'He wasn't nice to our country': children's discourses about the 'glocalized' nature of political events in the Global North

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Abstract:

The accessibility of new media combined with emerging patterns of migration are challenging current definitions of community as we see a shift from close-knit face-to-face interactions to more diverse 'glocalized' networks that defines community as a social rather than a spatial dimension. These changes mean that social connections, and fundamentally a person's sense of belonging, have moved beyond a local neighbourhood to depend upon global networks.

This was the case for the children in the current longitudinal ethnographic study that followed one class in a diverse primary school in the north of England every two years from their Reception year to Year 6. This paper draws upon data collected while the children were in Year 6 aged10-11. It uncovers the range of linguistic and semiotic resources that the children used to communicate with their school peers about two recent political events in the Global North - namely the UK's EU Referendum in 2016 that has resulted in Brexit and the US Presidential Election in late 2016 and Donald Trump's Inauguration in early 2017. Unearthing the 'glocalized' discourses in the children's narratives, this paper uncovers the connections that the children made between these political events and their nuclear family's experiences living in the UK and their extended family's experiences in their countries of origin.

In providing an account of the children's discourses surrounding these political events this paper uncovers the ways in which socio-political events of global significance become meaningful for this group of children and reveals that the children understand the global as situated; constructed within specific contexts and influenced by local interpretations. As the children orientate themselves to media depictions of these events their shifting perceptions of global politics alongside their intersecting experiences of racial, national and religious inequalities come to the fore in their peer interactions at school.

Key words:
Brexit, Donald Trump, children's discourses, glocalized networks, translocal assemblage

Introduction

An anti-establishment revolt against the consequences of globalization has played out recently across the globe with the voting electorate reacting to the power held by the world's global elite (Akbaba and Jeffrey 2017). Two notable political events in the Global North were the UK's EU Referendum in 2016 resulting in Brexit[1] and the US Presidential Election in late 2016 resulting in Donald Trump's Inauguration in early 2017.

In the UK concerns about immigration and multiculturalism have been cited as being important for those who voted to leave the EU (Hobolt 2016). Similarly concerns over access to healthcare and educational services due to (perceived) levels of immigration played a part in Trump's election campaign in the USA (Rothwell and Diego-Rosell 2016). Inglehart and Norris (2016) argue that while economic inequality had a role to play in both Brexit and Trump's election that the rise in nativism cannot be explained by this alone. Rather they argue that the diversity that globalization brings has unsettled the privileged majority in Western societies who resent being told that their traditional values are not politically correct resulting in sections of society feeling marginalized within their own countries. As Mendelsohn (2017:3) suggests, in the context of Brexit, exclusionary identity politics become dominant as 'national identity seems to have become a mechanism through which our globalizing world is rejected, and familiarity and homogeneity are favored over difference.'

Consequently, these discourses have caused some to revert to a nativist rhetoric (Akbaba and Jeffrey 2017). Tragically, the open racist discourses that underpinned much of the campaigns for both Brexit and Trump have emboldened supporters resulting in a rise in racist attacks in the UK and USA post the respective elections (McCloskey 2017).

The month after the EU referendum in the UK police in England and Wales reported a 41% increase in hate crime compared to the same month the year before (Corcoran and Smith

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[1] 'Brexit' is the colloquial term used to describe the UK's exit from the EU. It stems from the term 'Britain's exit' despite the fact that the UK as a whole is leaving the EU and not just Britain. If Britain, rather than the UK, were leaving the EU there would be no need for negotiations about a hard border on the island of Ireland which if implemented will undermine key principles in the Good Friday Agreement and risk stability in the region (Tonge 2016). This inaccurate conflation of the two terms Britain (comprising of England, Scotland and Wales) and the UK (which also includes Northern Ireland) is a widespread phenomenon.

