbourhood political and social – and religious – contexts (e.g. Ramji, 2008). Their narratives act as an important counter discourse to racist and Islamophobic narratives and contribute to a more nuanced literature of everyday life and the ways in which

Muslim identity is negotiated and maintained. This book provides a detailed study on the ways in which religious identity is practiced and experienced across scales and through a range of social differences, such as race, class, gender and age. By providing a richly detailed discussion of the politics and practice of fieldwork, it also makes some important observations on the application of feminist methodologies. It is a book I would strongly recommend to anyone undertaking a qualitative research agenda and certainly to those seeking to bypass the rhetoric of 'Muslimness' in favour of a more specific and grounded knowledge of everyday life lived and perceived from a Muslim perspective.

The immanent local politics of a global event

Kevin Dunn

Before reading Hopkins' book, I had wondered whether the terror events of September 11th 2001 were accorded too much importance at the everyday level. The focus on signature events can distract us from underlying trends. Long before September 11th 2001, there had been an accumulating western heritage of Islamophobia (Said, 1981), and this had manifest in unfair treatment of Muslims by government agencies and media. I had begun speaking with Australian Muslims in 1991, when Islamic associations in Sydney were having difficulty gaining municipal approval for mosque building (Dunn, 2001). This was long before the terror events of 2001. Does Hopkins overplay the importance of the September 11th 2001 terror events? The short answer is no, not for the youth he consulted. Hopkins shows that for young Muslim males in Scotland the world changed on September 11th. Hopkins evocatively details one manifestation of the tragedy of that terror event and the geopolitics that have followed it. The terror attacks in the United States of America, and especially those in New York, were multi-scalar events. The terror attacks and the aftermath were simultaneously global, national and local, and the local effects were felt across the globe. Smith (2002) distilled the local, national and global axes of the terror attacks and the ensuing 'global war on terror', which included globally sourced bombers killing a multi-national workforce in globally recognised workplaces, sited in very specific places. Nationalistic responses and racialisation shored up the case for military actions and securitisation across the world. Victims in Afghanistan were astonished at being bombed and asked "Why do the Americans hate us?", evocatively reflecting the puzzlement of Americans after the New York and Pentagon attacks and by Australians after the Bali bombings in Indonesia (Smith, 2002: 106).

The young men Hopkins interviewed in Glasgow and Edinburgh were 'frustrated by the way that global politics and events have changed their everyday local lives' (p. 151). Hopkins details these felt effects, from racism, the hyper-scrutiny of government agencies, public suspicion, and poor media portrayal. These are local effects that have been detected globally, certainly throughout western democratic societies (Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010; Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2004). The rich empirical detail in this book allows us to empathise with these young men who are justifiably frustrated at having their local lives complicated by global events. Their frustration is all the more palpable as this global event has not affected everyone equally. Within Scotland it is mostly the Muslims that endure its local effects. Global does not mean universal. But Hopkins also unpacks the political agency of this group of young Scots. Their 'small p political' responses had at least three aspects to them. They took the opportunity to clarify to non-Muslim peers the inconsistency of terrorism with Islamic principles. Others were determined to model their good citizenship, and thus 'show an example of how

Muslims actually are' (Arif, p. 181). Others engaged with the media representations of Islam and Muslims, some by voicing their discontent as widely as possible, and a handful by writing and making contact with media providers. We do not hear much about the success of these engagements in the book, but we are told that the youth are aware of the issues and are taking actions. It is unjust that these youth perceive a need to participate in these politics, an unfair burden is placed upon them, but they are not passive and hopeless. The book contributes to an emerging and more hopeful scholarship around the political response to Islamophobia (Phillips, 2009).

Hopkins has political ambitions, though his intentions are implicit. Like many scholars, Hopkins shelters behind the cloak of the 'neutral social scientist'. The book does not overtly outline Hopkins' social justice positions, nor his political aim. But the politics come through nonetheless. For example, Hopkins fundamentally undermines the stereotyping of male Muslim youth in the West. He shows that these boys have an overwhelming desire to feel safe, secure and at home in Scotland. These desires do not match the dominant western stereotypes of disaffected Islamic youth that we see in media. The boys' hopes are the everyday desires of people the world over – safety, well-being, inclusion and belonging – but with the specific wish to be free from the threat and experience of racism.

Hopkins confounds an expansive literature which talks of how the children of immigrants are 'caught between cultures' (Siddique, 1977; Smith, 2000). Much of the research that unearths tensions and in-betweenness uses a sample from the deep-end of disaffection, interviewing those who are not settled, or is focussed on the snippets of transcripts and the extraordinary events that suggest cultural tension. There is little doubt that second generation youth of immigrants do have to negotiate the cultures of their parents and of their surroundings (see Dwyer, 1998), but most of the second generation lead fairly ordinary lives, with a well worked-out sense of their self and identity. One of Hopkins' informants uses the example of a 'blue square' to outline how it is unproblematic for him to be Scottish and also Muslim, in the same unproblematic way that a square can be blue and still be square (p. 123). There are diverse and multiple ways to be a Scottish Muslim, and these eschew the simplistic assumption that immigrants must 'choose between two identity markers' (p. 119). Hopkins' work tells us not to generalise from those exceptional cases of disaffection, and to be wary of those processes that construct all Muslim youth as alienated or at risk.

