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ABSTRACT

The number of families who choose to home educate has significantly increased in the last decade. This article explores the experiences of British Muslims who home educate using data from a larger study exploring the views of a diverse range of families. Drawing on the work of Beck, we discuss how 'risk' is understood in relation to Muslim home educators. For these families, decisions to home educate were often made in response to identifying risks associated with their children attending school. At the same time, OFSTED has identified 'risks' of radicalisation associated with the 'Trojan Horse' affair which they linked specifically to Muslim families who home educate. We argue that Muslim families are both marginalised by the perception of 'risk' associated with radicalisation and also by their consequent decisions to home educate.

Introduction

This article draws upon two case studies of Muslim families living in the West Midlands, (a large metropolitan county in England) from a wider project that explored the choices of different home educators in the United Kingdom. The article examines how risk has been perceived and understood in the context of Muslim pupils who are home educated. It takes as its backdrop the 'Trojan Horse' affair in Birmingham, West Midlands, when suspicions and later evidence were uncovered of covert attempts to take over schools by Sunni Islamic groups (Clarke 2014). These events were linked by Michael Wilshaw, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools,[1] to an increasing number of families using home education as a cover for sending their children to unregistered madrassa schools (OFSTED 2016). In this article, we explore how Muslim families are both marginalised by the perception of 'risk' associated with radicalisation and consequent decisions to home educate.

The Trojan Horse affair

On the 15 April 2014 Peter Clarke was appointed Education Commissioner for Birmingham by the Secretary of State for Education, with a wide-ranging remit to understand the implications of the Trojan Horse affair 'for the school system both in Birmingham and more

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widely' (Clarke 2014, 7). He outlined a range of risks that materialised around attempts to destabilise schools and were highlighted by controversial media accounts suggesting schools in Birmingham were being hijacked in order to teach radical fundamentalist Muslim values (BBC 2014; *Daily Mail* 2014; *Guardian* 2014).

Following Clarke's report, OFSTED inspections of schools initially in Birmingham and then in other parts of England identified systemic, similar problems related to the safety of children; cultures of fear and intimidation towards staff; poor governance; inappropriate financial management; and the promotion of a narrow religious curriculum based upon the personal beliefs of Islamic activists (OFSTED 2014a, 2014c). In later reports, Wilshaw directly linked concerns about the culture, ethos and intent of illegal, Islamic unregistered schools to parents' ability to describe themselves as home educators (OFSTED 2015b, 2015c, 2016). He suggested the growth in numbers of home-educated children was partly because 'those operating unregistered schools are unscrupulously using the freedoms that parents have to home educate their children as a cover for their activities' (OFSTED 2016, 2). He noted evidence of local authorities' 'inaction' in tackling unregistered schools (OFSTED 2015b) that promoted a narrow Islamic agenda (OFSTED 2014a, 2014b, 2015a). Wilshaw also highlighted the Department for Education's confusion when issuing advice to proprietors of unregistered schools about home education legislation (OFSTED 2015c).

The 'Trojan Horse' affair highlighted the failings and challenges of government policy to promote fundamental 'British values' in schools, most notably the 2011 relaunch of the Prevent Strategy. Then Home Secretary in the Coalition Government, Theresa May outlined the need to confront ideological threats to British life that contributed directly to wider, more specific terrorist attacks (Home Office 2011). The Prevent Strategy noted that although there was no evidence of a 'systematic attempt to recruit or radicalise people in full time education' (2011, 67), supporters of terrorism had actively sought and secured roles in schools; and that some independent faith schools promoted 'views that are contrary to British values, such as intolerance of other cultures and gender inequality' and 'allowed extremist views to be expressed by staff, visitors or pupils' (2011, 67). Schools were required to promote British values based on the ideological content of the Prevent Strategy to pupils as part of their 'spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development' (Department for Education 2013, 2014). The Department for Education requires that:

> All maintained schools must meet the requirements set out in Section 78 of the Education Act 2001 and promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of their pupils. Through ensuring pupils' SMSC development, schools can also demonstrate they are actively promoting fundamental British values. (Department for Education 2014, 4)

