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Kinnvall, Catarina and Nesbitt-Larking, Paul

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# **SECURITISING CITIZENSHIP:**

## **(B)ordering practices and strategies of resistance**

### **ABSTRACT**

This article builds upon Yasemin Soysal's early work on postnational citizenship as constituting sites of resistance in contemporary European politics. Postnational citizenship provides every person with the right and duty of participation in the authority structures and public life of a polity, regardless of their historical ties to that community. This celebration of human rights as a world-level organising principle is, however, constantly challenged by liberal discourses and practices aimed to securitise identities and citizenships through the bordering of space, place and identities. Proceeding from a critical take on securitisation we propose that in addition to a focus on the exceptional and on elite speech acts, we need to recognize that it is through everyday practices that people engage in (de)securitising strategies and practices that both rely upon and contest notions of belonging and borders. We exemplify by looking at two (diverse) minority communities in Britain and Canada that have been securitised at transnational, national and local levels, and study the extent to which we can see evidence of everyday resistance through the explicit or implicit use of desecuritising strategies. In both settings, the communities we study are young Muslims.

### **INTRODUCTION**

This article builds upon Yasemin Soysal's<sup>1</sup> early work on postnational citizenship as constituting sites of resistance in contemporary European politics. Postnational citizenship provides every person with the right and duty of participation in the authority structures and public life of a polity, regardless of their historical ties to that community. This celebration of human rights as a world-level organizing principle is, however, constantly challenged by liberal discourses and practices aimed to securitise identities and citizenships through the bordering of space, place and identities. Proceeding from a critical take on securitisation we propose that in addition to a focus on the exceptional and on elite speech acts, we need to recognize that it is through everyday practices that people engage in (de)securitising strategies and practices that both rely upon and contest notions of belonging and borders. To what extent are those at the margins of citizenship able to resist securitising practices aimed at limiting their presence and rights and how do these

actors reproduce securitising practices that distinguish them from other groups? How can such claims be understood in terms of desecuritisation processes and what are the socio-psychological dynamics behind such resisting practices?

Building upon our previous work, we exemplify by looking at two (diverse) minority communities in Britain and Canada that have been securitised at transnational, national and local levels, and study the extent to which we can see evidence of everyday resistance through the explicit or implicit use of desecuritising strategies. In both settings, the communities we study are young Muslims. These communities have been chosen in order to outline different kinds of securitising practices affecting people who, while sharing a common ethno-religious characteristic are situated in countries with distinctive histories of immigration and citizenship regimes. As we shall see, despite the distinctive character of the Canadian regime, notably its policy of multiculturalism and its political culture of polyethnic diversity, the range of (de)securitising citizenship strategies finds patterns of both commonality and distinctiveness between the two national settings. In both the Canadian and the British settings, we are concerned with the narratives surrounding these communities and the particular forms of governance structures affecting their ability to act as citizens as well as the bordering practices they engage in. The empirical study is based on our interviews, reports and media transcripts<sup>2</sup>. The aim is not to provide a full-fledged analysis of all aspects of citizenship and the specific opportunities and hindrances affecting these groups, but rather to provide an illustrative study of the relationship between governance, narratives, borders and (de)securitisation to show the increasing difficulties postnational citizenship is facing in a global context.

We start by outlining the connection between citizenship and sovereignty. Here we delineate the theoretical debates surrounding these issues with a particular emphasis on the crisis

of postnational citizenship in a world governed by security. Empirically the focus is on how the current world order can be interpreted in terms of exceptional politics and how this exerts an impact on the governance of subjectivities and behaviour. We argue that such practices exist within re-invented master narratives that aim to reify borders, manifest in clear boundaries which act as co-constructors of individuals' and groups' self-identity in relation to significant others. Second, we proceed to a discussion of how this process involves securitising moves in relation to sovereign bodies, moves that are related to the *naturalisation* of borders and the *narrativisation* of boundaries. This involves a critical reading of much current security literature in an effort to clarify how securitisation must be viewed in co-constitutive terms in which individual agency and the narrative construction of boundaries play an important part. Third, we discuss how bringing individuals and emotions into the picture can help us in conceptualising a politics of resistance and desecuritisation. Relying on Bakhtin's and Markova's concept of dialogism and Agamben's discussion of subjectification and resistance we sketch a possible politics of resistance in response to the governing of subjectivity and the regulation of behaviour through narrative means. Finally, we provide empirical examples of both securitising and desecuritising practices by relating the theoretical discussion to our study of young Muslims in Britain and Canada. We conclude by drawing some general inferences from this illustrative study.

## **CITIZENSHIP AND SOVEREIGNTY**

Events occurring at a global level have local repercussions, not least in terms of how citizenship is conceptualised and sometimes changed. Traditionally citizenship has been used to differentiate between citizens and non-citizens, where citizenship is attached to people because of their belonging to a state jurisdiction. This implies that rights are principally connected to citizenship, rather than being universally defined and enforced<sup>3</sup>. International legal human rights structures

are of course built upon universal rights of people, but as Covenants they are ascribed to and enforced through an international state system which tends to exclude those considered non-citizens from the discourse<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, international agreements are weak and lacking in clear enforcement mechanisms under international law. From this perspective, citizenship is predominantly connected to borders as the modern state claims monopoly over the legitimate crossing of borders. Hence any border-related conception of citizen is framed within a perspective of sovereignty in which the state has the right to decide who its citizens are (or not), thus providing or denying entry of persons on the basis of citizenship<sup>5</sup>.

Critical attempts to overcome this conflation of rights have been suggested by scholars writing about cosmopolitan citizenship as well as multicultural citizenship. Both are concerned with the idea of the territorial state as the basis for rights. The cosmopolitan version is focused on how people are members of both bounded communities and a universal community of human kind, so called world citizens – a notion that is tied to ideas about certain universal moral rights of all individuals<sup>6</sup>. Cosmopolitan citizenship has been criticized for ignoring the fact that such moral conceptions rely on particularistic ideas of rights originating in Western liberal democracy with the emphasis on individual rather than group rights<sup>7</sup>. Theories of multicultural citizenship have challenged the cosmopolitan rights-based doctrine and have been concerned to move away from the idea of individual rights. By taking into account not only universal sameness in terms of inalienable individual rights, multicultural citizenship theories have addressed issues of group rights in general and minority rights in particular.<sup>8</sup> In Kymlicka's<sup>9</sup> reading this is mainly related to the national state in terms of providing particular rights to various groups in a society based on issues of inequality. More critical versions of multicultural citizenship emphasize not only class and inequality, but also questions of membership posed by feminism, race and ethnic

movements, ecology and vulnerable minorities<sup>10</sup>. Here the emphasis is on non-essentialist readings of culture, nations and peoples and the attempt is often to decouple citizenship from nationality.