While Hopkins troubles the dominant stereotype of Muslims, and of Muslim youth, he leaves the construction of white (non-Muslim) Scots somewhat unproblematised. White Scots are constructed in a narrow way. This construction comes mostly from the comments of the Scottish Muslim youth, but Hopkins does not take up the opportunity to critically reflect on this stereotyping. Take for example, Hopkins' discussion of the different Muslim settlement patterns in Edinburgh and Glasgow. In Glasgow, the Muslim youth say they feel safe because of a high level of residential concentration: the space has a defensive function (Boal, 1976). The youth say that because of the concentration of Muslims the whites do not risk being racist to them: 'in Pollokshields [suburb of Glasgow] nobody is racist because they know they'll get knocked out because there are more Asians there', it is 'the Asian person's safe haven' (focus group and interview participants, p. 52–54). In Edinburgh, the youth state that because Muslims are smaller in number, and more dispersed, they do not pose a threat to whites, and so whites tend not to attack the Muslims. White Scots are portrayed as either looking for an opportunity to be safely racist, or they are a group who are easily panicked into being racist by the presence of Muslim people. Those may well be the perceptions of Muslim youth, but it is a troubling stereotype, and needs further critical investigation.

The racist minority feels more emboldened to convert their attitudes into racist acts when they perceive their views to be popular. This is referred to by social psychologists as the 'Consensus Effect', and it underlines one of the dangers of allowing racist attitudes to be seen as normative (Pedersen, Griffiths, & Watt, 2008). It is therefore important to construct racists, and racism, as deviant and disruptive to good social order. Anti-racism needs the 'buy-in' of whites. Constructing all whites as racist is problematic for the politics of anti-racism. Two of Hopkins' informants, Amar and Arif, had more sophisticated views on white Scots and racism. They pointed out that whites vary in their attitudes, and that 'white areas' vary in the propensity for racist encounters. Amar notes how many Muslims in Britain have formed stereotypical views of whites: 'a lot of Asian people, to be honest with you, come up with the idea that white people are bad and that their kids should avoid white people' (p. 63). More research is needed on Muslim perceptions of whites and Christians, of minority perceptions of whites, and of the social construction and social reconstruction of whites and Christians.

My final comment, and quibble, regards the book title: "The Issue of Masculine Identities for British Muslims after 9/11". I have already laboured on the centring of the September 11th terror attacks in this book (and in the title), for which Hopkins offers empirical justification. There is also the attaching of a pathology to Muslim masculinity, by starting the title with "The Issue of ...". A Publishing House and Editor's decision no doubt? The content of the text dispels myths and stereotypes, so it is unfortunate that the title evokes the opposite. This provides another sense of the political geographies of our scholarship. Nonetheless, Edwin Mellen Press ought to be congratulated on publishing this excellent text. *The Issue of Masculine Identities for British Muslims after 9/11* is a complete work of human geography. The book reports on research work of methodological novelty, empirical depth, conceptual subtlety, and political robustness. It draws our attention to important political questions, reveals the political consequences of unquestioned assumptions, it undertakes important political work, and it raises further political questions.

Islam, youth, masculinity

Peter Hopkins

The reviews by Nagel, Phillips, Mohammad, McLean and Dunn generously engage with the context, argument and approach adopted in my book about the everyday geographies, politics and identities of young Muslim men growing up in post-devolution urban Scotland. I am very grateful to be able to expand upon some of the conceptual, methodological and practical issues that arose in writing this monograph. My intention was to explore the ways in which youth and masculinities are mediated by the contested geographies of race and religion, whilst also drawing attention to the ways in which networks of global, national, local and personal events influence how young Muslim men experience, negotiate and perform their identities. Such intentions – coupled with the narratives of the young participants – led me to focus on the tenacity of specific global events, the salience of the national situation and the significance of local frameworks in the everyday lives of young Muslim men. Nagel underlines these contributions to understandings of identity and space, whilst querying further theoretical ramifications of the book. For me, the work also contributes to understandings of and engagements with scale, and the complex ways in which young Muslim men navigate different scalar contexts during their everyday lives (as Dunn observes). One of the key mechanisms I used for exploring issues of identity and politics was to employ this concept: how different scales are used in

