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Abstract

According to the 2011 UK Census, Muslims form the second largest religious community in Britain. The relationship of this community to British society more generally has come under much scrutiny. The current study focused on British Muslim's constructions of belonging and conflict towards Britain. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using discourse analysis. Findings suggested that for these participants second generation Muslims were more likely to construct themselves as belonging to Britain than first-generation Muslims, who show more attachments to their own culture and religion. Both generations produced rationalizations in order to negotiate their sense of belonging to British society and /or other culture. Moreover, their discourse was constructed in such a way that it fulfilled the function of protecting both generations from issues of accountability in social interactions.

Key words: *belonging, British Muslims, discourse, discourse analysis, identities*

1. Introduction

The present study examines how Muslim immigrants to Britain do or do not seek to construct a sense of commitment to and belonging to British society and if and how such a sense is compatible with a continuing adherence to Muslim beliefs and practices. Rather than taking immigration and residence as recognisable states of affairs, the focus therefore is on the study of these issues as live concerns that individuals from Muslim backgrounds negotiate in identifying themselves in Britain. Looking at the history of migration, we find

that Muslims from different ethnic backgrounds like Africa, Cyprus, Malaysia, South Asia, Middle East and Eastern Europe have migrated to Britain in large numbers after the Second World War (Ansari 2002). These numbers rose even more steeply after the Commonwealth Immigrants' Act (1962) and dropped after 1970, when new legislation was introduced but rose again in 1980s and 1990s. This influx of Muslim immigrants from all around the world has resulted in the institutionalization of Islam in the UK. According to the 2011 UK national census, Islam is the second largest religion in Britain (Office of National Statistics 2013). Muslim migration to western countries is therefore not simply a geographical move, as might be the case for migrants seeking to move between states with potentially similar religious or secular beliefs and understandings. Instead, it involves broader changes in many aspects of life. This is mostly because of the cultural and social differences between an Islamic country and the western countries. These differences include family values, gender roles, sexual mores, and religious practices.

When we say that there is difference between Islamic countries and western countries, this does not mean that Muslims from all Islamic countries are same. There are also many differences among Islamic countries. These countries differ from each other in terms of their socio-economic situations, level of secularism, and developmental aspects. Moreover, there are also differences in the way Islam is being implemented and followed in these countries. Muslims therefore cannot be considered a homogenous group and are not expected to show similar processes of acculturation and identity formation upon immigration into a western culture. Moreover, these processes will reflect also the diverse and varying understandings of acculturation and integration found in the cultures to which Muslims migrate, and the extent to which these understandings are accepting of or resistant to Muslims' actions and efforts to settle (e.g. Drury 2015; Holland and Stephenson 2015; Kirkwood et al. 2015). Discussions of Muslims' cultural and individual practices thus have to be examined for how they function and what effects they have in local and specific contexts (Anjum et al. 2018).

Although there are differences among Muslim countries, much of social life across these countries will reflect broadly shared understandings of Islam as religion and its consequences for the organisation of daily experiences. The differences between various Muslim countries therefore may be relatively small when compared to the everyday social practices of other (non-Muslim) countries that do not share such understandings. Therefore, the migration between two cultures that differ not just in terms of prevailing religious beliefs but also in terms of how these beliefs are taken up and do or do not reflect established social patterns is likely to prove challenging, all the more so when Muslim immigrants are expected to demonstrate that they belong to the culture to which they have migrated. There are different levels at which Muslim immigrants are expected to establish belonging in and attachment to a western society. This belonging is defined as a 'socially constructed, embedded process in which people reflexively judge the suitability of a given site as appropriate given their social trajectory and their position in other fields' (Savage et al. 2005: 12). According to this view, belonging is not fixed but is a fluid process in which individuals see places as sites to perform their identities (Krzyżanowski and Wodak 2008; Sambaraju and McVittie 2017). This type of 'elective belonging' is reflected through a sense of spatial

attachment, social positioning (Bamberg 1997) and forms of connectivity to other places.