2016). On 27th August 2016 a Polish national Arek Jozwik was brutally murdered in Harlow in the South of England in what is believed to have been a result of post-referendum racism (Krupa 2016). These attacks have not been limited to EU nationals who currently live in the UK but have also been directed towards non-EU Eastern European nationals as well as nationals from outside of Europe including refugees and asylum seekers. The charitable organisation Tell MAMA, which measures instances of anti-Muslim attacks in the UK, state that in the month following the EU referendum vote, there was a 44% rise in the number of anti-Muslim hate incidents reported to them. The majority of these attacks were directed at non-EU nationals wearing visible Muslim symbols, such as the hijab or burqa. It is important to note, however, that Tell MAMA do not believe that the EU referendum is the underlying cause of anti-Muslim hate crime in the UK but rather it has acted as a trigger for people with latent racial prejudices to feel emboldened to act on their views (Atta 2018).

Activists have likened these racist attacks to those that were prevalent in the UK in the 1980s at the height of the Race Riots (Morrison 2016; Burnett 2017). The United Nations are concerned about this growing discrimination. At the end of her mission to the UK, the UN special rapporteur on racism stated that Brexit, coupled with other initiatives such as the controversial Prevent Strategy[2], has sparked a grown in racial and religious intolerance in the UK (Achiume 2018).

In the USA in the week following Donald Trump's election the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) recorded more than 200 complaints of hate crimes including swastikas being drawn on college campuses, female Muslim students being told to remove their hijabs or they would be set alight and children chanting 'build that wall' during their school lunch break (Reilly 2016). The SPLC reports that the rise in hate crimes in the immediate aftermath of Trump's election was higher than the rise in hate crime just after 9/11 (Eversley 2016).

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[2]The Prevent Strategy is part of the UK Government's counter-terrorism strategy called Contest. Prevent places statutory duties on public organisations such as councils and schools to develop projects to reduce the risk of people becoming involved in terrorist activity. Prevent has been widely criticised by academics, practitioners, community leaders and trade unionists as unfairly targeting and stigmatising marginalised sections of UK-based Muslim communities, promoting division and facilitating discriminatory practices which have been epitomised in a number of high-profile cases some involving children as young as four (Stanford and Ahmed 2016).

Children are not immune to these discourses. Wellman's (2002) concept of 'glocalized networks' and McFarlane's (2009) 'translocal assemblage' will be used in this paper to facilitate a focus on the ways in which the Brexit vote and Trump's election became meaningful for a diverse group of children in a primary school setting in the north of England.

Methodology

This paper draws on data from a longitudinal ethnography following a primary school class in the north of England every two years from their Reception class (first year of compulsory education in England and Wales when the children were 4-5 years old) to Year 6 (last year of primary education in England and Wales when the children were 10 – 11 years old).

The school, Sunnyside[3] is a community school[4] that is average in size and serves a deprived area of an inner-city in the north of England. Over the course of the seven-year study the total population of the school hovered just below or just over 200 pupils. The school has an attached nursery and therefore catered for children from the age of 3 to the age of 11. As with many inner-city schools in England the local population to the school is ethnically diverse and houses a large proportion of asylum seekers and refugees. This is also reflected in the school population where the majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups speaking at least 15 different home languages. Many of those joining the school are new to the country, as well as to the school, and few speak English when they arrive. Many pupils are not at this school for the whole of their primary education; large numbers join and leave throughout the year. Many families are asylum seekers or refugees, and some pupils are children of international postgraduate and doctoral students studying at one of two local universities. The school was chosen for this longitudinal study because of its diverse and fluid nature.

The central aim of the overall study was to trace children's diverse identity narratives and their influence on peer friendships during their primary school years. This aim was achieved through the use of observations, participatory visual methods (with an accompanying

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[3] Pseudonyms are used throughout.
[4] In England and Wales community schools are set up and maintained by the local authority, i.e. local government.

unstructured or semi-structured interview to uncover emic perspectives) and unstructured interviews with school staff. Ethnographic fieldwork was undertaken every two years, i.e. when the children were in Reception (aged 4-5), Year 2 (aged 6-7), Year 4 (aged 8-9) and Year 6 (aged 10-11). The diversity and mobility of the school population created a unique context in which to study identity and peer friendships within a globalised context.

