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The Intangible Nation: Spatialising experiences of Britishness and belonging for young British Muslim women

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Abstract:

Critical developments within studies of nationalism trace the spatially dynamic tonalities of the nation through everyday routines, practices and encounters, considering how bodies and objects perform, reproduce and resist ideas of national identity. These studies have turned towards the more-than-representational and conceptualizations of affective atmospheres to unpack the ties between people and the nation, exploring how the nation is felt and embodied. Drawing on interviews and small group discussions with 10 young British Muslim women in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, this paper contributes to this emerging body of literature in two ways. Firstly, it considers how religious and national identities intersect and are embodied in the everyday on an emotional and experiential level through the headscarf. Secondly it explores the affective spatialities of these women's embodied identities, considering how emotional spaces, such as the home, affect how the nation is felt, (re)shaped and (per)formed in the intimate and mundane. Focusing upon the home and the headscarf, it demonstrates the complex relationship between the non-human, human, tangible and intangible, reconceptualizing how the nation is felt, experienced and lived across diffuse spaces and atmospheres. Through questioning how 'Britishness' is felt and spatialised, the paper highlights the complex nature of national identities and how they are navigated and embodied by young people, impacting feelings of belonging. It argues that national identities are not spatially and geographically uniform, but messy, emotional and situated, constantly becoming through everyday encounters across space.

Highlights:

- Highlights key role of emotion and the body in feelings of national identities
- Illustrates religion as affective component in the becoming of national belonging
- National identities shaped and performed through affective experiences of headscarf
- Affective atmosphere as useful in exploring tonalities of national identities
- Encounters with(in) the home demonstrate the multiplicity of national identities

Key words: Everyday nationalism, Emotion, Embodiment, Affective Atmospheres, Feminist Political Geography, Religion

1. INTRODUCTION

National identity is increasingly seen as a fluid and on-going series of connections within the scale of the everyday and, more often than not, within the geographical space of the nation-state (Jones and Merriman, 2012; Antonsich, 2015; Militz and Schurr, 2016). Whilst understood as a social construct and not reducible to a specific point in time or group of people, dominant conceptualizations of nations have often assumed a unified and static notion of nationalism, therefore raising certain questions about these approaches and accounts of national identity (Closs Stephens, 2013). What happens when a person identifies with more than one nation? What happens when a person does not feel affiliated to any nation or to a different nation to the one they 'supposedly' belong to through birth or heritage? And how do dominant conceptualizations of national identities limit the ways in which the nation is felt and experienced by different members of the nation? It is these questions that I begin to address through exploring the varying tonalities of emotional experiences and encounters of the nation across multiple spatialities. It is important to move beyond dominantly representational and discourse focused analyses of the nation to ask how we can resist reducing a nation to a singular and unified identity, and explore how national identities are made manifest and persist within the everyday. Often described as a 'feeling' (Closs Stephens, 2016), thinking of national identities from a more-than-representational perspective allows us to trace the ebbs and flows of national feelings, through encounters and feelings of belonging (Wood, 2012; Faria, 2014; Merriman and Jones, 2016). The more-than-representational considers the affective entanglements of things, bodies, emotions and spaces that work to shape our being-in-the-world, arguing for identities as processual and relational (Sumartojo, 2017). It is key, then, to explore how bodies and objects work together to both (re)produce and resist ideas of national identities, unpacking the connections and ties between people and the nation (Militz and Schurr, 2016).

In this paper, I use affective atmospheres (Anderson, 2009; Sumartojo, 2014; Closs Stephens, 2016), the more-than-representational (Lorimer, 2005) and feminist geopolitics (Dowler and Sharp, 2001) to consider how religious and national identities intersect and are embodied through the everyday lives of young British Muslims. It adds two critical developments to studies on nationalism and religious identities. Firstly, the paper explores the spatiality of young British Muslim women's embodiment of their identities, unpacking the nation in the intimate and taken-for-granted spaces of the domestic and the body. Considering the agency of the non-human and the intangible, this research argues for a more nuanced understanding of national and religious identities, arguing they must be seen as an agglomeration of distinct components, which work together and affect one another. Secondly, it seeks to begin a dialogue between religious and national identities at an emotional and experiential level, considering how these identities are often taken-for-granted and not fully explored in relation to their felt and lived nature. In doing so it goes beyond conceptualizations of how national identities are (re)produced and considers how these narratives are understood and experienced, highlighting the complex intersections between them, and challenging static and singular understandings of national identities. By approaching national and religious identities through the more-than-representational it allows a more critical and fluid understanding of how feelings of national and religious identities intersect and provides space for new considerations of how national belonging is experienced in the everyday.

Religion has often been seen as a cohesive or foundational aspect of national identity (Kong, 2001; Mayer, 2004). However, both national and religious identities predominately exist within research as taken for granted, singular and bounded identities with little work unpacking the intersectional and affective aspects within the everyday (for exceptions, see Holloway, 2013; Williams, 2015). Specifically, research has highlighted the headscarf, worn by Muslim women, as an object intrinsically related to ideas of nationhood; the headscarf is an object that must be negotiated by the body but also works to simultaneously affect the body through its own

capacities and inscriptions (Dwyer, 1999; Siraj, 2011; Gökariksel and Secor, 2010; 2012; 2014). Decisions to wear or not wear a headscarf can work to shape the experiences of young Muslim women's everyday lives, with the headscarf having inscriptions attached in terms of both religious and national identities (Tarlo, 2007; Siraj, 2011).

