At Once the Saviours and the Saved: 'Diaspora Girls', Dangerous Places and Smart Power

This article explores how racially marked young women and girls are sought to be discursively and materially incorporated into markets and imperial economic and geopolitical strategies in spatially differentiated ways, through an examination of a series of media productions which portray the engagement of young racialised British citizens with their countries of heritage. I propose the term 'diaspora girls' to refer to the protagonists of these media productions, who are understood as embodying 'British' post-feminist gender values and heroically carrying them to 'dangerous' spaces of gender oppression and violence. In the context of current constructions of diasporas as agents of development, alongside the framing of migration as a 'security threat' to the global North, these British citizens are viewed as ideally positioned to further the contemporary imperialist project. Their perceived empowerment is understood to be fragile and contingent however, because of their affective connection with these spaces. Further, for those who are Muslim in particular, their perceived Britishness is understood as requiring continual reaffirmation and proof, thus reinforcing racialised structures of citizenship, and legitimising a border regime which reinscribes permanent North-South inequality.

Diasporas, Development, Girls, Gender Violence, Racism, Migration

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With the resurgence of explicitly racist, anti-migrant discourses and the rise of the far-right in Britain and globally, contestations around citizenship and belonging have intensified. This cannot be understood in isolation from ongoing imperialist relationships between North and South. Building on the author's earlier work on how race is embedded within international development, this article focuses on portrayals of young racialised British citizens, particularly women, in relation to their countries of heritage. It looks at various media representations to argue that these 'diaspora girls' are seen as saviours who can embody 'British' gender values and carry them to 'dangerous' homelands in the Global South, furthering contemporary imperialist projects. But their empowerment is understood as fragile: they are also portrayed as needing saving from their equally 'dangerous' diasporic communities. Those who are Muslim, in particular, are expected to continuously reaffirm and prove their 'Britishness', reinforcing globally racialised borders.

Introduction: 'Diaspora girls' in development

The last decade has seen the proliferation of representations of the 'girl' in the Global South within dominant development discourses. Earlier portrayed as 'passive victims' of their cultures and devoid of agency (Mohanty, 1986; Narayan, 1997), they are now frequently also hailed as potentially ideal agents of development awaiting empowerment. Feminist critiques have highlighted how these representations are directed towards the specific requirements of global capital, producing adolescent girls in the Global South as racialised hyperindustrious neoliberal subjects (see for example Wilson, 2011; Murphy, 2012; 2017) The corporate-led discursive focus on young women and girls in the global South as agents of development (Moeller, 2018), these critiques suggest, accompanies and legitimises policies and approaches which involve extending and intensifying women's labour such as the Word Bank's Gender Equality as Smart Economics (Chant and Sweetman 2012; Chant, 2016) under conditions characterised by precarity and disposability (Wright, 2004).

Multiple colonial tropes are reworked to reproduce racialised global inequalities: this figure of the 'girl' in the global South, awaiting 'investment' in order that her potential may be unleashed, is understood in relation and in contrast to her always already empowered Northern counterpart, unmarked by race or class (Koffman and Gill, 2013), mobilising post-feminist discourses (McRobbie, 2004; Ringrose, 2007) in which gender equality is assumed to have been achieved in the global North.

But how do representations of young women who have grown up in the global North, but have heritage and family connections in the South, both reinscribe and complicate these patterns? What do they tell us about racialised and gendered geographies of citizenship and the spatialised politics of belonging, about contemporary imperialism and global geo-politics? I examine the work these representations do, the relationships and contradictions they make visible, and equally importantly, those they obscure, through a consideration of a series of documentary films produced for the BBC in which young British people visit their countries of origin, and a British development NGO's animated video campaign on the issue of forced marriage in Britain.

I propose the term 'diaspora girls' to refer to the subjects interpellated by these representations. With international institutions and states in the global North increasingly emphasizing a 'diaspora option' in development, diaspora organizations identified as instruments of 'Smart Power' by the US administration during the

Obama era (International Diaspora Engagement Alliance, 2011), and migrant-sending states and non-state actors adopting 'diaspora strategies' (Ho et al, 2015), my use of this term seeks to problematise, rather than naturalise, the assumptions of 'extra-territorial belonging' (Raj, 2015) – and conversely, territorial un-or conditional belonging in states of residence - which such strategies and initiatives promote. Further, by referring to 'diaspora girls' I seek to explicitly relate the representations I analyse to the wider phenomenon of the 'Girl Powering of Development' (Koffman and Gill, 2013). In this context, I explore how racially marked 'girls' are sought to be discursively and materially incorporated into markets and imperial economic and geopolitical strategies in spatially differentiated ways.

In considering these representations of 'diaspora girls' and their material and discursive effects I seek to take account of multiple differences between as well as within communities, and ongoing processes of racialisation (Alexander, Kaur and St Louis, 2014) which are creating 'new categories of privilege and stigma' (Melamed, 2006:2). Thus while young racialised British citizens in the media productions discussed here appear to be interpellated within 'new hierarchies of belonging' (Back, Sinha and Bryan, 2012) which distinguish them from migrants and refugees, in the case of those who are Muslim, their perceived Britishness is also constructed as conditional and requiring constant reaffirmation and proof. In the context of intensified Islamophobia, gender inequality is also increasingly understood as a racial marker, with 'gendered civilisational discourses…inherently tied to the "War on Terror"' (Shakhsari, 2011:10). I explore how this is spatialised, through a focus on the construction of 'dangerous places' of exceptional gendered oppression and violence, which include both locations in the global South as well as racialised spaces in the North, legitimising intervention in these spaces.

