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Elite Young Muslims in Britain:
Generational Experience and Political Participation, 2007

USER GUIDE

‘Elite’ Young Muslims in Britain: Generational Experience and Political Participation

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This project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). It examines the nature of political participation, national and transnational, among ‘elite’ young British Muslims in the context of global traumatic events. The research combines interviews with three student cohorts in universities with distinctive demographic and intake characteristics and documentary analysis of three youth organizations and newspapers aimed at young professional Muslims. Rooted in generational analysis, the project is particularly important given that generational conflict is a recurring feature of academic and public debate and recent popular and press opinion in the US and the UK which has increasingly targeted young Muslims.

The research focuses primarily on student populations in three universities: The London School of Economics (LSE), Bradford and Cambridge. The sample student population will be both male and female drawn from a variety of academic disciplines, regardless of their level of political or religious activism. The research will also solicit the viewpoints of staff members working in Muslim youth organisations in the UK on the political participation and generational experience of young British Muslims. This will be supplemented by analysis of documentary evidence provided by the organisations that take part in the research.

The interviews are structured into six sub-sections. The first involves background information on education/generational location; the second, an exploration of formative events on political outlook; the third, participation in local or national politics; the fourth, transnational politics and then finally two sections on continuities and discontinuities between and within generations. *It is critical to note that at no point will politically sensitive information be solicited.* All the information conveyed during interviews will be treated in strict confidence, participants will be anonymised, and interviewees will have the full right to withdraw from the research process at any time they wish. It should also be noted that this research is neutral in character and interviewees will not be asked about their affiliations to any ‘controversial’ organisations. Indeed, it is in the spirit of our research to highlight the diversity Muslim youth and their active experience as second or third generation Muslims in the UK.

On completion of the interviews, in gratitude for their time, participants will receive a £15 book voucher.

ESRC Project RES 000 22 1948

Elite Young Muslims in Britain: Generational Experience and Political Participation

FINAL REPORT

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BACKGROUND

This research investigates an issue of contemporary political and social concern – the attitudes and activities of young British Muslims – with reference to theoretical and empirical developments in the sociology of generations. Sociology's interest in the role of generations in social change has been resurrected in the context of widespread political, technological, economic and demographic changes, many of which are regionally differentiated but have global implications. This new theoretical interest has spawned a growing literature on the role of ethnic/religious minorities in social and political change and, in particular, inter-generational shifts in patterns of political participation (e.g. Portes and Rumbaut, 2005). Contemporary studies tend to challenge the unilinear thesis which gained prominence after Herberg's (1957) classic study on generational adaptation patterns among US minorities, stressing the need for a more contingent approach. The author's own earlier research suggests that minority groups, galvanized by differential responses to traumatic events, may be dissociated from the active/passive alternation 'mainstream' generations (Edmunds and Turner, 2002).

In the post-9/11 period, there has been a proliferation of studies focusing specifically on young western Muslims. A generational approach, while not formally adopted, tends to be implicit in these studies. Thus, Huntington's (2002) Clash of Civilizations thesis uses a demographic, generational approach to argue that young, western (and Middle Eastern) Muslims are, as a result of being over-educated and under-employed, becoming increasingly involved in radical Islamic politics. The contrary perspective proposed by Fukuyama (2001-2) is also implicitly generational. His contention is that this cohort's location in the 'end of history' era, means that it is far more likely to be drawn into social democratic values and practices as there is no longer space for radical politics. The implication is that radicalism and opposition to the neo-liberal consensus will disappear with generational turnover.

Various studies have adapted the 'clash' thesis to Europe, suggesting that the disconnectedness of Muslim youth in the context of globalization, has promoted radical Islamic politics (Kepel, 2004; Roy, 2004). This generational cohort, insecure in the globalizing climate and alienated nationally, is depicted as remedying this by attachment to a global *umma*, which may provide a source of radicalism. Although competing perspectives (Mandaville, 2001; Hussain, 2003; Modood and Ahmad, 2007) suggest a higher degree of moderation and integration, the prevailing view – reflected in public policy especially after 9/11 – has been of young Muslims as discontented and potentially destabilizing, both in their western home countries and their countries of origin. This study explores these claims by looking at the everyday political activities of young, future 'opinion-forming' Muslims in the UK.