This decoupling of citizenship from nationality has, in empirical terms, been related to increased globalisation and the emergence of a postnational citizenship<sup>11</sup>. Yasemin Soysal's thesis from the early 1990s on the *banalisation* of citizenship belongs to this category as she discusses how transnational opportunities make national citizenship less important. When Pakistani immigrants in Britain make demands for the teaching of Islam in state schools for example, they mobilise around a Muslim identity, but they also appeal to a universalistic discourse of 'human rights' to justify their claims and pressure national governments by taking their case to the European Court of Human Rights<sup>12</sup>. This example, Soysal notes, tends to undermine predominant models of citizenship, which are normatively predicated upon the integrity of national communities and their boundaries. They also call into question analytic distinctions between states and the international system. In addition, postnational citizenship can be found in the ability of the individual to mobilise the international commitments of the state against state officials seeking to expel particular individuals. Here the international commitments of the liberal democratic state may bring the authority of the supranational organization to aid the immigrant against the state<sup>13</sup>.

Soysal's notion of postnational citizenship relies on the fact that nationality is no longer a precondition for the enjoyment of rights and is therefore seen as less important by individual immigrants. This *banalisation* of citizenship was associated with two distinct developments in the 1980s and 1990s, that of a move towards conditional *jus soli*, dual nationality, shorter waiting periods and less administrative discretion followed by recognition that citizenship should be

more accessible and less tied to ethno-national membership or loyalty. The other had to do with the lesser difference citizenship made to the guest workers of the 1980s as they largely enjoyed the same social rights as majority community members<sup>14</sup>. As Mouritsen argues, however, this may no longer be the case. “In essence, the post-national ease of access, lack of differences between permanent residence and naturalization, and lack of *pathos* from states and individuals alike all comes down to the fact that the only remaining prize of ‘thin’ neo-liberal membership is the right to access national labour markets”<sup>15</sup>.

Such developments have prompted the argument that a post-9/11 world defined by security and terror discourses is characterised by a recoupling, rather than a decoupling, of citizenship and nationality<sup>16</sup>. In these readings the national is repeatedly inserted in terms of adherence to liberal values and ideas, such as reason, rationality and secularism, as a substantial way of life to recreate inclusion into and exclusion from the national body. This, Joppke<sup>17</sup> argues, is especially the case in Europe as many European states have reacted against politicised Islam. As Scuzzarello<sup>18</sup> notes, certain scholars are increasingly joining popular moves to promote individual rather than group rights<sup>19</sup>. In the face of a number of real or constructed events, such as the Mohammed cartoon crisis, honour killings, female circumcision, the building of minarets, arranged marriages and other contested practices, the demand is for more liberal individualism rather than less. Within recent years, leaders in Germany, France and Britain – Merkel, Sarkozy and Cameron – have all declared an end to multiculturalism with Merkel arguing that “it had failed, utterly failed”, and Cameron insisting that we need more, not less “muscular liberalism” to confront Islamic extremism<sup>20</sup>. This “failure of multiculturalism narrative” in Europe has been reinforced through global narratives of terror and Islamophobia and has gained further strength through much local media. On a policy level, several countries, including Britain, Sweden and

the Netherlands have introduced citizenship rituals, designed to ensure the conformity of new immigrants to the core principles of liberal democracy. Other countries, notably Denmark and the UK, have made naturalisation contingent on passing language and culture tests<sup>21</sup>. New restrictions of citizenship acquisition have also been tied to employment in many European countries, and permanent residency is increasingly conditioned on self-support and participation in the workforce. In Denmark, Germany and the UK, for instance, so called *good citizenship* now consists of the introduction of language requirements, knowledge tests and screening for self-support, a clean criminal record and non-radical leanings<sup>22</sup>. This, we argue, signifies a deeply problematic political development that is itself tied to reconstructed conceptions of European space and sovereignty.

Multiculturalism in Canada, however, continues to be celebrated as a vehicle to facilitate cultural development in the context of a coherent, co-operative and communicative political society, one in which there are layered patterns of interchange. Reflecting both the broad political culture and public policy, the dominant pattern of response among our Canadian interviewees is a generalised and enthusiastic acceptance of the strengths of multiculturalism as a policy that facilitates the retention of ethno-cultural particularisms to the extent that people demand such distinctiveness, within the broader unity of a shared political society. However, not all Canadian Muslims are entirely satisfied and even those who are supportive nonetheless exhibit certain reservations regarding their sense of belonging. Over the past ten to fifteen years, the global shifts presented above in the European setting, punctuated in Canada by the more proximate events of September 11 2001, have led to the intensification of securitisation both in the Canadian political culture and in the Canadian citizenship regime. This has resulted in echoes of the bordering practices identified in the European context. Confounding immigrants with



refugees, the newcomer to Canada has been stigmatised as a dangerous outsider and as a security hazard<sup>23</sup>. Muslim and other non-white Canadian minorities with dual citizenship have been characterised as citizens of convenience who contribute very little to Canada and make unreasonable claims<sup>24</sup>. The Canada-US border has been securitised and Canada's immigration regime has seen the relocation of sites of surveillance and control to a range of extra-territorial settings<sup>25</sup>. The embodiment of such shifts in Canada's citizenship regime has been experienced through new biometric surveillance techniques<sup>26</sup>. The recently-elected majority Conservative government has accelerated the process of securitisation of the Canadian borders. Of significance is how the long-standing selective character of Canada's immigration policy has been accentuated with a consequent latent re-racialisation of immigration. Family-class reunions have been de-emphasised at the expense of employment-class immigration of affluent and/or highly-skilled immigrants. Recent controversies have arisen over the redrafting of citizenship guides to what critics regard as Anglo-centric and militarised standards, feeding negative stereotypes about new immigrants and those citizens who "look like them". Full face veils have been banned from citizenship ceremonies, even though only a tiny minority of Muslim women chooses to wear them and even though Muslim associations agreed to accommodations. Newly emerging refugee policy threatens to lock refugees who arrive by sea in detention camps for up to a year without due process. Critics argue that the proposed legislation counters both Canadian and international law<sup>27</sup>.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as discussed above, the modern notion of sovereignty as the ultimate and transcendent mark of indivisible power became increasingly synonymous with national sovereignty with people produced as citizens of the nation-state. In Giorgio Agamben's<sup>28</sup> terminology, the most elementary operation of sovereign power can be found in