Taking belonging to be a fluid process, instead of a state of affairs, an immigrant's belonging to any country will reflect their social and cultural preferences and identity formation. The extent of belonging to a western society reflects also a person's choice of that culture and values. A good example of this is seen in an ethnographic study that examined the acculturation patterns of second generation South Asian Muslims in New York City, USA. This research identified three patterns of acculturation: *Acculturation*, *Partial Acculturation* and *De-acculturation* (Ali 2008). *Acculturation* refers to complete adoption of host country culture and way of life, even involving activities forbidden in Islam; *Partial acculturation* includes the actions of those individuals who try to adapt to both cultures in order to be acceptable to both host society and Muslim practices; *De-acculturation* is the complete adherence to one's religious beliefs and complete rejection of the host society's culture. In this research, *acculturation* could be seen as complete belonging to the host society's culture and *de-acculturation* as complete conflict with that culture. The pattern or patterns available to individuals in any particular instance will, of course be shaped by practices and social arrangements that are established both in the country to which Muslims migrate and the local contexts in which they participate. Often, notwithstanding that agencies and policies emphasise the importance of integration between host and immigrant communities, the expectations in practice are that immigrants will adopt behaviours that reflect those of the host society rather than seeking to adhere strictly to what is permitted in Islam. Complete or at least partial adoption of the host country's culture and way of life will thus be encouraged, with rejection of that culture viewed as failure to take the appropriate steps to settle in a country of choice (Anjum et al. 2018).

It is against this background that immigrants negotiate their identities in host countries and seek to demonstrate the extent to which they belong. For example, someone might present himself or herself as primarily British with little continuing adherence to Muslim practices, as primarily following Muslim practices with British identity being less relevant, or he / she might seek to develop an identity that to some extent combines British culture with Muslim practices. All these individual preferences for specific forms of identity carry implications for if and how a person will be treated by others as belonging or not belonging to the relevant country. And, for the reasons discussed above, forms of identity that demonstrate complete or partial belonging will be preferred in a host society, regardless of the specific preference of the individual. As Antari (2002: 13) notes, in a study of the lives and experiences of Muslims living in the UK, 'among young British Muslims, there is much heart searching about where they belong – in Britain, or in an 'Islamic' community? They are developing their perceptions of national, ethnic and religious belonging, and negotiating new ways of being Muslim in Britain, in which the British element of their identity forms an important part of the equation.' Thus, individuals have to work out in their everyday lives how to balance and bring together elements of identity that reflect Muslim preferences and practices with those that will be taken to demonstrate belonging in the UK.

Although mostly this identity construction is influenced by one's sense of belonging and preferences, sometimes this is influenced by the fear of stigma and prejudice from those with whom they interact, especially in peer settings. A qualitative study was carried out to explore the ethnic and national identity development of Asian American professionals (Min and Kim 2000). Results suggested that for these immigrants developing an ethnic identity was a painful experience because of stigma and prejudice from school classmates. The participants tried to hide their own ethnic identities and often preferred to have white friends than to maintain primary affiliations with others from their own group. We can say therefore that sometimes immigrants construct their identities and belongings in order to avoid being treated as accountable for having chosen one form of identity over another. At the same time, however, British Muslims are seen to orient to the possibility that others from similar backgrounds might treat them as accountable should they abandon Muslim practices entirely in favour of those of majority British society (Anjum et al. 2018). Issues of belonging or not belonging are sensitive in themselves, all the more so in the diversity of local contexts in which the identities of British Muslim are relevant.

The above research has shown that belonging and attachment could occur through both cultural adoption and identity construction. Isajiw (1999) has argued that migrant research can usefully be divided into three sections based on aspects of integration into western countries; these include structural incorporation, cultural incorporation and identity incorporation. Structural incorporation includes the geographical assimilation of immigrants into the new society as well as their socio-economic status. Cultural incorporation refers to the adoption of the host country's cultural aspects such as food, dressing, or language. Identity incorporation involves the reformulation of one's identity including complete belonging to the host society (Pettersson 2007). These forms of migrant incorporations can also be seen among Muslim immigrants into western cultures. First-generation Muslims try to make more structural incorporation and to some extent cultural incorporation, whereas, the second and third generations are more likely to incorporate at all three levels of identity culture and structure. As Pettersson shows in relation to the value adoption by Muslims in western countries, it is difficult for Muslims to give up or change values learned through primary socialization, whereas values acquired through secondary socialization are subject to change as a result of immigration to western cultures. Thus religious values and family values are less likely to be affected by such immigration, whereas values related to civic society, social spheres and democracy are more likely to be affected and changed as a result of migration to western culture. Moreover, Pettersson also claimed in this study that his findings suggested that Muslim migrants had started to take up the religious and family values of their western neighbours, which indicates that in future these values may also be affected and changed due to immigration to western society.