The concept of the home is another area that has been studied in much detail within both sociological and geographical research (see Mallett, 2004; Blunt and Dowling, 2006; Brickell, 2012) yet is an important scale often missed within research on national identity. The home is a key everyday space in which religious and national identities are often performed and encountered (Tolia Kelly, 2004). Critically, the home is an un-thought-of space, an aspect of everyday life that is equally intimate and private. Drawing on the concept of affective atmospheres enables the home to be understood as an affective space, brought into being through the dynamic entanglements of bodies, things and emotions, whilst simultaneously shaping identities through the encounters, experiences and performances within this space. The home, then, becomes an example of a space in which the nation is encountered in multiple, intimate and private ways, and allows new insights as it reveals the negotiation of national identities as bodies move in and out of the home. Through this, it is possible to begin to pull apart the multiple and shifting nature of national identities and uncover how emotions and affect can bring forward new understandings of identity and belonging across different spaces, considering how places, like the home, become key sites in the embodiment of national identities. (Closs Stephens, 2016). In doing so, this moves beyond ideas of simply belonging or not belonging to a group (Hyams, 2002) and instead locates national identities as intimately private and emotional, working towards more nuanced conceptualizations of what it feels like to encounter and embody national identities in the everyday. The work here seeks to contribute to an emerging literature on a more-than-representational approach to the nation, which argues that national identities are emergent and multiple, shifting as bodies move through and

encounter different spaces (Wood, 2012; Sumartojo, 2014; Closs Stephens, 2016; Militz and Schurr, 2016).

The paper is split into four sections. Initially exploring the emergent bodies of literature on affective atmospheres, everyday emotions and nationalism, the paper discusses how these ideas have been conceptualized and framed within cultural and political geography literature. The paper draws on a study that was undertaken with ten British Muslim women in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, England. I present an investigation into the feelings and embodiments of Britishness in the lives of these young British Muslim women. I argue for a wider conceptualisation of national identities beyond that of a singular, unified narrative, and for the constant re-articulation and reproduction of the nation within the everyday and through mundane, taken-for-granted objects. Finally, I conclude by arguing for the importance of the intangible and emotional aspects of national identities, considering how other identifiers, such as religion, can play a role in how they are felt, imagined and embodied in the everyday. I suggest that the move towards affective atmospheres provides a useful conceptual framework for bridging the distant and the embodied to provide a more nuanced account of national identities.

2. AFFECTIVE ATMOSPHERES, EVERYDAY EMOTIONS AND THE NATION

Feminist geopolitics has long been working to locate and ground geopolitics at the scale of the everyday and the body, considering emotion and experience (see Dowler and Sharp, 2001). There has, however, been a reliance on the representational, as well as a lack of engagement with the non-human and intangible, such as feelings or atmospheres, although exceptions can be found (Williams, 2014; Pain, 2009; 2010; Dixon, 2015). Emotions and feelings play a crucial role in how we understand and navigate our everyday lives (Anderson and Smith, 2001; Pain, 2009; 2010), impacting how spaces and bodies are encountered, as well as the way our identities are performed and expressed (Faria, 2014). Simonsen (2012) reiterates the

importance of this relationship between bodies, spaces, the affective and emotional, highlighting how the movement of bodies through space constantly shape themselves and each other. She argues that bodies and spaces are always in process, or becoming, as they are performed and situated spatially and temporally (Simonsen, 2012). It is important to consider this recursive relationship between bodies, spaces, emotions and affect as this enables further exploration into everyday lived experiences of the nation, something lacking within current literature (Dixon and Marston, 2011). Critically this paper considers how works on emotional geographies, the affective and the nation come together to explore how national identity comes into being through feelings, performances and encounters with specific spaces, bodies and objects (Faria, 2014).

Key to this paper is the work of Anderson (2009), Closs Stephens (2016) and Edensor (2015) who suggest affective atmospheres are a way to explore the theoretical contestations surrounding bodies, cognition and the re-presenting of emotions and affects (Pile, 2010) as atmospheres belong to distinct and wider situations, yet are felt on a personal and embodied level. Stewart (2011:452) suggests that atmospheres are a “lived affect – a capacity to affect and to be affected”, a sensory, emotional, bodily attunement to something that influences a way of living, becoming and performing. An atmosphere is not passive or active, but sits in the middle and must be understood as experiential and relational. Approaching the performance of national identities through the lens of affective atmospheres means that emotionally subjective experiences of belonging to nations are important within wider narratives of national identities, formed through affective encounters with bodies, spaces and things (McCormack, 2013). Seeing emotions as relational doings, brought into being through performance and triggered by affective qualities, helps to explore how emotions intertwine bodies, spaces, atmospheres and things through encounters, gestures and movements (Simonsen, 2007; 2012). For Closs Stephens (2016), it is atmospheres and the little, mundane and taken-for-granted movements and rhythms that are important to consider as they permeate different parts of everyday life

across spaces, cultivating feelings of nationalism, which are expressed through emotional doings.