a variety of ways to include and exclude, connect and disconnect, and to engage and disengage young Muslim men. I also drew attention to the ways in which scale is struggled over as different actors attempt to make and remake scales in various ways (Hopkins, 2007). Alongside this, I was eager to respectfully research the everyday lives of young Muslim men by giving voice to a group of society whose perspectives are usually silenced, often misrepresented and frequently distorted. I hope that the research also contributes more broadly to social and political geographies of identity, in particular to understandings of the politicised intersections of youth, masculinity, race and religion (Hopkins, 2006), but also to sub-disciplinary debates around citizenship. In Phillips' generous review she recognises that the book connects concerns about citizenship to national, state and global politics. Indeed, one of the issues that I found most intriguing about my discussions with the young Muslim men involved in the research was their engagement with, and knowledge about, political issues and processes (Hopkins, 2007). Mohammad also asks about the policy implications of the research in the book. In writing, I tried to be particularly attentive to the ways in which the Scottish context differs from that in England (see also Hopkins, 2008), and I have argued that policy should be more sensitive to such differences. Although the political intentions and anti-racist approach of the book may be more implicit than explicit, as Dunn and Phillips observe, my primary intention was to give voice to young Muslim men and excavate their everyday social and political geographies.

Kevin Dunn justifiably queries the book's title, *The Issue of Masculine Identities for British Muslims After 9/11: A Social Analysis*, and wonders whether or not it was the choice of the publishers. When submitting the final manuscript to the publisher, I called it *Islam, Youth, Masculinity* as I felt that this would be broad enough to catch the attention of potential readers whilst encapsulating the main themes explored in the text. Initially, the publisher suggested that the title included the phrase 'before and after 9/11'. Despite my requests to drop this part of the title altogether, I clarified that all of the research took place after September 11th. As Nagel observes, I critique the use of the phrase '9/11' in the text itself, because its widespread usage is illustrative of the Americanisation of everyday lexicon elsewhere, and universalises the significance of that date. These are issues that many of the research participants were also aware of in their engagements with and critiques of globalisation and media representation. My eventual lengthy negotiations with the publisher over the book's title point to the 'broader and deeply political issues about the nature of academic research and writing' recently described by Hughes and Reimer (2005: 273).

A number of the reviews here are complimentary about the attention I gave to methodological issues. McLean asks about the political and radical potential of using focus groups. Although I can't claim that the focus groups led to radical social change for the young men involved, I do think that they may have empowering effects for the participants, not least because I was one of the few people willing to ask them about their lives, to show interest and listen to them. From feedback from a number of participants in both interviews and focus groups, I know that this is something that they valued and found cathartic. As is often also the case, some of my thinking on particular methodological issues and debates has changed following my continued reflection and experience. McLean also observes the close attention that I give to issues of positionalities, particularly to my position of simultaneously being an insider and outsider in relation to the young men. As I explain in the book, my motivation for exploring this set of issues stemmed partly from the persistent questioning of my motivations and ethics in doing this research, from lay people as well as other academic researchers. Notwithstanding very specific incidences when it may be appropriate for researchers and researched to share similar

identities, I still feel that debates about positionality have to be very carefully discussed, but on occasions put to one side. Giving them too much attention risks either focussing too much on the researcher rather than the participants, or essentialising the very socio-spatial identities that we are aiming to deconstruct, problematise and emphasise as socially-constructed (Kobayashi, 2003).

There are always topics passed over for consideration or bypassed in research monographs and this book is no exception. A number of the observations made by the reviewers point to these omissions. Nagel suggests that it would have been useful to know more detail about the local frameworks – of school, work, mosque and sport – that the young men engaged with. Detailed ethnographic studies of such sites certainly have the potential to provide rich and sophisticated insights into young people's lived and material circumstances: in this work, I was aiming to paint a broader picture rather than focus closely on such locations. Mohammad observes the lack of attention that I gave to intra-community structures and politics: the study set out to explore the issues as young people defined them, and these issues were not raised aside from occasional comments about neighbourhood territorialism. In more recent research I have included community stakeholders in order to access diverse perspectives on community relations, and I have been drawn to work in feminist geopolitics as one mechanism for exploring young people's lived experiences of geopolitics in particular institutional contexts (Hopkins, 2011). Dunn also usefully points to the potential of exploring Muslims' perceptions of other groups and the views of white Scots on Muslim identities and communities, for a more complete portrait of the political tensions, power struggles and inter-group dynamics that shape experiences of exclusion, marginalisation and injustice.

In the years following the fieldwork for this project, a number of events have taken place that will undoubtedly have influenced the everyday lives of the young Muslim men involved in this research. The London bombings of July 7th 2005, the incident at Glasgow Airport on 30th June 2007 and more recently, the election of a new coalition government in the UK heralding a raft of neoliberal education and social policies are likely to have intensified the exclusions experienced by these young people as well as many other marginalised groups in society. The growing literature on the everyday geopolitics of Muslim lives might fruitfully turn to longitudinal studies to explore the dynamic relationships between global events and intimate spaces. Such research, if set in different towns and cities and alternative national and state contexts, might further demonstrate the complex ways in which local material circumstances alongside national governance and politics shape, and are shaped by, the everyday political engagements of young people.

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