This paper presents data relating to the children's discourses about Brexit and Trump's election from the final stage of fieldwork when the children were in their last year of primary school education (Year 6) aged 10 – 11 years old. At this stage of data collection fieldwork took place over an 8 month period and incorporated:

- 21 participant observation sessions (totalling 63 hours)
- Identity Mapping (participatory visual) activity accompanied by a semi-structured peer interview
- four unstructured interviews with school staff

During this fieldwork stage there were 29 children in the class: 18 boys and 11 girls. No children in the class had a parent who was born in the UK. A third of the children were from Somali refugee families with leave to remain in the UK while the remaining children were seeking asylum or in the UK on temporary family visas from a range of North African or Middle Eastern countries bar one who was from Eastern Europe.

This paper draws on observational data captured in the classroom and in the playground. The fieldnote extracts included below are illustrative examples of the discourses that the children discussed in relation to the Brexit vote and Trump's election. While I was a participant observer to these discussions and, as will be seen below, was at times actively included by the children in their conversations each of the extracts below records a discussion that was started by the children and was not prompted by a research question. As an ethnographer 'hanging around' in the field it was common for the children to involve me in their conversations in this way.

Some key demographics for each of the seven children identified in these fieldnote extracts are outlined below:

- Umar was born in the UK. His family left Somalia due to the Civil War and have leave to remain in the UK. Umar has been at Sunnyside since nursery.

- Natif was also born in the UK. His family left Somalia due to the Civil War and have leave to remain in the UK. Natif arrived at Sunnyside School in 2015 at the start of the Year 5 school year.

- Amira arrived with her family in the UK in 2014 from Iraq. They came so that her father could study at a nearby university. Amira joined Sunnyside in Year 4. The family went back to Iraq in the summer of 2017 just after the end of the school year.

- Sabirah also arrived with her family in the UK in 2014 from Iraq so that her father could study at a nearby university. Sabirah's father was friends with Amira's father in Iraq. The two families came to the UK together and the two girls joined Sunnyside with their siblings at the same time.

- Lina and her family arrived in the UK from Libya on a family visa in 2010 so that both of Lina's parents could engage in post graduate studies. Lina's family applied to stay in the UK when the Libyan Uprising began in 2011 and have been granted temporary leave to remain. She, and her family, have regular contact with extended family who are still in Libya. Lina has been at Sunnyside since nursery.

- Cala was born in the UK. Her family have settled status in the UK after leaving Yemen. She has been at Sunnyside since nursery.

- Dalmar was born in the UK. His family left Somalia due to the Civil War and have leave to remain in the UK. He has been at Sunnyside since Year 4. He has a number of cousins at the school including two in the class.

Three out of these seven children took part in all four Stages of fieldwork (as part of the overall study), three took part in the final two stages of fieldwork (i.e. Year 4 and 6) and one child took part in the final stage.

To add further context to the data extracts included below it is useful to note that all of these children are from practicing Muslim families and actively talked about their religious identities in their peer interactions.

Data was analysed using LeCompte and Schensul's (1999) three levels of inductive ethnographic analysis: the item; the pattern; and the constitutive. At the item level of analysis observational fieldnotes were searched for the following key terms: *Brexit, EU, referendum, Article 50, USA, Trump, Clinton, Obama*. Data that related to Brexit and Trump's election were selected to take to Stage 2. At this stage patterns in the data were sought to identify key themes relating to these two political events. These themes were: *views on Brexit, views on Trump, views on Clinton, views on Obama, racist discourses, anti-Muslim rhetoric and feeling unwelcome*. At the final stage of analysis illustrative examples were selected that embodied these key themes. The illustrative examples are included in this paper.

Ethical approval was gained from the university ethics board for each stage of data collection. Pseudonyms for the school and individual children are given throughout. A participatory approach was adopted where children were encouraged to direct the focus of the study and participate in designing research activities and collaboratively analysing the fieldwork data. For more information on how this was done during earlier stages of fieldwork see Author (2014).

As Tanner (2017) encourages, I used my reflexive fieldnotes as a tool to analyse my own assumptions about 'race'/ethnicity and religion in the attempt to make my own privilege visible both within data collection processes and through my writing. 'Reflect[ing] on where one is speaking from' (Raghavan 2017:192) in this way is key to enabling privilege to be named resulting in marginalised silences being given space in which they can be voiced.