In the current study we are interested in observing how first and second generation Muslims who have migrated into a Western society construct their belonging and non-belonging to that society. The aim of the current study is to examine how Muslims construct their belonging and conflict with their home and host country. This study focuses on how Muslims manage and maintain their sense of belonging in their discourse. It also focuses on how Muslims

provide support for their particular claims to belong and address associated identity conflicts in their talk.

The theoretical and methodological approach adopted here for pursuing the study's aim is discourse analysis. Specifically, the micro-analytic approach used here is one that foregrounds the detailed study of participants' own understandings and interactional constructions of social phenomena that are demonstrably relevant to them, drawing on principles of conversation analysis (Sacks 1992), ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967) and discursive psychology (Edwards and Potter 1992). Discourse analysts do not consider discourse merely a way of representing one's inner world; instead, they consider discourse as a phenomenon, which has its own properties, which have an impact on people and their social actions (McKinlay and McVittie 2011). People are at least implicitly aware of these properties and use them to achieve specific social actions in their interactions. Discourse analysts from the social psychology domain have been particularly interested in how such discursive practices can be seen in the construction of social identities. From this perspective, identities are subject to claims, negotiation, resistance and other management in contexts of interaction with other people and within the cultural and social contexts in which we live. Identities are not simply features of the individual, but rather are understood as matters that individuals construct in the moment-to-moment of their interactions with others (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998; McKinlay and McVittie 2011). All these kinds of identity negotiation point to the fluid nature of identities and the variety of possibilities that are available to people in their local contexts. Adopting a discourse analytic perspective in the current study, then, allows for detailed examination of how British Muslims negotiate their identities, and issues of belonging or not belonging, in the moment-to-moment flow of their interactions with others.

2. Methods

Participants in the study were invited to take part in research interviews. A convenience sample of first-generation and second-generation Muslim immigrants of both genders was approached. The participants comprised 10 first-generation and 10 second-generation immigrants with equal numbers of male and female participants. Their countries of origin included Pakistan, Ghana, Bangladesh and Yemen and they belonged to Sunni, Shi'a and Ahmadiyya sects of Muslims. Data were collected through 40 semi-structured interviews, which were conducted in public libraries, community centres and public rooms at a large metropolitan university in Scotland. The average interview time was 40 minutes. Discussions were designed to be as naturalistic as possible and to produce talk that might reasonably be expected to resemble that found in everyday settings. First, a limited number of open-ended questions were used to stimulate discussion, including questions relating to participants' experiences of living in the UK, their social relations with others, and efforts to integrate or not to integrate with majority group activities. A primary goal, however, was to allow participants themselves to raise and to orient to what they considered to be the most salient aspects of their lives. Second, participants were encouraged, through back-channelling

(‘uh huh’, ‘right’ etc.) and the use of probes where appropriate, to develop and expand on their responses in order to enhance conversational flow. In these ways, the products of discussion were set up to reflect participants’ own concerns and goals rather than to generate interviewer-led data. It should be noted that the interviewer (first author) was a female Muslim who lives and works in Britain. She therefore shares many of the participants’ experiences of negotiating different cultures. This commonality might have encouraged the participants to respond in particular ways. While it might have been taken to indicate the interviewer’s sense of belonging in the UK, potentially it might also have made it more difficult for participants to reject such a sense and to argue for retention of Muslim practices. In the present instance however, as seen in the extracts below, the participants oriented to the interviewer as someone with whom they could willingly share their experiences, a rapport that might have been more difficult to establish with a researcher from a different background.