Home education in the United Kingdom

In England, the then Department for Communities, Schools and Families (DCSF [2007] 2013) published guidelines for local authorities on the broad approach that they should adopt towards home-educated children. There is, however, no UK-wide policy on home education; individual local authorities issue their own guidelines and local policies. The Education Act (1996) makes it the responsibility of parents to ensure their children receive an appropriate education and not the direct responsibility of schools or local authorities. This reflects the inherent ambiguities of The European Convention on Human Rights (Article 2, Protocol 1), which states that 'No person shall be denied the right to education' but goes on

to require that, 'In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching is in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions' (DCFS [2007] 2013, 4). Parents have the right to educate their children at home under Section 7 of the Education Act (1996), although such an education would need to be one that was efficient and suitable for the child's age, ability and aptitude. This also includes children who have special educational or other needs. Whilst there is no clear definition of how suitable or efficient is defined, under case law[2] 'efficient' has been described as an education that achieves its aims and 'suitable' as one which equips the child for life within their community and society (DCFS [2007] 2013, 5).

'Risks' that have been consistently identified with home educators include the potential for abuse and physical harm of children to go unnoticed because of inadequate monitoring by the state and parents who do not send their children to school avoiding prosecution by pretending to home educate (Bhopal and Myers 2016). Bhopal and Myers argue that often such risks are understood differently depending on the class and ethnicity of parents; so whilst white middle-class parents are perceived as posing few risks to their children, Gypsy families who choose to home educate are identified as being likely to pose greater risks. This is possibly reflected in OFSTED's particular identification of Muslim families using home education as potential cover for radicalisation.

Local authorities are often placed in an ambiguous and ill-defined role in relation to home educators. They are expected to provide guidelines about home education, and also have a duty under Section 436A of the Education Act (1996) to identify children who are not receiving a suitable education. However, they have no statutory duties to monitor the quality of education children are receiving at home and do not, for example, have legal powers to enter the family home. Consequently it is difficult to implement Section 437(1) of the Education Act (1996), which requires local authorities to serve a 15-day notice on parents who are not ensuring their children receive 'a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise' (DCSF [2007] 2013, 6). Whilst local authorities have a duty to safeguard the protection of children under Section 175(1) of the Education Act (2002), this duty does not extend to those who are home educating. Parents have no legal duty to inform local authorities that they are home educating. If schools are told that a parent has chosen to home educate, they are expected to inform their local authority and the child's details are removed from the register.

Serious concerns about the barriers local authorities faced around safeguarding and child protection issues were identified following the death by starvation of Khyra Ishaq. Khyra's mother denied social services access to the family home having informed them she was home educating. This high-profile tragedy led to calls for greater regulation of home education (Bhopal and Myers 2016). As a result the DCSF commissioned the Badman Review (2009) to investigate these concerns and the support local authorities were providing for home-educating families. Badman's main findings suggest that current measures in place were not sufficient or robust enough to protect all children. He recommended a compulsory national registration scheme for all home-educated children, a review of how 'suitable' and 'efficient' education is defined, and local authorities to provide clearer guidelines to home educators (Badman Review 2009, 47). Successive governments have not implemented any of these recommendations.

Badman (2009) and Wilshaw (OFSTED 2015b) both highlight the difficulties in estimating numbers of home-educated children but note evidence suggesting that it is increasing. The BBC (2016a) has suggested a 65% increase over six years in the number of children recorded as being home educated, based on freedom of information requests obtained from 190 local authorities. These indicated a total of 36,609 home-educated children within a school population of around 9.5 million pupils.[3] Similar findings, also based on freedom of information requests to local authorities, were published by *The Guardian* newspaper in 2016 (Mansell and Edwards 2016).

