



# Securing disunion: Young people's nationalism, identities and (in) securities in the campaign for an independent Scotland



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## ABSTRACT

This paper explores ethnic and religious minority youth perspectives of security and nationalism in Scotland during the independence campaign in 2014. We discuss how young people co-construct narratives of Scottish nationalism alongside minority ethnic and faith identities in order to feel secure. By critically combining literature from feminist geopolitics, international relations (IR) and children's emotional geographies, we employ the concept of 'ontological security'. The paper departs from state-centric approaches to security to explore the relational entanglements between geopolitical discourses and the ontological security of young people living through a moment of political change. We examine how everyday encounters with difference can reflect broader geopolitical narratives of security and insecurity, which subsequently trouble notions of 'multicultural nationalism' in Scotland and demonstrate ways that youth 'securitize the self' (Kinnvall, 2004). The paper responds to calls for empirical analyses of youth perspectives on nationalism and security (Benwell, 2016) and on the nexus between security and emotional subjectivity in critical geopolitics (Pain, 2009; Shaw, Powell, & De La Ossa, 2014). Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), this paper draws on focus group and interview data from 382 ethnic and religious minority young people in Scotland collected over the 12-month period of the campaign.

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## 1. Introduction

This paper discusses young people's everyday encounters with politics using the referendum campaign for independence in Scotland in 2014 as an illustrative case.<sup>1</sup> We consider the ways in which the campaign for Scottish independence represented hopeful multicultural and democratic aspirations for young people. Throughout the referendum campaign, Scotland was framed, by both Yes and No campaigns, as a transitional state and a site of emancipatory politics that emphasised 'securing futures' for the

(young) people of Scotland. The inclusion of youth voices on both sides of the campaign shows efforts made to strengthen youth political participation and recognize youth political agency (BBC News, 2014a; 2014b). This context is unique due to the nature of Scottish nationalism, its civic and 'multicultural' character and the paradox of being at once inclusive and exclusive. We argue that the discourse of inclusive multicultural nationalism in Scotland is effective in making some young people 'feel' secure in the nation state in spite of its ambitions for discontinuity from the Union. However, the everyday violence of racism in Scotland undermines efforts towards inclusion and multiculturalism, generating ontological insecurity in young people's everyday lives.

A key aim of the paper is to contribute empirically grounded research that offers youth focused directions in security theorizing. Following feminist political geographers, we position security as psycho-social, focusing on the individual narratives of young people and their sense of ontological security in the context of national political change. In doing so, we draw attention to *lived* (in)securities and everyday practices of securitization. Such practices are

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<sup>1</sup> We use the term politics here to mean both the formal politics around voting, engagements with political parties and nationalism, as well as an everyday, lived politics that consists of multi-scalar discourses and practices. We draw here on a feminist reading of geopolitics as embodied, emotional and intimate.

situated, located and embodied, hence we seek to re-scale security and put young people's narratives at the centre. We argue that young people's agency is central – not only to understanding multi-scalar impacts of security but to theorizing security itself.

We begin by reviewing three key areas of scholarship in order to bridge theory on security; Critical Security Studies that have traditionally been limited to scholars of IR, feminist geopolitics, and children's emotional geographies. This discussion is followed by an outline of the methodology used to research young people's everyday geopolitics in Scotland. Finally, we present a thematic analysis of this research with young people, examining the way in which young people co-construct narratives of multicultural nationalism in Scotland to form a personal sense of security within the nation state. Following this, we explore how such rhetorical frameworks are undermined through everyday encounters of racism that generate discursive and embodied insecurity. Self-surveillance and self-silencing practices function to 'securitize the self' in response to the threat of ontological insecurity.

## 2. Re-thinking critical securities

While 'security' has always been a contested concept (Gallie, 1956), the post-9/11 landscape has altered the nature and impact of international security work (scholarship, policy, discourse) leading to 'a much more expansive, fluid and uncertain concept' (Mutimer, Grayson, & Beier, 2013, p. 7). Scholarship on the securitization of everyday life has re-scaled geopolitics to the everyday level whereby matters of security are lived and experienced in non-exceptional landscapes (Dalby, 2010; Pain, Panelli, Kindon, & Little, 2010). Within these landscapes, certain subjects are more likely to be secured against and framed as a threat to ordinary life (Ahmed, 2004; Katz, 2010). Hussein and Bagguley (2012) argue that Muslims are 'securitized citizens', constructed through counter-terrorism policies as a 'security threat' and justified through common sense suspicion. As such, changes in the everyday practices of Muslims have been observed, such as the 'self-policing of personal mobility' due to experiences of 'publicly enacted forms of Islamophobia' (Hussein & Bagguley, 2012: 730). Others have observed self-surveillance/self-silencing practices by Muslims in response to security discourses across different sites and scales, such as the University campus (Hopkins, 2010; Nabi, 2010), places of worship (Jones, 2010), and through conciliatory expressions of belonging or 'mainstream' discursive practices (Mansson McGinty, 2013).

Traditional (realist and neoliberal) conceptions of security have largely held a state-centric view that presuppose nation states as rational actors whose primary concern is to protect and defend the stability and values of the state (see Bourne, 2014 for review). Critical security theorists have broadened and deepened the field advocating 'alternative securities' and multi-level analysis of individuals, communities and societies as intersubjective relations (Buzan, Waever, & de Wilde, 1998; Enloe, 1990; Neocleous, 2008; Shepherd, 2013; Wibben, 2011). Bourne (2014:2) argues that security is a relational concept – it is defined in context, in relation to an object that is being secured and as such 'there is no one 'security' but multiple securities'. This reflects a broader trend in critical geopolitics to a focus on the everyday (Dittmer & Gray, 2010; Thrift, 2000), beyond-the-state networks, flows and identities. Feminist geographers recognize the emotional, embodied and intimate aspects of security (Cowen & Story, 2013; Katz, 2004; Pain, 2009; Pain & Staeheli, 2014). They emphasise the partiality of knowledge production and challenge masculinist or westernized narratives by acknowledging marginalized voices (Dowler & Sharp, 2001; Hunt & Rygiel, 2006; Hyndman, 2004). This is a powerful critique that animates the 'subaltern' (Sharp, 2013), promotes an 'anti-', 'alter-' or 'counter-'geopolitics (Koopman, 2011; Routledge, 2006; Secor,

2001) with a focus on *doing* (peaceful) geopolitics. Hyndman (2001:219) promotes 'a finer scale of 'security' accountable to people, as individuals and groups, and analyses the spaces of violence that traverse public/private distinctions'. Similarly, Pain et al. (2010: 973) argue that 'research on securitization has provided a potential route through which to connect these global issues and everyday voices more firmly'. Feminist scholars reveal the neglected sites and scales of security. What is perceived to be ordinary is unlocked from the 'constitutive binaries of modernity' (public/private, global/local, inside/outside, normal/exceptional) and re-located at the scale of the intimate and everyday (Cowen & Story, 2013; see also; Cowen & Gilbert, 2008; Enloe, 1990; Puar, 2007). Pain and Smith (2008) see the everyday and the geopolitical as existing in a symbiosis, albeit subject to breaks, conflicts and tensions that are both awkward and enabling with the potential to be transformative (Pain, 2009; cf.; Askins, 2008).