Further, in the context of the British state's avowedly 'Hostile Environment' for migrants (Grierson, 2018), citizenship itself is increasingly uncertain for many young BAME people in Britain (de Noronha, 2019). In media representations too, the transformation from belonging to exclusion, from citizen to 'illegal' migrant is often all too seamless (Tyler and Gill, 2013). This increasingly contingent and racialised citizenship is experienced through the material violence of government policies such as Prevent (Kapoor, 2013; Rashid 2016b) and border policing in schools, hospitals and universities (Swain, 2018; Usborne, 2018) housing and workplaces(Yuval-Davis et al, 2017)). Most tellingly, young British-born BAME citizens can find their citizenship revoked entirely by the state as a measure of counter-terrorism policing.[1].

In the following section, I trace the emergence of policies which seek to construct particular diaspora subjectivities and mobilise them in the service of the project of international development, before going on to examine media representations of 'diaspora girls' in development.

Diasporas, Neoliberalism and the 'Core of Smart Power'

The UK government's Department for International Development (DfID) published its 'Building Support for Development Strategy' in 1999, under New Labour, aiming to increase public understanding of 'our mutual dependence', in line with the development/security paradigm espoused by Prime Minister Tony Blair. Within this, the focus on BAME communities was to become increasingly significant. As an evaluation of the policy ten years on noted, 'the decade since 1997 has seen dramatic changes in the international development agenda… climate change, globalisation, the post 9/11 conflict agenda, wider issues of peace and security …these changes were reflected in the approach to civil society. This is particularly evident in the engagement with BME groups'' (Thornton and Hext, 2009:14).

The evaluation observes that the publication of its 2006 White Paper (DfID, 2006), marked a further shift: 'At this point the term 'Diaspora' became more established in the development vernacular with BME groups valued more for the contribution they could make to economic and political development in their "countries of origin or heritage"' (ibid:14).

This is consistent with a wider rise in interest in the role of 'diasporas' in development. With the advent of neoliberal policies, the shift to market-led development strategies, and the near collapse of state provision in many regions, migrants' remittances had already come to be viewed as an important safety net and source of development finance by institutions like the World Bank in the 1990s (Ratha, 2003). Subsequently, the emphasis on the diaspora's role in development has gone beyond remittances to focus on their potential for investment and deployment of skills in countries of origin, and on diaspora organisations as a new channel for development initiatives.

The promotion of the 'Diaspora Option' in development has been consistent with the emergence of the Post-Washington Consensus (Pellerin and Mullings, 2013: 98; Boyle and Ho, 2017), a framework within which the Bank and other development institutions sought to address the poverty intensified by a decade of economic liberalisation policies in a way which retained the core of the neoliberal model intact,

and in fact could further extend the gains of global capital through the mobilisation of notions of individual responsibility, participation, and self-help (Molyneux, 2008). Attempts to engage organisations of migrants and their descendants in 'homeland' development narrowly defined (McIlwaine, 2007; Sinatti and Horst, 2015) can be seen as part of a broader shift which identified NGOs and private philanthropic initiatives as the most suitable vehicles for both service provision and building a consensus around neoliberal ideas (Robinson, 1996; Hearn, 2007). As Pellerin and Mullings argue, these attempts seek to create 'a self regulating system of governance where states and diaspora voluntarily act in ways that maintain/institutionalize existing market friendly agendas'(2013:111)

The potential role of certain self-proclaimed 'diaspora' actors as a source of legitimacy for specifically neoliberal forms of development can be observed in the support provided by right-wing Hindu nationalist groups based in Britain and the US for neoliberal corporate-led development policies in India (Wilson, 2012). Similarly, in the context of Jamaica, as Mullings (2012: 407) explains, 'skilled members of the Jamaican diaspora are becoming important actors in an emerging governmental strategy that aims to embed and extend the rationality of the market into everyday social relations and institutions'. Thus for example delegates to the 2008 Diaspora Conference held in Jamaica focused on 'law and order' problems as disrupting economic growth rather than recognising that they are an outcome of socio-economic inequalities and restructuring since the 1980s, and neglected human rights in favour of narratives of 'criminality and punishment' (ibid.:420)

As these examples suggest, the interpellation and mobilization of 'diasporas' in the service of neoliberal development relies on a selective engagement with particular sections of the targeted communities, defined by class, gender, ethnicity, religion, caste and other divisions which shape people's interactions with countries of origin (Pellerin and Mullings, 2013; Sinatti and Horst, 2015, Ho, 2011), while simultaneously eliding what Campt and Thomas (2008:1) call 'the vexing tensions of difference and inequity that characterize the internal relations of diaspora'.

For Northern governments and NGOs, working through diaspora groups has been framed as a way of promoting 'ownership' of development interventions: 'through people who share the languages and culture' (Bakewell, 2009:1) and are perceived as 'culturally proximate, cognitively accessible, less vested in securing Western

interests, and more concerned with the wellbeing of their homelands and caring for intimate kin' (Boyle and Ho, 2017:592). The dominant development discourse on diasporas has incorporated aspects of postcolonial notions of hybridity and transnationalism, which are here seen simply as assets which can be instrumentally mobilised for the project of development. This instrumentalism also renders invisible the ways in which racism, exploitation and exclusion structure the experiences of people in 'diasporic' communities in diverse ways, and condition their ability to engage in 'homeland' development (Hammond et al, 2011; Lindley 2010).