Critically, combining work on affect, emotion and feelings of nationalism is the work of Faria (2013; 2014), who considers the ways in which the nation is produced through emotions, triggered by deeply affective qualities that are emergent through embodied and intimate spaces. This emotional nationalism also allows for a conceptualisation of varying types or intensities of nationalisms, which are felt differently by and across bodies and spaces (Faria, 2014). Whilst intensities of nationalism have often related to debates surrounding the hot or banal (Jones and Merriman, 2009; Paasi, 2015; Christian et al., 2015), it is also important to think of intensities as ebbs and swells within the everyday (Closs Stephens, 2016), not dependent upon an event or moment but rather a lingering mood or atmosphere that is differentially felt and encountered within varying spatialities and temporalities. Affective atmospheres highlight the importance of an inhabited account of nationalism, naming the need to consider how nations are performed and come to exist through bodies. Moving and sensing bodies are in part generative of an affective imagined community, performing spaces and making something intangible, palpable (McCormack, 2013). Indeed, if the nation is to be considered as an affective 'space' or 'atmosphere' it is necessary to explore how the encounters with it, which do not have to occur in the geographical proximity of the territorial nation state (McCormack, 2013), shape conceptualizations and embodiments of national identities. How a nation is felt and understood becomes something that exists through encounters and performances that are spatially dynamic and specific, affected by and affecting a wider set of components. Bodies have agentic capacities, which are animated, communicative and performative, affecting the nation and being affected by emotionally subjective encounters with things, atmospheres, other bodies and spaces (Simonsen, 2012).

Through considering the more-than-representational we can unpack how national identities are experienced on an emotional level, and the ways in which those feelings are embodied and installed (Wood, 2012). Specifically, considering atmosphere and the more-than-representational addresses the multiplicity of national feelings that emerge (Closs Stephens, 2016: 182). By considering the multiplicity of national feelings, it is possible to more carefully explore how a body's own interpretation of the nation affects their performance of nationalism and their feelings of belonging (Nayak, 2017). Not only does this highlight the emotional and embodied aspect of national identities, it also draws human and non-human elements together, providing a more relational understanding of national identities and belonging (Jones and Merriman, 2012; Wood, 2012). It recognizes feelings as important national notions and explores how these arise to form a sense of belonging and identity (Wood, 2012; Faria, 2014). Importantly, we can consider how bodies are influenced in their performance and sense of belonging due to feelings and atmospheres that surround them. Specifically, it is useful to conceptualize both geopolitical and national events as affective, being scripted through and productive of atmospheres which, in turn, work to shape feelings and performances of national identity (Sumartojo, 2014). Through the more-than-representational, national identities are understood as relational, constantly becoming, and performed through encounters and ties rather than as a stationary and singular conceptualisation (Bruce, 2014). This enables a move beyond the presumed uniformity of national identity and towards spatially and temporally dynamic accounts of nations, engaging with the shifting and multiple tonalities of national identities (Militz and Schurr, 2016). By approaching the nation as a relational, affective space, we can critically build upon Billig's banal nationalism (1995), attending to ideas of the nation in the everyday (Benwell and Dodds, 2011; Benwell, 2014) and working to address some of its key concerns. Attending to the affective moves away from the assumption of structured and pre-existing nations, to unpack how nations are experienced and embodied in everyday lives (Militz and Schurr, 2016). It contends for resistant accounts and multi-national identities, affiliations that exist beyond the historical and static understandings of the state (Closs Stephens, 2013).

3. THE INTERSECTIONAL NATION

Whilst there is much work that discusses both religious and national identity (Hopkins, 2007; Zimmerman, 2014; 2015), 'being Muslim' and 'being British' are predominantly used as taken-for-granted categorical labels, either applied to bodies and used as explanatory indicators, or focusing on the lived aspect of their religious identity rather than how this relates to ideas of the nation. These approaches are useful and important, however, it is crucial to begin to pick apart the intersectional nature of national and religious identities on an emotional and experiential level (Kong, 2001), exploring the role that differential embodiments and spatialities have in relation to feelings of national belonging. Indeed, as argued by Wood (2007; 2012), exploring the role of emotional, embodied experiences in forming attachments to the nation is important in not only developing a more nuanced and critical understanding of national identities, but also in providing a way to unsettle dominant and familiar narratives of national belonging, making space for insight into lived encounters and the becoming of national identities across spaces (Sabhlok, 2010; Antonsich et al., 2014). Drawing upon ideas of lived religion (McGuire, 2008) it is important to develop these approaches to religious identities to consider how identities intersect and affect everyday experiences and encounters. Feelings of national identity are not separate from other identities that are navigated by the body, and the intersections of feelings of Britishness and ideas of religious identities must be considered.

The headscarf is an interesting point of departure in beginning to consider these intersections. There has been much discussion over the materiality of the headscarf for Muslim women within geographic literature, many exploring its meaning to religious and gendered identities within different spaces, and also in relation to the 'othering' of Islamic identity on a global scale (Dwyer, 1999; Gökariksel and Secor, 2009). The headscarf is an object through which young Muslim women physically claim and embody their religious identities and is a visual representation of their personal identity in the public sphere, marking their body as sacred and

specifically Muslim (Siraj, 2011). I seek to maintain the importance of the embodiments of national identities, but also consider how religious identities intersect with feelings of Britishness, and investigate the affective spatialities that shape the embodiment and negotiation of identities.

Within both critical geopolitics and religious studies there has also been some lack of focus on young people's experiences, often assuming young people are apathetic, unimportant or unqualified to understand and embody geopolitical narratives and religious identities (Philo and Smith, 2003; Pain et al., 2010; Vincett et al., 2012). I seek to build upon the work filling this gap (Hörschelmann, 2008; Hopkins, 2010; Olson et al., 2013), suggesting that young people are navigating and developing their own understandings of their identity. Young people are equally affected by experiences, things, atmospheres and spaces, expressing them primarily through the body. Often, within studies on embodiment and performance of religious identity, young people are seen to have a lack of religious understanding, knowledge and experience, yet research has begun to highlight the importance of unpacking young people's experiences of both religious identities (Olson et al., 2013; Vincett et al., 2012) and national identities (Jones et al., 2016). Specifically, the relationship between young bodies, spaces and atmospheres has begun to emerge as important, with certain spaces and atmospheres disrupting the normalized ways in which religious identity has been seen to be embodied, as bodies work to affect and reconstitute the spaces in which they are located (Olson et al., 2013; Vincett et al., 2012).