attempts to classify someone as being beyond dignity and full humanity or through the expulsion of someone who used to have rights as a citizen. Such people are not even subjects of a benevolent power but symbolise only mute and *bare life* (or *Homo Sacer*)<sup>29</sup>. This, what Agamben refers to as an inclusive exclusion, is fundamental to his thought and central to his account of the Western paradigm of sovereignty. *Bare life* is something that is produced by sovereign power *for* sovereign power. To Agamben, the *state of exception* in terms of the sovereign deciding on the exclusion of *bare life* has remained constitutive of the political community, acquiring ever more force as societies are becoming increasingly diverse; as the *multitude* of individuals are incorporated into the political community<sup>30</sup>. Security becomes a necessary step in preserving freedom and is used to legitimate this *state of exception* as a space in which subjects are governed and behaviour is regulated. Claudia Aradau clearly illustrates this in her citation of a speech by Tony Blair in 2006:

When crimes go unpunished, that is a breach of the victim's liberty and human rights.

When organized crime gangs are free to practice their evil, countless young people have their liberty and often their lives damaged. When ASB goes unchecked, each and every member of the community in which it happens, has their human rights broken. When we can't deport foreign nationals even when inciting violence the country is at risk<sup>31</sup>.

Instructively, Didier Bigo has described this process as a shift in governmentality – a shift from the *panoptical* to the *banoptical* – in which the *banopticon* is defined as a regime of practices where specific groups are blamed already before they have done anything, “simply by categorizing them, anticipating profiles of risk from previous trends, and projecting them by generalization upon the potential behavior of each individual pertaining to the risk category”<sup>32</sup>. This form of governmentality of unease, or *Ban*, is the work of biometric borders that redefine

external and internal security. It relies on exceptionalism, acts of profiling and containing foreigners, and a normative imperative of mobility<sup>33</sup>. Such practices exist within re-invented master narratives that aim to reify an object that is in fact plurilocal and manifest it in clear boundaries. They are mutually related and form political identities and act as co-constructors of individuals' and groups' self-identity in relation to significant others.

## **NARRATIVES, BORDERS AND SECURITY**

Foucault argued for a form of critical social analysis focused on *events*, moments when an existing regime of practices is “reinvested, co-opted and redeployed by new social forces and governmental rationalities”<sup>34</sup>. In accordance with such rationalities, Louise Amoore states that “immigration and the terrorist threat became combined as a problem ‘not because there is a threat to the survival of society’ but because ‘scenes from everyday lives are politicized, because day-to-day living is securitized’”<sup>35</sup>. This securitisation of day-to-day lives is likely to focus on restoring a sense of community, security and order<sup>36</sup>, but in so doing the very exclusions and prejudices that initiate conflict are often reconstituted. This can be seen in the development of a European visa system which increasingly replaces the national passport as a token of trust and as an original source of inclusion and exclusion<sup>37</sup>. It can be further seen in recent changes to border security and immigration law and regulations in Canada<sup>38</sup>. In line with van Munster, this could imply a reinterpretation of Agamben’s *state of exception* to describe the dominant paradigm, or narrative, of governing modern societies. “In this view the state of exception is not so much a temporary, exceptional measure but a technique of government that relies on security”<sup>39</sup>.

Such securitising moves involve narratives that inscribe a hegemonic set of cultural values upon territories and populations in order to control, know and domesticate certain groups of

people residing in national space, even in cases when these individuals have formal citizenship rights. Young urban *post-diasporic* (second and subsequent generations) Muslim men are being particularly framed as security threats in such stories<sup>40</sup>. In some cases they may even emerge as the *bare life* – “the in-between forms of life, uncoded substances without fixed belongings, unprotected by ‘their’ states” /.../ “that is, a form of human life upon which the sovereignty of states, of ethnic/religious communities and local strongmen can be performed and ‘natured’”<sup>41</sup>. This implies that the state is not the only centre and origin of sovereignty. Rather, the state is constantly confronted by other forms of sovereign bodies which attempt to insert control over the governed subject. Thus, the very invocation and attempted reassertion of borders, sovereign powers, and state apparatuses is evidence of bids for securitisation, not merely on the part of majorities, but also minorities. Within Europe, for instance, we have seen how Muslim and other minority communities are repeatedly framed in terms of security threats as migration is perceived as threatening to the self-identity of the majority society. In return, there is evidence of the closing down of available options to many Muslim minority community members. Also in Canada there have been attempts to import such a framing of Muslims and other minorities into Canadian discourse<sup>42</sup> and Canadian popular culture<sup>43</sup>. This is both reflected and amplified by recent regulatory and legal changes adopted by the Conservative government. In this context, the thrust of recent policy has been toward a pro-Monarchist, traditionalist and Protestant anglo-conformism combined with a marked pro-Israeli stance in Canadian foreign policy and a hardening of regulations regarding borders and immigration. Despite the underlying continued support for positive integration and multiculturalism in Canadian political culture<sup>44</sup>, it is apparent that discourses of securitisation have increasingly come to vie with those of desecuritisation.

