



The Muslim Problematic: Muslims, State Schools and Security

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The Muslim Problematic: Muslims, State Schools and Security.

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Muslims are folk-devils that mark the ubiquitous moral panic. For some the idea of the *Muslim problematic* signifies a long and worrying trend of creeping 'Islamification' of state schools. For others, the discourse of the *Muslim problematic* reflects the ongoing racial pathologisation of Britain's minoritised communities. One thing is for certain, the current debate marks a significant moment in the nature and function of the neo-liberal state as it re-frames race relation policy in Britain in light of the security agenda. The Trojan Horse affair, surrounding claims of infiltration of radical Islam in state run schools, marks a significant moment in the embedding of the security agenda in Britain's inner city schools through the medium of the Prevent agenda. It argues that one of the best ways of understanding the security agenda is by locating it within a broader sociological and historical context of the functioning of the racial state.

Keywords: Prevent, Trojan Horse, Ofsted, Birmingham, State Schools, Race State, Muslim Problematic

Introduction

The sociology of race and schooling in the UK has long been associated with a number of diverse themes; including, racism (MacDonald 1989; Gilborn 1995, 2008), racial inequality (Tronya 1987; Swann 1985), identity (Mirza 1992; Shain 2003; 2010) masculinities (Sewall 1996), citizenship and integration (Mullard 1982; Diwan 2008; Miah 2015). Whilst education, schooling has long been recognized as spheres of governance (Ball 2013) and surveillance (Taylor 2013; Monahan and Torres 2009); ironically, very little attention has been given to surveillance and race within the context of education and even less focus has been given to the links between surveillance, securitization and race.

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3 The shift in educational policy from a social democratic model to an over
4 securitized model of school in matters of race has largely been shaped by local
5 and international events. The international events shaped by the Arab Spring
6 led to the civil war in Syria and the subsequent rise of ISIS and the politics of
7 the Islamic State. It is estimated by the International Centre for the Study of
8 Radicalisation (ICSR) that the period of late 2011 to 10 December 2013,
9 between 3,300 and 11,000 individuals have travelled to Syria to fight against
10 the Asad government. The ICSR also indicate that between 396 to 1,937
11 recruits came from Europe; representing 18 per cent of the foreign fighters in
12 Syria with significant fighters from France (63-412), Britain (43-366) and
13 Germany (34-240) (Cited in House of Commons, Home Affairs Select
14 Committee 2014, p. 15). Furthermore, some of them traveling to ISIS territory
15 have been school aged children travelling with families such as the nine
16 children taken by their mothers in the Bradford, West Yorkshire case (Halliday
17 et al 2015), and also recent events involving four teenage school friends,
18 between the ages of 15 and 16 years old, leaving to join the Islamic State
19 (Benhold 2015) have made the question of radicalization a key government
20 priority. Whilst the above events played a important role in shaping the public
21 debate on radicalization and Muslim youths in public discourse, it was the
22 Trojan Horse saga involving the schools in Birmingham that was to provide a
23 pivotal role in embedding the security agenda at the heart of inner city
24 schooling.

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43 This article aims to focus on the recent education policy debates surrounding
44 Muslims and the question of security and schooling. It focuses on the Trojan
45 Horse debate surrounding claims of 'entryism' by radical Islamist within a
46 number of schools with majority Muslim cohort in Birmingham and Bradford.
47 The process of 'entryism' is seen to occur 'when extremist individuals, groups
48 and organizations consciously seek to gain positions of influence to better
49 enable them to promote their own extremist agendas' (HM Government 2015,
50 p. 19). For the British government and other political actors the 'entryism'
51 linked to the 'Trojan Horse' saga associated with the Birmingham schools
52 represents a worrying trend of creeping 'Islamification' of publicly funded
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3 schools (Clarke 2014; Kershaw 2014; Cameron 2014; Gove 2014). For
4 others story signifies the racial pathologisation of Britain's Muslim
5 communities (Miah 2015). One thing is for certain, the current debate marks a
6 significant milestone in the nature and function of the neo-liberal state as it re-
7 frames race relation policy in Britain in light of the security agenda. The
8 severity of the Trojan Horse debate, as it aims to push through an
9 assimilationist policy agenda, can be compared to the Stasi Commission
10 (Bowen 2008) in 2003 and its enforcement of *laicite* in French schools.
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18 This article will focus on how Muslim communities are problematized within
19 social policy discourse. It uses the Trojan Horse saga as a key milestone
20 event to demonstrate how *racial governmentality* (Goldberg 2002) contributes
21 towards insecurity within state schools. I will argue that the significance of the
22 Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) reports lies not only in the
23 redefining of extremism to equate with Muslim cultural conservatism, with the
24 implicit assumption that Muslims have sole monopoly over cultural
25 conservatism, but also in the ways in which a seemingly 'independent' body is
26 used by the state to embed the government's counter terrorism programme of
27 Preventing violent extremism at the heart of inner city schooling. This article
28 will further demonstrate how a reoccurring theme in all Ofsted reports, not
29 only recommends all schools to implement 'Prevent' policies, but also urged
30 them to integrate counter-terrorism measures through safeguarding policies.
31 The Prevent agenda is part of the government's counter-terrorism strategy,
32 with the view of stopping individuals getting involved with in terrorism works to
33 mainstream the agenda through the educational system. This discursive shift
34 away from educational attainment and social inequality to security in
35 education is one of the crucial legacies arising from the Ofsted rulings.
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'Trojan Horse' controversy?