Children's discourses on Brexit

At different points during this stage of fieldwork the children expressed views on the EU referendum result and I was repeatedly asked which way I had voted gaining a favourable response when I replied that I had voted for the UK to remain in the EU. Some children also

commented on specific aspects post the referendum, most notably the triggering of Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon. This Article gives all EU member states the right to leave the EU and outlines the procedures that are involved in doing this including a two-year period in which an exit deal can be negotiated. As Dalmar and Umar explain below the UK triggered Article 50 on Wednesday 29th March 2017:

> *I am standing next to the tall wire fence at the school end of the playground as the children run outside. Dalmar and Umar come up to me and Umar asks 'Do you know what is happening on Wednesday? Its important for us all.' I think for a minute about what is happening in the school this week before drawing a blank so ask them 'What's happening?' 'Article 50[5] is being triggered', Umar tells me. 'Do you know what it is?' Dalmar ask me. 'Yes,' I tell them, 'It starts the process of [Britain] leaving the EU.' 'It's a bad thing,' comments Umar.' 'Yes, its not good,' agrees Dalmar. 'Why do you think its bad?' Umar asks turning to Dalmar. 'I think its bad cause…' starts Dalmar before pausing. 'I think…' jumps in Umar. 'You asked Dalmar the question,' I tell Umar, 'Let him answer!' 'I think its bad for the European people who live here,' continues Dalmar, 'and for their children who will have to change school.'*

> *'Also, it will be bad for terror attacks like last Wednesday [Westminster Bridge attack in London]. We will be more vulnerable to terror attacks. Do you know they aren't letting people take laptops on planes?' Sabirah and Cala who are passing us stop. Cala asks 'Who? Muslims?' 'No everyone from some countries in the Middle East,' replies Dalmar. 'What kind of things can't you take?' asks Sabirah.' 'Anything bigger than a normal phone; Umar chips in, 'I think an iPhone 2 is too big.' The girls run off together and Dalmar chases Khaleed who has just run past us.*

> Fieldnote extract: 27th March 2017

This extract not only reveals an understanding of political events that were happening that week but also highlights that the children viewed the implications of Brexit in light of wider events of national importance such as the Westminster Bridge in London attack that had taken place the week before on 22nd March 2017. Due to the extent of the attack, injuries to

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[5] Article 50 is the article in the Lisbon Treaty that needs to be triggered to start the process for a member state to leave the EU.

the general public (including five fatalities) and the background of the attacker being widely, and uncritically, reported as an 'Islamist terrorist' this event dominated the UK's media for a period of time. During other participant observations both Dalmar and Umar, as well as other children, commented seeing footage of this event on news channels with some expressing concern about how '*Muslims like me*' or '*Muslims like us*' are being talked about. In some cases the 'us' discussed here referred to the individual and their school peers, in other instances to the individual and their family and in other cases to '*our Muslim brothers*' invoking an understanding of the Arabic concept of *Ummah*.

In relation to Brexit, children also discussed hearing reports of the impact of Brexit on the news. Those who did mention their parents' views clearly stated that if they were able to vote they had voted to remain in the EU and if they were not eligible to vote that they thought that Brexit was a negative thing. Dalmar's comments about '*children who will have to change school*' was echoed by other children in the class who worried that they and their family may have to leave the UK after Brexit and consequently they may have to leave their friends behind. These worries were felt quite strongly even though none of the children in the class were EU citizens. When prompted about why they thought this, children commented that '*people on the TV say that people who look like me should go away*' or '*I've heard some people telling other people to, 'Go home'.'* The wider nativist discourses, that contained racist undertones, and were repeatedly reported in the media at the time of the Brexit vote had filtered down into children's experiences. It was also widely reported at this time by local and national media outlets that there had been a rise in racist hate attacks post the referendum targeting Eastern European migrants (EU citizens and non-EU citizens alike) and ethnic minorities who were not European.