All discussions were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants and later transcribed using the transcription developed by Jefferson (2004). Initials were substituted for participants’ names to preserve anonymity and confidentiality. In the transcripts presented below, the interviewer’s contributions are identified via ‘I’. Coding was conducted to identify from the transcripts passages in which participants produced some sort of accounts of their host country or home country. From this selection of exchanges, a further selection was made in which participants talked about belonging or not belonging to Britain. Such references were found in all transcripts. Coding was conducted inclusively, with all passages in which participants raised issues of identity being selected for further analysis. These passages were then analysed using discourse analysis (McKinlay and McVittie 2008), specifically micro forms of discourse analysis that drew upon principles of conversation analysis (Sacks 1992), ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1967), and discursive psychology (Edwards and Potter 1992). Fine-grained analysis then focused on identification of if and how participants constructed their identities as British Muslims and the lexical items and argumentative forms that they deployed in doing so. Analysis also focused on the social action outcomes of this talk in constructing a form of belonging or not belonging in the UK.

3. Analysis

The extracts produced below exemplify the recurring forms of talk found across the data set and the ways in which the participants negotiated issues of identity and belonging in the UK.

3.1 Constructing attachment to the UK

The first extract is from an interview with a second-generation immigrant. It occurred at the very beginning of the interview. Here, we see how MD constructs his sense of belonging to one country and non-belonging to the other.

[Extract 1]

- I As your parents belong to Pakistan and you are born here in UK, so where do you feel more related or attached?
- MD Umm personally speaking I feel more attached to UK a:: somehow reason for that being aa I never been to Pakistan until the age of thirty three (.) so all my life I have lived in the UK and:: so I have obviously felt that UK was my first aa (1.0) home and then you only even visited Pakistan a:: for (1.0) to- you know:: to attend my own marriage (.) otherwise if I wasn't getting married I don't think I would have gone to Pakistan.
- I So you have gone to Pakistan twice and your parents might have told you about life in India, so what do you think is your life is better or worst here in UK as compared to these countries?
- MD I would say better (.) in the sense that umm putting money, financial things aside I think its sense of security and having a government there to listen to the people and protect you know their citizens and and from what I have seen in Pakistan you know there is there is no sense of security there, there is no satisfaction with the people for their own government umm and speaking to you know fellow beings, friends here as well who may have come on asylum and they they would say the same in the sense that they feel it's better for them to be live in in this country than it is in Pakistan and all for the fact that there was no security, they didn't- lives didn't feel aa:: safe being in that country
- I so it's coz of security its better here
- MD yeah that's one- that's probably the main factor but also if you look at the the quality of life here you know again one goes to the government that we have aa:: our system in place umm they looks out for its people umm you know provides for its people and also protects for its people abroad as well umm I think that's what puts a strong value to being a British national.

In this extract, the interviewer asked MD whether his attachment is with UK or with his parents' country of origin. In his response MD initially claims to belong to the UK. Now at this stage he might have finished his response as it answers the question was posed. However, instead he goes on to provide an explanation for this attachment. As a reason he puts forward the argument that he had not been to Pakistan until his adulthood and because all his life he has lived in UK he is more attached to UK. He further confirms this by calling UK his 'home'. He further explained that he went to Pakistan only because he was getting married and adds that if he had not been getting married he would not have gone there. What we see here is that he establishes a claim of attachment to the UK and, at the same time, constructs a form of non-belonging to Pakistan. By saying that he would not have gone to Pakistan if he was not getting married he indicates a lack of attachment to Pakistan except in so far as would be expected to acknowledge Muslim custom. So we can see established here a relatively high level of belonging to the UK and a relatively low level of belonging to Pakistan.