In early March 2014, *The Sunday Times*, a leading British broadsheet which positions itself right of the political spectrum covered a story which involved an 'Islamist plot to take over schools' (Kerbaj and Griffiths 2014). The article based upon an anonymous document highlighted the following strategy adopted by 'radical Islamist' as a form of 'entryism' to state schools. The plot, highlighted below, revolved around the idea of a 'radical Islamist plan' aimed at infiltrating schools with majority Muslim pupils, and transforming the leadership and management of the school through recruiting 'hardline Muslim parents and staff' with a view of implementing a narrow, ultra-conservative school curriculum.

Identify poor-performing state schools in Muslim areas; then Salafist parents in each school are encouraged to complain that teachers are 'corrupting children with sex education, teaching about homosexuals, making their children say Christian prayers and mixed swimming and sports'. The next steps are to 'parachute in' Muslim governors 'to drip-feed our ideal for a Muslim school' and stir up staff to urge the council to investigate. The strategy stresses the importance of having an 'English face among the staff group to make it more believable'. Finally, anonymous letters are to be circulated to MPs, press and ministers. 'All these things will work towards wearing the head down, removing their resolve and weakening their mindset so they eventually give up.

The same story was reported by a number of newspapers both national and local papers including the Birmingham Mail with 'Trojan Horse Jihadist plot to take over Birmingham schools' (Oldham 2014) as its headline. The letter which outlined the plot was initially sent to Birmingham City Council (27 November, 2013); it was then passed to the West Midlands Police (12 December, 2013) and finally, the West Midlands Police sent it to the Department of Education (13 December, 2013). In light of the allegations Birmingham City Council chaired a meeting with the West Midlands Police on the 16 December 2013 and concluded there is a "credibility gap" with the document (Clarke 2014:113). The document was made public after it was

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3 leaked to the media in late February (Miah 2014); prior to the media leak The
4 National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) and also the British Humanist
5 Association (BHA), both approached the DfE on the 31 January reporting,
6 in the case of NAHT some of their members received copies of the 'Trojan
7 Horse' letter (ibid.), and in the case of BHA informing 'that they have received
8 allegations about "inappropriate teaching and leadership behaviour" at Park
9 View School from former members of staff' (Ibid.).

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16 As early as March 2014, critics began to point out that the Trojan Horse
17 document may have been a hoax connected with wider claims of fraud by
18 former members of staff linked to one of 5 schools mentioned in the letter
19 (Adams 2014). Despite the questions regarding the authenticity of the letter,
20 it seems that that the story took its own meaning of 'truth' which is
21 underpinned by the following racialised discourse – especially given the idea
22 that the Trojan Horse story reinforced the view of Muslims as the 'other' (Said
23 1978). This is clear not only in the Coalition-led government response, but
24 also the Labour party response; the former Shadow Education Secretary,
25 Trisham Hunt to used the Trojan Horse controversy to argue that Michael
26 Gove was 'soft' on extremism (Adams 2014). Thus it is clear to note that the
27 political consensus of the day constructed the 'other' within the Trojan Horse
28 story drawing upon conventional orientalist depictions of Muslims as
29 untrustworthy, irrational and above all dishonest, and can be identified by the
30 following.