### 2.1. Young people's securities

A further development that has emerged from interactions between political geography, security studies and children's geographies is a call for greater attention to the child-body-politic as a realm of investigation (Beier, 2015; Benwell (2016); Brocklehurst, 2015; Krafft, Horton, & Tucker, 2012; Philo & Smith, 2013). In studies of security, age is a 'neglected dimension' (Bourne, 2014, p. 63) and 'adultist' approaches downplay the experiences of large swathes of the population who are affected by and shape global politics (Katz, 2004; Philo & Smith, 2013). Brocklehurst (2015:38) notes that despite calls to widen the gaze of international relations to 'those most in need (Stephens, 1995)', children's security 'remains unrealized and their relevance too is relatively under theorized'. She cautions that the danger of such an absence in theorizing security is also 'a symptom of the security we create' (ibid: 42). The representation of children and young people in the geopolitical scripting of international war and diplomacy denotes both their 'absence and presence' (Brocklehurst, 2015, p. 32). Anderson and Moller (2013) suggest a 'discursive-representational security regime' that operates through photojournalism has potential to consolidate particular ways of seeing children in relation to war and security, despite its critical intentions. Such representations are disempowering. Children are constructed as the victims of war, as child soldiers (Lee-Koo, 2011), and as 'agents' of change in community-based peace building yet still spoken 'on behalf of' (Brocklehurst, 2015, p. 33). In this sense, children and young people are misrecognized as apolitical yet used as representational bodies to justify and legitimise security discourse and intervention.

In this paper, we view young people as political actors through the lens of everyday geopolitics, re-connecting the political with the personal. The framing of children and young people as either apolitical or politically radicalized or 'deviant' (Berents, 2015) promotes a discourse of protection and prevention, materialized through anti-radicalization policies in the case of young Muslims in particular. As Beier (2015:9) notes "... children are once again reduced to an objectified political problem rather than being recognizable as genuine and autonomous political actors". In her work on young people's responses to the war in Iraq, Horschelmann (2008: 587) calls for greater recognition of young people as political agents who are engaged in the 'making, negotiation and contestation of global politics'. Drawing on research with anti-war protestors in Leipzig she argues that young people engage with the geopolitical in everyday sites and spaces. These include the home, where conversations with family and media exposure to politics occurs, and the city where young people negotiate 'site(s) of protest and collective memory' in the context of geopolitical legacies of post-socialism (Horschelmann, 2008, p. 601 and 598). In a different

context, Berents (2015) sees insecurity as a 'pervasive everyday phenomenon' for conflict-affected children in Colombia contributing to structural marginalization and exclusion, whilst also mediated and challenged by young people through everyday practices and 'processes of securing'. This work recognises the personal insecurities of young people in landscapes of violence and threat, drawing out everyday human insecurity as negotiated through the interconnected work of individuals and communities rather than rely on absent or distant state actors (Berents, 2015).

## 2.2. Feeling secure: ontological security and emotional subjectivity

A third dimension of security that is 'de-scaled' is the emotional (cf. Shaw et al., 2014). IR scholars have explored how emotions operate through security performances, elite discourse and the state (Kinnvall, 2006; Mitzen, 2006; Solomon, 2013; Steele, 2008). Drawing on intimacy-geopolitics (Pain & Staeheli, 2014) there is scope to extend this to finer spatial scales, exploring the entanglements of the private realm of the home, the family and the local with broad public narratives of security. We seek to explore the psycho-social experiences of young people, focusing on how intersubjective encounters and perceptions of being and belonging relate to notions of ontological security. Re-focusing the lens to the psycho-social enables us to explore the 'complexity, situatedness, sociality, embodied and ... constitutive qualities of emotional life' (Pain & Smith, 2008, p. 2).

The concept of ontological insecurity is often traced back to R D Laing's psychoanalytic work on *The Divided Self* (Laing, (1960)). Laing proposed that to be ontologically insecure was to feel in constant threat of 'slipping out of existence', where the 'ordinary circumstances of life' constitute such a threat (cited in McGeachan, 2014, p. 96). It involves a fear of discontinuity of understandable life and being 'paralysed' by a preoccupation with potential risks to existence without an ability to trust in the self or others for protection. Laing's theory is arguably a relational theory of existence, where ontological security is formed through re-connection with others and a place in the world. Giddens (1991:243) argues that ontological security is a condition in which 'a sense of continuity and order in events' is achieved. To feel secure is to be protected from threats to existence, it is a quest for 'living with uncertainty' of life (Bourne, 2014; Giddens, 1991, p. 3). Our use of the concept is not a direct application from psychoanalysis nor do we intend to imply knowledge of a clinical diagnosis. Our adoption of this concept is motivated by a desire to scale down thinking on security relevant to the wellbeing of the individual. We argue that the impacts of racism, Islamophobia and economic insecurity on young people has the potential to produce ontological insecurity – the anxious 'being in the world' - because of the effects of racism on personhood. Racism and Islamophobia do not only influence a feeling of not belonging, they are a threat to a sense of being – to the core of personhood and validation that one belongs in a particular place, and can function equally.