OBJECTIVES

The project aimed to:

- a) Document the impact of formative events (global, national, local or personal) on political participation or views of a sample of future 'opinion-forming' young Muslims.
- b) Gauge the involvement of this generational cohort in national political activities.
- c) Assess its involvement in transnational activities.
- d) Document its involvement in global politics.
- e) Document its use of the Internet as a news/politics source.
- f) Investigate inter-generational similarities or differences in relation to national, local and global politics.
- g) Document intra-generational similarities or differences (i.e. between genders) in relation to national, local and global politics.

All of these objectives were met.

METHODS

These objectives were achieved through qualitative analysis of interviews and documents. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students at the University of Cambridge, the London School of Economics & Political Science (LSE) and the University of Bradford. University students were targeted because less advantaged young Muslims have been extensively researched elsewhere, and because it is those with higher education who have more often been associated with extremism in recent media treatment. The sites were also chosen to reflect demographic contrasts. Bradford attracts a greater proportion of Muslim students, often from the local area. Cambridge and the LSE have a more international intake. Interviews were also conducted with members of young Muslim organizations.

Documentary research was carried out on two publications targeting young Muslims/South Asians (*Eastern Eye* and *Q-News*) and the website of the Muslim Public Affairs Committee (MPAC). These publications were chosen because their target audience is young, professional British Muslims and South Asians. MPAC was chosen because of its high profile in promoting the Muslim vote. Acknowledging the well documented difficulties with documentary research (Platt, 1981a; 1981b); documents were selected from the last general election (2005) to the present and based on selective sampling, of complete sets of the magazines/newspapers as far as possible. A similar approach was adopted with Internet material, although it was more selectively collected at the outset.

Difficulties accessing some organizations led to a change in strategy: a wider selection of organisations was contacted and members who agreed to participate were interviewed. Thus, interviews were held with members¹ of: the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS) which aims to provide educational and campaigning resources to student Islamic societies and to represent young Muslim opinion to the media; a former member of FEMYSO (Federation of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations) on the Advisory Council for Youth at the Council of Europe; Young Muslims UK, founded in 1984 as a youth branch of the

¹ It is important to note that the people interviewed from these organisations were expressing their personal views.

Islamic Society of Britain with locally based groups which accept Muslims of all denominations and non-Muslims; and the OAK (Oldham's Adults and Kids) Project, founded in 2001 after civil disturbances in Oldham to address social problems and generation gaps.

Interview procedure

The original target was to interview fifteen students from each University, totaling forty-five. However, recruitment difficulties were experienced, traceable to perceived pressure on Universities to increase their surveillance of Muslim students. The research coincided with the government's publication of guidelines to academic staff to monitor signs of political extremism, and publicised incidents of students being reported under such suspicion. To help to deal with this we introduced a recruitment incentive (i.e. a book voucher), supplemented some face-to-face interviews with email interviews and organised a focus group at the University of Bradford.

The final sample was:

Cambridge: 14 (7 women, 7 men)

LSE: 7 (5 women, 2 men)

Bradford: 5 (4 women, 1 man)

Bradford focus group: 10 (5 women, 5 men)

Organisations: 5 (1 woman, 4 men)

The interview sample (16 women, 10 men) was not representative. Among the students, members of cultural or Islamic societies (which were used for recruitment) were over-represented as were women. This could have been due to the surveillance question, with men feeling disproportionately targeted. Eighteen of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, recorded and transcribed verbatim and 8 were conducted via email. Each face-to-face interview lasted an hour or more. The focus group at Bradford lasted four hours and the discussion was recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Interview schedules were semi-structured. Although the same questions were asked at each interview, there was some improvisation at the respondents' or interviewers' initiative. All respondents were assured of anonymity and told that they could withdraw at any stage and would not have to answer questions they viewed as controversial or politically sensitive. All participants' names were replaced with a code.

This analysis was preceded by a literature review focusing on key studies of young western Muslims generally (e.g. Kepel, 2004 and Roy, 2004; Ramadan, 2004) and young British Muslims (e.g. Zokaei and Phillips, 2000; Modood, 2005; Mirza et al. 2007). Interview schedules were informed both by the project's research questions and the literature review.