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42 First, the fact that an unauthenticated document has had such a huge impact
43 on public discourse sets worrying precedents for the future, as it potentially
44 frames future allegations of Muslims setting up Trojan Horses to infiltrate
45 politics, local authorities and even the NHS. Indeed, the Labour MP Jim
46 Fitzpatrick (De Peyer 2014) has claimed that Tower Hamlets could be
47 'targeted in Trojan Horse-style Islamist plot'. He further claimed that whilst
48 'much as the entryism, the Trojan Horse allegations [were] in education in
49 Birmingham, the Trojan Horse in east-London was a political one rather than
50 an educational one'. Trojan horse within this context symbolizes a metaphor
51 of disruption whereby Muslims are seem to threatened the underpinning secular,
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3 liberal consensus that permeates the public space. In doing so Muslim cultural
4 practice and the 'adherence to Islamic norms and values threatens the notion
5 of Europe itself' (Fekete 2009:44), which has long maintained long diverse
6 tradition of secularism in the public space (Felzer and Soper 2009)
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11 Secondly, 'Trojan Horse' becomes an empty vessel in which prejudices and
12 other pre-conceived ideas about Muslims are poured into. This is clear from
13 the ways in which Trojan Hose saga has taken the form of racialised sexual
14 politics: A recurring theme within policy discourse revolves around the notion
15 that Muslims are essentially homophobic and sexist. For example, in a recent
16 interview to the BBC's Today programme (BBC 2015). Ms Morgan, Secretary
17 of Education, described how intolerance towards homosexuality could be
18 seen as an example of extremism. Racialised sexual politics constructs
19 Muslims as the 'other' because of the way they treat women and
20 homosexuals (Delphy 2008), the same 'equality test' is not applied to other
21 non-racialised groups. For example, in the same Radio 4 interview the
22 presenter failed to challenge the Education Secretary about her views on gay
23 marriage, especially given that Ms Morgan; a Christian voted against gay
24 marriage in the UK (Mason 2014).
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36 Third, the Trojan Horse debate is based upon an uncritical acceptance of
37 'truths' which not only attempts to justify collective prejudice towards Muslims
38 but also provides an impetus for the state to govern its Muslim communities
39 through a securitized lenses. Fourth, Trojan Horse saga draws on a number
40 of tropes of orientalism (Said 1978), whereby Muslims not only confirm
41 existing pre-conceived ideas of Muslim communities of undermining a secular
42 liberal consensus; but also demonstrating how Muslims are ontologically
43 different from the West. Finally, the 'culture talk' or the cultural interpretation
44 of politics associated with Muslims 'assumes that every culture has a tangible
45 essence that defines it, and it then explains politics as a consequence of that
46 essence' (Mamdani 2004, p. 17). Thus it is not surprising to note how 'culture
47 talk' associated with Muslim governors is usually linked with Muslim or Islamic
48 culture and not the desire of Muslim parents to improve educational standards
49 of the respective schools.
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Public policy and the Muslim problematic

Since the 2001 riots in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford, together with the London bombings in 2005 there has been a marked policy shift away from multiculturalism to a debate around integration of Muslims within a heightened security context (Thomas 2011). These debates have played a crucial role in both problematizing Muslim communities whilst at the same time aiming to tackle the Muslim problematic. In fact, Muslim communities have been viewed as a monolithic block or an essentialised group as far as policy framing is concern; rather than seeing Muslim communities as a diverse group of individual citizens.

Policy discourses of construct Muslim communities not only as racialised outsiders (Virdee 2015) but also as folk-devils (Shain 2011) that mark the ubiquitous moral panic. The moral panic is seen to be based not only on a physical presence but also an ontological fear – whereby the very existence of Muslims undermines and questions the very nature of Europe (Caldwell 2009). This category of Muslim problematic can be compared with the idea of Islam problematic (Miah 2015). The latter, sees Islam and essentially antithetical to western secular and liberal mores – not only is Islam seen as anti-modern it also seen as deeply homophobic. The role of public policy is to ensure Muslims reject the key tenants of Islam, and to assimilate into Western secular liberalism. The Muslim problematic, on the other hand, places less attention on religion and more on the ‘people’- it seem not a fundamental conflict with the religion of Islam but rather failure of Muslims to present a relevant, contemporary and modern hermeneutical interpretation of the text in light of the British context. The future for Muslim in the West lies, it is argued, in a liberal, depoliticized reading of the text and the role of public policy in general and education policy in particular is to bring about this change.