Further, the increased interest in diasporas in development has coincided with the intensification of anti-migrant policies in the global North such as the UK's 'Hostile Environment' (Grierson, 2018), leading to escalating insecurity and precarity. In fact many diaspora-based development initiatives implicitly or explicitly involve notions of 'return' (Sinnati and Horst, 2015), and cannot be understood in isolation from immigration and asylum policies and discourses which frame migration as a threat to security in the global North. As Pellerin and Mullings argue, 'particularly in Europe, another factor that motivated support for a Diaspora option was the belief that emerging immigration and security concerns could be solved by these diasporic developmental interventions' (2013: 95).

While state initiatives coercively promoting migrants' 'voluntary' return, such as the UK government's notorious 'GO HOME' vans introduced by Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May as Home Secretary (Back and Sinha, 2013), are explicitly racist and xenophobic, those which present return as an opportunity to contribute to homeland development incorporate similar objectives while reframing them as empowering for the returnees.

For example, a joint initiative of GIZ (the German International Development Agency) and the German Federal Employment Agency runs country-wise 'Return or Stay' seminars for migrant 'students, graduates and professionals'. One scheduled for October 2018 asks potential participants:

'Are you originally from Nigeria, currently living in Germany and faced with the decision on whether to return to your home country after your studies or a period of employment? We would like to help you make your choice ….The event is aimed at anyone who would like to find out more about the various opportunities of returning to their country of origin and making a contribution to development of the country' (Centre for International Migration and Development).

These constructions of 'diasporas' which assume meaningful affective relationships of deterritorialised belonging to their places of heritage for migrants and their

descendants (Raj, 2015) are thus also inseparable from the consolidation of structures and discourses of territorialized exclusion and 'unbelonging' in current places of residence.

Yet the enthusiasm for 'diasporas' in development also has strong undertones of the colonial civilising mission, constructing diasporas as having the potential to 'export to the global South Western political and economic subjectivities' (Boyle and Ho, 2017:580) where these are consistent with neoliberal models. For example, a report from the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad on 'The Pakistani Diaspora in Europe and its Impact on Democracy Building in Pakistan' argues that 'Diaspora members...have a lot to contribute as they have seen how democracy and democratic institutions work' (Abbasi, 2010:9); a similar argument about 'exposure to democratic political transactions and practices' is put forward in a report from the African Diaspora Policy Centre (Mohamoud, 2009:7).

Both Britain and the US have sought to incorporate diaspora organisations into the pursuit of broader strategic military, economic, and geopolitical objectives. Hillary Clinton, then US Secretary of State, expounded on this approach when she told a gathering 'aimed to bring diaspora communities across America into the fold of US foreign policy and development' in 2011 that:

Because of your familiarity with cultural norms, your own motivations, your own special skills and leadership, you are frankly our Peace Corps, our USAID, our State Department all rolled into one. Yes, we have a very strong force in our organised diplomatic efforts, our development professionals and certainly our defence establishment. But I think building these coalitions, spurring initiative and innovation around the world, using people-to-people exchanges is actually the core of Smart Power. And that's where all of you come in" (International Diaspora Engagement Alliance, 2011)[2]

This 'Smart Power' approach is also reflected in a 2014 speech made by Justine Greening, then UK International Development Secretary, at Comic Relief's 'Africa in Action' event, in which she focused on two main aspects of diasporas' role in development:

'Firstly …we are supporting the diaspora to improve lives and livelihoods, and ultimately build stronger, more sustainable economies too. Secondly, ...we are increasingly engaging with the diaspora to tackle the discriminatory attitudes and mindsets that stops girls and women from realising their potential. ….the diaspora have a huge role to play when it comes to tackling the discriminatory beliefs and attitudes that keep too many women poor and marginalised' (DfID, 2014)

As this suggests, an important aspect of the perceived 'civilising' potential of 'diaspora/ homeland' engagement is its role in promoting ideas of gender equality

(Lampert, 2012; see for example Levitt's notion of 'social remittances' [1998]) constructed in racialised terms as a set of ideas attached to spaces in the global North[3]. More specifically, gender equality in Greening's speech is understood as neoliberal 'Smart Economics': the realization of the potential of 'girls and women' to 'build stronger economies'. This approach promoted by DfID, the World Bank and other key development institutions eschews even liberal feminist critiques of gender, framing gender equality exclusively in terms of entry into labour markets, and in fact depends on the perpetuation of the gender division of reproductive labour, and of the tropes of gendered altruism which sustain it (Wilson, 2015).

In the following section I explore how these understandings of 'diaspora' actors as civilizational agents embodying particular gender ideologies, and as having the potential to intervene in spaces in the global South constructed as 'dangerous', are embedded more broadly in popular media discourses around 'diaspora/homeland' engagements.

'Dangerous Places': Media Representations of 'Returning' Diasporic Youth

From 2010 to 2013 the BBC aired a series of documentaries in which viewers were invited to view countries in the Global South through the gaze of young, usually female, British citizens with family members or heritage in these countries. The assumption that 'diasporic' communities can legitimise and give 'ownership' to development interventions by the global North is mirrored, I argue, in such media productions. In these stories of 'diaspora girls' and 'dangerous places', however, the emphasis is less on the unique potential supposedly stemming from hybridised cultural identities (though this theme remains), and more on the thoroughly 'British' outlook of the new generation of diasporic subjects, who, as I demonstrate, are constituted here almost as civilising Trojan horses being introduced into the alien cultural territory of their country of heritage. Significantly, British values here are almost exclusively represented in explicitly gendered terms: as an attachment to particular understandings of gender relations which can be broadly described as postfeminist (McRobbie 2004; 2008). These highly gendered market-driven patterns of sexuality, sociality and consumption (Ware, 2011) are repeatedly contrasted with gender relations encountered in countries in the Global South, which thus come to be recognised as the exclusive and originary locations of gender inequality, 'dangerous places' requiring intervention and regulation.