These literatures point towards the need for an embodied consideration of the more complex understandings of national identities beyond the banal and unified, considering instead multiple and nuanced lived experiences with the intangible nation. Combining existing and well developed approaches to research within these spaces, focusing on national and religious identity formation, performance and negotiation, this paper seeks to both highlight and move towards filling the gap that exists surrounding the intersectional nature of national and religious

identities and draw on ideas of affective atmospheres (Anderson, 2009; McCormack, 2013; Closs Stephens, 2016). Approaching the nation through this more-than-representational lens, it is possible to explore national identities as dynamic and individualized encounters, which differ across spatialities and bodies. We can begin to pick apart how the nation is conceptualized and performed in different spaces and times, exploring national identities as feelings, with affective capacities. Moreover, through beginning to unpack national identities at the embodied, emotional and felt level, we can consider the becoming of national and religious bodies, exploring how these identities are lived and brought into being across multiple spatialities.

4. THE STUDY

Feminist geopolitics highlights the utility of gaining primary data through methods such as interviews, focus groups and ethnography (Dowler and Sharp, 2001; Woon, 2013). These methods enable a documentation of personal encounters with space and place, highlighting the multiplicity of experiences, and producing a more grounded, embodied and situated understanding of broader geopolitical themes and concepts (Dowler and Sharp, 2001; Woon, 2013). Overall ten 17-23 year old British Muslim women in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, England took part in this research, with eight in-depth, semi-structured interviews and one small discussion group taking place. Interviews and the group discussion typically lasted for an hour to two hours and took place in coffee shops and university common spaces as requested by participants. Two contacts were made through Newcastle University and these participants acted as gatekeepers, providing access to further respondents who attended either college or university. The research was in part inspired by a campaign launched by The Sun newspaper for Britons to unite against the Islamic State, and included images of Muslim women wearing Union Jack headscarves and holding Union Jack signs (Sullivan, 2014). By exploring the first-hand accounts of young British Muslim women, I sought to give voice to their stories and experiences, contributing to the call for more embodied and grounded understandings of the nation and everyday life (Dowler and Sharp, 2001; Woon, 2014). As the research took place in a small area

of the UK, it is important to note this research does not intend to be representational of all young Muslim women's experiences within Newcastle-upon-Tyne, but aims to give voice to the experiences of these ten young women, providing an insight into wider narratives of national belonging and encounter. The work here also seeks to push forward an area of research that considers a more nuanced approach to studying the intersections of national and religious identity.

Within the interviews, different activities and prompts were used, drawing on more participant-driven approaches to research (Pain, 2004). Participants were encouraged to map out their 'everyday' through drawing or depicting different places they visit and people they encounter. This activity was used to get participants thinking about spaces and bodies that they experienced, and the ways in which their actions or bodies shifted according to space and time. The use of images and probes within interviews and focus groups is useful, especially when exploring personal narratives and accounts of the everyday (see Latham, 2003; 2004 and De Leon and Cohen, 2005). Further to the mapping activity, various images and news articles were shown to participants to drive conversation about the intersections of faith and nation. Images and mapping techniques were useful when approaching mundane and sensitive topics, as they opened new avenues for conversations about these ideas, facilitating communication and the exploration of identity performance, negotiation and encounter within the everyday (Kesby, 2000). Thus, these techniques were used to provide a way to allow participants to dictate their own engagement with a topic and aimed to produce more natural responses to ideas and situations. Mapping techniques and images also acted as triggers to encourage discussion about wider geopolitical events or different encounters that had impacted their lives, sometimes in unconscious ways (El Refaie and Hörschelmann, 2010). When exploring the affective and non-cognitive, it is challenging to rely on predominantly discursive methods to derive data, therefore the use of mapping and more creative methods is one way to begin to think beyond the discursive towards the felt, emotional and experiential. It is also important to consider how

participants performed their identities within the interviews through tone, actions and body language, adding a greater depth to the conversations and thinking about how they expressed their feelings about certain topics and moments in their lives. Feelings like excitement, reservation, passion and apathy were evident as they talked about their encounters and experiences, and were noted down. In future studies, it would be useful to walk alongside or visit some of the spaces that participants described as influential or meaningful, in order to more fully engage with the affective and get a greater depth of understanding to how identities shaped and were shaped by those spaces and encounters. The data was transcribed fully and analyzed through a coding framework on NVivo, drawing out key themes and concepts. During the process, the home and the headscarf became apparent as critical points of analysis, drawing together both national and religious identities and demonstrating the embodied and experiential nature of the nation.

Ethical considerations were a key aspect of the research, especially due to the more sensitive nature of some of the topics discussed (Mohammad, 2001; Leyshon, 2002; Hopkins, 2010). Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants and participants were informed that they did not have to take part in the research. Academic debates about methodology have explored decisions surrounding researcher's positionality within research (Hopkins, 2009; 2010; Jansson, 2010; Laurie, 2010). It is important to note the influence of my faith, gender, and national identity upon interpretations of data and analysis. In this case, the researcher's positionality was an aspect that drove the research as well as shaping how it was conducted. My experiences as a young Christian woman often created feelings of under- or misrepresented within both academia and the media, therefore developing a desire to give voice to young people and their experiences of faith in everyday life, enabling them to create their own narratives and stories of belonging. Indeed, the taken-for-grantedness of my British national belonging, both through internal ascriptions and external categorisations, influenced the way national identities were explored and conceptualized throughout the research, questioning the often linear and ordered

academic approaches to national identities. My religious and national identities were not outwardly expressed to participants, unless they specifically enquired, as to minimize influence on participants' responses surrounding their faith, beliefs and experiences. In some cases, however, knowing that I was religious, although not of the same faith, was beneficial and participants felt some level of shared understanding (Hopkins, 2009). As a young woman, there was at times a sense of commonality and shared understanding between the researcher and the participants, potentially encouraging the participants to discuss their opinions and feelings more openly. My gender seemed to impact the participation level of males, meaning that predominantly only females were comfortable meeting one on one, demonstrating the influence of my positionality within the research (Nast, 1994; Hopkins, 2009).