RESULTS

From a theoretical standpoint, the hypothesis guiding this project was that the political participation of this cohort of young British Muslims would be determined by their generational standing in terms of exposure to particular formative traumatic events, globally mediated, and their access to resources (educational/technological) unavailable to the first generation. It emerged that second and third generation Muslims were more politically engaged than their predecessors, more oriented towards global political causes and issues, and had a strong sense of national identity.

REFERENCE No.

To cite this output:

Edmunds, June (2008). 'Elite' Young Muslims in Britain - Generational Experience and Political Participation: Full Research Report, ESRC End of Award Report, RES-000-22-1948. Swindon: ESRC

This enabled them to feel secure in exercising their democratic right to vote or to protest either through attending rallies, engaging in protest voting or abstaining from voting. Moreover, they were optimistic about their career trajectories, having more confidence, educational opportunities and linguistic advantages over the first generation. It also emerged that while they shared transnational interests with the first generation, their political activities were more global, embracing wider issues, stemming from their exposure to traumatic events conveyed vicariously (i.e. through the global media) rather than through direct experience. Whereas the first generation's formative experience was direct, that is, migration, laying the basis for long-standing transnational attachments, this generation's attachments to causes went beyond those of their countries of origin.

Open coding of the data was used to distinguish political interest and organisation membership that were focused within the UK (national), focused on the interviewee's family country of origin (transnational), or focused on areas of the world outside the family country of origin (global). For example, in relation to formative events, 9/11 or the conflict in Chechnya were coded as global; the crisis in Pakistan as transnational (for participants of Pakistani origin); and British terrorist legislation, 7/7, local voting or 'race' riots as national. Membership of organisations linked to countries of origin was coded transnational and membership of organisations such as Amnesty International was coded as global. Axial coding was used to trace relations between generational position/gender and activism/political views and tabulated. Inferences from the data suggested that the most significant generational shift was from transnational to global politics.

Findings

1. *Formative experiences on political views/activism.* Whereas the watershed experience for Britain's first generation of Muslims was directly enacted migration, for 2nd and 3rd generation Muslims, most formative traumatic events have been indirectly experienced through the global media. The most cited were, inevitably, 9/11 and 7/7, and the Iraq war, but also Bosnia, Chechnya, Palestine and Sudan. 9/11 was an important catalyst to political engagement, as this cohort felt personally stigmatised by the action of a minority from which it seeks to dissociate, viewing it as incompatible with Islam. However, rather than retreating into isolationism, these events triggered greater political engagement. In the aftermath of 7/7, for example, *Q-News* stated that

The challenge ahead is to focus our sense of moral purpose to tackle extremism, protect our freedoms and work towards a long-term strategy of intellectual and civic engagement'.²

2. *National politics.* Unlike the first wave of migrants, which was politically passive and whose communal activities focused around the mosque, their successors felt a strong sense of civic responsibility and engagement. Far from feeling uprooted and insecure and ungrounded, the vast majority of this cohort felt confident in their British identity. Fifty-five per cent identified themselves as 'British' and 36% as

² *Q-News*, November 2005: 38

'British-hyphenated', with only 9% not regarding themselves as British. MPAC's logo is of the Union Jack with a mosque superimposed over it, demonstrating its belief that the two identities are compatible rather than mutually exclusive.

While membership of national political parties was minimal, this cohort was politically assertive, voting and attending anti-war rallies. They engaged in protest voting with four students shifting their vote from Labour to Liberal Democrat or the Green Party; though there was minimal support for Respect, largely on the grounds that it was a single issue party and six participants in the Bradford focus group abstained from voting as protest. In the 2005 elections, MPAC embarked on a pro-voting campaign aimed at challenging what they described as 'old Asian politics' centred around the mosque. It talked specifically of younger Muslims' departure from traditional, local politics, and of a global vision based on human rights.³

Far from advocating radical, separatist politics, the interviewees argued that young Muslims needed a political voice which would steer them away from extremism. As one participant put it:

'....with political participation [] trying to get more people voting, trying to create more awareness of the power of voting. That was with the voluntary work I did with the NTO. Getting ethnic minorities to vote and young people' (L2F).

There was widespread dissociation from radical Islamist politics, with most participants believing in a separation between religion and politics and rejecting Islamism – in particular, Islamist aims to capture state control in Muslim countries or the introduction of Shari'a Law in Britain on the grounds that 'you have to abide by the laws of the country' (BFGGrpM2).