I will briefly consider five documentaries, all of which were aired on BBC3[4] during 2010-13. In 'Women, Weddings, War and Me' (2010), 21-year-old Nel Hedayat, who spent her early childhood in Afghanistan but has grown up in London, visits Afghanistan to find out about the position of women in the country. This was followed by two further documentaries using the same format: in 'The World's Most Dangerous Place for Women'(2010), 23-year-old Londoner Judith Wanga returns to the Democratic Republic of Congo and is reunited with her parents before visiting the conflict affected region of Eastern Congo to speak to survivors of rape; while in 'A Dangerous Place to Meet my Family'(2011) 21-year-old Dean Whitney from Sheffield, whose mother is from Yemen, visits his mother's family there, and reports on the human rights situation. Subsequently, Nel Hedayet herself presented another documentary in a different, though related, format, 'The Truth About Child Brides'(2011), an investigation of child marriage in India and Bangladesh. And Radha Bedi, who describes herself as a young British Indian and journalist, reported on gender-based violence in India in 'India, a Dangerous Place to be a Woman'(2013).

The aim here is not to develop a comprehensive critique of these particular documentaries. In particular, the film dealing with the Democratic Republic of Congo, 'The World's Most Dangerous Place for Women', largely deals with extremely complex and traumatic situations sensitively, and has been followed by extensive campaigning on the issue of sexual violence in conflict by its protagonist, journalist and activist Judith Wanga. Nor does this discussion seek to undermine attempts to make particular issues accessible in a popular idiom. Rather the aim is to explore the representational work which media productions of this kind are doing in the context of wider racialised and gendered constructions of 'diasporas in development'. What takes place and what is said in documentary films is not simply recorded but constructed in specific ways in order to produce a particular set of narratives and particular 'understandings, subjectivities, and versions of the world'(Gill, 2007:12). The process of representing difference (such as that of race, gender or class) in media is thus also always a process of constructing it (ibid.). These representations also involve specific constructions of the projected viewer, even while, as feminist media critics have emphasised, viewers actively engage with media representations in multiple, contingent and contradictory ways (Wearing, 2012).

All four of the documentaries portraying a journey of 'return' open with scenes in which the protagonists demonstrate their 'Britishness', primarily through affiliation to

particular practices of femininity and masculinity. In the cases of Nel, Jude, and Radha, this is portrayed in a strikingly similar way (despite the films having different directors): through performing gendered, heteronormative and sexualised practices of consumption and self-representation which are clearly intended to establish them as 'normal' young British women. Nel shows viewers the camisoles and 'short shorts' in her wardrobe, explaining, 'I won't be able to wear any of this in Afghanistan' .An almost identical scene is replayed on the eve of Radha's trip to India, while Jude is first shown putting on mascara and, shortly afterwards, expressing alarm that she almost forgot to pack her hair-straighteners for the trip. Meanwhile Dean, the only male protagonist, explains that he finds it 'difficult to be a good Muslim in England because of the distractions. The Number One temptation? I would have to say sex, yeah (laughs)'. Later, in Yemen, when he encounters young women at an amusement park wearing burkhas, he will reaffirm his British lad's masculinity with the comment 'I'm trying to think about what young boys talk about when they talk about girls....You can't see their bum and you can't see their chest', while simultaneously rejecting what viewers are told are the markers of Yemeni masculinity ('He'd rather help his grandmother cook the sheep than kill it', according to the narrator).

Constructions of young diasporic subjects as 'caught between two cultures' or confused by 'competing identities' reappear in 'Women, Weddings, War and Me' (Ayaan, 2011), (for instance when Nel explains that one motive for her visit is that,'I'm not fully British, and I can never be fully Afghan'). But this is less prominent here than a discourse of 'successful' cultural assimilation where the main anomaly is seen as having, as Nel puts it, 'Asian skin'. Both Nel and Jude are shown reacting strongly against everyday gendered practices which they encounter in their countries of heritage (arranged marriage in the case of Afghanistan, and in Congo, the expectation that young unmarried women should live with their families). But strikingly, these reactions as they are portrayed in the film do not spring from long-term awareness of and resistance to the underlying ideas, but rather from the complete unfamiliarity, surprise and repugnance of the outsider: Nel is incredulous and 'cannot imagine' marrying someone she has not chosen, while Jude has 'never heard anything so ridiculous'. Their diasporic identities as constructed in the films are thus predicated on a lack of prior knowledge which is not always credible, further underlining that the filmmakers consider it essential that their diasporic protagonists are viewed by audiences as embodying unalloyed 'British' gender values.

Rather than linking the specific examples of gender oppression which the protagonists encounter with broader feminist critiques of patriarchy, all of these films seek to do

the reverse, framing these practices in terms of cultural exceptionalism and deviance, and simultaneously normalising the 'familiar' gender oppression encountered in the West. For example in 'India, A Dangerous Place to be a Woman', Radha Bedi is shown asking a young woman in Delhi who is explaining the concept of 'eve-teasing' (street harassment): 'is a guy checking you out - checking out your assets – really that bad?' normalising sexual harassment experienced in Britain (and her own acceptance of it as a young British woman) and seeking to establish that what happens in India is categorically different from apparently harmless and acceptable sexual harassment in public spaces in Britain, not only in scale but in nature.

