Critical Race Theory and Islamophobia

Gholami, Reza

Link to publication on Research at Birmingham portal

Critical Race Theory and Islamophobia: Challenging Inequity in Higher Education

Author: Reza Gholami, PhD

Role and affiliation: Senior Lecturer in Sociology of Education, University of Birmingham

Email: r.gholami@bham.ac.uk

Abstract:

This paper engages with an increasingly dominant model of Islamophobia in which race and racism are given primacy. It argues that such an approach is parochial, conceptually narrow and practically ineffective. I take as my case the Muslim student awarding gap in the UK – Muslims are currently the worst performing religious group at UK universities; they are also made up overwhelmingly of non-white people. In line with the dominant model, existing work tends to explain the problems facing Muslim students in terms of racism and/or Islamophobia. However, it is argued here that although the identification of these causal factors is accurate, a lack of analytical precision around race and religion has led strategies to fall back on quite 'standard' and largely ineffective ideas. I argue that racial *and religious disadvantage*, which are often synonymized by the term Islamophobia, must be partially disentangled and understood separately, although intersectionally, through Critical Race Theory (CRT) and the concept of 'religification'. Such an analysis sheds light on how institutional approaches to race and religion play a key role in the structuration and perpetuation of educational disadvantage for Muslim students. It also points towards an effective strategy for eradicating the Muslim awarding gap.

Keywords: CRT, Islamophobia, Muslim students, awarding gap, religification, higher education

Introduction:

This paper's point of departure is that an increasingly influential model of Islamophobia aligns the concept too closely with race and racism. For example, The UK's All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims has adopted the following definition: "Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is *a type of racism* that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness" (APPG 2019: 11, my emphasis). Similarly, the influential think tank the Runneymede Trust, which has been doing ground-breaking work on Islamophobia for over twenty years, has defined the phenomenon simply as "anti-Muslim racism" (Elahi and Khan 2017: 1). Given the prominence and convenience of such definitions, they are highly likely to be adopted by public and private bodies – for instance, many city/county councils in the UK, including London, Birmingham and Manchester, have already adopted the APPG's definition. The close alignment of Islamophobia to racism has academic support too, as we will see. Whilst recognizing the centrality of race, racism and racialization in Islamophobia, this paper aims to show that the near synonymization of racism and Islamophobia can actually weaken the latter's analytical and practical utility. It is also a theoretically narrow and parochial move based on a very British reading of Islamophobia. I draw attention to the fact that Islamophobia comprises racial *and* religious dimensions which must be at least partially disentangled and examined in their own right, especially if the concept is to be meaningfully applied to policymaking and institutional reform in increasingly internationalized arenas.

I will get at these issues through the case of the Muslim student awarding gap, i.e. the fact that students from Muslim backgrounds are the lowest attaining religious group at UK universities. In line with the dominant model of Islamophobia, existing strategies for addressing the challenges faced by Muslim students tend to locate the root of the problem in racism/Islamophobia. However, as we will see, the mere identification of these causal factors, though accurate, does not amount to an effective strategy. In fact, the lack of analytical precision has led existing strategies to fall back on a set of 'standard' and largely ineffective strategic recommendations. Although the awarding gap is now virtually universally acknowledged across the sector and by the UK government, and there is a pledge to eliminate it by 2030, there seems to be a complacent assumption that the Muslim awarding gap is neatly wrapped up in the broader awarding gap affecting students from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. This paper will challenge that view.

Instead, I argue that the Muslim awarding gap operates along two vectors which, though closely related, have specific dynamics that must be understood in their own terms. First, in as much as students from Muslim backgrounds *are* a racially minoritized group in white-majority societies, I posit that their racialization is best understood through Critical Race Theory (CRT), which offers a set of powerful theoretical and practical tools for addressing the various forms of racism that affect Muslim students. Secondly, Muslim students also experience a *religious disadvantage* that arguably extends beyond but is exacerbated by their racialization. This consists, in addition to being associated with extremism and terrorism, in having their spirituality politicized, re-signified and even ridiculed in a generally unfriendly educational environment, with implications for their educational experience and performance. They are thus simultaneously racialized and 'religified' with both processes reinforcing one another. I further build on the concept of 'religification' by exploring its unequal power dynamics and focusing on its institutional manifestations. This involves linking it to secularism whose power dominates the ethos of higher education and works to define, problematize and marginalize 'religion' in general and Islam and Muslims in particular. The paper starts by examining the primacy of race in Islamophobia before looking at data on the Muslim student awarding gap as well as existing strategies for addressing it. I then turn to each of the paper's theoretical pillars – CRT and religification – in turn.

The primacy of race in Islamophobia

In roughly the last twenty-five years, and owing largely to the events of 9/11, Islamophobia – as a concept, mode of discrimination and experience – has come to occupy a central space in public, political and academic discourses in the West. A pivotal moment in analytical approaches to the concept was the publication of the Runnymede Trust's 1997 report *Islamophobia: a challenge for us all.* In it, the Trust provides an eight-point comparative list of 'open' and 'closed' features to distinguish Islamophobia from legitimate critiques of Islam and Muslims. I will not rehearse these points here (see Runnymede 1997), but it is important to note that the concept of race does not feature explicitly in them. Given the racialized ways in which Islamophobia works in white-majority societies, the lack of overt attention to race was perhaps less than helpful. However, the Trust arguably over-compensated for that in its updated report twenty years later in which racism was placed front and centre, defining Islamophobia as "anti-Muslim racism". This short-hand definition is followed by a comprehensive one that is adapted from the UN's definition of racism. The Trust's approach has helped to set the tone for how Islamophobia is conceived of across British society (e.g. Streeting 2019), while its contributions more generally have been influential in Western countries beyond Britain (see for example Taras 2012).