3. *Local politics.* Whereas the first generation's political identity had been located in the private sphere, centring around local mosques and imams as a way of 'fitting in' (Fetzer and Soper, 2005: 31), most of the participants who were eligible to vote did not do so in the local elections and there was generally little interest in local political activities. Bradford differed slightly from this, with participants showing more interest in local politics. This may have been influenced by Bradford University drawing more extensively on its local catchment area than LSE or Cambridge. Moreover, while most of the cohort attended mosques, their political and social lives did not revolve around them in the way they reported their parents did. While the students were generally not critical of this, MPAC opposed mosque politics for being isolationist and narrow during its 2005 lobbying campaign.

4. *Transnational attachments.* While the first, migrant generation retained contact with their countries of origin (Cesari, 2003; Mirza et al. 2007), this study supports others in showing that the association tends to weaken over the generations. Participants in this study were interested in the politics of their countries of origin, but they were of less immediate concern to them than their parents and part of a wider interest in global politics. Most rated themselves as less knowledgeable of the 'home' country's politics, and less attentive to its media, than their parents. *Eastern Eye* was set up by a young Bengali aimed specifically at 2nd generation Asians because of a perceived gap between mainstream newspapers and community papers that presented

³ *Operation Muslim Vote*, Channel 4, 11 May 2005.

'home' news (i.e. transnational rather than global). Comments such as the following were typical:

They [my parents] keep up to date more [with politics of country of origin] largely perhaps because of their stronger connection with their country of origin. I suppose that I do not feel such a strong connection to Nigeria or my culture in that respect to be so concerned with the politics on a regular basis (LM4).

The previous generation's transnational identity meant that sectarianism remained important to them after migrating, for example, divisions between Deobandi and Barelwi sects surfaced during the Salman Rushdie affair (Amirau, 2004: 46). In contrast, younger Muslims in this study rejected sectarianism and religious division. Eighty-four per cent identified their religion as Muslim, with only 12% specifying a branch (Shi'a). MPAC explicitly distance themselves from sectarian identities and the same applied to *Q-News* which described itself as intolerant of sectarianism and 'tribalism'.⁴ This is consistent with the tendency observed in other contexts for second-generation expatriate communities such as Greek and Turkish Cypriots living in north-east London.

This disinterest was compounded by perception of Muslim country governments – including that of background countries, as essentially corrupt and anti-democratic. Interviewees rejected the UK government's approach – which older generation might have supported – that it was best to have secular leaders of Muslim states even if they were authoritarian:

'My interest doesn't lead me to read much about it, but in general I don't think Mubarak is doing a good job at all, and there is too much corruption in the country and many problems. We need change; we've needed it for a long time. I think these words are everybody's view also, but the fact that nothing is happening leads to apathy, or perhaps passiveness. So that's why I don't follow Egyptian politics – there is nothing to follow! Even the constitutional change they had to allow more parties/candidates in wasn't a real change (L6F).'

Q-News and *Eastern Eye* regularly covered Muslim government policies in a negative light, serving as a counterweight to UK 'appeasement', providing information on human rights abuses, level of welfare and educational benefits.

There was no evidence of transnational activities in terms of links with, for example, Madrasahs in Pakistan.⁵ Most of the participants in this study had contacts with student Islamic organisations, but this did not extend to Europe or their countries of origin. Members of Social Forum (from the Bradford focus group) were affiliated to Action Aid – a charity that does not exclusively centre around Muslim countries or communities. Some of them were interested in the Zaytuna Institute, an educational organisation based in the US in 1996 by Hamza Yusuf and informed by Sufism. Zaytuna has links with the European Social Forum, an eclectic annual conference of social movements, NGOs, environmental groups and trade unions. None of these

⁴ *Q-News*, November 2005: 38.

⁵ It should be noted that this could be due to the current political climate where people might be wary about admitting to such links.

organisations embrace radical Islam; most place an emphasis on achieving change through peaceful action and maintaining a plurality of ideas.