Evoking the adventure narratives of colonial era explorers, the term 'dangerous' is used in four out of five of the titles of these documentaries. This is clearly sensationalized and attention-grabbing, but also implicitly raises the question of who is in danger. Are the diasporic returnees in more danger than local people? Or are the projected viewers expected to care more about what happens to them? As diasporic subjects, have their lives then gained value precisely through becoming 'western' lives?

These questions become particularly stark in the way that three of these films explore issues of violence against women in the respective countries. Jude, Nel and Radha all meet women and children who have experienced horrifying gender-based violence. The focus here is on the traumatic effects of these encounters on the visitors, with all three films building up to a climax where they are overwhelmed by what they see and hear about and break down. This focus is perhaps inevitable given the format of the films, but it raises once again long standing questions raised by feminist postcolonial thinkers about representing others, who can speak, and whose voice can be heard (Spivak, 1988, Alcoff 1995). This is not to suggest that the locally based women in the films are represented as 'passive victims': all three protagonists emphasise the courage and agency of women they encounter, several of whom are activists defending women's rights. But the voices of these Afghan, Congolese and Indian women (as well as those of the Yemeni men and women encountered in 'A Dangerous Place to Meet my Family') are filtered to the audience through the reactions of the diasporic subject. Thus in place of the authoritative 'objective' voice of the white, middle class reporter which still dominates representations of the global South in the media, what occurs here is the privileging of the voice of the empathetic diasporic subject. The affective connection implied in being a member of a diasporic community is here expected to allay any concerns about representation, and at the

same time facilitates an appropriation of affect and emotion, leading one to ask not only 'who can speak?', but 'who can feel?'[5].

The fifth documentary which I will consider here, 'The Truth About Child Brides', does not actually portray the return of the diasporic subject, but it is similarly constructed around a central figure considered to be uniquely qualified to comment and empathise. Starting with the explanation that her grandmother and aunt 'were child brides', Nel Hedayat visits India and Bangladesh to investigate the practice of child marriage[6].

In India, having attended a child marriage in rural Rajasthan, Nel meets a group of well-off teenage girls living in the state capital, Jaipur, to solicit their views on the practice. What is striking here is the construction of the girls as not only disapproving of, but completely ignorant of and bewildered by, local forms of gender-based oppression, in a way which mirrors Nel's own reactions. One refers to a 'maid' employed by her family who got her daughter married at an early age, but the difference is explained in terms of a rural/urban rather than a class divide. Significantly, contemporary urban India then, unlike any of the locations discussed earlier, is presented as a successfully developed, globalised space of unproblematic affluence and reassuring similarity, rather than disturbing difference, for the diasporic subject. This is clearly a growing (although by no means universal) theme in media representations of contemporary India in which neoliberal economic policies have led to rapid growth alongside escalating inequality and poverty. In a BBC Radio 4 two-part series 'Home from Home' (2011) about people of Indian origin who have moved from Britain to India, the emphasis was similarly on the increasing prevalence of shopping malls, spas and gated communities where 'everything' is available, which were portrayed as making such 'reverse journeys' possible.[7]

In her quest for 'the truth' about child brides however, Nel rapidly moves on to Bangladesh where she meets several girls aged between 13 and 16 who are about to be or have recently been married. In this context the construction of the deviant 'Third World' other is explicit. The girls are portrayed as victims to the extent of dehumanisation: one group of young women (who were in fact suffering from obstetric fistula and in hospital awaiting operations when interviewed) are described as not having 'had time to develop a personality'. Meanwhile the men are demonised: while questioning a 19-year-old man about his first impressions of his 13-year-old bride-to-be, Nel comments, 'men here clearly don't look at young girls the way we do in the West!' But while the latter remark might seem to invite awkward questions

about objectification and sexualisation in the 'West', the fact is that, as in the films on Afghanistan, DRC and India discussed above, oppressive gendered practices are being critiqued here less from any feminist perspective ('Western' or otherwise) and more from the position of a celebration of 'British' gender norms such as heterosexual 'love' marriage. Nel repeatedly makes references to her own hypothetical wedding taking place in the future. Later, she meets Munni, an unmarried garment worker who supports her family financially, and, viewers are told, has worked forty hours a week since the age of thirteen, a Smart Economics 'solution' which, they are assured, is 'the lesser of two evils'. But when Munni explains that she has no intention of getting married until she is 25, and is happy to remain unmarried if no husband is forthcoming then, Nel hastens to scotch this possibility exclaiming 'no, no, you'll find *someone* in Bangladesh!'.

So far I have discussed some common features of the films under discussion, but they also differ from each other in significant ways which relate to global geopolitics, imperial intervention, and their symbiotic relationship with the reconfiguration of British racism, and specifically the racialisation of British Muslims. Firstly, The World's Most Dangerous Place for Women highlights the role of Western companies in fuelling the war and mass rape, through their demand for Congo's minerals (particularly emphasising the use of coltan in mobile phones, laptops and other electronic consumer goods). This contrasts with the marked elision of the role of the British state and British capital in generating the situations encountered in Afghanistan and Yemen[8].

Secondly, while, as discussed, all the films emphasise the 'cultural' Britishness of the diasporic subjects featured, in the two documentaries which feature the 'return' of young British Muslims (to Afghanistan and Yemen respectively), their allegiance specifically to the British state and its imperial presence in their country of heritage is additionally sought to be demonstrated, in ways which, again, often appear contrived. Thus Dean, on entering the heavily fortified British Embassy in Sana'a, describes it as 'a little piece of home'; Nel, while interviewing Provincial Prosecutor Maria Bashir, refers to British troops as 'our boys' who 'are here fighting presumably for your rights and your progress'.