5. FEELING BRITISH: ATMOSPHERES, OBJECTS AND THE MUNDANE

It is important to consider how feelings of Britishness are shaped and made tangible through encounters and practices within different spaces. Initially in this section I discuss ideas of belonging within the nation by investigating the affective atmosphere of the home and the agglomeration of relations, discourses, objects and feelings that exist inside and outside of that space. Following that, I consider how national identities are felt and navigated physically through the object of the headscarf, which is imbued with its own agency and specific understandings. I question how this affects the embodiment of both national and religious identities, working to affect feelings of belonging across different spatialities and scales. Through exploring the home and the headscarf, three alternative narratives emerge that work to disrupt the notion of a singular national identity; feeling connected to a different nation, embodying multiple national identities, and non-national belonging. Each of these narratives work to highlight the main arguments of this paper, which contend for the relational and more-than-representational understandings of national identities, as they collide with emotionally subjective and spatially dynamic (per)forming of other identities.

5.1 Spatialising the Nation: Feeling at Home

The home is a scale often missed within research looking at national identity; key texts focus on the body (Gagen, 2004; Grabham, 2009) and the state (Henry and Berg, 2006; Koch, 2011; Jones and Merriman, 2009; 2012) but seemingly overlook the mundane, local and nuanced space of the home. As Hörschelmann (2008) states, the everyday microscale of the home is often a key space in which the macroscale is experienced and where identity is translated between scales. Indeed, the atmosphere of the home was critical in shaping feelings of national identities within the lives of these young British Muslim women, but was also impacted by the embodied reproduction and articulation of other national, cultural and religious identities within it. The home was a site of encounter where multiple bodies, objects, sounds, smells and traditions came into contact, shaping both the 'feel' of the home, and the 'feel' of national belonging within it. Participants described navigating encounters with different ways of 'being' through their eating, dressing, speaking and living habits; their national identities were therefore critically shaped by their being-in-the-world within the home, which markedly contrasted to being outside of the home. The space of the home therefore provides an example of how feelings, encounters and embodiments of national identities can be spatially and temporally dynamic, ebbing and flowing across particular moments. It was also a site where these young women experienced a multiplicity of (non)belonging and changes to their feeling of Britishness through banal and unconscious shifts in feelings of belonging, made manifest through encounters within the atmosphere of the home. The home worked to demonstrate the emotionally subjective and intimate nature of felt national belonging.

Often, it is assumed that feelings of national belonging relate to the geographical location of birth, however, this sense of belonging is not always felt and embodied, and some of the young women did not identify as British. Instead, Khalida described a greater sense of belonging and identification with the nations of her familial heritage.

Khalida: Even though I've been born and brought up here and I am kind of British in a sense, I am still ... my home is Bangladesh. So when I'm at home I do have some Britishness about me but not the way *you* eat, the way *you* talk, the way *you* act, anything. I love *my* country, and at home I wear different clothes and back home I would go back to my culture. I would love to go back to my country. It is so nice there and say there was a cricket match on or anything I would always support my country, even though I'm from England, I don't support them against Bangladesh, I support *them*, so I go back to my culture first before where I was born. (original emphasis in italics)

Khalida (19) did not fully identify as British and during the interview she constantly referred to 'home' as Bangladesh. The UK was 'over here' and I, as the researcher, was marked as different to her because of my presumed British identity. Grabham (2009), building on Billig (1995), talks about the productive force of everyday encounters in reinforcing nationalism, specifically the use of language such as 'us', 'we' and 'you' in order to 'flag' society and reiterate national identity within community. Here, Khalida was using this language but associating it with a distant community to which she feels more attached to than Britain. The atmosphere of the home was a site of encounter between the intimate and the national; within the physical home, the imagined national home was made tangible in this space, shaping the performance of her identity and her feelings of national belonging. Language was one way Khalida embodied and performed her national identity and the encounters within the atmosphere of the home affected the way she talked experienced and expressed her feelings of connection and difference to her perception of 'other' British bodies and spaces. The home, then, is shown to be a space where the agglomeration of things, bodies, affects and emotions work together to translate specific ideas of the nation through these banal everyday practices of eating, acting, speaking, and affect how these experiences are embodied and performed.