There are many different reasons parents choose to home educate, which may include:

> … the right of the parent to determine the best educational provision for their child but also for the right of the child to have access to a broad and balanced curriculum or to be safe from harm and to develop the skills that are needed to become socially and morally responsible members of society. (Smith and Nelson 2015, 313)

Many parents believe they can provide a better quality education than schools (Webb 2011; Winstanley 2009), provide better learning experiences (Rothermel 2002; Thomas and Pattison 2010) or identify schools as failing to provide adequate support for special educational needs (Arora 2006; Webb 2011). Some parents want to maintain contact with their children at all times and form closer attachments with them (Hopwood et al. 2007). Home education is often adopted by parents who feel schools deal inadequately with bullying (Gabb 2004).

In the United Kingdom, there is little research which explores the reasons why minority ethnic families choose to home educate. Many Gypsies and Travellers home educate partly because their children experience racism and marginalisation in schools and partly because this has been an effective means of transferring economic skills (Bhopal and Myers 2016; D'Arcy 2014). The BBC (2016b) identified reasons given by Muslim parents for home education which included the standard of education their children receive and frustration with the introduction of the Prevent Strategy.[4]

Many of the concerns raised about home education have been mirrored in the USA where home schooling[5] is often associated with fundamental Christian beliefs that it is the family's responsibility rather than the school's to educate children (Arai 2000; Murphy 2012). Critics of home schooling suggest it deprives children of the social and educational opportunities needed to fulfil their potential (Apple 2000; Lubienski 2003), and requires stricter regulation and monitoring (Kunzman and Gaither 2013; Reich 2002). Reasons for home schooling include teaching children with a conservative religious perspective (Collom and Mitchell 2005), educating children with special educational needs in the supportive home environment (Duvall, Delquadri, and Ward 2004), and racism (Noel, Stark, and Redford 2013). There is evidence to suggest Black African American families increasingly choose home schooling as parents feel schools fail to address their children's needs, and many teachers have stereotypical and negative attitudes towards Black children which contribute to their low standardised test scores (Fields-Smith and Williams 2009; Ray 2015; Taylor 2005). The numbers of home-schooled Muslim students in the USA has increased; parents citing their preference for children being taught religious values that reflect their ethnic and religious identity (Sarwar 2013).

Methodology

The data for this paper describe two case studies with Muslim families who were home educating. The data are drawn from a larger study which explored the views of 33 families

living in England who were home educating (these included white middle-class families, Christian families, families of children who had disabilities, Gypsies and Travellers, and Black families). Six Muslim families participated in the research, three based in London and three in the West Midlands. Our research explored how and why home education is differently accessed by different groups and how these groups are perceived as home educators. We explored how different groups of home educators are portrayed (both by educational authorities and the media) as either 'managing risk' in their children's lives or alternatively putting their children 'at risk' by home educating them. For example, middle-class families are often perceived to act in an effective and responsible manner when choosing to home educate. They may be portrayed in media accounts as offering a challenging and creative education filled with opportunities for their children. This often contrasts starkly with accounts of families from more marginal communities (such as Muslim families or Gypsies and Travellers), who may be seen as putting their children 'at risk' if they choose home education. Such accounts stress the limiting nature of educational opportunities and highlight safety concerns for the children. We wanted to explore how discourses of home-educating families position them (and their children) as being 'at risk'.

Case-study methods were used as the most suitable to meet the aims of our study. We were particularly interested in exploring the reasons why families chose to home educate. As Yin (1994, 9) states, 'A how or why question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control'. We wanted to gain a detailed understanding that led to parents/carers making the decision to home educate and analyse the advantages and disadvantages associated with this decision. As Hartley (2004, 323) states, case-study research '… consists of a detailed investigation, often with data collected over a period of time, of phenomena, within their context'. She goes on to state that the main aim of case study research is to '… provide an analysis of the context and processes which illuminate the theoretical issues being studied' (2004, 323). In this article the 'context' was seen to be shaped by the discourses around the Trojan Horse affair and parents' perceptions of schools.