 In fact in both 'Women, Weddings, War and Me' and 'A Dangerous Place to Meet my Family' the visits are ultimately portrayed as redemptive journeys where what Nel and Dean really discover is a deeper appreciation of the privilege of being British

citizens. After visiting women imprisoned for so-called 'crimes of morality', Nel reflects 'I've had so many opportunities...it humbles me to think, God, it could have been me'. The trip, she tells viewers later, has made one thing clear: 'I can't be in Afghanistan'. Perhaps inevitably given the current preoccupation with the figure of the young British Muslim man as the 'enemy within' precisely because of his perceived connections with the 'Muslim world', the film featuring Dean's visit to Yemen 'on the frontline of the War on Terror' makes this even more explicit, concluding with Dean explaining 'there are so many things which aren't there in Yemen – just even as simple as human rights. That is why I am proud to be British and I am honoured to live in this country. To be honest, I am really glad I live in England'.

Prior to the trip, returning home from a football match, Dean reflects on the day-to-day racism he encounters in Britain: 'If I went to a pub now, I think I'd be beaten up....I'm sure I'll die there (Yemen) to be honest. For people like me, who are trying to fit into, I don't want to be racist, but the white culture, the Western way, I don't think you do fit in'. These experiences are understood by Dean as shaping his identity without ultimately undermining his own sense of having a right to be in Britain, an understanding consistent with anti-racist constructions of belonging: 'I would say I am a British Muslim, a steel-city Yemeni as we like to call ourselves'.

But after learning about human rights violations in Yemen such as police firing on unarmed protestors and disappearances of dissidents, Dean apparently learns to count his blessings: 'I didn't realise how comfortable we have it in England. Living where I live, police, they stop you in the street, you do get harassed, but it's nothing. Here (Yemen) if you say the wrong thing you'll disappear.' There is no indication here of the connections between the British government's engagement in the War on Terror and these human rights violations, or indeed of the incarcerations without charge in Britain itself under anti-terror laws of people who 'said the wrong thing' (Kapoor, 2013), often on the basis of evidence which is kept secret. Meeting a group of Yemeni men and women who talk about how the British government's actions in Iraq are generating sympathy for Al-Qaida, Dean has 'never felt so British' and in case viewers haven't got the message, the narrator tells them that 'there is a kind of radical Islam getting a foothold here which Dean is beginning to realise he can never sympathise with'. Later, Dean does meet survivors of a government missile attack on their village, Majala, in which US missiles were used, but this is not followed up. And things are soon back on track. By the time he returns to Sheffield 'his journey of self-discovery cut short by Yemen's capacity for violence', Dean is shown to be no longer

the confident, critical and potentially angry 'steel-city Yemeni' but affirms that he is now unproblematically 'proud to be British' and 'honoured to live in this country'.

Young gendered and racialised diasporic subjects, then, are increasingly constructed as ideally positioned to further the imperialist project. Their involvement is located within a broader civilisational discourse and contributes to the production of particular representations of both contemporary Britain and those locations in the 'developing' world which become the target of intervention, for circulation within Britain and beyond.

Saving Diaspora Girls? Borders and Plan UK's Forced Marriage Campaign

The representation of young racialised British citizens, and specifically of 'diaspora girls', as empowered civilisational agents par excellence in the contexts of their countries of heritage is also complicated by the fact that these representations co-exist with representations of young BAME women – and today primarily, young British Muslim women - as themselves the objects of intervention and potential salvation within Britain. This is a result of their affective connections with another set of dangerous spaces – Muslim communities in Britain as exceptional sites of gender oppression. The notion of exceptional 'Muslim' gender inequality and violence (Rashid, 2016b) has increasingly become central to the process through which these young women are racialised, with feminist notions mobilised for what Farris (2017) terms 'femonationalism'.

This complexity is visible in the context of development interventions, when young BAME women in the global North become subjects of campaigns by development actors which otherwise focus on places in the global South. For example, the NGO Plan International, a children's charity which works on 'combating child, early and forced marriage in the developing world' (Plan International UK)[9] also took part in interventions aimed at preventing forced marriage in the UK. Plan UK collaborated with British charity Karma Nirvana and the UK Home Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office to produce teaching materials on forced marriage for UK schools, as part of the British government's campaign against forced marriage (ibid.)

A number of BAME women's organisations and feminist activists working to combat gender violence in all its forms have been highly critical of the British government's approach which involves criminalising Forced Marriage (Larasi et al, 2014; Wilson, 2014), in the context of the extensive austerity-driven cutbacks in refuges and services for survivors of gender violence, in which BAME specialist services have been

particularly targeted (Kumar, 2014). The government's Forced Marriage policy has also been criticised for its exclusive focus, until recently, on supporting British citizens coerced into marrying foreign nationals, with critics suggesting the underlying concern is primarily one of preventing men migrating to the UK as spouses (Wilson, 2007; Gill and Mitra-Kahn, 2010)[10]. Women who have migrated to Britain as spouses and then attempted to escape forced and/or abusive marriages to British citizens, and women seeking asylum in the UK who are fleeing forced marriages and other forms of gender violence, are by contrast faced with detention and deportation (Wilson, 2007; Hill, 2017). More recently it has been observed that despite stated policy on Forced Marriage, in practice, in the context of austerity and cuts, social services are often reluctant to intervene to prevent children being sent abroad even when they are clearly at risk of forced marriage, in cases where they would need to be taken into care if they remained in the UK [11]. Further, the policy and wider state interventions around Forced Marriage have been criticised for constructing the phenomenon as limited to Muslim communities, downplaying its prevalence in Sikh, Hindu and Orthodox Jewish communities in the UK (Brown, 2014) and the fact that it is associated with patriarchal social structures rather than any specific religion, thus exemplifying another aspect of the mobilisation of gender equality discourses in the service of racialised geopolitical and economic objectives.

