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"Dubbing a Western Muslim Culture"

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Abstract

This paper explores the way in which five young British Muslim women have integrated into British Society. The paper begins by deconstructing the context within which these women find themselves as Muslims living in the West. It is in opposition to the contructed dichotomy of Islam versus the West, that these women have found a way of integrating themselves into British society while fully maintaining their Islamic identities. Using the techniques and methods of linguistic anthropology, the paper finds that these women are dubbing a traditional Islamic ideology over a Western modern ideology.

I first examine the complex ideological struggle between "Traditional Islam" and "Western Modernity" in which young Muslims live. However, I then argue that young Muslims are attempting to alter the hegemonic forces of these two ideologies by creating a new subject position. I argue that these young Muslims are in fact "dubbing" a "Western Muslim" culture. The concept of "dubbing" is similar to that of a speech translation of a movie over a film. "Dubbing" allows individuals to bring together two seemingly opposite or incompatible ideologies without conflating them, but also leaves space of noticeable incompleteness and therefore a space for subjectivity (Boellstorff 1993:237). In other words, in the case of young British Muslims, "dubbing" allows them room to see themselves as part of the global Muslim ummah, while also being authentically British or Western. Yet, as the paper argues, dubbing, as a method of integration, is not part of a larger, government planned order, but rather has happened spontaneously.

The integration of Muslim in the West has been a priority of recent government policies in Europe and America. The "War on Terror" and the "Clash of Civilizations" thesis are based on a constructed dichotomy of "The West" versus "Islam" or "Us" versus "Them". Yet, this dichotomy assumes a monolithic "West" as well as a monolithic "Islam," and it fails to address those who are both "Us" and "Them". So how have Western Muslim integrated into Western society?

The relationship between the "Western World" and "Islamic World" begins shortly after the founding of Islam in 7th century Arabia. Indeed at one time, large parts of the European continent were part of the Islamic World,[1] and today, parts of the Islamic World form part of Europe.[2] Meanwhile, violence seems to mark the relationship between these two "Worlds," in the past the relationship has been valuable to the progress of each civilization. During the "Dark Ages" in Europe, Muslim civilizations were flourishing: "absorbing the knowledge of every culture with which they made contact, digesting it, evaluating it, expanding it and breaking out in new directions with it" (Ahmad 2006:71). Influenced by, among others, Greek and Roman thinkers before, Muslim scientists between 700 and 1500 CE added a "vast treasure of new scientific knowledge in the fields of philosophy, astronomy, history, mathematics, chemistry, and the medical sciences, to name but a few" (Ahmed et al. 2005:x). Indeed, the fields of anthropology and sociology owe much to the work of Islamic thinkers such as Ibn Khaldun, Al-Biruni, and al-Mas'udi (Ahmed 1981:56). These contributions are important to recognize, first, in order place European Enlightenment thought in context, but also in order to challenge the idea that Islamic and Western civilizations are inherently and dichotomously opposed inevitably resulting in a "Clash of Civilizations."

This dichotomy proposes "Islam on the one hand and modernity or "the West" on the other [and] are usually portrayed as irreconcilable antitheses" (Gorlach 2006:2). Indeed, this dichotomy is not the sole result of Western ideology, but is also a part of Islamic scholarship. In the early days of Islam, scholars constructed a similar dichotomy: Dar al Islam and Dar al Harb. Dar al Islam is literally the "Abode of Islam," while Dar al Harb means "Abode of War," used to describe non-Islamic areas. Scholars in the first three centuries of Islam used these two terms "in order that Muslims have a clear picture of the geo-political reality of their era" (Ramadan 1999:125). Yet, these terms do not appear in the Holy texts of Islam (the Qur'an and the Hadith), leading many to rightfully question their usefulness and applicability to describe today's geo-political context (Ramadan 1999:127). More importantly, perhaps, is that these dichotomies ignore the reality for millions of Muslims living in the West.

There is a long and diverse history of Muslims living in the West. In America, Muslim presence dates to the Slave Trade in which an estimated 10 to 40 percent of African slaves arriving in America were Muslims (Ali 2005:17). In Europe, Muslims ruled Spain for over 700 years until 1492. Meanwhile the Ottoman Empire brought Islam to the doorstep of Vienna in the 16th century and, again, in the 17th century. However, "the nature of [Muslim's] current presence in the West is of a new kind" (Ramadan 1999:2).