Families were accessed via specific Muslim home education organisations. We posted adverts asking families to contact us via specific home education websites as well as organisations putting us in touch with families who may be interested in the study. After our initial contact with various families, we used a snowball sample and asked other respondents if they knew of other families who may be interested. We conducted interviews with six Muslim families, and at least one parent from each family was interviewed on two separate occasions. All of the interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Data were analysed through an iterative process. Categories were developed in which we explored different behaviours and patterns. We organised the data around key themes and the main research questions (Hartley 2004). The data analysis was based on '… examining, categorising, tabulating and testing … to test the initial propositions of the study' (Yin 2003, 109). We were guided by Neuman (1997, 426), in which '… data analysis means a search for patterns in the data' which are interpreted in terms of the setting whereby the researcher can understand the description of the data to an interpretation of its meaning. Yin (2003) suggests that there are three analytical strategies for analysing data: relying on theoretical propositions, thinking about different explanations and developing a description of each case.

Findings

This article draws on two case studies from the wider study. Whilst it is too trite to suggest that every family was different, one main finding of this research was the heterogeneity of experience. Within this, however, a number of patterns did emerge. More affluent families often deployed a range of capitals (economic, social and cultural) in order to make what appeared to be lifestyle choices. Less well-off families often chose home education in response to something difficult and challenging happening at their local school. General dissatisfaction with schools (poor teaching or concerns about excessive testing, for example) tended to be cited by more affluent families. More specific, immediate concerns such as bullying or racism were more likely to be cited by poorer families. Many families would have preferred not to home educate but felt the specific circumstances of their child's needs required forms of education the state could not provide; this included families whose children had disabilities and also families who identified their children as having specific gifts (e.g. musical ability). Generally parents were more comfortable home-educating their (younger) children anticipating that they would return to secondary state schooling (this was less true for Gypsy families who often felt secondary schooling exposed their children to greater threats of cultural assimilation and racism). Many parents used home education as a short-term measure to avoid a particular problem and actively sought to re-engage quickly with state schooling at a different school (e.g. if a child was not offered a place at the parents' school of choice they would put them on a waiting list for that school and home educate as an interim measure). Some Muslim families identified secondary faith schools as the best future option for children being home educated at primary school level, but often this decision was determined by proximity and transport links to a suitable faith school.

The Muslim families who participated in the research demonstrated a diverse range of findings typical of families in the research more generally. The most noticeable specific finding to emerge was the recognition of racism within schools (mostly identified around other pupils and their parents but also identified with respect to teachers). Even if not the sole or overriding factor, in making a decision to home educate it was almost invariably cited as one reason to do so. Muslim families also cited home education as a means to protect and promote religious values, although less significantly so than for other religious families as evangelical Christians. Data from two case studies are used in this article partly because it relates to two families living in the West Midlands (geographically within the orbit of the Trojan Horse affair) and partly because it highlights two different accounts of home education. The first case study might be identified as a family who were using home education in a 'traditional' fashion associated with middle-class family choices; and the second was perhaps the type distinguished by OFSTED as using home education as a 'cover' for accessing unregistered schools.

Siddiq and Rabeeha's family

Siddiq and Rabeeha agreed to discuss the arrangements they had in place to home educate their two children (a girl aged seven and a boy aged 10), who had both been in a local primary school. Discussing the research aims, Siddiq identified immediate concerns when the concept of 'risk' was introduced as a means of exploring the experiences of different

types of home educators. Siddiq explained that he was comfortable to talk about his own experiences but felt he may be the wrong person to be interviewed for the project:

> You say risk? I think you are looking for an angle on extremism? On religion … radicalisation and so on? That's not us.

In the conversations that followed, Siddiq distinguished his family's decision, which he characterised as an identification of managing risk, from discourses (media accounts and conversations with work colleagues in particular) about Muslim radicalisation.

Siddiq's father and grandparents migrated from Pakistan to the United Kingdom in the early 1950s. Apart from a brief spell of National Service, Siddiq's father worked as a secondary school teacher his entire working life. The family lived in London and later moved to the Home Counties. Siddiq was the youngest of a large family (he had five other siblings), all of whom had been encouraged to take education seriously. Most of the children including Siddiq went to university. After university Siddiq trained as a secondary school (modern languages) teacher and later became a lecturer in an education department in London:

> That was probably the happiest I've been. Even my dad was happy, he got to boast to all his cronies his son was 'teaching the teachers'. That whole element of being an educator it's embedded in my family. You know Rabeeha [Siddiq's wife] was a teacher? Even my sisters are teachers as well. I would say it's not even home education, just full on schooling.