These aspects of belonging became clearer later in MD's discourse when he is asked about life in UK as compared to life in the subcontinent where his parents come from. Without any hesitation he endorses the idea that life is better in UK. This endorsement is followed by a set of reasons. An interesting thing here is that instead of giving reasons straight away, he first excludes financial considerations. Before going to tell why life is better in UK, he indicates that he is 'putting money, financial things aside'. The factors accounting for better life in the UK are then produced in listings of three i.e., security, a government that listens and protects its people. Here, he is constructing the UK as a safe place to live and its government as considerate of its masses; Pakistan, by contrast, is not described as meeting these criteria. In referring to the issue of safety, here, he draws upon a concern that is commonly expressed by those who migrate from elsewhere as a justification for being in the UK (Goodman et al. 2015). It is interesting also to note that MD uses the phrase 'I have seen in Pakistan', when in fact he has been to Pakistan very few times. Given this, his account might be potentially open to challenge, however he inserts another source of information in his explanation in the form of friends who have come from Pakistan. He thus authenticates his knowledge of Pakistan by adding the accounts of people who have first-hand knowledge of these circumstances. This therefore gives more weight to his argument by bringing in the accounts of a group of people who are entitled to make relevant knowledge claims and who have themselves raised the same matters of insecurity in Pakistan.

As he continues, MD goes on to suggest that security 'is probably the main factor'. This indicates the presence of other possible factors as well which account for better life in UK. He then produces as another factor 'quality of life'. However, rather than locate this in relation to issues such as financial security, he again refers to the role of government which he initially mentioned. At this stage, he again uses a listing device in setting out the government's concern for its people i.e., government looks out for its people, provides for them and protects them abroad. Thus he uses these aspects of government as a base not only for his better life in UK but also as a factor strengthening the value of his British national identity. MD ends his response by clearly endorsing the value of his British nationality. This shows a strong construction of his national identity as British, which further asserts his sense of belonging to Britain as compared to his parents' country of origin.

In this extract, MD has shown his belonging to UK by building his argument about a better life in the UK based on other more credible accounts by people from his parents' country of origin. This warrant, based on the accounts of others, provides support for his explanations about the matter. He has further given a brief but clear conclusion to his argument that as a result of his above examples it is clear that being a British national has strong value as compared to belonging to the country that his parents left.

3.2 Arguing for equal attachment to the UK and elsewhere

This extract is again from an interview with a second-generation immigrant. In this extract, we see how AS accounts for his response about attachment to the UK and elsewhere.

[Extract 2]

- I So where do you feel more attached to UK or Pakistan?
- AS Depend on- depends on what type of attachment you want to- obviously umm I have an attachment to Pakistan as the country of where my family came from and where I still have lots of relatives and (0.5) yeah I have gone back there but (.) I will go back there to live not in the current state because I am product of this culture (.) this is where I have grown up so this is my home but that's my country as well so I don't know what differentiation is there but this is my home but that's my country as well.
- I So you think that you are attached to both?
- AS Well:: equally in the sense that when I go back I don't feel (0.8) you know out of place there but just as equally when I am here as I say this is my home this is where I live this is where everything (0.8) all my friends are (0.8) my job is my studies are here everything so (0.8) its equal attachment to both.

In this extract, AS was being asked about his attachment and he introduces a condition to attachment by saying that it depends upon the type of attachment. But in the next line he proceeds without further explaining the types of attachment he was referring to and endorses the idea of attachment to Pakistan as an obvious fact. It is interesting to note that in the next lines, he also constructs a rationalization for his response, as we saw in extract 1. This indicates that whenever immigrants make a choice between their home and host country they treat this as an issue requiring some sort of explanation. This may be because they consider themselves accountable for choosing either home or host country. For example, if immigrants say they are more attached to their home country, people from the host country might blame them for not integrating. Whereas, if they relate more to their host country then citizens from their home country might accuse them of inauthenticity. This tension potentially could be more relevant given that the interviewer could be taken to have experienced similar concerns, as noted earlier, and that the issues become all the more pertinent in this local interview context. In the current extract, AS produces this rationalization in the form of listings of three i.e., 'it is from where my family came from', 'where I still have lots of relatives', and 'I have gone back there'. However, this makes relevant the question of why, given such a level of attachment, he chooses to stay in the UK. In the following lines, AS himself answers this question by rejecting the idea of going back to live in Pakistan in its 'current state'. In addition, he refers to his current status. He refers to himself as the 'product of this culture' and someone who has grown up here. Although he started to respond this question by endorsing his attachment to Pakistan, towards the end he is referring UK as his 'home' and Pakistan as his 'country'. AS ended his response by saying that he is unable to differentiate between the two. This is an interesting point: the question invites AS to make a choice between the country that his parents left and his host country, but he concludes his response without choosing one or the other. There is a construction of inability to state to which country he is more attached. In consequence, he positions himself as not being accountable

for choosing one country over another. He will not be held answerable either to Pakistanis or British people for showing his all loyalties to either Britain or Pakistan.