Many of these patterns recur in Plan UK's teaching resources on forced marriage, which are designed for teaching at KS3 (ages 11-14) and KS4 (ages 14-16). Here forced marriage in the UK is placed in the context of wider campaigns globally against 'early and forced marriage'. British BAME communities, like those in the global South in the documentaries discussed earlier, are located as 'dangerous spaces' for young women.

The centrepiece of Plan UK's teaching resources pack is a short animated film, 'Sazia's story' (2011). This is based on a narrative of a British Pakistani schoolgirl whose parents tried to force her into a marriage to a man in Pakistan. There are a number of aspects of the animation which help us to understand the specificities of the construction of the 'diaspora girl' as endangered subject. Firstly, racialized difference is highlighted in the line-drawing based animation, which is entirely in black and white apart from the skin of the (all South Asian) characters, which is 'coloured in' brown. Secondly, Sazia's father, the main proponent of her marriage, and a consistently sinister presence, is further racialised in line with tropes of South Asian Muslim masculinities. In contrast to the other characters, whose features are indistinct, he is made to appear menacing through heavy scowling eyebrows, a thick

moustache, and dark rimmed eyes. Thirdly, the video includes several British South Asian characters who are sympathetic to Sazia and appear relatively unaffected by the norms associated with forced marriage; these are, however, all distinguished from Sazia's apparently working class Muslim family either by religion (as in the case of her teacher Mrs Chandra and would-be boyfriend Bharvin, who have both been given Hindu or Sikh names), or by class (in the case of Sazia's best friend Basheera, whose 'Dad is a doctor').

Having watched Sazia's story to the point where she is about to be flown to Pakistan for the marriage, viewers in the classroom are then asked 'what would you do' and shown videos which portray the likely outcomes of three possible 'choices': A -'go to Pakistan'; B – 'run away' and C- 'call Mrs Chandra'.

Raising awareness among girls who are at risk of forced marriage of alternatives to accepting the marriage (Option A) or 'running away' and trying to survive alone in a British city (Option B) is clearly a useful objective, notwithstanding the current rapid depletion of resources such as the specialist refuge to which Sazia is directed by Mrs Chandra in Option C, and the increasing incorporation of schoolteachers into policing roles in relation to immigration and security (Usborne, 2018) which inevitably undermines their pupils' trust in such situations. However, particularly given its target audience of KS3 and KS4 school students, which is clearly much wider than the sub-group of girls at risk of forced marriage, it is important to also consider how the representation of these options are specifically racialized and gendered, and to think about the potential effects of the production of a particular kind of diasporic subject.

In Option A, 'go to Pakistan', the visual representation of what Sazia's life will be like if she chooses this option is a monochrome brown (indicating rainy skies and muddy fields) while Sazia stands out entirely dressed in a white robe, establishing that Sazia is 'out of place' in these surroundings of stylised 'underdevelopment'. Whereas when Sazia is in the UK, she is literally a 'brown girl' and her vulnerability to gendered familial violence is constructed as inseparable from this racialised Othering, in 'Pakistan' she acquires symbolic whiteness, becoming a British girl who is 'out of place' in ways which are once again racialized. Further, this geographic and affective displacement from global North to South is the only effect of forced marriage which is explicitly represented in 'Sazias story'. As in the films portraying the 'return' of diasporic subjects, viewers are taught that it is the exceptionalised gendered violence of spaces in the global South and its emigrant communities, (pre-eminently those

which are Muslim) rather than patriarchal gender relations per se, which is the problem.

If the unviability of Sazia's life in Pakistan is primarily linked to her out-of- placeness as a diasporic British subject (echoing Nel's 'I can't be in Afghanistan') rather than forced marriage itself, what is particular striking here is the contrast between Plan UK's representation of 'diaspora girls' like Sazia, and its representations, targeted at a similar school-age British audience, of 'girls in the developing world' including those seen as at risk of forced marriage. The latter are represented by Plan, along with other international NGOs, as 'investable subjects' (Murphy, 2017) precisely because of their altruism, and specifically their commitment to economically supporting their families[12]. In both cases, entry into the labour market is constructed as synonymous with empowerment (Rashid, 2016a). But the 'empowerment' of diaspora girls like Sazia is understood to require social provision by the state, such as specialist refuges and free education, (which has in reality been relentlessly eroded by the same UK government which co-sponsored the campaign). By contrast, in the case of 'developing world girls', their empowerment (generally through education) is explicitly framed as an alternative to social provision, a means through which their gendered productive and reproductive labour can be mobilized for the neoliberal development project (Wilson, 2011, 2015; Murphy, 2012, 2017; Roy, 2012). Far from being 'out of place', then, these girls are rather constructed as 'fixed in place': with the sustainable development they are expected to fuel seen as facilitating the containment of the global South, the tightening of borders and the consolidation of permanent inequality between North and South (Duffield and Evans, 2011). In the context of approaches to forced marriage, the contrast between these representations of girls in the global South and those of 'diaspora girls', for whom empowerment is understood to require decisive estrangement from families, communities and 'homelands', arguably reinforces the suggestion of critical feminist observers that the British state's concern about forced marriage relates primarily to preventing potential migration of male spouses of British citizens.[13] Like the 'diaspora option' in development, it seems that the British state's selective intervention in forced marriages cannot be understood in isolation from the reproduction and extension of border regimes.