In IR, ontological security is drawn upon in relation to the state, focusing on the actions of elites in producing state 'self-identity' (Huysmans, 1998; Kinnvall, 2006; Mitzen, 2006; Steele, 2008). However, IR scholars who have adopted psycho-social approaches have been accused of methodological nationalism often neglected intra-state group dynamics (Steele, 2008). Kinnvall (2006) resolves this to some extent in her work on globalization and religious nationalism in India that explores the impact of state discourse on group subjectivities. She views security as a 'thick signifier' where the individual is embedded in 'discursive and institutional continuities'. She analyses the overarching discourses and structural conditions of security (globalization and colonization) and how these manifest as local practices that define an individual sense of security. Kinnvall is concerned with the process of identity

formation and mobilization in the context of religious nationalism and the way in which subjectivities are securitized, intersubjectively and in relation to discourse, institutions and cultures. Individuals are positioned variably and experience security in different ways. However, Kinnvall (2006) argues that individuals seek *one* stable identity (regardless of its actual existence) to achieve biographical continuity in the context of the uncertain and dislocating flux of globalization. This process of 'securitizing subjectivity' is thus a process of (re)constructing a single identity relational to 'others'. This can be easily mobilized through powerful signifiers like nationalism and religion in times of collective existential crisis "because of their ability to convey a picture of security, stability, and simple answers. They do this by being portrayed as resting on solid ground, as being *true*, thus creating a sense that the world really is what it appears to be" (Kinnvall, 2004, p. 742). Kinnvall's reading of ontological (in)security centers on the collective psychology of Sikh and Hindu nationalists and their quest for security in a context of dislocation and powerlessness in a globalized India. Solomon (2013) argues, however, that collective signifiers are tautological at best because in spite of the outpouring of collective emotion that is often witnessed at key events or moments of national security, the meaning of this expression is ambiguous and circulatory.

Our departure from Kinnvall is in the idea that nationalism in Scotland is deemed inclusive and pluralistic and thus ontological security is formed through comfort in diversity and living with difference. For some young people there are positive associations with nationalism, it is seen as an inclusive concept and one that does not elicit racism, as Balibar (1991) and others have argued. This played out through the campaign for an independent Scotland in complex ways. In many respects, the YES campaign was successful in attracting the support of young people because it was able to 'convey a picture of security, stability, and simple answers' (cf. Kinnvall, 2004, p. 742). Following successive political scandals, economic downturn and recession, young people had reasonable cause to mistrust mainstream, old party politics and seek out something new and different. However, while a critical mass did emerge that sought independence, others found ontological security in the continuity of the Union. Being part of the UK was viewed, by some, as a safer outcome for Scotland, moderating the uncertainty of constitutional change. Furthermore, the discourse of inclusion within which multicultural nationalism is also one of exclusion since demarcating a space of belonging involves putting borders up to exclude those outside i.e. those in the rest of the UK.

In the following sections, we review young people's narratives of political change in Scotland and their search for ontological security. Drawing on the previous discussion and integrating literature from feminist geopolitics, children's geography and IR, we understand security as transcending the scale of the nation state. Security is embodied and intimate; it is intersubjective and relational; it is about representation and voice; it is discursive and material; and ebbs and flows over time, space and place. Furthermore, security is situated in everyday landscapes that people inhabit and the sense of continuity gained through everyday practices and intersected by race/ethnicity, gender, class, generation, religion. This approach is not viewed in opposition with that of state agent interpretations, but rather is complimentary by offering a 'finer scale of security' (Hyndman, 2001) to explore the relational geographies of insecurity. Young people express diverse and multiple readings of ontological security, many of which are contradictory or in tension, we therefore recognize the need throughout this paper to understand and distinguish whose ontology and whose security is in question.

## 3. The research project

The data we draw upon in this paper comes from an AHRC

project about young people's everyday politics in Scotland, focusing on the experiences of ethnic and religious minority young people growing up in urban, suburban and rural areas. Overall, 382 young people participated in the research during 2013 and 2014; 45 focus groups and 223 interviews took place with young people from a range of different ethnic and religious minority backgrounds including Muslims; South Asian non-Muslims (e.g. Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists); asylum seekers and refugees; international students; migrants from Central and Eastern Europe; and white Scottish young people. Credibility and validity of the research was achieved through a rigorous qualitative research design and data triangulation was achieved through the use of multiple methods and selection of a diverse range of participants across a variety of case sites (Shenton, 2004). Young people were considered as active participants with particular attention given to informed consent and the use of participatory diagramming methods to enable young people to lead focus group discussion. Following this, semi-structured individual interviews lasting around 60 min were conducted gathering in-depth narratives around young people's everyday practices, emotions and identities. Participants were recruited through a range of sites, including Schools, Colleges, places of worship, youth and community groups. Convenience and snowball sampling ensured a diverse sample, all participants were compensated for their time with a £15 voucher.

All focus groups and interviews were fully transcribed, coded using NVivo and analysed using intersectional multi-level analysis (Winker & Degele, 2011). This approach pays attention to how intersecting identity characteristics (such as gender, age, class, race) affect different levels of social life i.e. social structures, identity constructions, and symbolic representations. It interprets how identities are relational to social structures and symbolic representations of norms and values through an analysis of how these levels interact (Winker & Degele, 2011). Aligning to feminist, anti-racist research (Anthias and Lloyd, 2002) we put young people's voices at the centre of the research and have engaged in processes of youth consultation through an advisory group, researcher reflexivity and been conscious of the impact of researcher positionality throughout the research.

This paper draws on a selected sample of ethnic and religious minorities, aged between 12 and 25, from the study (286). This includes Muslims and those who could be mistaken for Muslim i.e. Sikhs, Hindus, Black African and Caribbean young people, asylum seekers and refugees, and some international students. All quotes use pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. The narratives that follow represent their reflections on feeling secure in everyday spaces in the context of the 2014 Independence Referendum campaign. There are a number of observations that we would make about our sample. First, we fully acknowledge that this paper is based on a sample and not all interview data, therefore we do not seek to make empirical generalisations about the experiences of all young ethnic and religious minority people in Scotland. Rather, our purpose is to complement and extend current understandings about youth engagements with nationalism and its impact on personal wellbeing and security. Second, these interviews were conducted within a specific time and space which therefore alerts us to the situational nature of the findings. Third, the use of interviews as a research method can provide insights that go beyond the individual perspective and make social structures and collective processes available through individual narratives. Indeed, narratives are never 'direct accounts' but rather discursively constructed (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

#### 4. Securing (DIS)union: Scottish nationalism and independence

On 18 September 2014, the Scottish people were asked to vote

on a single question: Should Scotland be an independent country? Of the 84.5 per cent turnout, 55 per cent of the electorate voted against Scottish independence. The referendum generated the highest turnout of any election in the UK since universal suffrage and introduced new voting rights for those over 16 years old. While a multitude of cross party campaigners, business and celebrity endorsements made an impact on the vote, the two main campaign groups were the pro-independence campaign, Yes Scotland (led by the First Minister Alex Salmond of the Scottish National Party (SNP)) and the Better Together campaign in favour of maintaining the Union (led by Alistair Darling of the Labour Party).