That security is not only about state security was a theme developed early on by the so-called Copenhagen School (headed by Ole Waever and Barry Buzan) with its focus on societal security and securitisation as a discursive practice<sup>45</sup>. The Copenhagen school thus started a process in which security studies began developing a different vocabulary than that of classical international relations approaches to security, including a focus on the *politics of risk*<sup>46</sup> and the *politics of fear*<sup>47</sup>, often described as “an age of anxiety”<sup>48</sup>; the “governmentality of unease”<sup>49</sup>, and “ontological (in)security”<sup>50</sup>. Empirically many of these accounts have been related to September 11 and its aftermath, but they have also been concerned with a more general unease in terms of changed mobilities and the *crisis* of the state. Such contentions have rested on the idea of *porous border* in which governments can no longer control the flow of currencies, labour or commodities, information or unwanted aliens. Much of the discourse has focused on the *unassimilable* migrant workers, but it has also been preoccupied with other external threats such as the French reaction against US cultural products, the concern that the opening of the Channel Tunnel would open England to rabies, that the Euro would threaten the sterling or that legal sovereignty would be endangered by European courts<sup>51</sup>. Theoretically these concerns have often focused on power relations in order to better understand the meaning and construction of *borders* and *boundaries*.

The fact that borders are politically constructed means that they have to find their legitimacy in *boundaries*, i.e. the cultural and political narratives about a society, its culture, territory and history; about who is member of that society and, consequentially, who is an outsider. In this sense, we distinguish between *borders*, understood as the institutionalized phenomena, established in legal texts as territorial and spatio-temporal demarcations and *boundaries*, the narratives constructed to give or challenge the meaning of borders. This

distinction is often implicit in the literature on borders, where institutional and narrative or discursive demarcation of borders is considered to be part of the same process. Instead, we see them as separated, albeit interrelated processes<sup>52</sup>. As narratives, boundaries refer to a description of the fundamental events in their natural logical and chronological order<sup>53</sup>. Through their symbolic power they can become part of what Eder<sup>54</sup> calls the “hardness of borders” as they help to “naturalise” hard borders in the sense of taking borders for granted. Crucially, they have an ontological dimension<sup>55</sup>. Narratives about the boundaries of a community are used by actors to make sense of who they are in relation to contrasting out-groups<sup>56</sup>. A narrative approach to boundaries embraces a principle of *mind in action*, which implies that the construction of boundaries is not a passive endeavour, but one in which narratives mediate social practice. Hence the notion of *narrative engagement* is important as it suggests that individuals navigate a polyphonic context in which multiple storylines circulate and compete for dominance in individual appropriation<sup>57</sup>. This notion is crucial, as we shall see below, if we are to fully appreciate resistance and desecuritisising moves. It also complicates some of the contemporary readings of security practices and their emphasis on speech acts, top-down governance and exceptional politics. In addition it provides a much needed socio-psychological perspective to this literature.

## **BANAL SECURITISATION – SECURITISING THE EVERYDAY**

Attempts to naturalise borders and define the boundaries of communities may seem to imply only purposeful action on behalf of politicians (and/or community leaders) in order to manipulate individual and group sentiments to realise political objectives. In this sense it clearly involves the development of a *state of exception* in line with the ideas developed by Agamben and others<sup>58</sup>, including attempts to govern subjectivities and regulate behaviour. However, the securitisation of

borders is not simply about manipulating and mobilising opinion but also describes the process through which individuals and groups struggle to cope with uncertainty and insecurity/ies. This mode of powerlessness and anxiety clearly predates September 11, but it has also created a foundation for emerging responses to this event, and others like it; as such responses have thrived on the sensibility of vulnerability.

Many of the beliefs that shape the current response to terrorism – the idea that humanity faces unprecedented threats, that we inhabit a new era of terror, that we are confronted by a new species of terrorist threat, that what we must really fear is the unknown – are the product of a cultural imagination that is dominated by a sense of vulnerability<sup>59</sup>.

Read in this light, securitising moves are co-constitutive and co-produced rather than just those *states of exceptions* viewed through Agamben's work as the suspension of the juridical order. On the one hand, political elites, public figures, parts of the media and public campaigners have used a politics of fear to promote their own agendas. On the other hand, individuals and groups have been perceptive to such a politics, due to its splitting function and its constant othering – to use Lacanian terminology – involving aspects of *banal securitisation*<sup>60</sup>. This conception of security departs from the Copenhagen School's<sup>61</sup> insistence on the exceptionality of securitisation, but it also differs from Didier Bigo's<sup>62</sup> and others'<sup>63</sup> argument that practices of security exist in a specific field defined by particular know-how and technologies in which securitisation relies on certain *security professionals*. In contrast to perceptions of securitisation as extraordinary responses to particular speech acts or specific governing techniques, we regard this securitisation process as also being inherent in the everyday and the mundane – the normalising narratives that frame individual responses to fragmentation, threat and identity destabilisation<sup>64</sup>.

This involves a search for ontological security which becomes a spatial as well as a psychological dynamic to do with a generalized sense of insecurity, danger and threat and the longing for secure boundaries. As Noble<sup>65</sup> has noted in regard to a post-9/11 world, the experience of increasing racism and *otherness*, “undermine the ability of migrants to feel ‘at home’ and hence their capacity to exist as citizens”. In this sense both bordering and boundary practices have a psychological dimension. They fulfil an imaginary protection, at times manifest in fetishism for “pure” identities, and thus co-constitute the governing of subjectivities and behaviour. Any attempts to break this socio-psychological dynamic must take into account not only structural securitising moves justified through a politics of exception and fear, but also the vulnerabilities that make such a politics possible. If, as Claudia Aradau has argued, “securitization orders social relations according to the logic of political realism and institutionalizes an exceptionalism of speed, extraordinary measures and friend/enemy”, then desecuritisation needs to become a “normative project which reclaims a notion of democratic politics where the struggle for emancipation is possible”<sup>66</sup>. Hence, we must think of emancipation in terms of bottom-up approaches allowing for subjectification and re-appropriation of alternative narratives that can resist and subvert hegemonic dominance. At heart is the challenge to sovereign power from those at the margins of knowledge production – the return of the political – in the words of Jenny Edkins. “The protests reclaim memory and rewrite it as a form of resistance”<sup>67</sup>. Such resistance is psychological as well as structural, and is grounded in an emotional basis of defiance and anger that can reframe hegemonic boundaries.