5. *Global politics*. While membership of national political parties and organisations was minimal, there were numerous associations (either practical or affective) with global causes and organizations, such as Amnesty International and identification with humanitarian/charitable causes. Whereas the previous generation's international vision was essentially home-focused, i.e. transnational, this generation is globally aware and has political interests that extend beyond their original backgrounds, e.g. to Palestine, Africa and Chechnya. They were combining their religious identity with secular and global politics more than their predecessors. While many of the causes they sympathise with are centred on Muslims, they emphasise that their interests are based on universal human rights principles. As one respondent put it:

Human rights, when I look at the world, I don't look at the world like a Muslim, I look at it as a human being...My Muslim identity is what gives me these human concerns. *In Islam all men and women are considered brothers and sisters, regardless of religion. We are taught that the human nation is one body; if any part hurts we should all hurt. These two traditions make me more interested in human issues* (C3F emphasis added).

When asked to prioritise issues, human rights were consistently placed at the top of the list.

Complementing other findings (e.g. Werbner, 2007; Mirza et al. 2007) moreover, this research found that wearing the *hijab* was more often justified in terms of human rights principles and freedom of choice than 'modesty' or 'shame'; thus, governments' attempts to ban the *hijab* were criticized because such a ban was perceived as incompatible with western in general and British in particular commitment to freedom of speech and multicultural practices and a commitment to 'European' values of freedom, choice and individuality (Cesari, 2003; Nielsen, 1992). *Q-News*, for example, carried a series of cartoons highlighting the contradiction between the principle of freedom of expression and popular beliefs about Muslim practices.

6. *Internet*. The first generation's narrower, transnational focus may have been strengthened by its lack of access to global electronic communication, and ability to understand local-language newspapers and TV channels. In contrast, the younger generation's political interests were informed largely by the Internet. Contrary to Mandaville's (2001) findings, the most cited websites were not religious ones but BBC news and on-line newspapers, the *Guardian* and the *Independent*. As one respondent put it:

'The new generation is more opinionated and more aware thanks to the media and the Internet' (C2M).

7. *Inter-generational dynamics*. None of the sample considered themselves less politically engaged than their parents, with 55% considering themselves more engaged and 45% equally engaged. However, the direction of their political

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engagement had broadened, away from local issues and those relating to their parents' country of origin. While the parental generation tended to retain ties, familial and political, with their country of origin, this generation's interest was either lower than their parents' or the same, but incorporated within its 'globalism'. Fifty-four per cent considered themselves less interested than their parents in the politics of their parents' country of origin, with only 14% rating themselves as having higher interest. Nor were there any marked differences in views over issues such as arranged marriages or wearing the *hijab*, though some of the women reported that they differed from their mothers in choosing to wear it. Though it should be noted that sharper inter-generational contrasts were found in MPAC and *Eastern Eye* and *Q-News*, which were more critical of the first generation's politics and leadership of organisations such as the MCB.

The shift of younger generations' interests from transnational to global identified by this survey, and their greater use of electronic networks, may (while mainly motivated by political and humanitarian concerns) also help them to acquire resources to replace those of the previous generation that have become obsolete. In particular, the longer range of their social contact – across professional disciplines at university, and across countries and cultures via their global organizational involvement – promotes the 'weak ties' identified elsewhere as widening economic and social opportunities (Granovetter 1973, 1985, Burt 1992). Extensive networking with diverse groups, contrasting with their parents' intensive networking within largely homogeneous groups in their home and host country, provides a richer source of 'social capital', adding to the improved 'human capital' they obtain from higher education.

9. Intra-generational dynamics. As noted earlier, women are over-represented in this sample, which may mean that the congruence of opinion is greater than for the general population of young Muslims. Among this cohort, however, few significant differences were evident. There was general agreement between men and women that over issues of arranged marriage (acceptable as long as it was based on freedom of choice) and wearing the *hijab* (based on a woman's right to choose). However, a larger proportion of men than women considered themselves politically active (and more politically active than their parents), and a larger proportion of women opted for a hyphenated national identity than men, although overall there was no sense of a contradiction between being Muslim and British. Moreover, women were proportionately more concerned about Palestine and only women ranked Afghanistan as being of highest priority, which may reflect women's different relationship to warfare. The advocates of Muslim state schools are disproportionately male. Differences were noted also with the Bradford focus group, where six (4 women and 2 men) of the participants did not think it was worth voting; indicating higher levels of disaffection. However, given the limits of this study, these findings require further, in-depth research.