The Scottish referendum was a moment of political potentiality, a quest for securing certain sub-national identities in the context of broad political and economic insecurities in the rest of the UK (rUK). However, the aspirations for independence in Scotland are long standing and have emerged through distinct geopolitical legacies of English oppression and separatism, linguistic and cultural differences and a degree of devolved governance with discrete political ambitions (Hopkins, 2008; Penrose & Howard, 2008). Scottish nationalism is also unique in character channeling an inclusive, civic nationalism based around egalitarian values, progressive social democracy and a recognition of multiculturalism rather than the pursuit of ethno-nationalism constructed on exclusions and othering processes (Hearn, 2000). The concept of 'multicultural nationalism' (Sweeney, 2005) has been applied to Scotland. Hussain and Miller (2006:49) argue that this, however, is an oxymoron due to an "inescapable tension between nationalism and multiculturalism and a historic tendency for them to prove incompatible ... the genuinely inclusive 'civic' nationalism of the Scottish political elite may not apply 'on the street'". Multicultural nationalism in Scotland is disturbed not only by the othering of the English in the context of potential disunion (Penrose & Howard, 2008), but is also not immune from broader global discourses of insecurity and threat, such as 'new terrorism' and the securitization of certain 'suspect communities' (Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011; Mythen, Walklate, & Khan, 2012). Scottish nationalism is thus not a simple matter of 'civic' versus 'ethnic', but rather an 'ambiguous' and 'discordant' process (Hussain & Miller, 2006). In the following sections we discuss young people's narratives in support of multicultural nationalism alongside everyday accounts of multicultural encounters that potentially produce ontological insecurity. Young people's ontological security is situational and negotiated in different ways alongside narratives of faith, ethnicity and civic nationalism. We reflect on discursive and embodied accounts of insecurity to show the relationship between national and international security discourses and everyday lived experiences of youth.

##### 4.1. Securitizing youth subjectivity in Scotland

Youth national identity was at the forefront of the campaign for independence. On both sides representations of young people as aspirant and transgressive, embodying the hopes for Scottish future have been employed to summon youth engagement (Bathurst, 2014). Moreover, youth political representatives through bodies such as the Scottish Youth Parliament, YoungScot and Young Scots for Independence (SNP Youth) show different types of political engagement, albeit within the framework of existing institutional codes.<sup>2</sup> Frequent references to the security of Scotland's future were made throughout the campaign with Alex Salmond and Nicola

<sup>2</sup> We are not suggesting that all young people are 'engaged' in these networks. We recognize that many young people feel excluded from such institutional frameworks related to access to social capital, geographical location and poverty.

Sturgeon (who was Deputy First Minister at the time) putting forth the argument that a Yes vote would ‘secure the powers Scotland needs’, while Alistair Carmichael, the Scottish secretary of the Better Together campaign asserting that Scotland would be ‘stronger and more secure as part of a United Kingdom’ (Salmond, 2014). This scripting appeared to be a compelling provocation for youth engagement with the political question. Both the YES and NO campaigns attempted to rally the support of young voters. In a speech to young people in Edinburgh, Alistair Darling warned young voters not to ‘give up the opportunities and the security of being part of something bigger’, stressing the vote as a key political decision for their ‘life chances’ and future generations (BBC News, 2014a). While Alex Salmond claimed that ‘Young people will be at the heart of the debate and by voting can help to build a better country’ (BBC News, 2014b), pledging ‘opportunities’ for young people through the European Youth Guarantee and apprenticeship schemes, for example. This, coupled with 16 and 17 year olds being given an opportunity to vote for the first time, was significant in rallying young people to participate in the campaign and the vote itself<sup>3</sup> (Eichorn, 2014; Hopkins, 2015).

From our data there were varied levels of engagements with politics and young people had different perspectives on what it meant to feel secure in the nation. In participatory diagramming sessions when asked ‘what is good about Scotland?’, civic rights and values were prioritized highly. These were relational to prior contexts, of intergenerational and migrant histories, transnational identities and networks and personal issues associated with youth transitions. Many young people said they felt a sense of security in ‘being Scottish’ highlighting multiple and hybrid meanings of Scottishness based on diverse ethnic and religious heritage. The extension of voting rights to 16 year olds was frequently referred to in focus group discussions as generating a sense of inclusion for ethnic and religious minority young people. For many Yes and No voters in our sample perceptions of Scotland as an ‘open’ ‘inclusive’ ‘multicultural’ society were common. Fig. 1 presents the responses of a focus group with Muslim boys at a Glasgow school. It shows their perceptions of Scotland as ‘multicultural’ and ‘friendly’, picking out free education as a key civic right for young people in Scotland. This image also shows the negative perceptions of ‘racism’, ‘violence’ and other civil disobediences that affect the young people’s everyday lives.

Positive civic values were often expressed in opposition to England. Satnam is a Scottish Sikh and a Yes voter, he argues a case for Scottish nationalism based on ‘openness’ and ‘inclusivity’, characteristics which are rarely associated with nationalism elsewhere.

*[In Scotland] individual people do not discriminate or nestle themselves into groups that way in which other societies do, other communities do ... it's all about openness and inclusivity and so that in itself has probably shaped who I am' (male, 22–25, Scottish Sikh, Glasgow)*

Satnam’s defence of Scotland is central to his own identity and sense of belonging to the national habitus. He goes on to champion further the inclusive aspirations of Scottish nationalism: ‘the nationalism that was happening and existing in Scotland over the past two years is very much about the whole country, rather than about one so-called more worthy nationality’. Here Satnam prescribes to a multi-national nationalism, with broad values around civic inclusion of Scotland’s ethnic minority populations. He co-constructs SNP discourse to demonstrate an appeal to core values and

principles of a social democratic, multicultural state. The extension of voting rights to migrants from the EU and Commonwealth led to a greater sense of belonging for some EU migrants and international students. Addae (male, 22–25, Nigerian international student, Glasgow) was a Yes voter in the referendum and remarks on the importance of getting the vote.