Returning to the playground on 27th March, after Sabirah, Cala and Dalmar leave to play elsewhere Umar and I continue to discuss Article 50:

> *I turn to Umar and ask him, 'What do you think about Article 50?' 'I think its bad,' he replies. 'Why?' I prompt. 'Because people like Professors and Doctors and nurses and teachers can't get jobs.' 'Can't get jobs here or in Europe?' I ask. 'They can't come here and get jobs. Maybe my mum couldn't come and get a job here now,' Umar explains.*

'You know I asked someone the other day if they knew who the Prime Minister was and they said David Cameron!' He laughs at this. 'Who did you ask?' I reply. 'A boy,' he tells me, 'but not one here.' 'Who is the Prime Minister?' I ask. 'Theresa May,' he replies while rolling his eyes. 'What do you think of her?' I ask him. 'I don't like her cause she's triggering Article 50' I ask him.

'Does your mum still work in the polling station?' I ask him. 'She wants to change,' he replies. 'She did the Brexit one didn't she?' I ask. 'Yes,' he replies, 'Did you see her?' 'No, I tell him, 'I went to a different one but I remember you telling me on the day of the vote when you were in Y5. You asked me if I had voted and I said I was going to vote when I left the school.' 'Which polling station?' Umar asks. 'One behind the train station,' I reply. 'Yes, that's not my mum's,' he tells me.

Fieldnote extract: 27th March 2017

Despite not being an EU citizen, Umar questions if his mum would be able to work in the UK if the family were to move over now. Putting aside the fact that Umar's family arrived as refugees and therefore were, and as things currently stand would be, treated differently from economic migrants Umar had picked up on a wider discourse relating to the Leave Campaign's discourses about immigration levels and the economic impact of this. While, as stated above, this does not fully explain the Brexit vote it does remain a feature of it. Other children in the class expressed similar concerns particularly those whose family had moved to the UK for economic reasons making comments such as '*Why don't people want my dad to work here?*' or '*My mum is a doctor and helps people but some people don't like it.*'

These discourses need to be viewed in the wider local context and experiences that some children in the class have had of frequent right-wing marches in their neighbourhoods. In previous stages of this longitudinal study, some children reported racist incidents at the time of these marches such as '*Someone pulled off my Auntie's hijab*', '*A man spat at my sister and shouted*' or '*People were banging our letterbox and shouting bad things.*'

Children's discourses on Trump's election

Trumps election in the USA also featured in some children's discourses. All the children who commented on this event expressed their dislike of him:

I am sitting at the back of the classroom next to the reading corner watching the children working at their desks. There is a 'hum' of quiet chatter as the class are working. One or two students are moving around. Natif finishes the task and leans over to pick up an old copy of a 'First News' school paper. On the front cover the main story there are two large pictures: one of Hilary Clinton and the other of Donald Trump. The text above the pictures reads '89% of school children would have voted for Clinton. 11% for Trump.

Natif points to the picture of Hilary Clinton, 'I would have voted for her', he tells me before asking, 'Would you have?' 'So would I,' I reply before asking, 'Why did you want her?' Natif points to the picture of Donald Trump, 'He says bad things about Muslims.' 'Do you mean 'cause he's racist?' I ask. 'Racist?' Natif replies, 'You mean he's religionist.' I nod in agreement.

Fieldnote extract: 27th March 2017

Some children engaged in acts of resistance against Trump with comments such as *'I drew a poo in Trump's mouth.'* while showing me a photograph of Trump that they had edited. Others expressed very strong feelings about him such as *'I hate him with all my heart.'* While none of the children explicitly mentioned Trump's discriminatory 'Muslim Ban' these children attributed their dislike of Trump to his negative view of Muslims saying things like *'he doesn't like Muslims'* or *'he isn't nice to people like me.'*

The fieldnote extract below involves three girls in the class: Lina, who originates from Libya, and Amira and Sabirah, who are both from Iraq. While the three girls all criticise Trump, they express different views of Barak Obama dependant on the relationship that he had with their country of origin:

I leave the dinner hall and go back to the playground. I walk to the wall and lean on it watching a group of children playing football. Lina comes up to me with Amira. 'MacDonald is a Scottish name isn't it?' Lina asks me. 'Yes,' I reply. 'Do you know how I know?' she asks. 'How?' I reply. 'Cause of Ronald MacDonald,' she tells me. 'Do you know what Mac means?' I ask. 'No,' she replies. 'It means son of,' I tell her, 'so MacDonald is son of Donald.' 'Not son of Donald Trump!' exclaims Amira. 'No,' I reply laughing. 'I don't like him,' Amira tells me. Sabirah (who has just joined us) says, 'I

wouldn't have voted for him. He's a racist.' 'I wouldn't vote for him either,' I tell
them[6].