Whilst teaching in the university Siddiq completed a PhD in languages and eventually made the transition to working in a language department. At the same time he married Rabeeha and they had two children. The family moved to a large West Midlands city after Siddiq was offered a more senior lectureship in a more prestigious university. Rabeeha, a primary school teacher, also found a permanent part-time job but was unhappy:

> It was a job share with this older woman. She was a bitch. Really horrible, undermining everything I did. Siddiq said just leave it, we don't need the money. And I said no. But then my son had some problems.

Siddiq explained the family had a 'rough patch' with Rabeeha unhappy in her workplace and his son encountering racist bullying at primary school. He identified one day when his son was repeatedly called 'Bin Laden' by other white pupils as 'my tipping point'. He described how teachers at the school failed to treat the incident seriously and this fell within a pattern of similar events in which he felt his son was marginalised:

> One of the teachers said to Rabeeha, basically things happen and we just have to move on. And I suppose in the end that's what did choose to do. We moved on.

Rabeeha described an earlier incident when her son was physically attacked by other boys:

> They were calling him a terrorist and a paedo [paedophile]. When I asked him if the teacher knew what they had said he said yes and that the other boys were told off. But they were only told off for fighting. Not the names.

The family's perception was of a range of racist discourses impacting on their son's school experience. The references to 'Bin Laden' or terrorism suggesting globalised discourses of radicalised Islam have currency with school pupils in many ways mirroring political and media discourse around the Trojan Horse affair. Siddiq also suggested the 'paedo' insults could possibly relate to understanding of Muslims in the light of media coverage of Asian men grooming white girls.

Both Rabeeha and Siddiq described making a 'mistake' when buying their house. They had relocated into a wealthy area favoured by university lecturers whose postcodes generally guaranteed entry to excellent local schools. However, the local school reflected a predominantly white population in which the family felt:

> Out of place, that's the only way I could describe it. The city is full of Muslims, Asian people, Black people, Chinese but they don't live here … It's not like London where everywhere is mixed. So my son had a rough time and the school was poor. They didn't handle it well. That and what was happening with Rabeeha, we just decided to call it a day. So Rabeeha is teaching them. She quit. And we took them out of school.

Siddiq described how his decision to home educate was perceived by his family:

> It's a bit of family joke. I was also seen as the wayward younger son. So now they give me a hard time; my brother makes the same joke over and over again that I have come full circle and I am secretly radicalising my kids.

He also went on to describe the difficulties he perceived in talking about his decision with his work colleagues:

> I've been a little careful with them. I've had to have those conversations about my kids and what schools they go to. Every time I end making really long explanations about it being a short-term choice. I know they read the papers, so they probably think I'm some sort of fundamentalist. Taking his kids out of school …

In many ways this was an archetypal account of middle-class dissatisfaction with schools circumvented by deploying the family's economic and cultural capital.

Rabeeha clearly articulated something of the malleability of their lives when she noted:

> We couldn't do this a few years ago. But we are better off now. We bought a bigger house here and it cost the same as London. Siddiq has a good salary. My family are here. I enjoy being with the children; it's not what we planned but it's not a disaster either.

In addition, Siddiq underlined the effectiveness of home education as a strategy to work around the risks faced by his son when asked what sort of reaction the school had to the family's decision:

> I don't really know what they think. They should think, 'oh, we've failed Siddiq and his family' but you know that's never going to happen. I felt the school went through the motions. They had the conversation, 'we really feel you should think twice before you do this' but they weren't very persuasive. They didn't suggest they would stop my son being called names. We had some letters from the civic centre. Basically just saying 'this is your choice'. Which it wasn't. We weren't given a choice of our kids being offered schooling without the name calling … Maybe we're on a list. We probably are. All the potential radicalised Muslims.