*“So for me getting a vote and voting, it makes you feel like yeah you have a voice. And the way this debate is going now the both parties seeking to get even the other ethnic groups involved like having discussion with the African forums and stuff like that makes you feel more involved in the system and makes you feel that yeah somebody’s recognising you and feel that you can make a difference in the system. So there’s that inclusion”*

Addae’s positive expression of gaining the vote is oriented through his involvement in student community networks. For others too institutional networks that operated between national political stage and local everyday lives were instrumental in feeling closer to the system. Political engagement with ethnic and religious minorities surrounding the independence campaign was seen by some young people as a valuable strategy to cultivate dialogue between referendum campaigners and ethnic and religious minority citizens. Many young Sikhs for example, said that the local sites of worship in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen were perceived as important spaces to connect with politics as a collective and projecting Sikh issues into mainstream political debate. Those interviewed gave examples of SNP support of the Sikh community in recognition of the 1984 riots, making ‘articles of faith’ legal in Scottish Courts and the engagement of the Sikh community through visits to Glasgow Gurdwara. Whilst not universally felt, such engagements were perceived as positive by those who previously felt locked out of due to the size of the community compared with other religious communities (Muslim) given more prominence in political debate (Hopkins, 2014).

*“I think the Scottish government has worked more towards, not even Sikh communities, but any community of ethnic minorities, whereas, Westminster which obviously has immigration as their policies and immigration as their thing, they just, I don’t think they’ve done anything for it” (Vaani, Pakistani Sikh refugee, female, Glasgow).*

For others, however, such engagements were criticized for tokenism, politicizing community spaces and for complacency in understanding community issues. For example, Aisha (female, 22–25, Muslim, Inverness) displays cynicism about an encounter she had with Alex Salmond at her local mosque over issues of family migration policy.

*“... he was very vague, and you could tell that he was just rowing for the immigrant vote, you know, and he had no real tangible answers to give to us that would help our loved ones”*

While the everyday encounters of racism and Islamophobia are the focus of the following section it is important to note here that for the majority of young people interviewed racism was perceived as less of a problem in Scotland compared to England. Discussions on the theme of racism were analysed, it was evident that instances of racism were frequently downplayed as ‘banter’, ‘casual’ or ‘ironic’ with young people minimizing the seriousness of everyday racism.

*‘people that are racist to me and my friends, like in a casual way, it’s not good but like that’s how it is’ (Bruno, Muslim male, Dundee)*

<sup>3</sup> 109,533 of those aged 16–17 registered to vote with 71% of this cohort voting for independence.

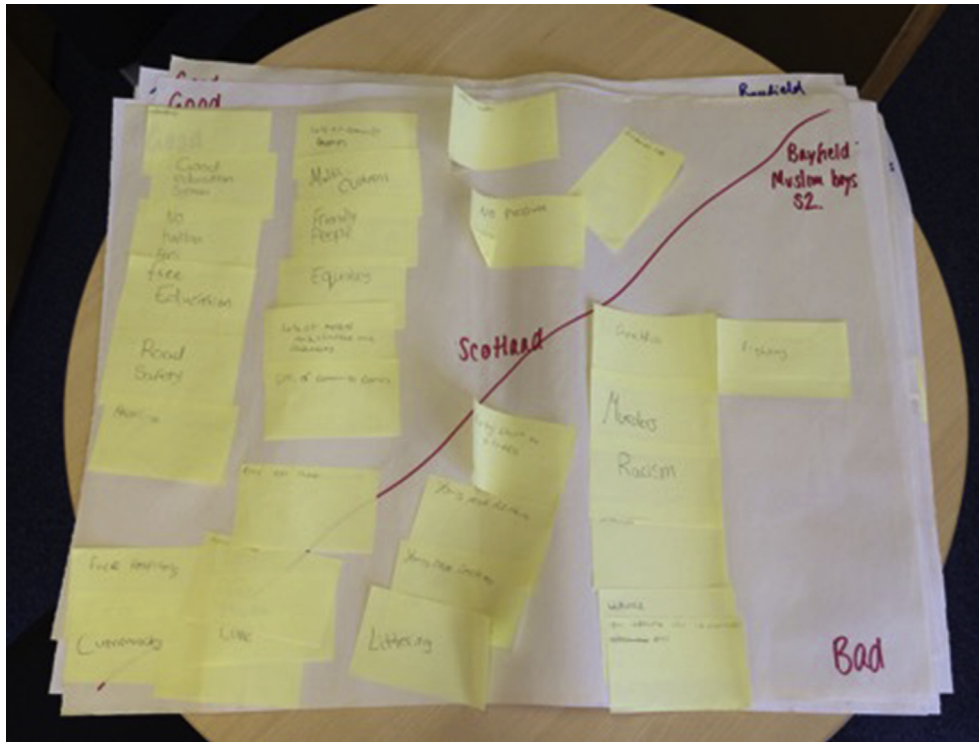


Fig. 1. Participatory Diagram of Muslim male focus group, Glasgow.

*"Like people don't treat you any different than anywhere else. Like you would get the odd jokes, racist jokes but that's like your friends' banter so you would just have little bit a' jokes here and there ... Like they just, they say like stuff about my, like my dad's turban" (Pally, Sikh male, Glasgow)*

*"I call it ironic racism really because they, it was more out of jest ... I mean yeah there was, there was one time in first year when, when someone was like 'oh you're, you know you're a member of the, you know you're a subject people of the empire' type thing. But you know like yeah I'd, I'd say there's that whole status, there, there was a different status between us. But it wasn't, it was, it, I had, I can't quite remember the context of it but it was in a, in a jest worthy context" (Victor, Indian Jain, Fife)*

'Acceptance' of diversity in Scottish society was also cited as indicative of multiculturalism. Nuz is one of many young people who felt that racism in England was worse than in Scotland.

*"I feel England the folk are more racist ... Yeah and Scotland is not so bad because Scotland always promote 'No Racism' more than what England do" (Nuz, Muslim female, Dundee)*

Nuz's narrative supports research elsewhere that suggests that Scottish multiculturalism has furnished a feeling of safety particularly among Scottish Muslims in comparison to England (Hopkins & Smith, 2008; Hussain & Miller, 2006). The SNP has been actively trying to attract ethnic minority votes though a 'self-consciously multiculturalist leadership' (Hussain & Miller, 2006, p. 34). To give an example, Preet is a young Sikh living in Edinburgh who refers to Scotland as more 'accepting' than England.