Everyday and emotional practices specific to the physical space and atmosphere of the home were also important in demonstrating the ways in which she enacted and embodied her Bangladeshi identity through the clothes Khalida wears, the foods she eats and the language she speaks within it. The example above demonstrates an alternative form of national identity, stretching beyond the bounded geographic locations within which Khalida was born and lives as she chooses to embody her parents' national identity. Her sense of belonging and national identity are brought into being and made tangible through her habitual routines and encounters with things, bodies and affective atmospheres within the space of the home (Edensor, 2006). The 'becoming' of her national identity emerges through her encounters with other bodies and in other spaces. These relational experiences have an affective capacity and shape how she talks about her identity, moves through and experiences spaces. Here, the nation is lived and experienced through emotions and feelings of attachment rather than symbolic, singular or tangible ideas. The home was an emotional space, demonstrating both the varying intensities of national identities across different spatialities, as well as how national identities are contested within the lived, everyday experiences of individuals (Bruce, 2014). Khalida's sense of national identity also builds into the conceptualisation of national identity as a non-linear and non-territorially distinct atmosphere, transcending borders and normative ideas surrounding proximity and national identity. The "becoming of national bodies" (Militz and Schurr, 2016: 3) is seen through these momentary encounters and the embodied practices performed by Khalida in different spaces. They also highlights the cognitive body as important when thinking about how national identities persist and are made tangible, acknowledging the significance of human agency and intentionality within the inhabiting of space and coming to "feel at home" as being more than a naturalized process (Simonsen, 2012: 16).

A second form of alternative national identity is that of multiple national identities, with participants describing connections to the country they were born in, but also to the places that their parents or family members came from. These feelings of multiple forms of attachment and

belonging are seen and explored in literature on diasporic communities, statelessness and complex forms of citizenship (Mavroudi, 2008). It is, however, lacking in studies exploring national identities and feelings of attachment within groups of national citizens and non-diasporic members of a nation-state. Many participants suggested that their feelings of national identity shifted depending on the location that they were in, highlighting the multiple, diffuse and spatially dynamic tonalities of national identities. More specifically, as illustrated below, the physical space of the home was a site that had significant meaning in relation to feelings of national and cultural identity.

Author: Do you feel a connection to Bangladesh?

Sabreen (22): Yeah, completely, I find it equal though because I've been here all my life and I've grown up in the UK but I have such a strong tie with Bangladesh through my family. I dunno, when I'm home I feel more Bengali than when I'm outside the home. It's interesting. We speak a lot of Bengali at home, we eat like erm, we eat Asian food, we do Asian things at home, whereas out ... I dunno it's different, I feel more British when I'm outside the home. It's British life outside. At home I'm more Bengali than outside.

Rafa (23): Yeah I totally agree with that. But saying that, my mum she is adapting to the British life, she has learnt English, she has learnt to read and write, she can speak it but she isn't that good. And she has changed to the modern way of thinking, she's yeah, erm ... so yeah, I guess she's become British herself. I think being British is more like accepting the norms and values. Or everyone's interpretation of what they are. Yeah.

Saffia (20): I think erm ... when I'm at home it's like I am Pakistani! I am! And like with my grandma I am Pakistani but when I'm out and about I still think I'm Pakistani but I'm actually British! So I think yeah ... it's like you are a different

person inside the house and outside the house so I am like ... generally like I am British-British and I am a normal girl but when I'm at home it is the language and like the food [and] the way we act.

The banal and unconscious shifts in these participants' experience of the nation that were made manifest through their actions and feelings, and affected by routine encounters in the home, demonstrating the spatially diverse flows of national identities. The home is a space where the "complexities and contradictions of national belonging and non-belonging" are highlighted for these young women (Bruce, 2014:40). Approaching national identities as experienced and performed through feelings enables a consideration of how the intensities of it shift within everyday lives, accounting for heightened experiences as well as times when it is not particularly considered (Closs Stephens, 2016; Militz and Schurr, 2016). It is also possible to begin to think about how feelings of nationalism intensify or shift across different spaces, connecting these feelings to the atmospheres within the different spaces and scales that the body may be located within.

5.2 Materializing the Nation: The Headscarf and Feeling British

The headscarf works to provide a bridging point between national and religious identities as everyday experiences highlight the relationship between the two. For Sabreen (below), wearing her headscarf is a choice based on religious values and she feels it empowers her yet, to those around her, it represents her religion and simultaneously has assumptions attached, however accurate or inaccurate, about her nationality. This brings into question ideas of how religious identity is seen as synonymous with specific assumptions surrounding belonging and inclusion (Fluri, 2008; Koch, 2011; Ahmed and Fortier, 2003). The conversation between Sabreen and Rafa (below) highlights the headscarf as something upon which the wearer inscribes a meaning but also something that has alternative meanings attached to it, dependent upon space and time.

Author: Have you ever been made to feel different because of your religion or ethnicity?

Rafa: When I was younger. Like in secondary school.

Sabreen: Yeah I think secondary school was the hardest.

Rafa: Yeah that was when I ... well it was kind of around like... the twin towers and stuff. There was a lot of racism and stuff. I did get the odd look and harsh comments. It doesn't happen now. Not to me anyway, I know Sabreen has some stories.

Sabreen: I think it also depends on the way you dress, you know, because I wear the hijab, that's when I find I get the trouble. But... yeah. It hasn't been a huge huge issue.

Rafa: Yeah, because of the hijab your identity is on show

Sabreen: Yeah it's there.

Rafa: Yeah, cause I don't [wear a headscarf], I get less hassle.

Sabreen: That's what it is – people just look at you and judge you. I think it's like a common thing now [...] It's just the negative stuff I've spoke about already when I was asked if I was a terrorist! You get like the odd thing in the street where someone will say something nasty.

Rafa: If you didn't wear your hijab I don't think you would as much

Sabreen: Yeah I dunno, I ... on numerous occasions I've been called a 'Paki', I'm not from Pakistan! [laughs] You just don't know what to say to some people.