Following World War II, the destruction and subsequent reconstruction required the importation of a cheap labor force. Thus, the first wave of Muslim immigrants came to Britain, France, and Germany between 1945 and 1960. Waves of immigrants continued to arrive and by 1970, the Muslim presence in Europe tripled as compared to 1950. In addition to the waves of new immigrants, new generations of Muslims were being born in the West, rapidly increasing the size of

[1] Muslim Spain, or Andalusia, prior to the Spanish Inquisition and the Ottoman Empire are two examples.

[2] Bosnia and Turkey are two examples.

the European Muslim community (Ramadan 1999:119). By the 1980s, the mentality of community shifted from one of temporary "guest workers" to that of permanent residents. Today, it is estimated that 12 to 15 million Muslims live in Western Europe (Ramadan 1999:120).

In England, the government estimates 3.1% of the population to be Muslim, while in London, Muslims make up 8.5% of the population (National Statistics, 2001b). Moreover, 74% of Muslims in the UK are of South Asian ethnic origin. Of this group, 43% are of Pakistani background, 16% of Bangladeshi, 8% Indian, and 6% "Other Asian" (National Statistics, 2001a). The South Asian Muslim population arrived in the UK in the 1950s and 1960s, "[a]t first, they were mainly recruited by the British to work in the London transport system, the nationalized health service and the privately own textile mills in the north of England (Asad 1993:253). Many of these migrant workers were housed in government "estates," poor, inner city housing, similar to " the Projects" in the United States (Seddon 2004:27). Thus, I can conclude that within "multicultural" Britain, there is a sizeable Muslim population of South Asian background living in London, many in poor, inner city housing.

Some commentators have termed these "Muslim enclaves," or "areas of separate development which are not integrated with the rest of" London, as "Londonistan" (Phillips 2006:2). This term plays off the name of Pakistan, and other Central Asian nations, as a way to emphasize the disjuncture between 'white' British Society and the immigrant Asian populations. Beyond the poor neighborhoods, the term also reflects that "[o]ver the past two decades, London has become the most important center for Islamic thought outside the Middle East" (Phillips 2006:2). In addition to the think tanks, lobbying groups, charities, and research institutions, some claim, "London has become a major global center of Islamic extremism," including the claim that "al-Qaeda was actually formed as a movement" in London (Phillips 2006:3). This image of "Londonistan" leaves one with the impression that although Muslim are living in Europe, they are isolated from British society as well as actively seeking to launch a violent campaign against it.

Indeed, "if the clash is not a reality, the ingredients that could lead to it are very present in current mentalities: on both sides, the lack of knowledge of the other (and of self), the acceptance of simplistic and absolute caricatures and final judgments, not to mention conflicting political and geostrategic interests" (Ramadan 2004:226). Therefore, States have instituted 'integration' policies aimed at aiding immigrant populations assimilate into Western society. In Britain, education policies insist that immigrants and their child acquire a "fluent command of English,… a clear understanding of British democratic processes, of its laws, the system of Government and history that lies behind them" (Asad 1993, 242). Moreover, the government insists that Muslims incorporate into their lives the idea of 'freedom', or 'tolerance' and 'obligation' (Asad 1993, 244). These steps, they insist, will permit the proper integration of Muslims into British society.

Yet, for the government, integration also means eliminating dual loyalties which threaten the notion of "the absolute nation-state – of its demands to exclusive loyalty and its totalizing cultural projects" (Asad 1993, 266). Specifically, "state authorities remain deeply suspicious of all international movements, loyalties, and relationships that they cannot regulate" (Asad 1993, 266). Thus, integration policies are the State's method of planning and controlling social order.

As my research shows these efforts to plan social order and integration of Muslims into British society have been less effective than Muslims creating their own space in British society through spontaneous order.

In Britain, the second and third generation immigrant Muslims have largely distanced themselves from the cultures of their parents. Moreover, there are many converts to Islam, especially in the post-9/11 generation,[3] who are rejecting the conflation of Islam and cultures in Muslim countries. "This awareness and birth of a new understanding of Islam marks the period of transition we are experiencing today [which] is a sign of hope, the way of salvation that has the potential to lead [young Muslims] to reconcile their Islamic principles with life in the West." (Ramadan 2004:215-216). It is in their attempts to reconcile the constructed dichotomy of Islam and the West, that young British Muslims have created their own subject position as "Western Muslims."[4]

In order to better understand how young Muslims have created their own space in British society, I will focus my attention on a single text in which a group of young British Muslims discuss the ummah (global Muslim community), modernity, the West, and Islam.