One main component of Agamben’s thought is his conception of the subject as an interval or remainder between what he refers to as processes of subjectification and de-subjectification<sup>68</sup>. If we see the current world order in terms of a *state of exception*, as a



suspension of a juridical order, then the task is to make the law ineffective by creating a new form of subject that is neither self nor other. Agamben uses the term *profanation*, meaning to violate or transgress, as well as play, as a useful term for a process in which something new is created through a novel use of old “things”. The intention is to use the internal logic inherent in a state of exception to subvert its outcomes. This new thing can avoid the sovereign capture. “(W)hat the state cannot tolerate in any way ... is that the singularities form a community, without affirming an identity, that humans co-belong without any representable condition of belonging”<sup>69</sup>. The issue at stake is thus to explore and invent the profane potential that resides within remnant forms of subjectification and de-subjectification produced by sovereign power itself<sup>70</sup>.

This was recognised by Mikhail Bakhtin<sup>71</sup> in his emphasis on *dialogism* as expressing multitudes of multivoiced meanings in which a critical self is emerging. Relying on Bakhtin, Elena Marková<sup>72</sup> formulates an ontology which places dialogicality, i.e. the capacity of the human mind to conceive, create and communicate about social realities, at the centre. At heart is to find ways in which to overcome strangeness through recognising the tension inherent in exceptional practices and the possibilities this may imply for resisting conformity and *monological closure*. Monological closure refers to the attempts made by a single authority to monopolise meaning to the exclusion of all competing voices<sup>73</sup>. The dialogical encounter, notably the profane transgressions of self-dialogism, calls for the preservation of the other within the self. Such an orientation avoids the danger of ethnocentrism and of being locked in either the epistemic overpowering of the other, or in historicism, individualisation and the concealment of hegemonic power structures and practices.

In normative terms, it is thus not enough to see movements for political change in terms of right-claims or centring such movements on identity politics<sup>74</sup>. Hence, rather than being fabricated from above, resistance and resilience must be manifest in a desecuritisation process focused on everyday interactions that question the normalising narrative order of society. This requires prizing open any hegemonic narratives, including that of “the West”, as narratives are always interlocked with political, economic and cultural conditions of societies and because narratives have a strong ontological function at all levels at which they operate<sup>75</sup>. Addressing narrative change is not enough, however, also socio-psychological positioning needs to be taken into account promoting, in the words of Henry<sup>76</sup>, “empowerment and resistance to forms of subjugation; the politicization and mobilization of marginalized groups; the transformation of social, cultural and economic institutions, and the dismantling of dominant cultural hierarchies, structures and systems of representation”. Many young people from different cultural and religious backgrounds refuse to be positioned into stereotypic notions of who they are or are supposed to be. Instead, they challenge both majority and minority norms and romanticised narratives through everyday practices and engagement. Many of these are at the forefront of building bridges to the larger political society and work through cultural and religious compromises to challenge monological closures of self and identity and unjustified dominance of some voices over others.

To what extent do those at the margins of citizenship resist securitising practices aimed at limiting their presence and rights, and how far do they accomplish this without reproducing securitising practices that isolate them from other groups. In order to discuss this in the next section we outline securitisation in the British and Canadian contexts. In the subsequent section we give examples of how far these securitising practices have been resisted..

## GOVERNING SECURITIES: YOUNG MUSLIMS IN BRITAIN AND CANADA

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Prime Minister Thatcher voiced her concerns about the country being swamped by people with a different culture. These were also the years when a number of nostalgic Raj movies hit the cinemas together with an emphasis on Victorian values and a neoconservative remythification of the imperial past. In the 1980s the Thatcher government established a *national* curriculum in schools to enhance the transmission of a shared national identity, where British history should take precedence over world history<sup>77</sup>. The war nostalgia in British society is still prevalent and perpetuates a belief that the British society can only enjoy restorative solidarity when it is at war. This nostalgia, Gilroy<sup>78</sup> says, seems to have provided the backdrop to Tony Blair's adventures in Iraq and helps to explain why his attachment to the politics of George W. Bush was so significant and unshakeable. This war nostalgia goes together with an inclination to assume that there is such a thing as a *British way of life* in which the majority sets the rules and makes sure that control remains in the hands of native Britons. Hence there are few expectations that immigrants should become *good* Englishmen, Scotsmen or Welshmen. Rather, *ethnic communities* have become important reference points for public authorities and the focus of British multicultural politics has often been on *race and ethnic relations*<sup>79</sup>. The result has been "multiculturalism on one island" as Adrian Favell<sup>80</sup> puts it, where immigrant and ethnic minorities have been "nationalised" in relation to British social and political institutions. The 1999 Parekh report followed the logic of this race relations politics in its recommendation that the major political parties should seek to select ethnic minority candidates in seats where more than 25 per cent of the population is from ethnic minorities. As pointed out by Geddes<sup>81</sup>, the corollary of this logic would mean that "white people are best represented by other white people". Underlying this race-related logic is the implication that it is

the minorities that should be concerned with their own representation rather than there being more general modes of representation. In this sense representation becomes a minority concern instead of a mainstream issue<sup>82</sup>.

In terms of Muslim minority communities, governance in a British context has thus taken the form of surveillance of *suspect communities* – a concept first used in relation to the IRA – in which the process of identification of a threat legitimates the politics of exception put in place by the state<sup>83</sup>. This can be exemplified in terms of how *extremism, ideology, evil, and Islamism* became intertwined in the narrative following the attacks in London on July 7, 2005, interspersed with the theme of *barbarism* as a term associated with the metaphorical struggle for civility. In the language of Tony Blair, this was evident in the divergence between the “terrorists”, the “civilised people” and “those Muslims who represent ‘the decent, humane and principled faith of Islam’”<sup>84</sup>. The feeling that Britain was under attack, that national values and national unity were under threat and that people were fearful instigated a response in which the nation would resist and stand united. However, similar to September 11, this narrative also provided a foundation for closer surveillance of these communities resulting, for instance, in the UK control orders<sup>85</sup>.