The physical embodiment of identities through the headscarf works to unfold the young women's identity on a visible level, making known and simplifying the complex geopolitical identities that are inscribed onto their bodies. For Sabreen, the headscarf has a dual narrative as it identifies her as Muslim and is an intrinsic part of her religious identity, but it also identifies

her as different and inscribes a particular geopolitical narrative onto her body as other; often a terrorist, an immigrant, as oppressed or traditional (Dwyer et al., 2008). Her national identity is both questioned and seemingly defined by her headscarf. Specifically, the spaces and atmospheres in which the headscarf is (not) worn demonstrate the different affective capacities attached to the headscarf and body, as well as how this works to shape feelings of belonging and the becoming of national identities. It can be suggested, then, that “national community emerges in moments of affective encounter” (Militz and Schurr, 2016: 8); national identities are constantly coming-into-being through encounters of different bodies and objects in spaces. Interactions between bodies, the headscarf and spaces are more-than-representational in relation to how national identities are felt, performed and embodied, particularly when considering how other forms of identities, such as religion, are demonstrated or expressed. The headscarf is often performed and exists as a cultural and religious identifier that is seen to shape these young women’s experiences of Britishness and belonging through their own personal embodiment and the simultaneous encounters with other bodies and perceptions. This demonstrates the more-than-representational dynamism of national identities, as incited and shaped through the entanglement of different bodies, things and spaces. For Sabreen and Rafa, their Britishness and their religious identity are relational, demonstrated and shaped through these multiple, complex and intensely personal encounters with the headscarf as it moves through and is embodied within different atmospheres. Encounters with the headscarf blurs the private and public, and articulates forms of Britishness in different moments and spaces.

Alia (20) wanted to identify as British but feels like she does not belong in Britain because other people do not see her as British. Alia explained that her ethnicity and decision to wear a headscarf single her out as different and people often perceive her as foreign.

Author: Would you identify with being British?

Alia: I'd like to but I don't really. [...] I don't think other people see me as British.

[...] I just feel like other people think that you have to be white to be British.

Author: So do you think people see Britishness as related to your race then? Or is it your Muslim identity?

Alia: It is the Muslim part. I think. It is hard. I have friends that come from different countries but they don't wear a headscarf and they're treated differently to how I am. They're treated much differently to how I'm treated.

It is assumed within nationalism narratives that a body always has a national identity, whatever it may be. This leaves no space for non-national identity, linking to Closs Stephens' (2013) discussion on the dominance of the nationalist imaginary in structuring approaches to everyday politics and belonging. Alia's non-national identification also highlights the slippage between the performance of identity and the perception of the performance; Alia's identity was affected by both real and imagined encounters with other bodies' readings of both her identity and her headscarf. Critically, Alia's experiences also demonstrate the emotional nature of national identities, and therefore the ways in which encounters and performances of national identities can structure the practices of the body and feelings of national detachment alongside national attachment (Faria, 2014). By exploring how Alia emotionally connects and engages with her national identity, it highlights the intimate and felt nature of national belonging, which transcends simplistic or sweeping narratives to produce a more nuanced and personal understanding, engaging the nation as multiple, diffuse and inseparable from bodies, things and places. Feelings of national belonging can relate to ideas of difference, but the body can also work to both rework and reinforce the dominant narratives of nation (Hyams, 2002), something that is seen by Alia's rejection of her prescribed national identity due to feelings of difference and non-belonging. It is useful to probe how the headscarf situates itself as an agent within the everyday and begin to unpack how it works to affect embodiments of national identity and feelings of belonging.

Often described by the young Muslim women as a form of empowerment, the headscarf also worked to restrict their movement and freedom due to unwritten identities inscribed onto the object. An example of this was when Yasmin (20) discussed her experience of airport security.

Yasmin: I went to Paris last year and I still considered myself kind of, sort of Muslim but like I wasn't praying and I didn't dress Islamically at all. So me and my friend had no trouble getting through security or anything like that. Less than a year later, gone again and basically got slightly harassed at the airport so ... it was like ... I knew it was going to happen but it still surprised me because like you didn't have a problem with me a year ago but now I wear the headscarf you feel like you need to check me more. I think that that is directly related to Charlie Hebdo.

Many of the young women had stories of being subject to Islamophobic comments in the street and on public transport, often in the days following terrorist attacks such as the Charlie Hebdo shootings in Paris on 7th January 2015, linking to extensive bodies of literature discussing Muslim identity, discrimination and belonging post 9/11 (see Hopkins, 2007; 2008; Peek, 2003; Zimmerman, 2014). The effects of geopolitical events flow beyond specific spatio-temporal moments, and whilst specific emotional and global responses do occur in the immediate aftermath, it is also important to unpack how these undulating and enduring geopolitical narratives and contexts impact the everyday lives of young British Muslims in a more nuanced way, thinking through how affective atmospheres exist outside of the extraordinary and in the mundane. The stories from Yasmin, Rafa, Sabreen and Alia all demonstrate the contested negotiations of both national and religious identity within their everyday lives and across different spaces. They also demonstrate how the scales of the global, national and body work together to form much more intimate and emotional felt national identities. Importantly, these stories and experiences highlight how the headscarf as an object has affective capacities

associated with how it is, or is not, worn and the space it exists within. Through the headscarf, identity is embodied, encountered and negotiated; national identity goes beyond the representational to something that is fluid and is constantly negotiated, performed and becoming through bodies and objects. The decision to wear, or in Rafa's case to not wear, the headscarf demonstrates the messy, affective interactions of national and religious identities. The embodied practice of wearing a headscarf was differentially felt by the participants to the extent where Alia rejected any form of national identity because of her encounters with other bodies and the spaces in which these encounters took place.