'Obama is better,' Lina tells us all. 'In some things,' Amira says slowly. 'He wasn't nice
to our country [Iraq],' Sabirah replies indicating to herself and Amira. 'Mmmm,' I
reply. 'He wasn't good to Iraq,' Amira interjects, 'He did some good things but some
bad things too.' 'He gave money to Libya which was good,' Lina replies.'

Fieldnote extract: 23rd January 2017

As can be seen in this extract, all three girls have an understanding of how American actions have impacted on their countries of origin and have used these events to construct their evaluation of whether Obama's actions were 'good' or 'bad'. While at this point in time, just over a month after Trump's inauguration, Trump had not had any high-profile contact with either Iraq or Libya the three girls express a general dislike of him. Interestingly, in comparison to Natif's assertion above that Trump is 'religionist' Sabirah calls Trump 'racist' in this conversation.

Glocalized networks and children's discourses about political events in the Global North

Contemporary urban settings in the UK, such as the one in the Sunnyside catchment area, are increasingly characterised by the global and 'superdiverse' nature of their populations where 'new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socioeconomically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants' (Vertovec 2007:1024) have arrived and settled (Vertovec 2007; 2017; Blommaert & Rampton, 2011). 'To acknowledge superdiversity is to recognise that more attention needs to be paid to the diverse social and cultural issues that pattern childhood and the communication economy in which they are embedded' (Author 2016:478).

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[6] While I normally did not make my views known to the children unless they asked me a direct question in cases were discriminatory views were discussed (or in some instances expressed) I felt that it was always important to challenge discriminatory discourses. Brown's (2007) work supports this approach by saying that quick responses that promote equality and inclusion are needed in situations like this to send clear messages to children. Sending this message was more important to me throughout the course of my fieldwork than collecting data.

In his seminal work on globalization, Appadurai (1996) highlights how the influence of mass migration and new media have redefined patterns of self-representation and reconceptualised the notion of the local. Building on this, Wellman (2002:14) coined the term 'glocalized networks' to refer to the ways in which communities have become defined through their social connections rather than spatially arguing that an individual's sense of belonging is increasingly dependent on 'place-to-place connectivity, and not door-to-door'.

Similar to the young people in Rowell and Burgess' (2014) study, the children in the current study developed 'glocalized networks' by drawing on linguistic and semiotic resources in communicating with their school peers about the Brexit vote in the UK and Trump's election in the USA connecting these two events to their own national, religious and racial identities as well as to their families' experiences both in the UK and their countries of origin.

At an earlier stage of fieldwork, during the children's Reception year, some of the children in the class who originated from Libya, including Lina, likewise drew on a wide range of linguistic and semiotic resources to talk to their peers in England about the Libyan Uprising in 2011. As children from the Libyan Diaspora 'orientate[d] themselves to media depictions of 'the naughty person' (Gaddafi) their sense of 'home' and shifting perceptions of what it mean[t] to be Muslim, [they] act[ed] these out in the day-to-day … interactions and structured learning activities at their 'local' primary school [in England] (Author 2016: 451-452). In this instance the children from the Libyan Diaspora were not only influenced by family and peer relationships but also by 'new media.' The dynamic nature of the Libyan Uprising, which had direct consequences for some of the children's extended families, left a mark on the children's peer interactions at school.

As fieldwork progressed and the children got older those whose families had settled permanently in the UK started to take an interest in political events in the UK both in terms of General Elections (discussed elsewhere) and, as this paper shows, the Brexit vote. As research has shown, 'national consciousness and childhood are viewed as mutually constitutive' (Cangià 2017:7) where children can actively make sense of their identity,

including negotiating any contradictions between discourses, within an identity negotiation process (Pache-Huber and Spyrou 2012). All of the children in the fieldnote extracts relating to Brexit self-defined as having a composite British or English identity alongside a country outside of Europe, for example as English Somali. Having situated themselves in this way they then felt a contradiction after the EU referendum with promotion of the nativist and racist discourses that they had been exposed to. Despite these children's self-defined composite national identities, they felt, as Mendelsohn (2017:3) describes, rejection by exclusionary identity politics and associated discourses that have been repeatedly and publicly stated post the EU referendum in the UK.