The primacy of race in Islamophobia has sometimes been supported by commentators on rather spurious grounds. For example, Allen (2018, n.p.) backs the APPG's foregrounding of racism because it is not "too academic" and thus will have popular appeal, and because people "intuitively 'get' racism, and the majority deem it to be unwanted […]." But these assertions are hardly convincing: popular appeal is not an adequate criterion for establishing the analytical and political utility of an idea. Those dedicated to social justice should be committed to establishing facts, building evidence bases, doing rigorous work and speaking truth to power *regardless of unpopularity or inexpediency*. Furthermore, there is no evidence that people intuitively 'get' racism. In fact, evidence points to the contrary with race/racism often being among the least-well understood phenomena in white-majority societies (see Di Angelo 2017) and research by the Pew Centre showing that 65% of Americans say that racist views are now more common (Horowitz et al. 2019). At any rate, by the Runnymede Trust's own scholarship, and that of many academics (e.g. Chan-Malik 2018; Kundnani 2015; Lean 2017; Shryock 2010) the unbalanced focus on racism in relation to Islamophobia seems reactive and conceptually narrow.

My intention here is not to detract from the importance of race. As Alexander (2017) makes clear, in countries such as the UK, the 'de-raceing' of Islamophobia is dangerous not to mention a sinister tool of racists and Islamophobes. She situates current Islamophobia in Britain along a much longer history of racist demonization of Muslim peoples, reminding us that:

> 'Muslims' in post-war Britain were configured as 'coloured', then 'black', then 'Asian', then 'Pakistani' and 'Bangladeshi' before they appeared as 'Muslims' – and while the labels may have changed, the racist content of the category largely did not (p.14).

Decoupling Islamophobia from race thus risks concealing these historical parallels. But it is important to bear in mind that these are *British* historical parallels, and this parochialism runs counter to the international utility which the concept of Islamophobia must today be able to offer. Furthermore, Alexander identifies four "conceptual sleights of hand" (ibid.) by which Islamophobia in Britain has been de-raced: defining racism in biological terms, denying that 'Muslim' is also a racial/ethnic category, describing Muslimness as a choice (rather than ascription) and focusing too heavily on 'Muslim/Islamic culture'. Although I am in broad agreement, I think that some of those points need to be complicated *if we are to use the concept of Islamophobia to effectively address problems that*

Muslims face and not just as an anti-racist descriptive device. As we will see below, for example, some Muslims identify as Muslim above all other social categories, and their *choice* to submit to God is the very cornerstone of their faith. The 'race-ing' of Islamophobia must not elide these *religious* experiences.

There are also studies that have usefully examined Islamophobia through the lens of CRT. For example, Housee (2012) deploys CRT as a potent tool to animate anti-racist teaching with reference to Islamophobia. Nevertheless, she locates Islamophobia purely as a modality of racism. As I discuss below, the lens of CRT is indeed a powerful one, but we must not fall into the trap of thinking that applying such a lens somehow 'completes' our understanding of Islamophobia. Another contribution is the work of Breen and Meer (2019) who use CRT to explore the ways in which whiteness and Christianity have been codified into key British policy concepts such as 'fundamental British values' (more on which below). In this way, policies and dominant discourses work to racialize Muslim Britons and cast them as 'others'. This is an important analysis. But again, I contend that a CRT approach is only one side of the coin. The other side pertains to how those same policies and discourses frame the religious identities of Muslims (or thrust Muslimness upon them, even those who are secular). My argument is that this side of the coin, too, needs theoretical framing so as to be properly 'operationalized'.

Outside Britain Islamophobia remains a more loosely defined concept. The common thread running through approaches to Islamophobia in Europe and North America seems to be anti-Muslim sentiments or attitudes. For example, the pervasive definition in the US is "fear and suspicion of Muslims", a definition which for Beydoun is "driven by expediency and the practical and analytical benefits associated with packaging a complex phenomenon into an operable term" (2016: 109). Beydoun follows up his well-founded critique with a detailed definition rooted in the structural and private dynamics of Islamophobia and the dialectic between them, albeit without offering a clear theoretical basis. Across Europe, too, studies have drawn attention to the fact that public sentiment around Muslims is generally negative and this results in hate crimes and unjust laws (Abdelkader 2017; Statham 2016). European Islamophobia seems to target mainly religious expressions of Muslimness and takes the form, among other examples, of the refusal to provide non-pork foods for Muslim school children in France, the banning of burqas in Belgium, and the prohibition of minaret building in Switzerland. Such targeting of Muslim religious experiences differs from anti-black racism and therefore needs to be analytically 'unbounded' from race/racism. However, race remains a key factor in Islamophobia, which is why I propose a more balanced approach that rests on robust theoretical foundations.

Muslims in higher education: problems and strategies

I illustrate my argument by examining the Muslim student awarding gap that exists in UK universities. Data from the UK's Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), analysed in a report by Advance HE (Macmaster 2020), provide for the first time figures on the significant under attainment of Muslim university students. In 2017-18 only 18.7% of Muslim students graduated with a first-class honours degree, by far the lowest of all religious groups. To put this in perspective, 33.6% of Jewish students and 29.8% of students with no religion attained a first class degree in the same period. If we factor in upper-second class degrees as well,[1] the figure rises to nearly 9 in 10 Jewish students and 8 in 10 students with no religion, compared to just under two thirds of Muslim students, who are also heavily under-represented at the most academically selective institutions. It is also significant, as I will discuss,

---

[1] First and Upper-Second are the only degree classifications considered 'good honours' in the UK. They are used as an indicator of success in higher education.

that the most successful religious groups, including Jewish, Christian, Spiritual and those with no religion, are predominantly white, whereas Muslim students belong overwhelmingly to non-white ethnicities.

The problems faced by Muslim students in the UK seem to be symptomatic of a deeper-rooted malaise afflicting higher education (HE) across the Western world. For example, Islamophobia perpetrated by students and faculty is widely reported to take place on campuses in the US, where despite being well-integrated and identifying with America, Muslim students, especially women, are often the target of hate crimes (Daguerre 2017). Similar issues are happening in Canada, France, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, to name but a few (see for example Jouili 2009; Khosrojerdi 2015; Ulriksen et al. 2017; Virkama 2017; Zieler 2016). In addition to anti-Muslim prejudice, these problems stem from Muslim students' often 'non-traditional' status in HE and institutions' inability to adequately accommodate their learning needs and enable them to develop a sense of belonging in the university community. The latter is exacerbated by the fact that Muslim students are less likely to be taught by Muslim (and generally BAME) faculty and to find Muslim scholarship included in their curricula.