Siddiq was clearly well aware of the perception of 'risk' that might be linked to a home-educating Muslim family; this materialised in family jokes but also in the management of the narratives he produced about his life for his new work colleagues. Whilst Rabeeha largely felt that no one was interested in what their family were doing, Siddiq articulated his awareness of risks that might be associated with his decision to home educate which would position his family as a potential threat to British society. Whilst he was dismissive of such discourses, often making fun of people holding such views, they were still articulated as being quite real features of his daily life. Perhaps the single most overwhelming detail in his account was the 'mistake' Siddiq felt he made when choosing a school; the problems he felt were related to both the cultural background of staff and students being very different to his own family. His family's decision to home educate reflected their marginalisation within the school, a

marginalisation that he articulated as being shaped at a time when Muslim families' choices of education were seen to be problematic.

Nadim's family

Nadim was in his late twenties and had been living in the United Kingdom for about 15 years. Apart from a brief spell living in London, he resided in the same large West Midlands city. He agreed to be involved in the research project following discussions with an Afghani charitable community organisation and was interviewed twice on their premises. During the first interview Nadim expressed concerns about the research, resulting in a long conversation about the researchers' backgrounds and his experiences of being an Afghani father. He talked more specifically about education and his family's choices at a second interview. Nadim was father to three children: two girls aged 7 and 10 and a baby boy. Nadim's wife did not participate in the research. Nadim worked as a taxi controller relaying instructions to other drivers from a busy city-centre office.

Nadim's two eldest girls were both 'officially' being home educated; however, Nadim was very clear that the terminology 'home education' was inappropriate:

> They both attend a local school. A community school. One that supports my culture.

When asked to explain what this actually entailed, Nadim described how the school was a community-based organisation that his children attended three days a week. He explained that his children were taught not just academic skills (reading and writing) but also about his family's religious faith:

> They are in school that thinks about Islam. The way they teach respects our background.

Nadim explained his discomfort with local schools for a multitude of reasons:

> They don't respect my religion. This country does not respect religion generally, but being a Muslim that's the lowest of the low. It's treated as though we are something backward. Something out of history that needs to be eradicated. In the schools it's always a story about respecting all religions. Respecting everybody. But instead they end up respecting nobody. They actually don't mind the children being rude or violent. They don't mind if a black kid beats up my girl or white girls swear at my daughter. That's fine. That's tolerated. In this city the worst is just normal now. We are supposed to live with the worst.

Nadim went on to suggest that he wanted his family to be 'protected' from problems he saw around him:

> It's all over this city. All the people behave badly. Not just you. My own people. All their children grow up as though nothing matters anymore. They stop valuing everything and the schools don't work to change that.

Nadim explained he felt it was important to take responsibility for his children's upbringing and that this meant withdrawing them from primary school. He was unsure what the future would hold for his children's schooling. In particular he noted there was a problem when it came to financing their education outside schools. However, he was very clear about his options:

> I don't have to send my kids to school. That's not me that's what the law says.

When asked how this approach might be perceived by other people Nadim noted that his brother's family agreed with his decision, although they sent their children to a 'better' state school. Discussing his neighbours and community, he suggested:

> Mostly they understand round here. Everybody has the same problems. When the kids grow up they change. They lose what we had. On our road there are boys. Young men. They don't have proper jobs. So they fix cars and they make a mess. They are always outside. They swear and they are loud. My children are unhappy they get scared. Tonight they will be outside till late. The schools never did anything for them.

Nadim returned several times to a discussion of wider, endemic problems with the city in which he lived. He identified these problems caused by the wider non-Muslim population and also problems within his own community. He was very clear about linking youth culture and the disruptive, criminal behaviour of young people to wider problems associated with the city. When asked directly about the impact of the Trojan Horse affair in the West Midlands he suggested it had nothing to do with him or the people he knew.