In continuing, AS explains his equal attachment to both countries in detail. First of all, he explained that he is attached to Pakistan because when he goes back he does not feel out of place there. Now this is somewhat contradictory to his earlier response where he said that he would not go back in the current state because he is the product of British culture. This gives the indication that as he is the product of British culture he feels more comfortable here, whereas, now he is saying he does not feel out of place there either. This positions him as a person who is putting a lot of effort into proving his attachment to both countries. This again helps him to escape any accountability for belonging to one country and not belonging to the other.

His response further constructs the UK as a country that is related to more than just feeling out of place. He referred to the UK again as his 'home', where he lives, where he has everything including his friends, studies, job and so on. By using the term 'everything' he has extended the category to a potentially infinite range of properties. But, in spite of the fact that his 'everything' is in the UK and only a few issues are related to Pakistan, he concludes that he has equal attachment to both countries. This gives the impression of a struggle in his discourse to prove that he is attached to both countries when in fact his inclination is more towards one country. But, as mentioned earlier, this presentation of himself as someone who is struggling in his choices gives him the advantage of avoiding any accountability for his claims of belonging to one country rather than another.

3.3 Minimising conflict between host country expectations and religious adherence

This extract is from the interview of a first-generation male living in UK for the last 33 years. This comes in the very beginning of the interview. Like the above extracts, in this extract we also see a construction of rationalizations for avoiding responsibilities for following one culture and not following the other.

[Extract 3]

I Where do you feel more related/attached, your country of origin or UK?

MA To Britain.

I Can you give me any other examples of this mix culture?

MA Yes for example if where there are ladies, I mean (.) aa:: many times in religion if we are in Pakistan it is not our culture to shake hand with ladies (.) shake hand but we have to do this a lot here not because we are happy by heart to do this but we have to do this because of culture many times aa:: moreover (.) there other things as well aa:: (.) in daily life like hmmm:: (o.8) many such things we have to do which are not in culture but are in this culture and we do it because they are not much conflicting with our religion.

When MA was asked about his attachments, he immediately responded 'Britain'. His response is then followed by a probe from the interviewer that invites him to provide examples a mixed culture. MA thereafter goes on to describe experiencing a kind of pressure of following British culture. Now this is ironic that if someone is attached to a place how he can be pressurized to follow its culture. He started his response with an example of shaking hands with ladies. He begins by introducing his home country's culture and then explaining British culture in which he has to shake hand with ladies a lot. Now this shift of culture is being portrayed as being done unhappily, in fact, it is done because of cultural reasons or pressures. In these lines, the interviewee is avoiding any responsibility for not sticking to his home country's culture by moving that responsibility to the host country's cultural needs or pressures. It is interesting to note that in his first response he constructed a sense of attachment to Britain but in this response he is constructing a sense of pressure in following British culture. This may be because he will not be held responsible by his home country's people for leaving his own attachments and cultural practices.

In the next lines, MA extends this category by saying that there are 'many such things' that are asked of him in British culture. In the last line of his response, he introduces another factor for rationalizing this act i.e., 'we do it because they are not much conflicting with our religion'. Instead of arguing that he adheres to his previous cultural practices, here he seeks to minimise the divergence between these practices and what is now being asked of him. In this way, by reducing the conflict between the two sets of expectations, he is able to demonstrate a willingness to do what is expected in British culture while also attending to the level of criticism that he might receive for not following what is expected of him in terms of his religion.

It is interesting to note in this and earlier extracts that whenever the current participants are asked about their attachment to their host or home country they not only rationalize their response but also construct it in a complicated way that does not lead to any accountability on their part. In extract 1, we have seen that high level of belonging was constructed to UK but there were rationalizations for this attachment. In extracts 2 and 3, there were not only construction of rationalizations but also avoidance of accountability for particular attachments. In the next extract we will see an example of high level of conflict, which is also framed in rationalizations.