Focus Group

In March 2007, on a visit to London, I met with five close Muslim friends for lunch at a house in East London. After filling our stomachs with the delights of Bangladeshi food, I recorded a thirty-six minute focus group with them. While conventionally, perhaps, a focus group brings together a group of strangers, the dynamics of a group of friends provided a lively conversation in which they interrupted, teased and spoke over each other. Moreover, being all friends of mine, and thus knowing their history (and them knowing mine), gave me an advantage in interpreting and analyzing their text.

The group of five consisted entirely of young females born of South Asian heritage and raised in or near East London. They are all in their early twenties, single, and still living in their family homes. Three of the women, Farah, Guli, and Sabrine, are sisters whose parents immigrated from Bangladesh. Their father owns a small shop in East London while their mother stays at home. They each attended an Islamic secondary school before attending prestigious universities in Britain. Sabrine is the oldest and is currently teaching at an Islamic school while also earning her masters degree in education. Farah recently graduated from a top London university and is working for a prestigious multinational financial institution in London. Guli, the youngest of the three, is currently studying medicine. Wafaa, another participant, is of Pakistani descent. Her father recently passed away suddenly leaving her two older brothers responsible for her and her mother. Although she has a law degree, she has recently finished her teacher's training course and is teaching in a public school. The fifth participant is Asma. Asma is the daughter of a Pakistani father and Mauritian mother. Asma's mother

[3] This refers to the large number of people who have converted to Islam since 9/11/01.

[4] This is the used by the participants in the focus group. It has yet to be determined whether this is a wider phenomena that includes all Muslims in the West. Instead, it could be understood that they have created their own subject position as "British Muslims."

was raised Hindu but converted to Islam when she married Asma's father. Her father owns a couple of newsstands while her mother, who is trained as a fashion designer, stays home. Asma graduated university with a degree in social policy but has recently begun a training program in accounting with the local council government. Of all the participants, she has spent the most time in South Asia. She spent approximately a year as a child with relatives in Pakistan and in the summer of 2006 she volunteered with a humanitarian organization in the earthquake-devastated region in Pakistani Kashmir.

All five women are practicing Muslims: praying five times a day, fasting during the month of Ramadan, and abstain from alcohol, swine, and non-Muslim meat. They all wear the hijab (headscarf) and wear loose clothing, typically a skirt or pants with a long tunic. None of them limit their clothing to all black, instead they prefer colors and patterned scarves which match their outfits. Moreover, none of the women cover their faces with the niqab (face veil). In addition, they all observe conservative interpretations of adhab (Islamic behavior). They do not dance or sing in front of non-related men. They also do not shake hands or touch such men. When they decide to marry, their parents or families will either arrange the marriage for them, or at least approve of the man. They will not date before marriage, let alone meet in private with a man before marrying. While these behaviors may seem "peculiar" to some, it is not out of the ordinary for Muslim women of their generation and background in the UK.

However, to understand how young Muslims perceive and create their space in the UK, a simple ethnography alone is not sufficient. Rather, a critical analysis of their discourse can give us a deeper understanding of the complex ideological struggle in terms of which young Muslims like these are creating a new subject position.

Co-Construction of Text

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) focuses on "power, and especially institutionally reproduced power" by examining "the intersection of language/discourse/speech and social structure" (Blommaert 2005:24-25). Moreover, CDA "openly professes strong commitments to change, empowerment, and practice-orientedness" (Blommaert 2005:26). One of the most influential theorists in CDA is Norman Fairclough, who described a three-dimensional framework for discourse analysis (Blommaert 2005:29). "The first dimension is discourse-as-text, i.e. the linguistic features and organization of concrete instances of discourse" (Blommaert 2005:29). This would include word choice, grammar, structure, and verb tense, among other features. "The second dimension is discourse-as-discursive-practice, i.e. discourse as something which is produced, circulated, distributed, consumed in society" (Blommaert 2005:29). This would include, among other things, intertextuality. And finally, "[t]he third dimension is discourse-as-social-practice,ie. the ideological effects and hegemonic processes in which discourse is seen to operate" (Blommaert 2005:29). The use of this three-dimensional framework for our purposes will be in accordance to Fairclough's intention: "the model of discourse he develops is framed in a theory of ideological processes in society, for discourse is seen in terms of processes of hegemony and changes in hegemony" (Blommaert 2005:30). Yet, before applying Fairclough's model, it is important to note how the text is constructed.