The discourse of essentialised policy discourse is evident from the ways in which government policy have play a role in constructing Muslims as suspect

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3 community. For example, the Preventing Violence Extremism Pathfinder Fund
4 distributed by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG
5 2007) during the formative period of Prevent (2007) did so based upon a
6 calculation of the size of the Muslim population (DCLG 2007). The Pathfinder
7 Fund delivered a total of £5 million in funding to 70 local authorities for a
8 community-based response to violent extremism (DCLG 2007), based upon
9 an eligibility criteria of a Muslim population size of 5 per cent (Thomas 2012).
10 The disconnect between policy implementation and empirical evidence is
11 highlighted below by Finney and Simpson (2008) – they show how
12 ‘segregated’ communities is not accurate indicator for terrorism based upon
13 the proportion of Muslims charged with terrorism according to local
14 concentration of Muslims. They argue:

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24 If 'segregated areas', where there are the largest concentrations of
25 Muslims, were hotbeds of terrorism ... then one would expect more to
26 be charged in these areas. Seventeen of those charged in the period
27 August 2004 to October 2006 were residents of Bradford, Luton,
28 Newham or Wandsworth, four of the seven most Muslim districts where
29 18% of the population is Muslim. But just as many lived in other areas;
30 for example, 16 lived in districts with on average only 1% Muslims,
31 coming from Breckland in Norfolk, Doncaster, Bournemouth, Reigate in
32 Surrey, Bexley, Brighton and Hove, Aylesbury Vale and Greenwich.
33 The only set of districts where more Muslims were charged than others
34 was those with the second-lowest concentrations, including Crawley,
35 Lambeth, Wycombe and Manchester. So, Muslims living in highest
36 concentration Muslim areas are not more likely to be terrorists than
37 Muslims living in any other type of area. There is no reason to link
38 particular levels of concentration with terrorism.

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42 (Finney and Simpson 2009, pp. 109/110).

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46 The Muslim problematic within the policy question exists independent of any
47 evidence rather it is based on a racialised construct of the other. In fact,
48 Gillborn (2014) has shown based upon evidences submitted to the Public
49 Administration Select Committee how ‘much of our policy making is evidence
50 free, prejudice driven and hysteria driven (particularly hysteria generated by
51 the press)’. (cited in Gillborn 2014, p. 26). This has led Gillborn (2014) to
52 describe the complex interplay between the state, political actors and its role
53 to govern minoritised communities via ‘racism as policy’.

Muslim problematic and racial politics

Alum Rock, Birmingham, along with Manningham, Bradford and Tower Hamlets, London represent spatial narratives. Whenever these three localities are shown in the media they are often presented within a backdrop of women in niqabs, men with long beards in traditional clothes, and piercing minarets from purpose built mosques. They are essentially made to symbolise parallel existence, self-segregation and all things un-British. The media headlines associated with the Trojan Horse scandal in Birmingham and Bradford not only reinforce racialised spatial narratives but also confirm 'our concerns and fears'.

In light of this, it is pertinent to note the reactions by the state. Both central and local government responses to the plot were to play a pivotal role in shaping the discursive parameters of the debate within counter-terrorism and security. The Birmingham City Council responded by appointing Ian Kershaw as an Independent Chief Advisor with a view of overseeing the investigation (Kowalewski 2014). It also set up a newly established Review Group comprised of MPs, councilors and faith leaders, chaired by Stephen Rimmer (McCarthy 2014). The latter was the former director of the Prevent strategy based at the Home Office. He was parachuted into Birmingham as a lead investigator into abuse and sexual exploitation of children (ibid.). More crucially, Michael Gove, the former Education Secretaries, controversial response was to appoint Peter Clarke, the former head of the Metropolitan police's counter-terrorism unit, which led the investigations into the 7/7 London bombings in 2005 (Podd and Dodd 2014). The decision to appoint Peter Clarke was condemned by a number of individuals. For example, Chris Sims, chief constable of West Midlands police, in an interview with *The Guardian* argued that initial conflation of Trojan Horse with counter terrorism would have significant impacts upon community relations; especially given the fact that Trojan Horse was not investigated as a criminal offense. Sims was one of the first civic leaders to warn of the potential damages on community relations, he argued how the appointment of Peter Clarke 'must be a concern. People could be made fearful if they think that is the way this issue is being