Events surrounding this event illustrate the particular forms of governance facing British Muslims. As forms of governance, they work at the emotional level to construct a normality prevailed by fear and anxiety. They contribute towards the feeling that majority populations are dealing with the legacies of these traumas through everyday securitisation of the British public sphere. Such governance obviously affects those communities under surveillance. In the 2010 report on suspect communities, the young Muslims interviewed felt the effects of such surveillance as they talked of *fearfulness, of lying low and keeping their heads down*<sup>86</sup>. After September 11 and 7/7 Muslims were pressed to condemn the attacks louder than other citizens as

anything else would have been considered as hidden support for the murder of innocent civilians. Hostility to Muslims also intensified after these tragic events; from abuse and discriminatory treatment to physical violence, including assault on individuals, the desecration of graves, and attacks on mosques and other Muslim community buildings. Hence it is not surprising that a substantial number of British Muslims remain alienated from mainstream British society, experiencing a sense of retreatism from the majority community. Muslims in Britain have been forced to think of themselves in reaction to being rejected and constructed as the *other*, as their identification with *Britishness* is often questioned.

This has at times involved the reproduction of securitising practices on behalf of some members of these communities. While the atmosphere of our ten-person Bradford focus group, conducted on March 28, 2007, was generally positive, it was interrupted after about 35 minutes by a woman who had up to that point been sitting quietly. Her intervention expressed certain elements of Islamic literalism that were intended to shut down discourse – or at least to attempt to do so. The context for her interruption was a statement made by another woman that Muslims need to work harder at knowing their religion as individuals and to practice it before they preach. A male in the group was beginning to express his agreement when the woman interjected loudly and turned to one of the authors, saying defiantly: “excuse me, but if you have very little knowledge about our religion...what our own rights...our relationship towards God – about God’s rights that is on us – the more you try to practice your religion, the more they call you a fanatic. The more you try to become close to God, the more he will test you and of course that will make them mad”. Her tone was declarative to the others in the room as she was attempting to establish control and in so doing was laying down categories of belonging, order, and propriety.

The setting for the politics of immigration, integration and securitization in Canada was the birth of multiculturalism under the prime ministerships of Pierre Trudeau in the 1970s and early 1980s and Brian Mulroney in the 1980s and early 1990s. Grounded in a move away from both anglo-conformity and the ‘two solitudes’ of the French and English, the Canadian regime began to positively embrace multiculturalism and the polyethnic polity in the 1970s<sup>87</sup>. The principal public policy initiatives that expressed these developments were: The Canada Immigration Act that came into effect in 1978 and introduced a highly selective points system based upon qualifications, resources, and skills, and at the same opened up immigration to non-European sources; the Constitution Act of 1982 that recognized and entrenched many of the principles of multiculturalism in a Charter of Rights and Freedoms that balanced individual, state, and community rights; and the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988, that formally entrenched the core principles of ethno-cultural diversity, civic equality, and participation. It was into this context that the first substantial waves of Muslim immigrants entered Canada. Having selected from the more educated and affluent immigrant applicants, the initial setting of reception and integration was different from the European setting and more closely aligned to the American experience<sup>88</sup>. Given this context, it is understandable that the socio-economic, cultural, and strategic bases upon which the multiple minorities of Canada have come to constitute their political lives together condition a set of responses which as we have noted<sup>89</sup> are qualitatively different from those of the British interviewees. While instances of defensive essentialism and assertive literalism are to be found in both settings, the overall tone of the Canadian milieu is more positive and expressive of a habitus of political engagement. In the context of its evolving culture and public policy, Canada is widely held to be a postmodern state, grounded in a long-standing plurinational and polyethnic diversity. Canada is a fixed address but

not a singular homeland, and it has never been a colonial power, despite the internal colonialism of its aboriginal policies. At various times its citizens have attempted to suture a common and unambiguous identity, efforts that have resulted in failure. Canada's core identity is in fact not to have an identity. Since the 1970s large numbers of Muslim and other immigrants have settled in Canada on the basis of a competitive points-based immigration system that privileges wealth, educational attainment, and occupational category. Such selectiveness has created a Muslim minority in Canada that in contrast to its British counterpart is more affluent and better educated. While Canada has not been immune from racism and anti-Muslim actions, the selective citizenship regime in combination with the emerging sense of national identity have opened spaces for a more adequate integration of Muslims than has been possible in most European settings.

As we have already mentioned, however, in a global context of perceived risk and danger, both the Canadian regime and the broader culture have experienced increased levels of securitisation in recent years. While there have been arrests and detentions in Canada involving Muslims, including an aborted terrorist plot, there have so far been no terrorist acts perpetrated by Muslims on Canadian soil. Were such actions to take place, the existing discourses and narratives of global terror would be likely to accelerate both elite and mass practices of securitisation. In the absence of such developments, we have seen very few responses to match that of the woman in the Bradford focus group presented above. Much more common among the Canadian interviewees and participants is an assertive strategy of political engagement. In our focus group conducted in March 2009, we clearly heard instances of reported anti-Muslim words and actions, and the challenges of integration, particularly in light of intergenerational and inter-familial conflict. What was more typical, however, was an assertive and confident politics of

engagement, punctuated by boundary setting and, in Agamebn's sense, the playfulness of profanation. Typical of the comments was this intervention from one of the women:

I lived in Mississauga [a suburb of Toronto] so I grew up in a very multicultural society – it was like Muslims everywhere and everything like that – but I came to London [Ontario] and I think I was the first woman in a hijab to get a part-time job in White Oaks Mall [laughs]....and people would constantly come up to me as a cashier...and they said: “how did you get this job? What did you do? I mean, how did they treat you?....people just assumed they couldn't apply.

In her claims, the woman is confidently expressing an engaged and entitled claim to public space and to occupy the very centre of community life and public visibility. In so doing, she is also a self-defined social animator who gives the message that observant and visible Muslims should not be concerned at sharing in the commercial and cultural life that is shared in the banal exchanges of Saturday shopping. In so doing, she is urging her fellow Muslims to overcome what Lerner refers to as ‘surplus powerlessness’, the learned predisposition to retreat and stay quiescent owing to an unrealistic assessment that one's voice and presence will be ignored, belittled, or put down<sup>90</sup>. She is making the case that a radical desecuritisation of the self and the bold claim to a place in integrated and shared public space will be accepted by the majority.