CONCLUSIONS

While acknowledging that extreme political views can be found among a minority of young western Muslims, this project found evidence that the group best resourced to lead such oppositional action is among the least inclined to do so. Contact with social democracy, multiculturalism and new generational experiences and opportunities have created a momentum for accommodation rather than a clash. Europe in general

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and the UK in particular now hosts a new generation of Muslims who are politically engaged, either in mainstream parliamentary politics or extra-parliamentary politics. Its concerns are more global than those of the first generation, showing awareness of and concern for parts of the world unconnected with their ancestors' domiciles.

Political action is becoming more participatory, rooted in a strong sense of civic rights and responsibilities. But that while acting locally, the younger generation is concerned with issues that have universal appeal (e.g. environmentalism, human rights, Palestine). It sympathises with causes such as Sudan, Iraq, Chechnya, often through 'mainstream' organisations such as *Action Aid* or *Amnesty International*, due to a concern for human rights, equality and social cohesion which it regards as Islam's contribution to universal values. This new style of engagement is linked to rising expectations about rights and obligations. Young western Muslims who enter higher education are confident in their national identity and in their right to engage in civic (including protest) politics.

The more relevant 'clash' may be the emerging disjuncture between established western Muslims and the leaderships of some Muslim countries. Nationalist, anti-democratic secular Muslim leaderships, while accepted by western governments for standing out against Political Islam, alienate young western Muslims who - immersed in democratic values and global politics - see their policies as restrictive and oppressive. This has recently been illustrated by the significant protests among western Muslims against continued UK and US support for Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf, owing to his lack of a democratic mandate.

From the perspective of the new generation, these other Muslim countries cannot share the same global consciousness because they (or the leaders who speak for them) continue to be engaged in a national liberation struggle against neo-colonialism. Their anti-Islamism continues an outmoded battle for recognition as nations in western eyes - especially in Pakistan and Turkey, whose modern founders intended to make them models of the modern, technocratic Islamic state. The status insecurity of these countries, feeding nationalist not global politics, is now at odds with established communities of British and other western Muslims. While young British Muslims are generally hostile to political Islam, they are equally opposed to governments using the 'Islamist threat' to justify restrictions on freedom of religious and cultural practice which they uphold in the name of universal human-rights principles.

The globalism of this new, settled generation thus generates different domestic policy pressures from the preceding, immigrant generation's bilateral nationalism and transnationalism. The study highlights a possible conflict between the UK government's promotion of multiculturalism at home and its acquiescence support for authoritarian opponents of political Islam abroad. It also indicates a potentially important role for Western Muslims - having established a viable identity in a non-Islamic society - in helping to redefine the policies and structures of the more turbulent Islamic nations that their parental generation left behind.

ACTIVITIES

Conferences

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Edmunds, J. and Jawad, R. ““Elite” Young Muslims in Britain: Generational Experience and Political Participation”. Social Policy Association (SPA) conference, Birmingham in July 2007

Edmunds, J. and Jawad, R. ““Elite” Young Muslims in Britain: Generational Experience and Political Participation’. European Sociological Association (ESA) conference, September 2007

Networks

This project has provided the basis for future links with the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations (CRER) at Warwick University, where the researcher who worked on the project is now based. It facilitated membership of the ‘Religion and Secularism Network’ (David Lehmann, University of Cambridge) which runs a seminar series with a large number of well-known authors in the field, both from abroad and from the UK and it is anticipated that the project’s findings will provide a basis for connections with the research group on globalization and religion at the National University of Singapore (Professor Bryan Turner). The project also involved a significant amount of liaison with organisations concerned with the promotion of the interests of young Muslims in the UK, some of which have links with affiliated organisations abroad; in particular, it forged a link with the Oak Project.

OUTPUTS

Edmunds, J. (2008-9) ‘Young British Muslims: From Transnational to Global Politics’ (near completion).

Edmunds, J. (2008-9) ‘Social Capital among Young British Muslims’ (in preparation).

Jawad, R. and Edmunds J. (2008-9) ““Elite” Young Muslims in Britain: Generational Experience and Political Participation” (in preparation).