As previously stated, the text that I will use is a discussion of five individuals. While each individual has her own opinions and agency, I will build off the notion of text as co-constructed between the speaker and audience. Since each woman is both speaker and audience throughout the text, "it is helpful…to think of textual meanings as something interpellated through the mutual engagement of speakers and audience in a social moment" (Leap 2003:403). This co-construction is clear throughout the text.

Evidence of this co-construction can be found in the repetition of phrases which hail the other participants to agree or respond to what the speaker is saying. For example, after finishing a thought, the speaker would sometimes add "right?" to the end of her sentence. In line 702, Wafaa uses this technique when she says, "So we're different from people back home, right?" In addition, Asma used the same technique in line 742: "stuff that which traditional Islam isn't about, right?" In both cases, the audience responded, "yeah." Another example of the frequent use of hailing to co-construct the text was the phrase "you know what I mean?" In this case, it was usually used when the speaker wanted to disagree with something a previous speaker said. This is important as we should not "presuppose co-operativity" in a dialogue as "co-operativity is a variable in dialogue, not a rule" (Blommaert 2005:44). Asma uses this technique while disagreeing with Wafaa's analysis of capitalism's effect on the Muslim ummah (community). Wafaa had expressed that one of the reasons the ummah is in a poor state today is due to the imposition of capitalism on traditional economies (see lines 89-106). Later, Asma disagrees, saying:

295 when you were talking about capitalism
296 that may be an issue
297 but capitalism is an issue in itself
298 do you know what I mean?

299 W: mm

300 A: for like everyone
301 as opposed to just Muslims.
302 Like I don't see..
303 money as a problem.
304 Like
305 do you know what I mean?

After, disagreeing with Wafaa's analysis, and stating her case, Asma hails Wafaa in order to engage Wafaa in Asma's analysis. A similar occurrence happens when Sarine disagrees with Asma's argument that Muslims can be modern simply by living in the modern era. Sarine disagrees with this generalized statement, instead she states conditions which must be meant in order for Muslims to be able to be "modern":

848 But if it means abandoning
849 the core foundation or fundamental rules of Islam then..
850 there will be-
851 th-you won't –
852 then as a Muslim
853 I can't be a Muslim who is in the modern era or is-

854 do you know what I mean?

Thus, Sarine is calling on Asma to engage with her in building the meaning of "modern Muslim." Therefore, although we should not pre-suppose a "friendly, co-operative conversation and exchange of views," the text in our case clearly has a high level of co-operativity. (Blommaert 2005:44). Moreover, it is also important not to presuppose in a dialogue sharedness or "symmetry in contextualizing power" (Blommaert 2005:44-45).

While one cannot assume "that participants in communication share lots of common ground – language or language variety, referential and indexical meanings attributed to words, utterances or speech events, and so on," our text, again, shows a high level of sharedness (Blommaert 2005:44). A clear example of this is the use of certain Islamic phrases in Arabic, which, in this case, are utterances that "indexically invoke social norms, roles, identities" (Blommaert 2005:252). Throughout the text whenever one of the speakers refers to Prophet Mohammad, the speaker follows his name by saying "sallalahu alayhi wasallam" (May God bless him and grant him peace). While the speaker is invoking her identity as a practicing, pious Muslim, she is also hailing the other participants who respond with the same utterance "sallalahu alayhi wasallam" (May God bless him and grant him peace) (see lines 578-579). It is important to note the strategy in code-switching here. None of the speakers actually speak Arabic and they are all aware of the English translations of the phrases. However, they choose to use Arabic, the language of the Holy Qur'an, as a way of indexically expressing their common identity as pious Muslims. Moreover, this strategic choice of using Islamic phrases in Arabic sheds light on one of the centering institution at work here.

"The systemically reproduced indexicalities are often tied to specific, authoritative actors which we call centring institutions" (Blommaert 2005:75). These institutions "are emblematic: they centre on the potential to articulate (hierarchically ordered) 'central values' of a group or system" (Blommaert 2005:75). In the case of this text, the centring institution which generates the shared indexicality of Arabic/Islamic is "Traditional Islam." I will address more specifically "Traditional Islam" as an ideological position later in the paper, but for now, it is important to note the choice of the participants to indexically invoke their shared identity and affiliation as pious Muslims.