Discussion

Both families' decisions to home educate were driven by personal and individual circumstances often related to putting in place strategies to mitigate perceived risk in relation to their children and their education. According to Beck (1992, 21; original emphasis), '*Risk may be defined as a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities introduced by modernisation itself …*', and this resonates clearly with the experiences of Siddiq and Nadim's families. Their decision to home educate can be understood as a reaction to modernisation; a reaction to a society which is marked by insecurities and dangers associated with the 'other'. However, neither family positioned themselves primarily in terms of the cosmopolitan or globalised sense of risk suggested by Beck (1992). Instead risk was most clearly articulated in relation to something far more localised; in the racism experienced by both families at schools, in Nadim's description of dangerous and poor neighbourhoods, and in Siddiq's account of being 'out of place' in a white middle-class area. One consequence of occupying such spaces was to be identified as an 'other' or 'outsider' leading to their children encountering problems in school.

Beck 1992, 93) argues that education becomes ever more important because '… the educated person incorporates reflexive knowledge of the conditions and prospects of modernity, and in this way becomes an agent of reflexive modernisation'. Both Siddiq and Nadim accounted for their families' life chances and took action to stave off threats they felt would impact upon their children's well-being by continuing at school. Within the heightened atmosphere of the 'Trojan Horse' affair and OFSTED investigations, both families were likely to be identified as instigators of wider risks to society. This was readily acknowledged by Siddiq who described strategies he had in place to manage such narratives in his dealings with work colleagues and the local authority.

Whilst the identification and management of different risk reflected the agency of both families as reflexive individuals responding to Risk Society, it was also clear that both families had access to different resources. Access to and the deployment of economic, social and cultural capital is closely linked to educational outcomes (Bourdieu 1984; Bourdieu and Passeron 1990) and this is often defined within intersectional experiences, for example of ethnicity or gender (Reay 2004; Shah, Dwyer, and Modood 2010). In this research many families had different experiences based on their ability to deploy different types of capital, and this was evident in the experiences of the two families discussed in this article.

Siddiq and Rabeeha were financially very secure and had a transferable base of knowledge and skills that, in the short term at least, they could pass on to their children. From a Bourdieusian perspective (Bourdieu 1984), what appeared to be missing was elements of cultural capital relating to status and standing as evidenced by the family's discomfiture in their choice of location and the breakdown of relations with the school. However, they demonstrated an abundance of credentialised capital such as educational qualifications, as well as cultural objects such as books and music in their home. Most important was the willingness to invest in pedagogical approaches such as teaching their children and passing on knowledge to them. Home education for this family revolved around the transfer of financial and cultural capital in order to manage a short-term crisis; the ability to make such a transfer emerged in the self-confidence of the family to home educate. However, by demonstrating 'choice' and successfully deploying different types of capital successfully, in many ways they identified themselves within popular and policy discourses loaded with ideological risks. They were now more likely to be marginalised in a wider discourse about the threat of Muslim families to British life rather than a narrative of their son facing racism and marginalisation in school.

In these terms, inequalities become redefined '… in terms of an individualisation of social risks' (Beck 1992, 100), which for many families leaves them feeling they have little choice but to take their children out of school and home educate them – well aware of the risks associated with this decision. In Nadim's case this materialised in his dissatisfaction with the moral framework of the school; something he most frequently articulated in terms of much wider failings of the city and British culture being irreligious and lacking a moral compass. Similar to other home educators, Nadim appeared to choose a path towards greater individualisation in which his family 'for the sake of their own material survival' were compelled 'to make themselves the centre of their own planning and conduct of life' (Beck 1992, 88).

Whilst both families identified risk in relation to the impact of attending school, the OFSTED accounts suggest Muslim families who chose home education put their children 'at risk' of marginalisation and in some cases extremism. These fears include both threats around child safety and a wider ideological attack on 'British values'. In many ways this distinction of risks identified by the families and those identified by the state and within public discourses is at the nub of home education choices. The same dilemmas are faced or identified across a range of different home-educating families but in each case they are identified within the specific characteristics of their identity. Whilst Siddiq in particular identified the globalised context in which his family's actions might be translated into being understood as potentially creating the risk of a radicalisation, this bore little resemblance to his family's daily life. Nadim appeared less aware of the discourses around the Trojan Horse affair, managing his children's education in a manner that mirrored the concerns of OFSTED. In reality both families appeared more concerned with specific risks in their lives rather than the narrative of religious radicalisation.