Conclusion

While racialised minority young women in Britain are simultaneously represented as victims in need of saving and as embodied saviours in contemporary British

development discourses, these sets of representations are not mutually exclusive, and both contribute to the production of particular representations of both Britain and locations in the 'developing' world which legitimise the contemporary imperialist project. Central to this process, further underlining the 'profoundly gendered politics of race and diaspora' (Campt, 2007:372) is the representation of locations in the global South as well as 'diasporic' spaces in the North as dangerous spaces of exceptional gendered oppression and violence, and of 'diaspora girls' as 'out of place' in these spaces, and as potential civilising agents embodying 'British' post-feminist gendered and heteronormative market-driven patterns of sexuality, sociality and consumption.

'Diaspora girls' facing oppressive situations such as forced marriage are understood by development organisations as requiring intervention by the state (even as the state is increasingly starved of resources which could provided them with support) and decisive estrangement from families, communities and 'homelands' – and by extension from all those represented as would-be migrants - in order to become empowered subjects. This contrasts with the now ubiquitous racialised and gendered representations within neoliberal development discourses of 'girls in the developing world' who, once empowered, are expected to not only support themselves but also altruistically support their families, through engaging with exceptional industriousness in both productive and reproductive labour.

Further, while the constructions of 'diaspora girls' which I have discussed depend on these subjects' privileged location as citizens, for young women, as well as young men, from Muslim communities in particular, this citizenship is contingent and depends in these representations on proof of political and affective affiliation with the British state and its economic and geopolitical objectives. Ultimately then, these constructions reproduce racialised structures of citizenship, naturalise a border regime which reinscribes permanent North-South inequality, and legitimise multiple forms of imperialist intervention.

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[1] Revoking citizenship is the most extreme of a number of measures currently in use (for example passport removal) which Kapoor and Narkowicz (2018) term 'unmaking citizens'. This has happened to a number of British citizens, but the most high profile case has been that of Shamima Begum, a 19-year old who had travelled from London, where she was born, to Syria along with two schoolfriends at the age of 15 to join ISIL. Shamima Begum's citizenship was revoked by Home Secretary Sajid Javed in February 2019 when she was living in a refugee camp in Syria with her newborn baby (also a British citizen). Her baby died less than three weeks later.

[2] 'Smart Power' was defined as 'an aggressive brand of liberal internationalism' (Nossel, 2004:142) in which Washington exercises 'assertive leadership -- diplomatic, economic, and not least, military -- to advance a broad array of goals' (ibid: 131). It was a central concept in 21st century US foreign policy pre-Trump
.

[4] BBC3 was a BBC channel broadcasting content aimed at audiences from the 16-34 age group, which broadcast from 2003-2016. From 2016 onwards it has become an online only channel.

[5] This is consistent with feminist anti-racist scholarship on empathy which highlights how the notion of empathy conceptualised as 'co-feeling' can in fact work to strengthen the voice and authority to speak of the already privileged empathising subject (Hemmings,2011:203; Ahmed, 2004, Pedwell, 2014).

[6] The film does not make a very clear distinction between marriages arranged and celebrated (but not consummated) between young children, and the marriages of girls in early adolescence.

[7] A different but related set of representations portrays the return of highly qualified professionals to Nigeria and Ghana in similar terms (for example, Yeebo, 2015), although here, the emphasis is on the transformation of 'brain drain' into 'brain gain' and while the existence of 'chic' clubs and sophisticated restaurants is marvelled over, there is a more explicit suggestion that these are isolated enclaves and these countries continue to be portrayed as in desperate need of the 'help' of Western countries and by extension, Western-trained returnees

[8] For example, geopolitical and economic interests led the British government to play an extensive role in the development, funding and training of Islamist political forces in Afghanistan in the 1970s and 1980s, and subsequently fuelled the British government and British private military and security companies' ongoing role in the post 9/11 invasion and occupation of Afghanistan (Ali, 2003, Khan, 2011 Curtis, 2012,) The US-UK-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 led to intensified conflict and intervention in the Gulf region including in Yemen (where Britain also has a long colonial history) which has further escalated since 2015 with Britain playing a central role in the Saudi-led war waged on the country and the ensuing humanitarian disaster (Wearing, 2018).

[9] Plan International has also been one of the NGOs which spearheaded the focus on adolescent girls in development through its 'Because I am a Girl' initiative (Murphy, 2012).

[11] Camille Kumar, Personal Communication 30 August 2018

[12] See for example this case study featured in the 'Girl Power' section of Plan International's website: 'Roksana, 18, from Bangladesh had a marriage arranged for her when she was in tenth grade at school.

She persuaded her parents to put the marriage off as she had applied for an eye doctor training course being organised under the Girl Power Programme. Following the course, she got a job at her local hospital. Today, she supports her family and has a place at the Open University to continue her education."I am grateful for the training. It has changed my life. I think this type of training programme can play a vital role in making many poor girls self-dependent."'(Plan International [b]). The racialised and gendered trope of the altruistic, hyperindustrious 'girl in the developing world' promoted by development institutions in the context of the Gender Equality as Smart Economics approach, is discussed elsewhere (Wilson, 2011).

[13] A 2nd October 2018 speech on immigration by Conservative Home Secretary Sajid Javid made this connection explicit. https://press.conservatives.com/post/178663685490/sajid-javid-speech-to-conservative-party