The final aspect to address in the co-construction of the text is the presumption of "symmetry in contextualizing power" (Blommaert 2005:45). Among our speakers, there is a clear that there is an unequal access to contextualization. For example, in the discussion of modernity, Wafaa and Asma have different understandings of the term. Asma describes modernity as "the age I'm living in right now" (line 650), while Wafaa believes modernity s a set of mechanisms which "seeks to break up, fragment, individualize people" (line 713). In their debate over the meaning, Asma and Wafaa use of intertextuality reveals the unequal access to contextualization they have as compared to the other participants. Asma refers to Marx (lines 734-738) and Wafaa refers to "postmodern society, post-structural, constructionist deconstructionist" theories (lines 678 –682). Meanwhile, Guli, Farah, and Sarine allow Asma and Wafaa to impose their contextualization on their uses of "modernity." In fact, Guli admits her lack of

access to the debates about "modernity" and then accepts Wafaa's contextualization of the term.

1023 If we're discussing everything we're saying here that's its stripping away
1024 hm
1025 if we're using your definition which
1026 I think modernity has this
1027 …for me…
1028 its not a term I'm familiar with at all,
1029 it doesn't
1030 you know
1031 it doesn't affect me at all
1032 its not a term I ever even…
1033 you know think about at all.
1034 But if its what you're talking about that its stripping
1035 hm
1036 away the sacredness of
1037 you know…
1038 you know of Islam

This example shows that although there is a high level of co-operativity and sharedness among the group, there is an inequality in the "accesses to particular contextual spaces" (Blommaert 2005:45).

This discussion of co-operativity, sharedness, and inequality to certain resources contextualizes the co-construction of the text as a whole, so that I may now move on to describing, interpreting, and explaining the analysis of the text so as to shed light on how young Muslims negotiate opposing ideologies and attempt to alter hegemonic forces.

Creative Practice in a Spontaneous Order

In order to understand how these young Muslim females construct a space for themselves in the West, specifically in Britain, I will borrow from Raymond Williams notion of creative practice (Williams 1977:206-212). Creative practice can entail the "remaking of inherited (determined) practical consciousness: a process often described as development but in practice a struggle at the roots of the mind—not casting off an ideology, or learning phrases about it, but confronting a hegemony in the fibres of the self…"(Williams 1977:212). In other words, "[c]reative practice, then, is something that has to be situated in the borderline zone of existing hegemonies. It develops within hegemonies while it attempts to alter them…" (Blommaert 2005:106). However, I argue that this is not part of a planned order, but rather happens as part of a spontaneous order.

In a spontaneous order individuals "learn to conform to shared norms and constraints so that their interactions and exchanges will be orderly and successful" (Macedo 1999, 290). In other words,

> social arrangements under which we live are of such an order of complexity that they cannot be the product of deliberate calculation but are, rather, the unintended consequence of countless individual actions, none of which aims at the establishment of coherent social institutions and many of which are the product of instinct and habit. (Hamowy 1999, 280).

Thus, it is my argument that these young British Muslim women are spontaneously partaking in creative practice in order to alter existing hegemonies and create a new form of integrated British Muslim consciousness in a way that no government plan could

This argument will first lead me to analyze the existing ideologies in the text which engage hegemonic forces. I will then analyze how these young women negotiate these hegemonic forces by creatively dubbing a "Western Muslim" subject position.

Ideologies

Ideology is usually understood as "abstract cognitive complexes located in the minds of members of groups, based on accumulated experience and socialization, and organizing the way in which these member think, speak, and act" (Blommaert 2005:162). However, this cognitive/ideational view of ideology is not able to explain how "such very deep cognitive patterns end up in people's heads" (Blommaert 2005:162). Thus, it is essential to understand materialist approach to ideology.

> The materialist approach incorporates "particular social formations, instruments of power, and institutional frames within which particular sets of ideas are promulgated" (Blommaert 2005:161

This understanding of ideology as 'hailing' helps us to identify two important ideologies that 'function' in the text. For our purposes, I shall call the first "Traditional Islamic Ideology" and the second "Western Modern Ideology."

Traditional Islamic Ideology

As mentioned previously, it is clear in the text that Traditional Islam is a centering institution which generate indexicalities that orient these women as pious, conservative Muslims. These indexicalities also give us insight into the Traditional Islamic Ideology present in the text.

According to the speakers, Traditional Islamic Ideology includes a deep respect for God and sacred elements of Islam. This is clear in lines 812-818 of the text when Wafaa explains,

812 So it's the taking away of the **sacred elements** of our life
813 which is the lifeblood of what traditional Islam is about
814 because we seek to
815 hm eh
816 what do you call it?
817 We seek to make things-
818 to **venerate** certain symbols of Allah, right

Moreover, as Sarine says,

958 You're suppose to fulfill the rules-
959 you are in fact suppose to live this day as though its your last day

Therefore, Traditional Islam has a strict set of rules which must be adhered to as if it is your last day before the Day of Judgment, or as if there is no tomorrow. In addition, while there are strict rules, there is room for compromise, however as

Sarine says, "they're not decisions that the lay person makes" (line 1415). Sarine echoes this sentiment later when she says, and Wafaa adds:

1438 and that is the beauty of this religion
1439 and that is the ease
1440 and the freedom in this religion
1441 that the decisions are made for you
]
1442 W: and the promise!