3.4 Accounting for rejecting British culture

This extract comes from an interview with a first-generation immigrant, who has lived in Britain for 12 years. This extract occurred in the first 10 minutes of the interview. We will see an example of conflict in belonging to Britain that is justified with rationalizations.

[Extract 4]

- I Can you give details that what sort of things you follow of your own culture?
- AB Um mostly living with the family first thing and follow the religion (0.5) a::nd (0.5) I prefer like my own culture rather than British culture

because where I born and brought up then I need to follow it my own religion rather than British culture. British culture is totally different than my culture where I born (.) that's why I like to follow it because I don't like aa specially the British culture (.) the way their life I don't like to live that [a:: probably

I [what specific things you don't like?

AB the way they born and brought up because they like to drink that's in my religion don't allowed to drink that's the most I like it because I don't know I don't like the way they live about the pub culture or the most probably they follow the religion or not that's why I like to my own religion and own culture as well.

In this extract, although the interviewer has asked about what aspects of AB's home country's culture he follows, AB describes his likes and dislikes for his home culture and British culture. Initially AB briefly responded to the interviewer's question by mentioning that he likes to be with his family and follow his religion but after that he introduces a comparison between his own culture and British culture. Thereafter, AB rationalizes his dislike by highlighting the differences between British culture and his home country's culture. Later in the extract, when asked about specific things which he does not like, he answers 'the way they born and brought up because they like to drink'. He again rationalized his response by making reference to his religion. Therefore, he claims that he does not like British culture because of their 'pub culture' and drinking which he does not like because it is not allowed in his religion. There is a construction of chain of rationalizations for his dislike of British culture. Here he uses religion to explain his personal dislike for drinking, and builds his response by arguing that 'they like to drink that's in my religion don't allowed to drink', thereby allowing him to avoid the possibility of personal responsibility by putting the responsibility of one's likes and dislikes onto his or her religion.

In this extract, there is a construction of high level of conflict with British culture as opposed to his home culture. This extract is different from those above in which participants displayed some level of belonging to UK. Similarly to the other participants, however, AB rationalizes any conflict through recourse to religion. So in this extract, AB constructed conflict with UK and a belonging to his own culture. This is warranted by reference to specific forms of behaviour that AB constructs as responsible for his non-acceptance of British culture, thereby attributing the responsibility there and avoiding accountability on his part for making a choice not to adopt an attachment to that culture.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

This study examined how British Muslims negotiated belonging and conflict in relation to their experiences of living in Britain. As previously noted, belonging can be developed through different aspects including culture, religion and identity. In the above extracts, we have seen a number of ways in which these participants construct and manage belonging to Britain or to their

or their parents' home countries. An interesting thing to note, for these participants, is that if there is a continuum of belongingness, the second-generation immigrants will demonstrate a higher level of belonging to the UK whereas the first-generation immigrants demonstrate greater belonging towards their home countries. This is consistent with the previous findings of Pettersson (2007), who found that second-generation Muslims are more likely than first-generation immigrants to take up many kinds of western values as a consequence of learning such values through primary socialization. The same is the case with the participants of the current study. The major reason constructed by second-generation participants for this is that they have spent all their early life in UK, which is probably the time for their primary socialization. Thus, here, second-generation participants more often construct a stronger claim to belong to the UK and identify with British identity as compared to first-generation participants, who less commonly claim to belong to the UK and who instead foreground allegiance to their countries of origin and adherence to Muslim religious practices..