The dearth of large-scale statistical data on Muslim attainment has hitherto forced researchers to conduct relatively small-scale studies and generally focus on student experience. Nevertheless, they have been offering insights and strategic recommendations for some time. An ambitious project by Stevenson (2018), based on interviews with 100 Muslim university students in the UK, identified four key themes in their exclusion and disadvantage: 1) they are often 'invisible' and thus neglected; 2) paradoxically, they can also be highly visible due to common stereotypes linking Muslims to extremism and terrorism; 3) they are often the victims of racism and Islamophobia; 4) they do not have a strong sense of belonging to their universities. On this basis, Stevenson makes several policy recommendations, including:

- offering religious literacy training to staff and students;
- rewarding "exemplary practices" of supporting Muslim students and helping them to develop a sense of belonging;
- having robust mechanisms for reporting Islamophobia and reporting back to students what action has been taken.

Though admirable, these recommendations are arguably quite 'standard' and unlikely to be equal to the task; they leave several important issues untouched. On religious literacy training, for example, it is not clear what this would entail, which groups or individuals would be best placed to deliver such training and whether they would have to focus on religion as a broad category or a particular branch of Islam specifically. Nor is the theoretical (or indeed theological) framework for such training discussed. Is the idea merely to furnish staff and students with 'facts' about Islam and Muslims or to take a richer approach? More importantly, as we will see below, the main problem may not be a lack of religious literacy *but the absence of a critical understanding of how the power of secularism operates in the social world*.

As for rewarding good practices, firstly, why should practices aimed at social justice be rewarded? The sector should not need to be incentivized to behave equitably but rather be expected to do so as a matter of course. Secondly, doing support work exclusively with/for Muslim students presupposes that those students are 'problem cases' to begin with. This poses a host of ethical and practical dilemmas. Imagine, for instance, being the first generation in one's family to go to university, fighting many battles and making sacrifices to get there, only to be greeted at university with the message that simply based on one's Muslimness, one belongs to a red-flagged group who are prone to failure without institutional support. At least, we must acknowledge that such a policy move potentially

places a given student in an entirely new subject position, one which may produce unintended consequences for their wellbeing and erode any sense of belonging they may have developed. Finally, in terms of robust mechanisms for reporting Islamophobia, this is of course hugely important. However, such mechanisms already exist in most institutions. They comprise formal and informal channels at the level of student groups, programmes and academic departments. There is no doubt that these could be improved, but we cannot lose sight of the fact that Muslims' generally poor experiences and attainment levels have persisted despite these measures. What is more, there is plenty of evidence to show that hate crimes continue to have serious negative psychological, physical and social effects on their victims long after the fact (see for example Clay 2017; Fernando 1984; McCarthy 2020). Thus, a strong strategy for tackling the impact of hate crime on educational performance would not assume that victims can/will simply report hate crimes (which they should of course do) and that institutions will subsequently work to eradicate them. Rather, it would account for the ongoing impact of hate crimes both off and on campus.

Another important study into the experiences of Muslim students was conducted in 2017-18 by the UK's National Union of Students (NUS). This project surveyed 578 Muslim students from across Britain and comprising a diverse array of ethnic backgrounds. Its headline findings, which reverberated in national media, were quite sobering in that a third of respondents had experienced some type of abuse or crime at their place of study and 20 percent had been the direct victim of verbal abuse (NUS 2018). The vast majority of these respondents (79%) believed the abuse to be of an Islamophobic nature. Remarkably, although most students said they would report a hate crime, only 42% trusted their institution and a quarter outright did not believe the institution would respond appropriately. The report also drew attention to the impact on students of the UK's counter-terrorism policy PREVENT, which I will come back to. The recommendations of the report in terms of addressing Islamophobia are not dissimilar to those of Stevenson and include calls for sharing "best practice" around hate crime reporting, training for key staff and so forth. They do, however, focus more squarely on student unions and give special recognition to the fact that female Muslim students are more adversely affected by Islamophobia.

Alongside the more sporadic focus on Muslim students, the wider issue of the BAME awarding gap has in recent years come front and centre, with student groups, institutions and the government all calling for urgent action – the UK government's Office for Students (OfS) has pledged to eliminate the gap by 2030[2]. These calls have generally been framed within two agendas, internationalization and curriculum decolonization. Briefly, internationalization is driven by Western institutions' increasing reliance on international (especially Asian) students prompting the need to better accommodate and include them academically, pedagogically and culturally. Curriculum decolonization, on the other hand, is driven by a more thoroughgoing political agenda that indicts the mutually constitutive links between Western higher education and the projects of Western imperialism and colonialism throughout the modern period. Thus, it is aimed at a fundamental reimagining of higher education as a space of knowledge production and dissemination (cf. Charles 2019). Whereas most institutions would probably have been happy simply to 'internationalize' their provision, students have rightly tended to push for decolonization as a way to comprehensively guarantee justice and inclusion, and their commitment to decolonization is having considerable impact, as a growing number of universities embrace the agenda and have even formally acknowledged that the attainment gap is in

---

[2] See https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/office-for-students-universities-must-eliminate-equality-gaps/ (retrieved 30/04/2020)

reality an *awarding* gap.[3] However, in order to be most effective the movement should be mindful of the fact that – questions of solidarity notwithstanding – general categories for referring to racial/ethnic minority groups such as 'BAME' or its American counterpart 'people of color' can elide inter- and intra-group dynamics and nuances. The movement can sharpen its analytical and practical focus through the sort of analysis I am proposing below. After all, in addition to racial brutalities, Western colonialism historically proceeded through the marginalization or outright erasure of the *religious* knowledges of non-European peoples. Whether through Christianity or secularism, Western expansionism has sought to restructure the Global South epistemologically, cosmologically and culturally alongside its political and economic projects (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Mahmood 2006).