In other words, in Traditional Islam the decisions of how to live and practice Islam are made simple for the 'lay person' by scholars and imams(community leaders). One could then deduct that it does not encourage, and even represses, individual reflection or thought.

Western Modern Ideology

A second ideology present in the text is what I have called "Western Modern Ideology." In the text, we can see characteristics of this ideology when the speakers discuss the meaning of "modernity." Wafaa clearly identifies "modernity" as an ideology:

691 Modernity is something…
692 I think
693 I think its something which is like mechanisms basically.
694 The mechanisms which make people how they are-
695 they're kind of sociali-
696 it socializes you
697 and it almost kind of-
698 it brings you up in a certain way.

Wafaa continues to describe the effect of "modernity", or Western Modern Ideology:

705 and I think modernity
706 has that kind of effect
707 to where it affects they way that you behave
708 and the way that you think about things.
709 And I think that modernity is…
710 and it has been argued by other people that its
711 one of the biggest enemies of traditional Islam
712 in the sense that modernity seeks to
713 break up, fragment, individualize people
714 and to kind of say
715 "well its everyone for themselves"
716 in an individualist kind of way
717 and you're working for yourselves

Therefore, she characterizes Western Modern Ideology as an individualistic set of ideas which attempts to fragment groups of people. It is also seen, according to her, as something which people believe is the "one of the biggest enemies of traditional Islam" (line 711). Moreover, she associates Western Modern Ideology

with secularism (lines 748-751) and says that modernity "normalizes things which are meant to be sacred" (lines 785-786).

Hegemonic Forces

Having identified and described the two ideologies central to our argument, I will now explore the hegemonic forces functioning in both ideologies. In Gramsci's understanding, hegemony dominants, while force 'determines' (Blommaert 2005:167). Hegemony achieves consensual dominance by employing ideological control over society. For our purposes, I will examine the hegemonic forces functioning between Western Modern Ideology and Traditional Islamic Ideaology.

The speakers in our text clearly recognize the hegemonic forces struggling for dominance in Western Modernity and Traditional Islam. For example, in the following lines, Wafaa identifies how Western Modernity is seeking to dominant over Traditional Islam:

761 Its like we were discussing yesterday,
762 like for example
763 homosexuality
764 even though we know it's a sin
765 because we've heard about it and…
766 know about it so much it doesn't seem like such a…
767 huge enormity to us.
768 So there's a g-
769 you know you hear about peo-
770 someone introduces themselves a-as gay you might kind of…
771 take a double take or something
772 but its not something which is…
773 you know…
774 huge or great or immense to you.

In lines 761 through 764, she identifies how Traditional Islamic Ideology defines homosexuality as sin, however in line 765, she identifies how Western Modernity normalizes homosexuality. The hegemonic force in Western Modernity then attempts to dominate or alter Muslims' view of homosexuality so "its not something which is…huge or great or immense" any longer; it has been normalized (lines 772-774).

Sarine also identified the hegemonic force within Western modernity:

945 SR: its when you're asked to do things which go against the basic tenets
946 or-bu-hm
947 or looked as being backward
948 for following basic tenets of Islam
949 because it doesn't fit in with the
950 overarching or widely accepted framework
951 that's when its an imposition of somebody else's idea of what modernity is

Wafaa continues to identify the hegemonic force within Western Modern Ideology when she says:

780 I think what
781 modernity does it seek-
782 it seeks through its mech-mechanisms and the way that it manifests itself
783 it seeks to hm
784 [pause]
785 normalize
786 things which are meant to be sacred
787 and things which are meant to be
788 hm
789 enormous to individuals who…
790 see
791 who see it as that.
792 So like drinking like alcohol
793 like swine
794 like
795 hm
796 extramarital affairs
797 all these kind of things.
798 They're not-
799 they don't-
800 they- they don't seem so sacred to us anymore so…

Here, again Wafaa addresses how Western Modern Ideology attempts to normalize things which are haram (forbidden) in Traditional Islam, such as alcohol, swine, extramarital affairs. Thus, Western Modern Ideology is a hegemonic force attempting to dominant Traditional Islamic Ideology.