OFSTED's fear of radicalisation, and the more general concerns of the Badman Review that home educators fail to prepare children to participate as British citizens, is possibly reflected in the fragmented 'newly formed social relationships and social networks' required of Beck's (1992, 2006) 'agents of reflexive modernisation'. The outsourcing or other-sourcing of educational strategies by home educators entails the need to establish new social networks. This was not borne out by Muslim home educators, however, who tended to work either within their own family or within the support networks of Islamic community groups.

In other words, the reaction to modernisation and a society marked by insecurities and dangers is more inward looking and the management of risk often appears to represent a narrowing of outlook.

Conclusions

This article has examined two case studies of home-educating Muslim families to suggest that discourses of Muslim communities characterise them as a source of risk, related to their positioning as marginalised others. Home educators have been identified in the Badman Review (2009) and by OFSTED (2015b, 2016) as a category of parents who are putting their children at risk. One finding from this research has been that despite the heterogeneity of experience of different home-educating families, they are still classified within a singular, administrative category. OFSTED's descriptions of Muslim home educators tend to identify a type of family who are not engaged in delivering home education. Rather than home educating, these families are identified as circumventing an engagement with schooling in order to access unregistered Islamic schools, and potentially putting children at risk of radicalisation. In these accounts, the global risks envisioned by Beck (1992) materialise in terms of divisions between a western secular or Christian outlook and the threat of the Muslim world. This is problematic for Muslim families who, as reflexive agents (Beck 1992, 2006), need to manage both the everyday, local risks encountered in schools and, at the same time, understand and situate their decisions within globalised discourses such as OFSTED's account of radicalisation. This placed the Muslim families in this research in an invidious position. In an increasingly neoliberal education system, parents are expected to engage in making choices and engage with marketised schools; however, the very process of making such choice identifies them as a 'risk' to British values.

The accounts of both families bore striking similarities to those of other home educators: they possessed detailed knowledge about their legal position; they felt schools did not adequately address instances of racist bullying; they often felt they were identified as a marginal groups within British society; and they utilised to a greater or lesser extent their economic, social and cultural capital to improve their children's education. Access to and management of different types of capital directly affected educational outcomes for Muslim families. Siddiq and Rabeeha's strategy of avoiding risk in primary school before the transition to secondary school was predicated on their greater access to capitals. In the short term, deploying social and cultural capital ensured their children received an effective education. In the future they could easily relocate to a postcode that ensured their children attended a secondary school of choice. Such options were not available to Nadim, whose family lacked the capitals to personally provide an effective education and did not have the economic capital to move out of rented housing association accommodation in the wrong postcode.

Whilst the deployment of different capitals affected how families managed risk, it had little or no impact on perceptions of risk. The narrative of Muslim families posing risks of radicalisation is very easily reinterpreted within narratives of concern about home education. Both families described long-standing inequalities within and outside schools that shaped children's education and also sedimented, through repeated experience, the mutual feeling that they were a marginalised community. The Prevent Strategy is one discourse that can marginalise and demonise Muslims; it contextualises decisions by Muslim families to home educate as evidence of separation from mainstream society, of inculcating radicalising

non-British values and eventually threatening British society with extremism. Beck (1992, 100; original emphases) suggests that when individuals are faced with risks, '*temporary* coalitions between *different groups* and *different camps* are formed and dissolved, depending on the *particular issue* at stake and on the *particular situation*'. When Muslims are demonised in society, in the Trojan Horse narrative for example, such social crises become individual crises in which Muslim families feel threatened by the society around them. Muslim home educators, however, tended to draw upon traditional family and community support to address issues in their children's education, not quite mirroring Beck and not building the sort of extremist coalitions envisaged by OFSTED.

Notes

1. Head of Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED), the government body that inspects and regulates schools and education providers.
2. Mr Justice Woolf in the case of *R v Secretary of State for Education and Science* (1985).
3. See http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-35133119 (accessed November 28, 2017).
4. See http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-35823876 (accessed November 28, 2017).
5. This is the term commonly used in the USA.

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