Focusing on the headscarf enables us to begin to highlight how feelings of national belonging are, in part, made apparent through material objects and also how feelings are not only spatialised on a local scale, but also on a national and global scale, with national identity being related to both external and internal perceptions and assumptions of what it is to be British. Objects have been seen to play a part in dominant conceptualizations of both national (Raento and Brunn, 2000) and Islamic identity (Siraj, 2011), drawing on imagined notions of what both identities are comprised of, yet highlighting the reality of these identities as complex, undefined and in need of further exploration. Approaching national identities through the lens of affective atmospheres considers the ways in which the headscarf has different meanings across spaces and affects the inscriptions placed on bodies. It is argued that geopolitical situations "become compressed into the intimacies of everyday life and incorporated into everyday embodied encounters" (Simonsen, 2012:14), and through considering the atmosphere surrounding geopolitical events, the affective relationship between the events and the body can be better conceptualized and realized. The emotional and felt impact of geopolitical events is illustrative of its more-than-representational appearance and dissemination as the events work to affect bodies and be affected by bodies and other non-human elements across geographical distance (McCormack, 2013).

Both the domestic and intimate spaces of the home and body provide interesting scales of analysis as they transect the private/public binary (Dowler and Sharp, 2001) and allow a more nuanced consideration of how national identities are emergent through the entanglements of bodies with specific spaces and the atmospheres that exist there. Through considering the home, the coming together of bodies and spaces affect the embodiment of national identities and feelings of belonging in multiple ways. Unpacking national identities through these grounded and embodied experiences addresses Knott's (2017) call for a greater exploration into ideas of national belonging through private and intimate experiences, showing the multiple and diffuse ways in which national identities are made tangible. It allows a reconceptualisation of the imagination of the singular national community and body, arguing for multiple feelings of national identities and belonging that ebb and flow across spaces and scales. What is also clear is the situatedness of bodies and the importance of the intersections of religion, culture and nationalism. These intersections need to be unpacked further to enable a richer understanding of not only the performance and embodiment of the nation through the everyday but also the multiple ways that the nation is being reworked in relation to wider geopolitical discourses and narratives.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This paper demonstrates the unfolding of the intangible nation in the affective encounters of bodies, spaces and atmospheres, exploring the spatiality and lived reality of the nation in emotionally subjective practices and performances. I have sought to consider how dominant conceptualizations of nationalism can work to limit the way we understand the nation within everyday experiences, through suggesting that studies of national identities have often seemed fluid and multiple, yet remain somewhat bounded and distanced. Conceptualizing how national identities are cultivated and represented through objects and discourses is important, yet it is also crucial to explore the affective interweaving of these objects, discourses and bodies into the nation. Through this it is possible to consider more intimate and tangible national identities,

which come into being in the everyday, through lived, emotional, embodied encounters. I contend that national identities are intrinsically relational in their becoming, affected and shaped by and through encounters between bodies, things and atmospheres. The nation is not something that is merely seen and represented, but it is something that is felt and experienced (Wood, 2012; Faria, 2014). Feelings of national belonging do not precede 'being', 'feeling' and 'encountering' the nation but are made real through these emotional entanglements. I have begun to explore this through considering how young, British Muslim women navigate, (re)produce and embody their national and religious identities within the everyday and across multiple spatialities. I have highlighted how the intangible and non-human have an affective and spatial relationship with the embodiment of identities and experiences of belonging and insecurity.

Secondly I have demonstrated how approaching national identity through the more-than-representational can ground research in everyday emotional experiences and move towards a less idealized and static conceptualisation of national identities, providing a way to explore the realities of how national identities are encountered, understood, reshaped and resisted within the everyday. The home is a key affective space through which identity and feelings of belonging are navigated and performed. It is shown to be a space in which the multiplicity of national identities become apparent and often where feelings of Britishness for these young women were not as prevalent, highlighting the spatially dynamic tonalities of national identity. The headscarf is also shown here as a key object in the navigation of both religious and national identities, working as part of a messy set of components and both shaping and resisting feelings of 'Britishness'. Both the atmosphere of the home and the affective embodiment of the headscarf work to demonstrate the recursive relationship between the non-human, human, tangible and intangible, showing how dominant narratives surrounding national identities are understood, reworked and resisted through bodies, things and atmospheres. Crucially, this begins to make space to explore alternative forms of national identities, such as non-national

identity or multi-nationalisms. This move to the more-than-representational enables a reconceptualisation of how national and religious identities come into being, treating national identities as not reducible to specific essences but rather as (per)formed through spatially and temporally specific encounters, movements, emotions and affects that stick to specific bodies and materials (Closs Stephens, 2016).

Importantly, drawing on Closs Stephens (2016), Militz and Schurr (2016) and Merriman and Jones (2016) I highlight a key area that requires more development, the importance of the emotional and more-than-representational within the nation. I argue that national identities are not spatially and geographically uniform, but are comprised of a range of affective components, which translate feelings and emotions onto the body from the scale of the nation. Moving forward, the naturalness and taken-for-granted understanding of national identities must be questioned further, instead considering its felt and spatialised nature through exploring the real lived experiences of these identities within the everyday. It is also critical to consider the intersectional nature of national identities, arguing for a greater consideration of emotional subjectivity and the role that age, gender, sexuality, religion and other forms of identities play on performances and doings of national identities. This work has begun to highlight the complex and intricate nature of national and religious identities, picking apart how they are navigated by young people, impacting upon not only their feelings of belonging but the physical embodiment of their identities. It suggests that studies of national identities require a greater level of attention at the scale of the body, moving away from discourse oriented approaches that explore how national identity is represented and instead asking how national identities are encountered and experienced in everyday lives.

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