However, the participants also identify Traditional Islamic Ideology as a hegemonic force. Sarine clarifies that Traditional Islamic Ideology requires that Shariah (Islamic Law) take precedence in the lives of Muslims:

833 and we can be modern Muslims because Islam…
834 tells us where it does not go against Shariah that you-
835 you know-
836 you are under the rule and law of a country

Therefore, Traditional Islam seeks to dominate over Western Modernity by conditioning that only in cases where the laws or norms of a society do not violate the Shariah (Islamic Law), Muslims would follow those Western Modern norms. Moreover, as Sarine explains, Traditional Islam permits Muslims to live in Western Modern societies as long as it does not mean abandoning Traditional Islamic Ideology:

844 But if it means adapting to where you live,
845 Islam is all for that
846 and there isn't a-eh-
847 contradiction between modernity and Islam.
848 But if it means abandoning
849 the core foundation or fundamental rules of Islam then..
850 there will be-
851 th-you won't –

852 then as a Muslim
853 I can't be a Muslim who is in the modern era or is-

Thus, Traditional Islam is also a hegemonic force which seeks to dominate, specifically the lives of Muslims, but also over Western Modern Ideology. This discussion of the hegemonic forces within which young Muslims in Britain are living is important as I return to the notion of creative practice.

Dubbing a "Western Muslim" Culture[5]

As mentioned earlier, creative practice is "situated in the borderline zones of existing hegemonies" (Blommaert 2005:106). An individual will partake in creative practice when they are no longer content with dominant understandings. Therefore, individuals attempt to alter hegemonies "by creating new (contrasting) forms of consciousness" (Bloomaert 2005:106). It is my argument that these young British Muslim women are creating a new consciousness by dubbing a "Western Muslim" culture.

Before discussing 'dubbing' as a creative practice, it is important to show that these young women are no longer content with the hegemonic forces in Traditional Islam or Western Modernity. For example, Asma expressed her frustration with Traditional Islam's rejection of Western Modernity:

1093 Like being modern,
1094 being-
1095 moving with the times is seen as modern
1096 but then at the same time saying
1097 "Islam has a problem with modernity"
1098 as you-
1099 as Wafaa defined it.
1100 Like
1101 as in you know
1102 making us alien with each other and stuff
1103 then we're always going to have a problem with it and it just sounds so…
1104 rubbish
1105 It sounds like Islam has a problem…
1106 with these mechanisms.

Asma also expressed frustration with how Western Modern ideology labels Traditional Islam as 'backward':

657 buts its only when people start saying
658 "but the way you are living is traditional"
659 that you think
660 "what?!
661 Like, no!
662 this is..
663 I'm living in the same age as you guys"

[5] The term "Western Muslim" is used by the speakers, but it should not be assumed that it can be used across the Western World. Rather, it is specific to the context from which it came.

Unhappy with the dominant understandings of both Traditional Islam and Western Modernity, Asma and the other young Muslim women have dubbed "Western Muslim" culture.

'Dubbing Culture' is a theoretical framework made famous by Tom Boellstorff (Boellstorff 1993). Similar to dubbing a speech translation of a movie over the film, "'dubbing culture' sets two elements side by side, blurred yet distinct" (Boellstorff 1993:237) Boellstorff uses the concept of 'dubbing' as a way to move beyond the dichotomous "impasse of "puppets of globalization" versus "veneer over tradition"" (Boellstorff 1993:236). Boellstorff goes on to explain:

> Disjuncture is at the heart of the dub; there is no prior state of pure synchrony and no simple conversion to another way of being. Where translation is haunted by its inevitable failure, dubbing rejoices in good-enough and the forever incomplete. Dubbing is not definitive but heuristic, interpretive—like many understandings of the ethnographic project. (Boellstorff 1993:236)

Thus, the concept of dubbing can allow the individual to bring together two seemingly opposite or incompatible ideologies without conflating them, but it also leaves a space for subjectivity (Boellstorff 1993:237). In other words, for our purposes, it allows Muslims see themselves as part of the global Muslim ummah, while also being authentically British or Western (Boellstorff 1993:237).

'Dubbing' is different than the notions of hybridity and translation. Hybridity is typically synonymous with 'mixed', which does differs from dubbing in which the agent places two distinct elements side by side (Boellstorff 1993:237). Translation is also not appropriate in this case because, as Boellstorff points out, translation is based on a binary of "import-export and authentic-inauthentic," which does "not capture the possibility of subject positions with more nuanced and conjunctural relationships to the "West," ones that may stand outside usual definitions of identity politics" (Boellstorff 1993:237).