IMPACTS

The intention of this project was not only to reach academic audiences, but also to provide data to inform interested public bodies and the media. We therefore intend to disseminate the findings to the following organisations: FOSIS, MPAC, Young Muslims UK, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) and the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). We shall also seek to publicise the findings in the mainstream media, including the *Times Higher Educational Supplement* (THES), the *Guardian* and the *Independent*. In terms of academic articles, the hope is to find outlets in high impact journals, such as *Ethnicities*, *Ethnic & Racial Studies* and *Sociology*.

FUTURE RESEARCH PRIORITIES

1. The data collected for this project have provided unexpected leads for further research:

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a) A journal article on social capital and young Muslims. This article will argue, on the basis of the data collected that this cohort of young Muslims benefits from high levels of social capital. In particular, it will show that it is the more effective forms of social capital obtained by weaker links to wider networks rather than stronger links to local networks. This is particularly applicable in this case as this generational cohort demonstrates high levels of social capital which is extensive (i.e. membership of globally-oriented Islamic and political organisations) rather than intensive (i.e. membership of local mosques) whereas the first generation's networks were more intensive, local and community based. It is the rise of extensive social capital that is responsible for the relative success of this cohort.

b) The relationship between British Muslims and Europe. While some of the literature on Muslims and Europe posits the positive construction of a European Muslim identity and European transnational belonging, this research found a high level of ambivalence, which reflected more general patterns of British isolationism. There was a significant perception of 'Europe' as 'other' and a parallel aspiration for the rest of Europe, in particular France and Germany, to adopt the British model of integration without assimilation.

c) Compared with other political causes, there was a low level of commitment to feminism. However, this accompanied high levels of confidence, assertiveness and strong career aspirations among the young women interviewed and defiance of views of them as oppressed by their religious and cultural practices. This finding should form the basis of a research project on a wider cross-section of young Muslim women in the UK.

2. This project was intended as an original plank of a bigger, comparative study. It was intended to be followed first by a comparable project on young Muslims in France and Spain and second by a comparable project on young Muslims in Algeria, Morocco and Palestine). In this respect, it could be considered a 'pilot' project for these larger ones. As such it has served as an excellent basis for follow-up comparative research.

APPENDIX ONE: REFERENCES

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APPENDIX TWO: TABLES⁶

Table 1: National Voting

	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Conservative	Green	Respect	Floating	Too young	Circumstance
Male	1 (10%)	3 (30%)		1 (10%)		1 (10%)		
Female	3 (19%)	4 (25%)	1 (6%)		1 (6%)	2 (13%)		
Total	4 (15%)	7 (27%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	3 (12%)	7 (27%)	2 (7%)

Table 2: Local Voting

	Yes	No	Unable (circumstances)
Male	4 (57%)	5 (38%)	1 (17%)
Female	3 (43%)	8 (62%)	5 (83%)
Total	7 (100%)	13 (100%)	6 (100%)

Table 3: Issues ranked highest in terms of significance⁷

	Human rights	Iraq	Headscarf	Palestine	Environmentalism	Afghanistan	State Schools	Feminism
Male	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	0	4 (40%)	0
Female	12 (75%)	6 (38%)	8 (50%)	7 (44%)	5 (31%)	8 (50%)	2 (13%)	2 (13%)
Total	19 (73%)	9 (35%)	12 (46%)	9 (35%)	8 (31%)	8 (31%)	6 (23%)	2 (8%)

Table 4: Religious and National Identity

	Muslim	Shi'a	Agnostic/NA	British	British hyphenated	Not British
Male	8 (80%)	2 (20%)		7 (70%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)
Female	13 (81%)	1 (6%)	2 (13%)	8 (50%)	7 (44%)	1 (6%)
Total	21	3	2	15	9	2

Table 5: Organisational Membership

	National	Transnational	Global	Charitable/Humanitarian
Male	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)
Female	4 (25%)	2 (13%)	7 (44%)	3 (19%)
Total	6 (23%)	4 (15%)	10 (38%)	7 (27%)

⁶ These tables are based only on the interviews with students, namely 26 in total comprising 16 women and 10 men. The organisations and the focus group have not been included because the data are less systematic. However, references have been made to them in the main text. Given the small size of the sample, these results cannot be understood as statistically significant. However, where there is a big gap (for example when twice the proportion of women to men support something) it is interesting to note and to describe the sample in more detail - with more substantial qualitative results drawn from what they said.

⁷ Respondents were asked to rank 8 issues according to their importance to them where 5 indicated most important.