As we have seen above, children with no legal EU status feared that they and their families may have to leave the UK due to Brexit. As non-EU nationals including, like many of the children in the class, refugees and asylum seekers repeatedly reported being subject to hate attacks following the referendum (Morrison 2016; Burnett 2017) sadly the children's fears have a clear basis within the Brexit discourse and the 'hostile environment' immigration policy that is being promoted by the UK Conservative government. As we have seen, these children are influenced not only by the relationships that they have with their families and their peers but also by the media and the dominant discourses that are promoted via it. McFarlane's (2009) concept of the 'translocal assemblage' can help us to understand this situation. In an attempt to counter homogeneity McFarlane rejects the idea of the global as an undifferentiated universal space and replaces this with an understanding of the global as situated and consequently as constructed within specific contexts. 'Translocal assemblage' is therefore influenced by local interpretations. Within the context of this study, the notion of 'translocal assemblage' is helpful in accounting for the ways in which socio-political events of global significance, such as Brexit and Trump's election in the USA, become meaningful for a group of children in a primary school in the north of England. As children are exposed to wider discourses relating to shifting perceptions of what it means to be Muslim, an immigrant or a refugee their sense of home is brought into question.

Trump's election, which can be viewed as a spatially distant socio-political event, as defined by Wellman (2002), also became salient for some of the children in the class. The children

identified racist or 'religionist' discourses in Trump's election campaign that deeply concerned them particularly in relation to the marginalisation of Muslims.

We have also seen, in the data extracts above, that some children were aware of how political decisions in other parts of the world, namely in the USA under Obama's administration, impacted on their countries of origin. This was the case for both children of families who had settled permanently in the UK and those who were planning to return to their country of origin. The consequences of these globally significant events have impacted on this group of children's peer interactions in a local school context and influenced their discourses relating to national, religious and racial identities. Consequently, the children's networks are 'glocalized' as their sense of belonging has become dependant on social connections rather than spatial proximity.

Conclusion

This paper adds to previous ethnographic work by showing how salient socio-political evants can be in young children's identity narratives and how these events can influence their sense of belonging. Within the dynamic contexts of the Brexit vote in the UK and Trump's election in the USA socio-political dynamics came to the fore in children's discourses relating to national, religious and racial identities as they linked global contexts to their local experiences.

It is important to note that the children's exposure to and understanding of the implications of political events has broadened as they have progressed through their primary school education. As we have seen, during an earlier stage of this study, while in their Reception class, some children were aware of volatile events in their country of origin and its impact on their family (Author 2016). Now that the children are older they are also aware of political events in their host and other Western countries and are able to link these events to their own and their family's experiences both in the UK and their country of origin.

While this paper has focussed on children's discourses relating to two nativist votes it is also important to note that in latter stages of this longitudinal ethnography (Year 4 and in Year 6) the children also discussed the impact UK General Elections would, and then did, have on their families and communities both in the UK and their countries of origin revealing a wider interest in political events in the host country.

As Schaull (2006:16) stated in his introduction to Paulo Friere's 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' stated:

> *'Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes 'the practice of freedom', the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.'*

The findings of this study have clear implications for the role of education in a post-Brexit/ post-Trump era. Countering the nativist discourses that have become socially acceptable within some communities and have, as we have seen, such a profound impact on children's sense of belonging is essential to ensure children's wellbeing. As McCloskey (2017) argues these social attitudes are poisonous and need to be countered via the values that underpin development educational curriculums. Until education policies and practices critically unpick structures of privilege, such as those that have been displayed since the Brexit vote in the UK and Trump's election in the USA, power differentials will be replicated and maintained and consequently children will continue to be marginalised in what is becoming a more hostile immigration environment.

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