Again, it is my argument that these young women are attempting to alter hegemonic forces by creating a new subjectivity by dubbing a "Western Muslim" culture. Wafaa introduces this idea of "Western Muslim" when she declared:

700 we're Western Muslims
701 or we're brou-brought up with a Western point of view.
702 So we're different from people back home, right?

After declaring her "Western Muslim" subject position, she dubs the "Western point of view," or Western Modernity, over Traditional Islam, represented by "people back home." To be more clear, in lines 1436-1442, which was quoted earlier, the women describe how Traditional Islam is not reflexive and requires following the rules that scholars, community leaders, and elders set down. Moreover, in the following passage, Farah describes how in Traditional Islam there is not room for tolerance of other views:

1447 F: but it has to go back to the basis of what we've been given.
1448 It can't-
1449 it can't be each person for themselves
1450 choosing what they want to do

Yet, when I asked them what they believe are the major problems in the Muslim community and how we can fix them, Farah responded:

474 everyone thinks that their opinion is the right opinion.
475 Hm
476 and theres a lack of like
477 just humbling ourselves
478 and actually thinking actually no th-the other person might be right
479 and hm
480 just going back to the basics really
481 and just
482 not have-
483 not thinking that my way is the right way
484 cuz it might not be.
485 Hm
486 and if everyone did that
487 and actually learnt from each other..

In this passage, Farah says that the problem in the Muslim community is that people are not tolerant of other opinions within Islam. Another problem that Farah identifies is that Muslims are simply following the decisions of elders rather than questioning for themselves:

567 how do you tell people who are that older than you
568 and who have more fixed in their ways that….
569 you know they're ways
570 aren't necessarily the right way

The change in Farah's discourse is remarkable. At one point, she claims that Traditional Islam does not have room for differing opinions and agrees that in Traditional Islam scholars and community leaders make the decisions for the 'average' Muslim. However, she also identifies this attitude as part of the problem. This seeming contradiction can be understood through the dubbing of Western Modernity on Traditional Islam.

In commenting on the ideology of Western Modernity, Wafaa explained that one of the characteristics of this ideology is:

723 and they-everybody's right in their own way
724 so nobody's right and nobody's wrong.

In this passage, Wafaa identifies that in Western Modernity there is a toleration for all opinions. Thus, when Farah identifies the problems of the Muslim community, she dubs the Western Modern tolerance for diversity of opinion on Traditional Islam, which has a strict set of rules. The outcome is that she is not accepting diversity of all, but rather accepting diversity of opinions which stay within the bounds of Islamic rules. Thereby, Farah has created what Wafaa identified earlier as the "Western Muslim" subject position seeking to alter the hegemonic forces of Traditional Islam and Western Modernity.[6]

[6] Another example of dubbing a "Western Muslim" culture can be seen in the picture on the cover page (Innovative Minds, 2004). This photo does not include the participants of our text, however, they all attended the same rally protesting the French ban on the

The creative practice of dubbing a "Western Muslim" culture is important in the larger context within which this process is taking place. Politicians, journalists, and academics, among others, are pondering the likelihood of a "Clash of Civilizations," a la Huntington, and ways in which it can be avoided. Moreover, many are asking questions about how to integrate those Muslims who are actually living in the West. The link between the two issues, a potential clash and integration, are all the more important for the United Kingdom. On July 7th, 2005, four British Muslim men blew themselves up on the London transport system killing over 50 people. Unlike attacks in Madrid or on 9/11, which are thought to have been carried out by foreign 'terrorists', the 'London bombers' were raised in Britain and were UK citizens. The shock of this supposed fact swept across not only Britain but also all Western nations with large Muslim populations. Thus, those who were once pondering a "clash" and ways of integration are now actively seeking measures to solve the problem. The State is scrambling to figure out how to plan Muslim integration, but I believe that the five young Muslim women who participated in this focus group and who have dubbed a "Western Muslim" culture, have spontaneously found a way for them to be authentically Muslims and Western without losing something in translation.

Muslim headscarf, or *hijab*. The dubbing of Western Muslim culture is clear in the signs the women are carrying which say "Hijab, our Right" and "The Hijab: A Woman's Right to Choose." Here, again they have dubbed a Western Modern ideology of human rights over the Traditional Islamic rule that women must cover their heads.

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