Theoretical pillar 1: Critical Race Theory (CRT)

This paper proceeds on the basis that it is no accident that the religious group doing the worst at university, Muslims, is also overwhelmingly non-white. According to the HESA data, nearly 70% of Muslim students in the UK are Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African. The remaining proportion are from a wide range of ethnicities, including white. By contrast, the same data show that the most successful groups are made up of mostly white students – 91.1% of Jewish students, 76.3% of Christian students, 75.8% of Spiritual students, and 91.4% of students with no religion. The fact that such a stark differential exists between white and non-white groups points directly to racism as a strong current in the HE sector. This has been well-documented in numerous studies focusing on BAME students and staff (e.g. Pilkington 2013; Rollock 2019); it is also now widely accepted across the sector (Bhopal and Pitkin 2018; UUK and NUS 2019). Race intersects with Muslimness in complex ways, and there is often an expectation that Muslims are exclusively brown and black people. A study by Moosavi (2015) shows that upon converting to Islam, white Muslims become perceived by other white people as brown/black and can therefore lose some of the privileges their whiteness would normally afford them. Similarly, a US study by Maghbouleh (2017) shows that although Iranian-Americans are categorized as white by the US government, they are nonetheless subject to racism because White (European) Americans associate their Iranianness with brownness and Muslimness. Thus, (perceived) Muslimness seems to go hand in hand with racialization and minoritization in white-majority societies.

I argue here that an effective strategy for closing the Muslim awarding gap, and indeed for thinking about Islamophobia in general, would approach the racialization (brownification) of Muslims through CRT. This is because CRT offers a set of incisive theoretical and practical ideas for addressing racism in all its forms. Without such focused clarity, there is a danger that strategies become platitudinous and rudderless. Unfortunately, this has been a characteristic of anti-racist work in the past. Commenting on the non-existence of a coherent body of anti-racist thought, Gillborn (2006: 13) argues:

> The absence of an anti-racist orthodoxy can be a source of strength. Racism takes many forms and so anti-racism must be flexible and constantly adapt. However, the absence of a dogmatic 'manual' of anti-racism does not require that we avoid all attempts to systematize our critical approaches and conceptual starting points. Unfortunately, in many ways, anti-racism has fallen into this trap: our awareness of the multifaceted and constantly changing nature of racism may have led inadvertently to a failure properly to interrogate our conceptual history and theoretical frameworks.

For Gillborn, anti-racist analyses have been unable to i) clearly describe what specifically makes them anti-racist, and ii) offer an adequate point of departure for exploring educational theory, policy and practice. CRT can address these shortcomings. Interestingly, some of the solutions being proposed in

---

HE today already resemble core CRT ideas. For instance, spaces in which students and staff can talk about their experiences of race/racism are increasingly seen as paramount in the sector. This idea resonates with CRT's emphasis on storytelling, as we will see. Likewise, the concept of micro-aggressions, another key weapon in the CRT arsenal, is also now widely used to account for how racism operates and is experienced. Where most institutions flinch, however, is at CRT's insistence that racism is not an aberration but the norm in Western societies and that the status quo is effectively a perpetuation of white supremacy.

Originating in US legal scholarship, CRT takes to task both mainstream and critical discourses of race for failing to understand the ingrained and endemic nature of racism in dominant Western cultures, policies and institutions. This also means that CRT scholars are deeply suspicious of mainstream policies of race equality and notions of 'colour-blindness' and 'meritocracy' (cf. Warmington 2019). However, it is important not to misunderstand the intentions of CRT: the argument is *not* that all white people are always racist. Rather, CRT is concerned with covert, unintentional and micro-aggressive forms of racism as well as its crude forms. It sees race as a socially constructed phenomenon that produces powerful, lasting and deeply inequitable social distinctions. Equally, the idea of 'white supremacy' is not meant to suggest that all white people either belong to far-right groups or secretly desire to do so. Rather, it draws attention to *the ideology of whiteness* and refers to a socio-political system that invariably advantages white people whilst making this seem natural (cf. Delgado and Stefancic 2000; ibid.). Applied to education, these ideas have been instrumental in documenting and theorizing how the very institution of education is complicit in systematically disadvantaging racially minoritized groups (e.g. Delgado 1995; Crenshaw et al. 1995; Gillborn 2014; Ladson-Billings 1998). Finally, it is also not the case that CRT focuses on race at the expense of all other social characteristics. Owing not least to the work of one of its founding figures, Kimberlé Crenshaw, CRT favours intersectional analyses because oppression and minoritization work multi-axially (cf. Crenshaw 1991; Hobbel and Chapman 2009).

From this foundation, CRT offers a set of conceptual and strategic tools to make visible, indict and fight racism. Key among these are the following three, which are particularly useful for addressing the Muslim awarding gap:

- (counter) storytelling
- interest convergence
- interest divergence

Storytelling, fictional or not, enables racialized minorities to share and come to terms with their experiences of racism. As such, it is a powerful method for building alliances and strategies based on empathy, reflection and deep understanding. It also helps to create a common language whilst opening doors to a wealth of granular qualitative accounts in the form of personal narratives, oral histories and so forth. Furthermore, it is an important way to engage other groups, including white groups, in discussions about racism and thus offers an opportunity for minorities to claim a stake in public spaces and 'speak back'. This sort of counter-discursive work is crucial in the case of Muslims as their unique position at the intersection of race and religion makes it very easy for their racist victimization to be denied. Van Dijk (1993) has shown how racist discourse – especially 'elite' discourse – works by constantly denying its own racism. This has the function of delegitimizing efforts to fight racism and even making those efforts seem irrational and ridiculous. In the case of Muslims, the race-religion nexus provides racists with ample room for manoeuvre as they are able to clothe their racist attacks as 'sensible' concerns over cultural differences, immigration, integration, and so on. Cheng's study (2017) of the Australian parliament, to take just one example, shows that Australian Muslims

are cast in such culturally racist terms without being seen as a 'race' in the more conventional sense. Ultimately, no one knows what it is like to live at the intersection of a demonized race and religion better than the Muslims who experience it every day. Therefore, their voices and stories, their counter discourses, must be central in any work aiming to eliminate the awarding gap.