## **RESISTING SOVEREIGNTY – DESECURITISATION AS A PRACTICE OF RESISTANCE**

The positive and assertive character of mainstream Canadian and British Muslim engagement shows that there are organized Muslim voices pushing for greater political involvement. Even before September 11, several British Muslim leaders served on the 20-person Runnymede Trust



Commission that produced *Islamophobia: a challenge for us all* in October 1997. The Commission heard from a diversity of interests including many Muslim organizations and individuals. Among other recommendations, the Report promoted a future in which: “the voices of British Muslims will be fully heard and held in the same respect as the voices of other communities and groups”<sup>91</sup>. This claim reflects the Bakhtinian notion that dialogical interaction is an important component of the politics of resistance. The voice of a Muslim is the voice of a unique consciousness and therefore a psychological entity, even as she or he speaks through social discourses. Through open access to the ear of the other, the speaker builds meaning in an intersubjective space that is dialogically inflected and accented and thereby shapes discourse itself. This also puts into focus efforts to redefine narrative relations of past politics. Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins argue that the call to religion and the invocation of the past is neither necessarily reactionary nor essentialist and need not necessarily stand in the way of a full and effective engagement in the present: “Through the various invocations of the past, contemporary Muslims are invited to see themselves in terms of quite different unfolding dramas with quite different implications for the characterization of contemporary social relations, their interests and their future”<sup>92</sup>.

A male student in our Bradford focus group stated that “my experience is that when I have got in discussions with non-Muslims, it’s all positive, there’s more scrutiny, but positive scrutiny”. There was almost complete agreement among both British and Canadian interviewees that Muslims should be encouraged to become more involved in political processes and engage as voters, activists and leaders. The general sense of the need for political engagement among the British and Canadian interviewees emerged from a powerful sense of contributing to a renewed polity that pays attention to Muslim sensibilities. Many of the responses of our interviewees

expressed a sense of possibility, empowerment and optimism that was nonetheless mixed with a certain degree of caution and defensiveness, reflecting an awareness and lived experience of boundary setting and the cultural and structural restrictions on access to citizenship. The following comments provide an appropriate way to summarise the more general orientations of the interviewees:

I think Muslims should join mainstream political parties....I think non-Muslim British society needs them – you know, needs to benefit from their diversity – needs to benefit from what they can bring....Through the political system where Muslims raise their voices...there's a likelihood, even though it's a small likelihood, there's a likelihood they will actually be able to do something..... (British male economist and community leader).

I am in this very blessed position. I have to help. I don't know what it's like to live your day-to-day life and not feel like you have this raging passion inside of you to reach out and help in some way or another. And to me that's – that's picking up the phone and calling, you know, Ed Holder's [local MP] office and saying "Can we talk? When can I come in because we need to discuss this?" And you know calling a bunch of other groups in the city and a bunch of other groups from out of town and getting representatives, and then going as a group and talking about that.... (Canadian female placement worker)

Facing the common challenges of regimes that are increasingly securitised and whose regimes of borders and boundaries have become ever more complex and plurilocal, our Muslim interviewees in both Canada and Britain exhibit a range of creative acts of profanation, even at times verging on the carnivalesque, as they negotiate an ever-changing world of scale and scope. Through almost imperceptible acts of resistance, they navigate themselves and their bodies

toward a renewed citizenship that is cognizant of the changing landscapes of those regimes that configure their worlds. As Salter and Piché<sup>93</sup> point out, the regime itself is no monolith and is in fact multiply and complexly constituted. Shotter states: "...no one yet quite knows what it is to be a citizen; it is a status which one must struggle to attain in the face of competing version of what is proper to struggle for"<sup>94</sup>. Not all acts of citizenship are rupturings, and the cultivation of citizenship in the self involves "wars of position" as well as "wars of manoeuvre"<sup>95</sup>. Some acts of citizenship are gestures, some are massages, others are trial probings or clinical cuttings around affected areas. The following selections from our data illustrate the ingenuity of a range of bids to desecuritize citizenship and to relocate one's place through the profane.

### **Claiming the metropole/refusing the margins**

To the extent that regimes of citizenship have rebordered western states and securitized them through a reassertion of the imagined communities of ethno-racial majorities, assertive Muslim minorities have questioned such boundaries, desecuritized their intersubjective worlds and problematised nationality.

A middle-aged male lawyer and politician in Canada of Lebanese background makes reference to the cultural consignment of himself and his family to a remote homeland and insists on staking a claim in the heart of Canada:

..I think in this Federal Election, there are more Muslims that have come forward to run for office than ever before. We're part of this community, you know we're part of this community....you know, really it's a matter of geography. It's – you know – I mean I was born in Lebanon – you know- I have kids that were born in London, Ontario. They're Canadian...when you say to my son "go back to your own country," he just sort of looks

at them like "What the hell are you talking about? This is my country." So, you know, where one is born is really a matter of geography.

A very similar claim for location at the centre of things is made by a British female sociology student of Pakistani and Caucasian mixed parentage, who is also a hijabi. She says: "People say ridiculous things like 'if they don't like Britain why don't they go home? Trouble is for many like me Britain is our home'".

A Canadian male student of mixed background insists on proudly occupying the centre of Canadian citizenship discourse with the Muslim body:

Muslims are commanded to obey the law, even if it is not our own, and be upright citizens. This means that Canadian Muslims should ideally be industrious, hardworking, and pay all taxes, without any crime rate, alcoholism, domestic abuse, or fraud. In short, the potential is that when Muslims are observant of their faith, they are actually the ideal citizens for Canada.

Individuals make claims on the metropole in different ways. Two young Canadian women of Palestinian origin, both of whom work as social workers, are political activists, and know each other. Despite this, have very different ideas regarding political involvement. One of them rejects the apparatus of political parties, elections and formal politics as hypocritical and useless. She devotes her energies instead to charitable work in the non-profit sector. Her friend, who we quoted earlier, is an enthusiastic participant in electoral politics, an advocate of proportional representation, who routinely campaigns and contacts her MP.

### **Legal borders vs. Cultural boundaries**

One of the most challenging of circumstances is for young Muslims to know that they have full legal entitlement as citizens and yet to experience a social distance from the national cultures that they inhabit. In Canada, the social exclusion is subtle. A female social sciences student of Eritrean background says: "...Canada claims to be so multicultural and accepting, but under their breath, but really when you ask them, they will only accept what they want to accept, for instance to food, but not beliefs. I think they're threatened by our religion".