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3 perceived' He further added how 'Peter Clarke has many qualities but people
4 will inevitably draw unwarranted conclusions from his former role as national
5 coordinator for counter-terrorism. I am a strong supporter of open and
6 inclusive education for all children in Birmingham and across the West
7 Midlands and am committed to the process adopted by Birmingham city
8 council with educational and social inclusion at its heart' (Ibid.). The
9 controversy surrounding the appointment of Peter Clarke was a feature in
10 Education Select Committee Report (2015); it noted how the Trojan Horse
11 saga from its inception was shaped within strong counter-terrorism purview.
12 The wider politics surrounding the controversy is captured by the evidence
13 submitted to the Education Select Committee by the Birmingham City Council:
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23 The local authority had hoped to conduct an inquiry that was
24 joint between us, the Department of Education and Ofsted, and
25 DCLG [Department of Communities and Local Government]
26 were also involved in those discussions[...] At the 11th hour, the
27 Secretary of State decided it would not be a joint inquiry and
28 announced the appointment of Peter Clarke to conduct as
29 separate inquiry. He then decided to instruct Ofsted to inspect
30 the schools separately[...].
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34 The relationship between the state and minority communities has a long and
35 complex history, a number of academics have long pointed out that racialised
36 politics is not the sole monopoly of the far-right, but rather the media (Gabriel
37 1998) and also the state (Hall., Critcher., Jefferson., Clarke., and Roberts
38 2013) have a history of demonizing and essentialising minority communities.
39 The relationship between the state and racial politics is highlighted further by
40 Gilborn (1995); he has shown how race not only played a critical in the
41 formation, development and transformation of the modern nation stayed but
42 also modern states are 'racial in their modernity and modern in their racial
43 quality, their raciality' (Gilborn 1995, p. 7).
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Ofsted, racial politics and the Muslim problematic

Ofsted was established by the Conservative government in 1992 and in many respects seen to be impartial body with the aim of inspecting and regulating the education sector. Ofsted is run by a non-ministerial department, which means it is run not by elected politicians but rather by senior civil servants – one of the functions of non-ministerial departments is to ensure protection against any political influences or biases. Ofsted carries a number of statutory and regulatory functions, including the inspection of schools by teams of inspectors, who then publish and make such reports publically available for and schools, parents, and the government. According to the Ofsted website it provides a very neutral and an apolitical impression, whereby inspectors ‘help providers that are not yet of good standard to improve, monitor their progress’ (Ofsted, no date). Ofsted stated goal is ‘to achieve excellence in education and skills for learners of all ages, and in the care of children and young people’, its ethos is further reinforced by stating that Ofsted ‘report directly to Parliament’ and that they are ‘independent and impartial’ (Ofsted, no date). Whilst this claim of political impartiality has been questioned by a number of academics (Baxter 2014; Ozga et al 2013), the racialised politics of Ofsted have, until now, not been assessed by academics.

Following the Trojan controversy, Gove instructed the schools in Birmingham with a majority of Muslim cohort to be inspected – despite the fact that not all the schools inspected were named within the Trojan Horse letter. It was clear that the focus of the inspection should be schools with majority Muslim cohort and not simply those listed in the letter. In total 21 schools were inspected by Ofsted. All of the schools were state schools and none of the schools were Muslim faith schools, majority of them were from deprived background and in receipt of free school meals. Out of the 21 schools inspected by Ofsted: 6 consist of secondary schools, 1 all-through 4-19 school, 12 primary schools, 1 primary and nursery and 1 nursery school. All of the 21 schools had a majority Muslim cohort. It is difficult to understand as to the reasons why these 21 schools were identified for Ofsted Inspection other