*"I feel Scotland's more open, like they're more accepting. They're not as judgmental as England ... like anyone from the Scottish Parliament and they're just so friendly, like they're accepting of*

*your culture. It's almost as if they want to like infuse all the cultures together so you're like helping, which I think is really good" (Preet, female, 16–18, 'BritAsian' Sikh, Edinburgh).*

The perception of Scotland as open, inclusive and multicultural yet also holding a distinct national identity echoes multicultural nationalist discourse. But there are also subtle discontinuities. For instance, Preet talks about 'they' in reference to the Scottish Government but also more generally the White Scottish people implying a normative idea of who Scottish people are – i.e. not her. She separates herself from this imagined national populous, differentiating herself through culture. This points to an underlying insecurity in 'being' Scottish relational to a normative perception of Scottishness. Being part of multicultural Scotland also requires being accepted into it by those who are constructed as Scottish, which invariably translates to 'white' Scottish.

We have discussed here how some young people are active in the co-construction of multicultural nationalism in Scotland through narratives that downplay racism and celebrate Scotland as multicultural and integrationist compared to England. However, there is disjuncture in this rhetoric when considering the everyday multicultural encounters of many ethnic and religious minorities in Scotland and performances of Scottishness that manage multicultural intimacies and counter intersectional narratives of racism, Islamophobia and exclusion.

## 5. Encounters of everyday (IN)security

In this section we demonstrate the ways in which everyday racism and 'subtle Islamophobia' (Essed, 1991; Kilomba, 2013; Moosavi, 2015) are understood and negotiated by a sample of ethnic and religious minority young people in Scotland. These concealed and tangential experiences of racism are often not overtly recognized as such by young people themselves, and

downplayed through disavowal and disassociation in certain forms, as previously discussed. This is not to deny the many expressions of physical and verbal abuse reported and recorded in our data, but to focus on how young people narrate hidden and unspoken racisms they experience and to what extent this leads to a sense of ontological insecurity. We explore this through two modalities: discursive and embodied insecurity. Our analysis of discursive insecurity exposes the silences that are part of many young people's everyday lives, where they express feeling absent from debates and thus excluded from politics. Embodied insecurity refers to the spatialized experiences of individual bodies, focusing on the body as the 'primary site of violence' (Dittmer & Gray, 2010, p. 1666).

### 5.1. Discursive insecurity

While many young people felt 'engaged' with the debates on independence, for some this fell short of feeling comfortable expressing political views on certain topics. Many young Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, for example, expressed apprehension over engaging in conversations about foreign policy and national security issues. Feelings of discomfort were spatially differentiated.

*"When moving from London to Aberdeen ... I was a lot quieter. A lot ... I wouldn't speak as much, I wouldn't say too many things people, and I would stay out of certain conversations ... simply because it could associate me, associate myself with something else that could be related to ... anything. I mean people, they look at me and I have got a turban, I have got a beard, so they would normally associate me with someone who is highly religious or ... a religious extremist or whatever have you. So I tend to stay away from those kind of topics and stuff like that" (Shera, male, 22–25, British Indian Sikh, Aberdeen).*

As Shera explains here, in order to avoid misrecognition or confrontation he engages in self silencing on certain topics. He assumes his body will be read as threatening or highly religious, he may be misrecognized as Muslim and associated with extremism. Rather than counteract the stereotype, he chooses to withdraw from the situation and fit into what he perceives as a more palpable, quiet version of himself. This, in the context of moving from London to a smaller, less diverse city in Scotland, raises questions over broad discourses of inclusion and multiculturalism in particular locales. Shera navigates his new city with caution as he seeks a place to speak for and be himself. Some felt that over time and with age, the confidence to speak about politics grew but recalled memories of feeling 'awkward' about being marked out as different from 'other' Scottish people alongside anxieties about being misrecognized as Muslim, as Suzana (female, 22–25, British Indian Hindu, Edinburgh) remarks:

*"It was just awkward when people talk about it, like, all the bombings, and I was just like oh, just don't think it's me. As long as they don't think it's me, or anything to do with me, I don't care ... When I was younger I wouldn't talk to anyone. I guess, as I grew up, I just thought that not everyone is gonna think I'm the same, cause I'm my own person, and I wasn't ever involved in it. And I think that's what I kept thinking, I was like, cause at first I was like they might think it is to do with me, cause everyone looks the same. But then I was like even though we might look the same we're not the same people."*

Suzana describes her awkwardness with a tone of frustration about being misunderstood and misrecognized. Her narrative reveals the importance of youth transitions in negotiating difference

and sameness in Scottish society – 'I'm my own person', she says, revealing a strategy for securing herself from other people's prejudice than demonstrates agency and resilience. The inclusion/exclusion of Muslim voices in political debates on security and immigration has been taken up widely in analyses of multiculturalism in Britain (see McGhee, 1998). There has been less time given to the experiences of non-Muslims who also feel excluded through misrecognition (Hopkins, 2014). Drawing on Ahmed's (2004) notion of the 'could be terrorist', our research suggests that many young people had experiences of being misrecognized and felt anxious about being targeted for appearing Muslim. Nearly all of those interviewed who had South Asian heritage as well as a minority of Black Scottish, East Asian and Eastern European young people reported experiences of misrecognition, with varying degrees of intensity and different strategies of resistance. This is compounded by political discourse on radical extremism that has singled out British Muslims and faith communities to condemn extremist groups such as ISIS, which could be interpreted as an indictment of tacit support. Gentry (2015) sees this as related to neo-Orientalist anxieties about new terrorism that are discursively reproduced emphasizing the unknown, amorphous threat of the scapegoated other. It is possible that these anxieties silence some ethnic and religious minorities who don't want to talk about faith and politics in relation to each other for fear of being stigmatized, potentially adopting secular discursive habits as young people anticipate potential exclusion or misrecognition.

Unsurprisingly, young Muslims in particular expressed caution in talking about politics. Here Afia, (female, 22–25, Scottish-Pakistani Muslim, Glasgow) refers to her anxiety in a politics class at school.

*"I remember in one of my politics classes you know they're awkward because we were talking about Al Qaida and I felt awkward because I am, like, well why am I feeling awkward? But I feel tremendously awkward but it is because of the big media stigma that we associate one with the other, and all of us should be apologetic for what some people do. It's very strange".*

Despite institutional frameworks and visible markers on school grounds that celebrate the diversity and equality of students, schools were often the site of direct and 'subtle Islamophobia' and the recognition of this caused additional tension in some young people feeling secure in themselves. Tylo (male, 16–18, Scottish-Algerian Muslim, Glasgow) is at a multicultural school in Glasgow and was reticent to label himself as Muslim or Algerian anticipating bullying at school.