A commonly held complaint among the British students is expressed by a female student in Bradford MSA focus group: "You've got to understand people saying 'integrate' and at the same time shutting the doors in your face...."

A Canadian female lawyer discusses reactions on the part of broader society to Muslim Canadians expressing an assertive voice in the public sphere. Her point is very similar to that of the British student, arguing effectively that Muslims are criticised if they do not occupy public space, but suspected if they actually take the public sphere seriously:

...it's not this person is exercising their right, it's this person is trying to impress upon Canadian society their views, trying to take over, trying to undermine Canadian values, even though this person is using the political process, is using the means that there are, that they are entitled to use. I feel that sometimes it's viewed with a little more suspicion than if they weren't Muslim.

The results of these distinctions are to alienate some Muslims. A Canadian woman student of Indian origin describes herself as "a citizen of the world". She reflects: "I don't think of myself as a Canadian. I'm a citizen of Canada but I'm not like descriptively a Canadian citizen, right?"

A Canadian male student of Iraqi origin, who has only been in Canada for seven years, goes further and locates himself in Iraq itself: “I don’t think Canada is my home country. I think the place that is being attacked, the place that people are not living peacefully, that should be our home country....There is not ‘I am Canadian; he is Iraqi’. We are all human beings at the end of the day”.

Hostility directed against certain Muslims leads some, such as a Canadian-born male student of Pakistani origin, to doubt the security of his father’s legal status as a citizen. At any time, he believes his father can be displaced. He says: “My father thinks...he’s a visitor here and he’s not welcome, and at any moment they can kick him out”.

Thus, resistance to rebordering practices may take the form of cultural and political voice against those who have attempted to instantiate new cultural boundaries. It may also take the form of cognitive or literal exit to a more cosmopolitan, or at least better integrated, world.

### **Strategic integration and bodily plurilocation**

For those who are gradually experiencing themselves and those they love being displaced into a series of external locations – as refugee claimants, smuggled humans, visa applicants, caged occupants of remote holding camps, *homo sacer*, economic migrants or citizens of convenience from elsewhere trying to take advantage of “our” generosity, there is a tendency to respond through evasion, ambiguity or pluriform existence. A female student of Iraqi background in Canada:

More than ever I think we...need to integrate ourselves. I always say not integrate completely because we do have our values and we do have our cultural norms that we hold very dear. And not assimilate completely, but also not isolate completely and hold

ourselves into our own private pockets and not give to Canadians. But have a middle ground of integration – kind of a give and take – and not just get involved in political issues that affect us as Muslims, but also...we need to get out there and to give to a country that has given so much to us....let's come to a middle ground consensus so that we can live as Canadian Muslims.”

In a written submission, a Canadian male science student expresses surprise in the discovery of his own Canadianness through a mapping of values: “I know of renowned Islamic scholars who state that Canada is the most Islamic nation in the world if you look at our laws/const. I personally agree with this idea. While we share a lot of Canadian our values (just realized I am both!) in practice these are hardly ever interpreted the same way even amongst Canadians”. A Canadian male teacher of Lebanese origins is asked by one of his students why she is not allowed to eat pork, even though the Canadians are allowed: “..I go ‘what are you?’ She goes ‘I’m Muslim’. I go ‘Right, where were you born?’ She goes: ‘I was born in London’. I go ‘London is in Canada, so you’re not Canadian?’” His response is to use radical pedagogy to invite his student to occupy the ground in which she is located, to make it home.

In each of these instances, there is active resistance to banal securitisation. In both a psychic and a somatic sense, these Muslims are playing with their spatio-temporal locales in a bid to craft subjects that refuse the dualism of ‘self and other’, either through being both or being neither.

## **Conclusions**

In the context of a global order in which state sovereignty is increasingly in question and a complex of socio-economic and political networks and flows are reconfiguring both phenomenal space and the (b)ordering of regimes, different kinds of postnational strategies of citizenship

have emerged that do not necessarily take their point of departure from cosmopolitan human rights discourses or communal rights claims. Reflecting possibility and opportunity, a series of translocational citizenships is now possible. Punctuated by traumatic events, the global order of vertiginous change has also conditioned responses of panic, fear, uncertainty, and perceptions of risk. The reactionary consequences of this are evident in the erecting of neo-nationalist boundaries, ethno-cultural particularisms, and the centrifugal scatterings of borders through new regimes of surveillance and securitisation.

Multiculturalism has not fared well under such circumstances of securitisation, and there has been a generalised closing down of communication and contact between and among those perceived to belong to distinctive ethno-cultural communities. On the basis of a widespread intolerance of ambiguity and an insistence on categorical and essentialist forms of social inclusion and exclusion, anti-terrorist discourses and anti-Muslim sentiments have contributed to the securitisation of Europe, not as a *fortress*, but as an evolving organic regime whose capillaries and sinews are being constantly repositioned to respond to perceived threat, both within Europe and beyond. Such are the moving parts of what Bigo refers to as banopticism. Given the global order, such exclusionary tendencies are evident even in Canada, where the history of colonisation, citizenship regime, and multicultural presence has been distinct.

Those who live within the cracks of the securitised order, who are designated other and outsider, or the enemy within, find themselves dislocated by the reconfigurations of borders that take place as regimes respond to uncertainty and threat. Through the agency of the dialogical self and profane acts of resistance, young Muslims demonstrate a capability to engage citizenship regimes in various ways, to adapt and to challenge through assertive remappings of social space. Assertiveness through positive engagement entails working within evolving multicultures (for no



matter elite claims that multiculturalism is a failure, multiculture is a lived reality) to dislocate, relocate, and plurilocate Muslim bodies in the face of regimes of (b)ordering that reconfigure disciplinary space and place. Building on the conviviality of dialogical interactions as well as the insistence of Muslim bodies in the public arena, banal acts of citizenship contribute to a remapping of the social landscape. So too do the profane refusals to *colour within the lines* that are constantly redrawn by securitised citizenship regimes and the insistence on creative ambiguity and multiplicity in the face of bureaucratic taxonomy and cultural endogamy.

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