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3 than due to the size of the Muslim pupils. In fact, the Trojan Horse letter,
4 published in the Clarke report (2014) only mentions five schools as either
5 been successfully take over or in the process of being taken over under the
6 Trojan Horse 'plan'.
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11 It is clear from the following analysis that Ofsted inspection contributed
12 towards Muslim problematic through the following. Ofsted inspection reports
13 published in June 2014 happened during a period of intense media hostility
14 against the Muslims community in Birmingham (Poole 2014). The Ofsted
15 inspection team are required to adopt the Ofsted Inspection Handbook to
16 conduct their inspection. Yet the Ofsted Inspection Handbook (2014) that
17 would have been used by the inspectors did not have a key focus on
18 Preventing violent extremism. In fact, the central feature arising from all the
19 Ofsted inspection reports seems to revolve around section 10 of the Prevent
20 Strategy (2011), which focuses on the relationship between Prevent and the
21 public sector, and not the comprehensive inspection framework identified in
22 the Ofsted Inspection Handbook. In fact, the Ofsted Inspection Handbook,
23 revised in April 2014 (Ofsted 2014) has no direct mention of the Prevent
24 Strategy (2011). In fact, the much-awaited Common Inspection Framework
25 (Ofsted 2015), which came into effect 1st September 2015, has references to
26 Fundamental British Values within the broader context of the Prevent
27 Strategy. In short, it seems that the 21 inspections of Birmingham schools
28 were not focused on the quality of teaching and learning, nor on the bigger
29 questions about how poor children from deprived areas are doing in state
30 schools, and children's broader safety and well-being, but rather on the
31 relationship with the state and its security apparatus vis-a-vis the Prevent
32 agenda.
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49 It appears that the inspection was done *a priori* especially given the following
50 account provided by the assistant principal of Park View School - the school
51 at the centre of Trojan Horse controversy:
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56 Ofsted inspectors first visited Park View in early March, they left us with
57 a list of mild recommendations for improvement. We had an action plan
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3 ready to be implemented the very next day. However, when the same
4 inspectors returned 10 days later, they told us within hours that the
5 school would be rated inadequate. Our strongly held belief is that the
6 inspectors was ordered back into the school by somebody who felt that
7 Park View had to be placed in special measures to enable the removal
8 of Park View Educational Trust.
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11 (Donaghy 2014)
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17 The above judgment to remove the Park View Educational Trust by rating the
18 school 'inadequate' is particularly ironic especially given that Sir Michael
19 Wilshaw, the head of Ofsted, visited the Park View school in 2012 not only
20 praised the staff and pupils but also saw it as a ideal model for other schools
21 in deprived neighborhoods, especially given that Park View was one of the
22 first schools to be rated outstanding by Ofsted under a revised and detailed
23 inspection regime introduced in January 2012 (Vasagar 2012). After his visit,
24 Sir Wilshaw noted the following praise for Park View: 'If a school like this
25 does well, why shouldn't any school do well?' (Donaghy 2014).
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33 The conduct of some of the inspectors were also called into question,
34 especially given the revelation that some of inspectors were conducting a
35 'criminal investigation' with comments such as 'so many members of staff with
36 beards', referring to Muslim members of staff, or directly asking a member of
37 staff if they were 'homophobic' and asking a Muslim pupil if they were forced
38 to wear a hijab' (ibid).
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45 One of the most striking of cases involves the only nursery school (Ofsted
46 2014h) on the list of 21 schools inspected by Ofsted. The nursery school has
47 52 pupils on its role, all of whom are of south Asian heritage. The school was
48 criticised because 'school leaders were unaware of local authority or
49 government guidelines on the prevention of extreme and radical behavior's as
50 set out in the Prevent programme'. In light of this, Ofsted recommended that
51 'staff and governors require further and immediate training to ensure that the
52 new policy is understood and appropriately monitored'. Part of this training, it
53 is argued, would lead to 'identifying and minimising extremist behavior'
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3 (Ofsted 2014h). Exactly how 'extremism' can be identified or even tackled
4 within the context of early years education is not discussed not explained in
5 detailed yet it is assumed by the inspectors that Muslim pupils can be
6 radicalized at a very young age. The relationship between nursery schooling
7 and Preventing violent extremism within the context of Birmingham is nothing
8 new, especially given the revaluation that as early as 2009 counter- terrorism
9 officers had visited a nursery school in Birmingham as part of a programme to
10 combat violent extremism (Casciani 2009).
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18 More critically, the Ofsted inspection reports are riddled with contradictions. In
19 fact, the idea of contradictions has been one of the key features of
20 understanding the complex nature of racialised politics (Bonila-Silva 2006). A
21 related theme associated with the idea of contradiction is a major theme
22 arising from the Ofsted inspection reports. Whilst it is the case that a major
23 theme underpinning the Ofsted reports were the recommendations for the
24 schools 'to raise students awareness of risks of extremism' (Ofsted 2014a);
25 'train all staff in recognizing risks of potential radicalisation and extremism'
26 (Ofsted 2014h) or aimed at criticizing the 'governing body and senior leaders
27 [for] not engaging with the government's 'Prevent' agenda. Consequently, it is
28 argued by Ofsted that 'pupils are not taught or prepared well enough to deal
29 with any potential exposure to extremism or radicalisation' (Ofsted 2014e).
30 Yet, in the same reports there are no concrete examples of cases whereby
31 students were radicalized were highlighted. Conversely, what the examiners
32 did find ample examples of 'children's behavior is good and they enjoy school'
33 (Ofsted 2014h), 'students behaving well' (Ofsted 2014b), 'pupils behavior is
34 impeccable. They display exemplary behavior to each other and to adults in
35 the academy. They are polite respectful and courteous...' (Ofsted 2014c). In
36 fact, the 'absence of any concerted and deliberate plot to promote
37 radicalization and violent extremism (Mogra 2016:1), together with any
38 concrete examples of students becoming radicalized by the Trojan Horse
39 'entryism' was also highlighted by the Education Select Committee, it noted
40 how 'no evidence of extremism or radicalisation, apart from a single isolated
41 incident, was found by any of the inquiries and there were no evidence of a
42 sustained plot nor of a similar situation pertaining elsewhere in the country'.
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3 (House of Commons 2015: 3).
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5 In order to ensure that the 'entryism' was a dominant theme within the
6 Trojan Horse saga, Ofsted inspectors changed the 'goal post' of what
7 constitutes 'extremism'. For example, the inspection report dealing with one
8 of the schools in Birmingham deemed 'inadequate' mainly due to the schools
9 link to Saudi Arabia; it felt that the governing body could not justify how pupils
10 were kept safe from any radical views they might encounter' (Ofsted 2014c).
11 In fact, a previous Ofsted report of the same school published in January
12 2013 praised the school and deemed the international links to Saudi Arabia as
13 positive and an 'outstanding' feature of the school (Ofsted 2013. p. 6).
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Conclusion