In this study, participants have constructed their belonging and conflict to a multicultural UK society in different ways. First of all, there are people especially from second generation who not only show their all belongings to Britain but also display a sort of non-belonging to their country of origin. In extract 2, there is an example of a second-generation immigrant who argues in detail for an equal attachment to both countries. Extract 3 shows the construction of conflict between British culture and Muslim practices, while minimising the extent of that conflict. In Extract 4, however, we see the participant arguing that social practices in the UK are in direct conflict with the culture of his country of origin and his accepted religious beliefs and on this basis claiming allegiance to that culture and rejecting British culture. So there are different ways in which belonging to a country is constructed and maintained, with all four forms of construction recurring across the participants' talk in the present study. The present findings do however suggest some differences in the constructions of belonging according to the orientations of individual participants towards issues of belonging and conflict. Thus, second-generation participants more commonly described themselves in terms of belonging or some level of attachment to the UK, whereas first-generation participants tended to describe conflict, either minimal or so direct that it ruled out adoption of elements of British culture. These findings are consistent with the previous research in this area, for example that of Din (2006) who found that second-generation youths preferred to identify as being British rather than Asian or Pakistani, in contrast to their parents who they perceived as being resistant to adopting British culture and as retaining allegiance to Pakistani culture instead of adopting specific British cultural ways.

One thing common to all forms of belonging or conflict is that participants treat this as being an accountable matter. Whether the response is expressing belonging to a country or conflict towards a country, participants always provided reasons for their responses. This may be because the response could be treated as incomplete without some construction of the grounds on which their particular claim for attachment is based. For example in extract 1, the participant based his response on the pros and cons of both the countries, where more positives were given to UK and more negatives to Pakistan. In

some cases, this rationalization is being constructed using the shield of cultural pressures and religion. Moreover, at times the act of following the host country culture was described by minimising any conflict with another culture or with religious practices. This type of rationalization was more commonly found in the talk of first-generation participants. Such constructions are to an extent unsurprising given that first-generation migrants have chosen to migrate to the UK: complete rejection of UK culture might render problematic the basis of such choice and make the participant accountable for the very action of migrating to the UK. Minimising the difficulties encountered, by contrast, presents the chosen action as one that is less likely to meet with challenge. Thus, a construction of difficulties in terms that suggest that these potentially at least can be overcome functions to relate the participant's residence in a particular place to their preferred choices and circumstances, similarly to the concept of 'elective belonging' (Savage et al. 2005). In short, whether a person is constructing belongingness or conflict with a country, they rationalize their choice as being in their best interests.

Rationalizations to support one's attachment to host or home country also perform the function of protecting the participants from other possible challenges. Most of the time, the participants provide such rationalizations which enable them to escape accountability for their attachments to a particular country. For example, in extract 1 MD's account of his parents' home country might be challenged on the basis of lack of relevant knowledge because he has not been to Pakistan many times but he addressed this by introducing a category of people, entitled to give out such information about that country. So, concerns over safety and government thus provide grounds that distance MD from adopting attachment to the UK simply on the basis of personal choice that might be open to question. An alternative way of avoiding such accountability, as seen in Extract 2, is for the participant to avoid making a direct choice through claiming equal attachment to two cultures. Not only does doing so avert the need for choice, it also attends to the possibility of challenge on grounds of preferring one culture over other and being treated as accountable for doing so. And, in other cases, participants can deploy arguments that are based on the tensions between cultural pressure and expectations, on the one hand, and the requirements of adherence to recognised religious practices on the other hand, to avoid individual accountability for constructing either a sense of belonging in or lack of attachment to UK culture. Where behaviours that are expected within a host society are presented as not entirely consistent with particular religious practices, Muslim immigrants can claim to resolve that tension in favour of the behaviours that are expected of them in order to display a commitment to the host society. Alternatively, they can present the tension as one that is not open to resolution, in order to account for not following expected patterns of behaviour in the host society while denying individual accountability for doing so.

There are therefore a number of ways in which Muslims in Britain can avoid accountability for their attachments to a particular country. Previous research has pointed to issues of identity that can arise for second-generation immigrants in making sense of themselves in a host society (Min and Kim 2000). The present findings extend that understanding by showing how such concerns of identity and belonging or not belonging, and the potential

accountability that individuals face for their attempts to resolve these concerns, are matters that are negotiated in the moment-to-moment of interaction with others. This study has shown how belonging or not belonging to a place is constructed and supported through the use of rationalizations and accounts that are designed not just to present the identities of those involved but also to deal with potential accountability for how and where they claim to belong.

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