*"I don't mention it too much because people can become very kinda judgmental about it. And if they found out that you're Muslim and not just another religion, they can, they can kind of not befriend you a way. Which I mean, I guess it's a bit sad. But so I don't, I don't really mention it too much. I kinda just act as if I'm normal. I mean, I mean I'm not saying that I'm embarrassed but it's just that people can become very differing and kind of bullying in a way with their views"*

Tylo also talked about his father encouraging him to call himself 'Scottish' rather than 'Algerian' as a way of downplaying the 'Muslim' label. The stigma of being Muslim in Britain has implications for Scottish Muslims, particularly where intergenerational transmission of insecurity may play out in silences and absences demonstrated here. Tylo's father is arguably promoting political affiliation with the Scottish nation demonstrating a type of 'Muslim loyalty' triggered by post-9/11 counter terrorism discourses of

'unacceptable' and 'acceptable' behaviours and the expectation of Muslim loyalty to the British way of life and to British values (See McGhee, 1998). Being a Scottish Muslim is analogous to being a British Muslim for many and this comes with a political responsibility to affiliate with national values, highlighting the paradox of multicultural nationalism. Fear of being seen as disloyal or threatening to the nation and overcompensating through nationalism is a way of securitizing the self and averting misplaced suspicions. These examples suggest that many young people experience an anxiety of expression when it comes to politics in Scotland. Despite the appearance of multicultural harmony, everyday discursive landscapes are complex terrains, with inculcated silences and the apprehensive voices of those whose selfhood is often disempowered and dislocated.

## 5.2. Embodied insecurity

For many young people of South Asian or African heritage (both Scottish and non-Scottish) being marked out as 'foreign' generated exclusions and tensions in everyday multicultural settings.

*"Racism is a big thing, no matter where you are, you are picked on by your colour. And maybe being proud of where we live and being British or being Scottish, but Muslim, there is ups and downs – you are looked at differently regardless, if you are Muslim. Not only Muslim but any like, you can be Hindu, Sikh, Chinese or just ... we are all you know Asians are put in one box. You know people turn around and say 'you go back home!' That is what they say because they don't know you're British, just looking at your colour it is just like you are not from here" (Pakistani Muslim focus group, Fife)*

The discussion in this Pakistani Muslim focus group indicates that racism is experienced by young Scottish Muslims and those who 'look Muslim' (Alexander, 2000), in spite of multicultural nationalism in Scotland. Young people talked about encounters in public space where they felt apprehensive or insecure, where multicultural tensions were palpable. Raafat, (male, 22–25, Pakistani Muslim, Inverness) talks about being Pakistani Muslim in Scotland and the emotional housework involved in negotiating multicultural intimacy on public transport.

*"Well, people see me as a Muslim and as a Pakistani ... I have found that some people don't want to talk to you at like a bus stop or in town ... you are just sitting in the bus and the bus is all full. You have got one seat spare, if there is anyone, well the guy will sit with you, but any woman, any girl, they won't sit with you. They will prefer to stand, it is just all skin ... I have experienced when I go to college, I have seen there is a girl, she is going somewhere as well ... She was British. I sat with her, she showed me so much embarrassment like 'I hate him' ... I said why I sit with her? Because it was the morning time it is quite long go to college, and there was a seat empty. So but after that one seat empty I change my seat. After that I stopped sitting with any woman. I prefer to stand ... just I feel like I will go and sit with her and embarrass her. So I prefer to stand ... as I say the respect is not a gift, you have to earn it ..."*

Raafat remarks 'it is just all skin', referring to the affective command that skin colour has on multicultural encounters. The embodied interactions in this extract demonstrate his persistent conciliatory behaviors employed to minimize difference and dissipate confrontation (Fortier, 2008; Hopkins, 2014). For many non-Muslims too, the visible marker of skin colour was a prominent signifier in feeling comfortable in certain public spaces. Here, Derek reflects on his feelings of insecurity at the Gym:

*"When I first came to the gym, I was the only black person going into the room with about thirteen, fourteen like Scottish people. And when you get in there you do feel apprehensive. You wonder what they are thinking about you, what's going through their mind ... like sometimes it's just the slightest expression, in most cases it's not the choice of words, it's the words they don't say that really counts" (Derek, male, 22–25, Ghanaian International Student, Dundee)*

The intersection of race and gender in Derek's narrative evidence his emotional and embodied insecurity during a visit to the gym as the intersections of race, masculinity and place work to make him feel uncomfortable, self-conscious. As Derek makes clear, his experiences of embodied insecurity are not necessarily about what is said but are instead about the looks, glances and expression of those occupying the space that work to enhance his sense of discomfort (Noble, 2005) and raise questions about his sense of ontological security within Scotland.

Young women and men negotiate gendered expectations about faith practice from within families, faith communities and in various institutional spaces in different ways (Sanghera & Thaper-Bjorkert, 2012). Much has been written about dress and the embodied performance of faith and gender in various sites. For Muslim women, for example, the veil is perceived to be the most significant marker of difference for young Muslims growing up in the West (McAuliffe, 2007). Muslim women contest problematic tropes of being 'oppressed', 'foreign' or 'threatening' through political activism and performative display (Tarlo, 2010). Despite this, Ali (2013) contends that Muslim women in Scotland are 'bearing responsibility of worldwide misrepresentation' since they are simultaneously marked out and overlooked: the visibility of Muslim women and their representation as 'foreign' and 'other' amplify their physical presence in Scottish cities, yet they are personally anonymous, 'figures of faith' rather than 'individuals' (Ali, 2013). From the narratives in this study, many young people of different faith identities felt the pressure of this anonymity. The fear of being misrecognized or misunderstood led to assimilationist behaviours among some Muslim women, for example, in relation to dress. For example, Nadia (female, 19–21, British Pakistani Muslim, Dundee) speaks about the decision not to wear a headscarf when starting University.