The debates around Trojan Horse marks a critical moment in embedding government's de-radicalisation agenda at the heart of inner city schooling. This paper has demonstrated how this is achieved through a radicalized discourse of public policy through a complex interplay between the state, the media and Ofsted. Thus education is not only about learning but also about the question of security, which is mediated through radicalized politics. This paper has demonstrated that security revolves around the Muslim problematic. The Muslim problematic policy constructs Muslim communities, through policy discourses, not only as radicalized outsiders but also as folk-devils that mark the ubiquitous moral panic. The moral panic is based not only on a physical presence but also an ontological fear – whereby the very existence of Muslims undermines and questions the very nature of Britishness. Muslims within this context are no longer individuals that associate to a particular religion, rather *problems* that need to be addressed.

These problems are ultimately addressed, firstly, by the racial politics of the state and its associated departments, including, quasi-non-governmental organisations, such as Ofsted, which through the policy discourse 'marks' Muslims as the radicalized 'other' a group that is stigmatized; ironically whose stigmatization is silenced. Secondly, the Prevent agenda is part of the government's counter-terrorism strategy, with the view of stopping individuals getting involved with in terrorism works to mainstream the agenda through the educational system. The implications arising from such as discourse not only stigmatizes Muslim pupils through essentialised racial politics. It also, blurs the boundaries between the teaching professionals and the security profession. Some critics have noted how 'the Prevent programme involves the embedding of counter-terrorism police officers within the delivery of local services, the purpose of which seems to be to gather intelligence on Muslim communities, to identify areas, groups and individuals that are 'at risk'

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3 and to then facilitate interventions' (Kundnani 2009:6). In fact, some of the
4 criticism of the Prevent programme has also come from leading teaching
5 unions such as National Union of Teachers (NUT). For example, the NUT
6 annual conference passed a motion for the government's prevent programme
7 to be withdrawn. The Union feared 'a danger that implementation of Prevent
8 could worsen relationships between teachers and learners, close down space
9 for open discussion in a safe and secure environment and smother the
10 legitimate expression of political opinion' (Whittaker 2016).
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Notes on Contributor

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