Another powerful CRT concept is 'interest convergence', which posits that white elites will only tolerate advances in racial equality when it is in their interest to do so, or rather when not doing so poses greater risks to their privilege and dominance (Bell 1980). The routine demonization of Muslim populations in Western societies since the 9/11 attacks is well-documented (e.g. Shain 2010; Kundnani 2015). In this general climate of hostility, it is perfectly sensible for Muslim students to be suspicious of rhetorics and policies that purport to ameliorate their situation. The key question to ask is why, when Muslims continue to largely be positioned as the enemies of Western civilization, does there seem to be pockets of activity aimed at supporting and including them? The cynicism in asking such a question is not lost on me. But I think it is well-founded. If, for example, Muslims are offered legal protection under the UK's Equality Act 2010 by virtue of their religious identity, then another policy, PREVENT, has singled them out and added to their demonization (cf. Novelli 2017; Scott-Baumann 2017). Likewise, if the HE sector is now committed to closing the awarding gap, then that policy exists against the backdrop of chronic institutional disadvantage. I have no doubt that most academics and students are genuinely well-intentioned when it comes to their Muslim students and peers. However, institutional cultures and practices have a life of their own, and interest convergence is a useful way to ask relevant questions in this regard and hold institutions to account. For instance, as I mentioned earlier, the 'internationalization' agenda has largely been driven by the *economic* logic of exploiting international student 'markets'. The very real questions that arise as a result regarding inclusion and equity are only considered by institutions after the fact and in a highly reactive manner. Thus, Muslim students – whether domestic or international – must be conscious of these logics and question the support/inclusion mechanisms that universities now so 'graciously' offer them. Through the concept of interest convergence, Muslim students can gain a measure of control and demand more proactive and sincere strategies from their places of study.

Finally, possibly even more important than interest convergence in the context of the Muslim awarding gap is the concept of 'interest divergence', which refers to situations in which white people believe their interests are best served by further marginalizing ethnic/racial minorities. As we have repeatedly witnessed after the 2008 financial crash, interest divergence tends to happen especially during times of economic hardship and manifests in increased demonization of non-white people regardless of their settlement and citizenship status. Here, racial identity seems to take precedent over class identity. As Gillborn (2014: 30) writes, "when economic conditions become harder, we can hypothesize that white elites will perceive an even greater need to placate poor whites by demonstrating the continued benefits of their whiteness." The Trump presidential campaign in 2016 and the Brexiteers' rhetoric during their campaign to take the UK out of the European Union are just two examples of how socio-economic problems were blamed on non-white immigrants and communities by political elites. These campaigns clearly played on a sense of common whiteness that was under attack by non-white 'enemies' externally and internally. They even did this through spreading fake news, as Trump did when he retweeted the white nationalist lie that 81% of white homicide victims in the US are killed by African-Americans (15% is more accurate), or when he retweeted misinformation about Muslim immigrants by the British far-right group Britain First (see Sides and Tesler 2018).

Many Muslim students will have felt first-hand the effects of interest divergence through policies such as PREVENT, which, since becoming statutory in 2015, has required all educational institutions in the

UK to monitor their students for 'signs of radicalization'. All available data, including the government's own, show that Muslims have been disproportionally affected by PREVENT (see for example HM Government 2019; Novelli 2017; UK Home Office 2018). Interest divergence works through the policy's pivotal concept, Fundamental British Values (FBVs), which assumes some commonality in experiences of whiteness as well as a link between whiteness and 'Britishness'. In defining extremism as "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values [...]" (HM Government 2015) then singling out Muslims as particularly prone to radicalization, the policy problematizes *Muslimness* (not just Islamist extremism) in British society and works to distance Muslim people from its understanding of 'the British nation'(cf. Breen and Meer 2019; Vincent 2018). This creates a sense of alienation and exclusion among young Muslims that is now well-evidenced, including in the NUS Muslim student survey cited earlier.

This backdrop has implications for the awarding gap. Islamophobic and racist incidents on campus may appear as one-off events that can be reported and even dealt with, but the everyday reality for Muslim students is one of near-constant demonization, exclusion and surveillance. The pressure this exerts on individuals is huge and it will almost certainly affect their academic performance. For instance, one of the respondents to the NUS survey described the impact that suspicion of Muslims has had on her: "In lessons I found myself not speaking my true opinion because of fear of being misreported [...]" (NUS 2018: 12). Another woman said: "[...] I don't feel comfortable debating Islamophobia as people don't take the subject seriously and think we're playing victims [...]" while a male student simply drew attention to: "Being under the radar. Potentially reported to PREVENT. Being misunderstood" (ibid.: 15). Universities can be much more vociferous in condemning the status quo for their Muslim students. But instead, any action they take is often ambiguous and self-congratulatory in that it involves the institution telling itself and its prospective clientele how 'diverse', 'inclusive' and 'supportive' it is. However, as Ahmed has shown, "the speech acts that commit the university to equality are *non-performatives*. They 'work' precisely by not bringing about the effects that they name" (2006: 105, my emphasis). In this way, the mere description of the university as a place of equity, or as committed to equity, comes to take the place of actual equity, which does not and may never exist.

At the time of writing, we are in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic and there is a consensus that we are headed for perhaps the worst economic crash in history. It is unlikely that the plight of Muslim students will feature on the list of policymakers' and institutions' priorities. And there is already evidence that *both the disease and the measures to control it* are hitting BAME people the hardest (e.g. Campbell 2020; Roberts 2020). Universities are now trying to prepare for the 'new normal' (post-COVID-19) without really having solved the problems of the 'old normal'. That is, the BAME, Muslim and other awarding gaps all existed long before the pandemic, yet the sector is now gearing up for partially or wholly new forms of provision without really thinking through the ramifications of this for disadvantaged groups. We find ourselves in an extremely sensitive moment when 'pragmatic', 'necessary' or 'wartime' economic decision-making at the top could once again side-line the interests of ethnic minorities and especially Muslims, who are also among the poorest people in the UK. An interest-divergence approach gives us the conceptual and historical clarity to ask the appropriate questions and present the appropriate evidence to not only hold policymaking to account but also help push it in the right direction.