*"I just think people would view you differently like they might see you ... as not as friendly as you are. Or like not as confident as you are just cause you've got a headscarf on. So like you're meant to just be like quiet and sit in the corner or something like that"*

Nadia's hesitation about veiling suggests an attempt to securitize the self through a disavowal of Islamic faith practice and conform instead to an embodied orthodoxy that scripts Muslim women in certain ways. This is a powerful example of the way in which Muslim women may be excluded through the silencing of the multiple subject positions they inhabit. Muslim women are silenced through western-centric, essentialised representations of the veil and what it means to the women who decide to cover. The veil then becomes an embodied representation through which Islamophobia operates.

Some felt a sense of unease in public spaces where there was potential for confrontation. Many referred to 'checking' or 'hiding' behaviours (cf. Mythen et al., 2012) to 'fit in' or be tolerated by 'Scottish' people, as well as a feeling of alertness over potential attacks. The following two narratives of Gurple and Renuka exemplify this in different ways.



*“People think that, like, Muslims are the same as Sikhs and like they’re all together basically in, like, one group, when we’re not. And then they’ll class us as terrorists ... When I wear a turban and it was happening then it would really concern me walking down the street ... I’d be more sketchy and a bit more on alert. Like if someone was to come and attack me I’d be, kind of, almost prepared” (Gurple, male, 12–15, Scottish-Indian Sikh, Edinburgh)*

*“I went to a party a couple of weeks back and there was all, there was a Muslim, eh Sikh girl who held it and she acted like a complete Christian and there was me who acted more like a Sikh. But I dressed up like, I wore a dress and I dressed up like everybody else, but just something made me stand out from everybody else. I felt as if, yeah everybody else is here acting normal except for me ... Everybody else dancing, I was dancing as well, but I am really self-conscious when it comes to that. So when it comes to that it is like, basically laughing away and they were all drinking. And I did drink a bit, they were all drinking their heads off and I felt really, as if I am Sikh who keeps her religion, and you are all sitting their drinking and pure smoking and all that. I felt as if, I pulled out of the situation. I didn’t take anything by it but people still acted like you have to do that when even though you don’t want to. It is your choice, but they are making you basically do something you don’t want to” (Renuka, female, 16–18, Scottish-Indian Sikh, Glasgow).*

Both Gurple and Renuka discuss the sensation of feeling visibly out of place in everyday spaces, and the discomfort and self-consciousness they both experience in relation to others. For Gurple, wearing his turban and recognizing this as a signifier of difference, with potential for misrecognition and threat made him feel the need for preparedness in the street, cautious of being singled out. Renuka, on the other hand, expresses an ambiguous sense of unease – *‘something made me stand out’* – that left her feeling not ‘normal’. Her response was to ‘pull out of the situation’ and she reflects on the tension between her faith identity and the constrained choices she has in the context of growing up and relating to her peers. These two extracts reflect a spectrum of insecurity that vary in intensity, are relational to particular contexts and individuals respond in different ways. For some, walking down the street generates anxiety over the perception that their mere presence will be read as threatening and lead to the potential criminalization of their personal life. Arguably, what follows is a threat to self-identity – not only from the outside-in but through the diminishing sense of self-worth and the challenge of preserving ontological security in the context of external and internalized threats.

Of course, there are many examples of the way in which young people challenge and resist such threats to their sense of self. However, in many cases this is done through processes of securitizing the self (self-silencing, self-surveillance) in the context of feeling threatened. These performances of everyday security could be viewed as a means of ‘securitizing subjectivity’ (Kinnvall, 2016) as ontological insecurity increases through intersubjective encounters that challenge young people’s sense of being and identity. Such practices arguably rely on a neoliberal notion of resilience through which young people take responsibility for their difference to a perceived norm or Scottishness (even if they were born in Scotland and identify as Scottish), if the normal order of security is reproduced through securitizing behaviours that respond to multiple sources of insecurity then dismantling overarching discourses of security is unresolved. In many cases, young people accept and conform to the multicultural nationalist narrative as a process of negotiating insecurity and securitizing themselves, because what is the alternative? How do young people actively desecuritize themselves in the context of global security discourses that position

them as problematic or threatening? For many young people, racism is part of everyday life and resilience is almost a routinized practice in response to persistently disempowering narratives of othering. But the quest for ontological security through routines of resilience arguably silence young people’s agency for change. As Steele (2008:65) suggests, ‘routines discipline and punish the self, obscuring alternative paths for action’.

We have argued that the geopolitical scripting of Muslims works to deny the subjectivity of many ethnic and religious minority young people through persistent invalidation. This works at the core of personhood for Muslims and non-Muslims alike with potential for ontological insecurity. Beier (2015:11) argues that ‘resilience in many instances does not mean thriving; resilience is too often about surviving’. Individuals have diverse strategies to anticipate and respond to hostile encounters, however subtler forms of racism, such as ‘entitlement racism’ (Essed, 2013), that have been seen to re-emerge at times of constitutional uncertainty, may flourish in the absence of collective efforts to nurture landscapes of peace in diversity.

## 6. Conclusion

In this paper, we have re-scaled theorisations of security to analyse the lived ontologies of young people. In doing so, it becomes increasingly clear that to talk only of universal, global experiences of security is inadequate – such experiences are contextual, historical, processual and felt. By re-scaling security, we are not foregrounding the particular at the expense of the universal and thereby diluting security studies through atomism. Rather, we suggest that young people’s securities are integral to shaping and understanding national and global securities. By analyzing the intersubjective entanglements of security, this paper shows the different ways that some young people see and do everyday geopolitics. Using these examples, we call for more in depth analyses of youth voices to illuminate how young people understand and negotiate everyday (discursive and embodied) securities – through resilience, disavowal or dissociation. There are further questions over how, through securitizing subjectivities, young people are compelled to reinforce modes of othering through assimilative dismantling of difference, casualization of racism and intergenerational deference.

This paper has offered an integrative theoretical framework that draws on feminist geopolitics, children’s geographies and international relations. The analysis of empirical research on young people’s everyday geopolitics addresses the dearth of work on the lived experiences of geopolitics, particularly in terms of children and young people as political agents and the way in which young people co-construct and disrupt narratives of national security (Horschelmann, 2008). Broadening this, the paper promotes the integration of a political psychology with ‘intimacy-geopolitics’ to study everyday relational encounters, going beyond the ‘minor’ of geopolitics to the psycho-social or geopolitics of feeling that individuals negotiate. We have also shown that referendum politics offers a unique context for research on security, particularly in light of recent EU referendum debates. Through this research site there is scope to interrogate how political instability/discontinuity stimulates different modes of thinking and acting through conflict/peace and security/insecurity.

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