Theoretical pillar 2: Religification

For devout Muslims – Sunni, Shia or of any other denomination – Islam as a religion is often the single most important aspect of their identity, providing them with their most meaningful and positive life experiences. This is why many Muslims describe themselves, and indeed feel, as Muslim above

everything else (see Eade 1994; Ghaffar-Kucher 2011). I mean in no way to suggest that 'Muslim' is a monolithic category. Indeed, like 'BAME', the term 'Muslim' also glosses over a truly dizzying array of social, cultural, national, economic and even religious and secular positions (see *inter alia* Cesari 2013; Fadil 2009; Gholami 2015). This diversity notwithstanding, my argument is that Islam-as-religion has to be afforded special attention in our efforts to eradicate the Muslim awarding gap (and guard against its return). This is for two reasons. Firstly, Muslims who prioritize their religious identity may not readily identify with racial or other categories and will likely even experience hate crimes against them in a distinctly *religious* way, as we will see. Secondly, there are people from Muslim backgrounds who do not identify as Muslims or with Islam. Some even actively resist the label 'Muslim'. Yet, these people will have 'Muslimness' thrust upon them – positively or negatively – by wider society. This sort of ascribed identification references dynamics beyond what we would conventionally call racialization exactly because it involves categories of 'Islam' and 'Muslim', which in the post-9/11 world have become uniquely associated with extremism and terrorism in addition to tropes of backwardness, irrationality, rigid conservatism and so on.

A useful way to conceptualize these two forms of Muslim identification is through what Ghaffar-Kucher terms 'religification', "the simultaneous ascription and co-option of religious identity" (2011: 14). It involves being identified by (Islamophobic) others as Muslim, but it also involves the choice of Muslims to embrace and foreground their religious identity. Ghaffar-Kucher uses the term to understand something about belonging among Pakistani-American youth. She draws attention to the emotive notion of belonging and describes it as 'thicker' than the legalistic concept of citizenship. Thus, when ostracized from mainstream narratives of nationhood, as Muslims often are in Western countries, their sense of belonging (to a Muslim community) is 'activated'. Notably, Islamophobic discrimination works by denying Muslim youth any other identity positions (e.g. Pakistani, American, Desi). They are invariably seen as 'Muslim', which transcends racial and other categories. Paradoxically, then, Islamophobia racializes Muslims but denies them a racial/national identity of their choice, or relegates that identity to a level of insignificance compared to the person's 'Muslimness'. The flip side is that some Muslims choose to emphasize their religious identity, not least as a response to the pressures of Islamophobia. But this can itself work to reinforce their status as 'outsiders' and 'non-citizens' (Ghaffar-Kucher 2011: 33). What is clear is that regardless of how an individual from a Muslim background may feel about their various identities, and whatever their relationship with the religion of Islam, Islamophobia thoroughly embroils them in all its 'issues of Muslimness'. They become entangled in an endless web of defending, putting right, resisting, denouncing, attacking, crying, apologizing, being diplomatic…all of which unfold in a noxious socio-political environment.

'Religification' is a useful concept for getting at these issues. However, I wish to build on it in two ways to make it more readily applicable here. The first follows from the observation that the two dimensions of religification are not equal. Those that thrust Muslimness on others occupy a more powerful and privileged position than the Muslims who choose to foreground their religious identity. An important ramification is the heavy toll this power differential exerts on Muslim individuals' sense of well-being, which can have grave educational consequences. The idea of 'racial battle fatigue' and its negative educational impact are well-documented (see Smith et al. 2011). For some Muslim students, however, there is an added religious dimension. Sometimes, this takes the form of direct discrimination and/or exclusion because of their religion. As a Muslim student interviewed by Stevenson (2014) reported:

> It's just becoming so clear that religion stands in the way of me making friends with other people. Like on one level you are friends but it's not really friendship, not like I would like. But they don't want to cross a line that they seem to have drawn (p. 58).

But trying to avoid this sort of situation can itself have negative consequences. My own previous research with young devout British-Iranians (Gholami 2014) shows that living in social spaces that are hostile towards Islam/Muslims can force some Muslims to make 'concessions' on their religious practices and preferences – a partial loss of *religious* control and identity simply to socially survive in mainstream society. This can result in a perennial sense of unhappiness, self-questioning and even guilt. Thus, Muslims' experience of hate crimes is not separate from their religious or spiritual experience.

The second way I wish to build on the concept of religification is by exploring some of its institutional dimensions, which link the concept to secularism. Western universities are largely secular, though 'elite' ones like Harvard and Cambridge often have a historical connection with Christianity (Hill 2017). A problem with much of the literature on secularism and HE has been its focus on *the extent to which* universities have a 'secularizing effect' on religious students. Unsurprisingly, a key finding has been that being at university does not necessarily affect students' religiosity and that students deploy a range of strategies for navigating the secular spaces of the university (see Reid 2017). I would argue, however, that this research premise misses a key point. A better question would be: what is it like to be, and study as, a religious student at a secular university? Asking this question is important because a) the fact that students do not 'lose their faith' at university does not mean secularism as an institutional force is insignificant; and b) the fact that students deploy strategies for navigating secularism does not mean they have fully overcome the challenges it poses for them. Such a question, then, draws our attention to forms of *institutional religification,* which exist despite equality and diversity measures because the ethos and epistemology of the university are secular, *and because secularism, as a social, political and cultural force, is not neutral or equitable*.

The work of Jouili (2009) is instructive here. She has studied Muslim students at French and German universities and reminds us that secular discourses tend to dissociate ideas of success, civility, rationality and professionalism from religion and religiosity. As we saw, this is all the more pronounced for Muslims who are additionally associated with extremism/terrorism and notions of a primitive, sexist, Middle-Eastern culture. This means that their practices and demands will provoke a negative response from those who feel that secular public spaces 'really' or primarily belong to them. Using the Islamic ritual prayers, *Salah,* as an example, Jouili writes:

> When Muslims pray within a non-Muslim social environment, the prayer gets invested with meanings that are not related to the enacted bodily practice as such. Confronted with a hostile and wary Other, *Salah* is de-contextualized and emerges as a site of difference and of contestation (p. 459).

There is a secular politics of space at play here. Despite being presented as spaces of freedom and inclusivity, university spaces favour types of practice, indeed rituals, that are commensurate with their underpinning secular ethos. In so doing, they implicitly sanction the problematization of Islamic practice for no other reason than it is happening. Of course, the specific dynamics of this will vary between Western countries depending on the type of secularism that animates public life. French *laïcité,* for instance, is much more normative than the sort of Judaeo-Christian secularism that operates in Britain (see Hurd 2009). But on the whole the problematization of religion, and Islam in particular, is a characteristic of secularisms across Western societies, including in educational institutions (cf. Asad 2003; Hurd 2009; Stevenson 2014; Vincent 2018). This is coupled with the fact, as Mahmood shows in her seminal work on 'secular hermeneutics' (2006), that the power *and goal* of Western secularism consist in (re)producing a type of Muslim religious subject that is compatible with liberal political rule. This is done systematically via well-funded, government-backed political and educational endeavours geared entirely towards problematizing extant (or 'traditional') forms of Islamic religious practice and creating 'moderate' reinterpretations in their place.

It is also significant, to go back to Jouili, that performing religious practices at university can open up those practices to contestation and re-signification. When arriving at university, many Muslim students will only ever have had a spiritual relationship with their faith. *Salah* is above all a way to connect with God spiritually. They will no doubt be aware of societal debates surrounding Islam and Muslims and possibly have had experiences of Islamophobia, but they will likely also have had access to round-the-clock family and community support. It is not unreasonable, then, to think that some of these Muslims will be discombobulated, to say the least, by the experience of having themselves and their spiritual practices put into wholly different positions, none of them spiritual. In a very short time – and in addition to all the other stresses that come with starting life as a university student – they have to learn to cope in a powerful new environment, a space of scientific and scholarly excellence that they sense ultimately dislikes but tolerates them (cf. Stevenson 2014). The inimical opinions of prominent scientists like Richard Dawkins about religions are well known – people who pride themselves on being open-minded yet adopt remarkably narrow and often ill-informed views on religious beliefs and practices. These academics tend to go well beyond a legitimate critique of religions to peddle a decidedly anti-religious agenda replete with incredulity, condescension and ridicule. The evolutionary biologist Jerry Coyne, for example, believes science and religion to be "at war" and dismisses all religious belief as "wishful thinking and ancient superstitions". He also sees no problem in making the judgement that "all serious ethical philosophy is secular ethical philosophy" (Coyne 2018, n.p.). My aim here is not to challenge the secular foundations of public Western universities or to argue that views such as Coyne's should be censored. Not at all. What I am keen to get across is that in the eyes of devout students, academics like Dawkins and Coyne are the very embodiment of 'the university' – the university is their 'home turf', so to speak. *They* are the ones who *really* belong; *they* are the most senior and powerful people leading their institutions (and *they* think religious people are essentially stupid).

The likes of Dawkins have carved out lucrative careers for themselves by tapping into the popular appetite for sensationalism and moral panics around especially minority religions. However, there exists a long history in elite Western higher education of a culture of white, male privilege that has actively sabotaged efforts at diversification and demonized racial and religious 'others'. Examining historical records from Oxford and Cambridge universities, Deslandes (1998) shows that the super-privileged, white 'Oxbridge' university men of the mid-nineteenth century were deeply fearful of diversity in general and of racial and religious 'foreigners' in particular, whose presence they saw as demeaning and detrimental to the character of the university. For example, an 1870 Cambridge publication titled 'Moslem in Cambridge' responded to the abolition of some Anglican religious tests by depicting the university as having become invaded by Muslims and foreigners and made it absolutely clear that diversity of this sort would negatively alter the "ancient and grave University" (ibid.: 67-8). These cultures of privilege form a great deal of the current norm at Western universities. They work at macro and micro levels to produce an atmosphere that alienates Muslim students, *despite presenting itself as inclusive and friendly*. Therefore, without a serious and sustained effort by universities to mitigate the effects of institutional religification, and an understanding that conventional notions of race/racism cannot adequately address issues of religion, policies of inclusion and strategies to tackle the awarding gap will likely be ineffective.

Conclusion

My goal throughout this paper has been to contribute to broader debates around Islamophobia and race. I have attempted to demonstrate that approaches to Islamophobia must take as their point of departure the intersection of race and religion and keep both sets of dynamics firmly in sight as they proceed. Giving primacy to race in the context of Islamophobia is parochial and conceptually narrow;

it risks foreclosing other important experiential and analytical avenues. This is not an attempt on my part to fully disentangle race and religion or to undermine the importance of race. Rather, I have been concerned to show that Muslims live both racialized *and* religified lives *whether by choice or not*. Thus, whilst Muslimness is a racialized category and is often experienced as such, hate crimes can also have a distinctly religious dimension. Muslims' demonization, ostracization and disadvantage unfold along these two vectors. On this basis, I have argued that the racialization (brownification) of Muslims be approached through CRT, whereas 'religification' is a useful way to conceptualize their religious positioning and disadvantage. However, I have argued that we must build on the concept of religification by i) drawing attention to the power dynamics involved in Muslim identifications and the effects – including religious effects – this can have on Muslims; and ii) by exploring some of its institutional dimensions, especially its link to secularism and long-standing traditions of white, male privilege.

Whilst the Muslim student awarding gap has served as a useful case to illustrate my broader argument, the sort of analysis I have espoused will also have useful application in addressing the awarding gap itself. The OfS pledge to eliminate the BAME awarding gap by 2030 in the UK is an incredibly important goal and certainly has my support. But I would warn against the complacency of thinking that the Muslim awarding gap will also disappear because it is neatly wrapped up in the broader BAME issue. That assumption would itself be problematic, not to mention pretentious, as it would perpetuate the fallacy that Muslims are necessarily BAME. A coherent strategy must include all Muslim students regardless of race, domicile or any other characteristic. The assumption also has the problem of eliding differences between the many categories of BAME students and precluding the possibility that Muslim students may have unique needs. Therefore, it makes sense to approach the Muslim awarding gap as a discrete problem and seek a targeted strategy, *even if only to better inform* the broader BAME and decolonization agendas. As we have seen, however, it is unlikely that existing recommendations for addressing Muslims' problems in higher education will be adequate. 'Standard' measures such as religious literacy training, rewarding 'best practice', better hate crime reporting mechanisms and the like seem woefully inadequate given the enormity and complexity of the task. Instead, I have explored some of the ways in which the conceptual tools offered by CRT and religification can be utilized to produce effective strategies for eliminating the awarding gap. These relate to questioning institutional motivations and histories whilst accounting for the ongoing effects of hostile policies and a generally toxic social environment on Muslims' well-being and academic performance.

References:

Abdelkader, E. 2017. A Comparative Analysis of Islamophobia: France, UK, Germany, Netherlands and Sweden. *Journal of Islamic and Near Eastern Law* 16, no. 1: 29-63 https://escholarship.org/uc/item/870099f4

Ahmed, S. 2006. The Nonperformativity of Antiracism. *Meridians* 7, no. 1: 104-126

Alexander, C. 2017. Raceing Islamophobia. In *Islamophbia: Still a Challenge for Us All,* ed. F. Elahi and O. Khan, 13-17. Runneymede. https://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/Islamophobia%20Report%202018%20FINAL.pdf (retrieved 06/05/2020)

Allen, Chris. 2018. Why UK's working definition of Islamophobia as a 'type of racism' is a historic step. *The Conversation.* https://theconversation.com/why-uks-working-definition-of-islamophobia-as-a-type-of-racism-is-a-historic-step-107657 (retrieved 05/05/2020)

All Party Parliamentary Group. 2019. Islamophobia Defined. All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims.https://static1.squarespace.com/static/599c3d2febbd1a90cffdd8a9/t/5bfd1ea3352f531a6170ceee/1543315109493/Islamophobia+Defined.pdf (retrieved 05/05/2020)

Asad, Talal. 2003. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity.* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Bell, D. 1980. Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest Convergence Dilemma. *Harvard Law Review* 93: 518-533.

Beydoun, K. A. 2016. Islamophobia: Toward a Legal Definition and Framework. *Columbia Law Review* 116, no. 1: 108-125 https://columbialawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/November-2016-11-Beydoun.pdf

Bhopal, K. and C. Pitkin. 2018. Investigating higher education institutions and their views on the Race Equality Charter: University and College Union Research Report. https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/9535/Investigating-higher-education-institutions-and-their-views-on-the-Race-Equality-Charter-Sept-18/pdf/REC_report_Sep18_fp.pdf (retrieved 01/05/2020)

Breen, D. and N. Meer. 2019. Securing whiteness?: Critical Race Theory (CRT) and the securitization of Muslims in education. *Identities* 26, no. 5: 595-613. DOI: 10.1080/1070289X.2019.1589981

Campbell, Paul, Ian. 2020. Coronavirus is hitting BAME communities hard on every front. *The Conversation.* https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-is-hitting-bame-communities-hard-on-every-front-136327 (retrieved 14/12/2020)

Cesari, Jocelyne. 2013. *Why the West Fears Islam: An Exploration of Muslims in Liberal Democracies*. New York: Palgrame Macmillan.

Chan-Malik, Sylvia. 2018. *Being Muslim: A Cultural History of Women of Color in American Islam.* New York: NYU Press.

Charles, E. 2019. Decolonizing the Curriculum. *Insights,* 32 no.1: 24 http://doi.org/10.1629/uksg.475

Cheng, Jennifer, E. 2017. *Anti-racist Discourse on Muslims in the Australian Parliament.* Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Clay, R. 2017. Islamophobia: Psychologists are studying the impact of anti-Muslim sentiment and exploring ways to prevent it. *Monitor on Psychology (American Psychological Association)* 48, no. 4: https://www.apa.org/monitor/2017/04/islamophobia

Comaroff, John. and Jean Comaroff. 1991. *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 1: Christianity, Colonialism, And Consciousness In South Africa.* Chicago: Chicago University Press

Coyne, Jerry. 2018. Yes, There is a War Between Science and Religion. *The Conversation:* https://theconversation.com/yes-there-is-a-war-between-science-and-religion-108002 (retrieved 12/12/2020)

Crenshaw, K. 1991. Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review* 43, no.6: 1241-1299.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas. 1995. *Critical race theory: Critical writings that formed the movement.* New York: New York Press.

Daguerre, Anne. 2017. In Trump's America, universities' solidarity with Muslim students has become even more important. LSE US Centre. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2017/11/28/in-trumps-america-universities-solidarity-with-muslim-students-has-become-even-more-important/ (retrieved 09/04/2020)

Delgado, Richard. 1995. *Critical race theory. The cutting edge*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Delgado, Richard and Jean Stefancic. 2000. Introduction. In *Critical Race Theory: the cutting edge (second edition)* ed. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic. Philadelphia: Temple University Press

Deslandes, P. 1998. The Foreign Element: Newcomers and the Rhetoric of Race, Nation, and Empire in 'Oxbridge' Undergraduate Culture, 1850-1920. *The Journal of British Studies* 37, no. 1: 54-90

Di Angelo, Robin. 2017. Why It's So Hard to Talk to White People About Racism. *Huffpost.* https://www.huffpost.com/entry/why-its-so-hard-to-talk-to-white-people-about-racism_b_7183710?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cDovL3d3dy5nY29yci5vcmcvd2h5LWl0cy1zby1oYXJkLXRvLXRhbGstdG8td2hpdGUtcGVvcGxlLWFib3V0LXJhY2lzbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAJOQ--kxz48tcOAGugbt3n4pnOhJWXVfewwb1AhhPiwyskM4gI-T801I3DOk0ApsabnY7vO9JrZLfizlVKVjGuOGYqRDR0BPjU9BH-4fStc8tYIe3j3us2hInqZoKpTzuzAL_v6d69E-fvo_u-M6ZQ0b-6HwkO8XcEDHgRs0ESNa (retrieved 06/05/2020)

Eade, J. 1994. Identity, Nation and Religion: Educated Young Bangladeshi Muslims in London's 'East End'. *International Sociology* 9, no. 3: 377-394

Elahi, Farah and Khan, Omar. 2017. Introduction: What is Islamophobia. In *Islamophobia: Still a Challenge for Us All*, ed. F. Elahi and O. Khan, 5-13. Runnymede. https://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/Islamophobia%20Report%202018%20FINAL.pdf (retrieved 24/04/2020)

Fadil, N. 2009. Managing affects and sensibilities: the case of not-handshaking and not-fasting. *Social Anthropology* 17, no.4: 439-454. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8676.2009.00080.x

Fernando, S. 1984. Racism as a Cause of Depression. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 30, no. 1-2: 41-49. https://doi.org/10.1177/002076408403000107

Ghaffar-Kucher, A. 2011. The religification of Pakistani-American Youth. *American Educational Research Journal.* Advance online publication.
http://aer.sagepub.com/content/early/2011/08/02/0002831211414858

Gholami, Reza. 2015. *Secularism and Identity: Non-Islamiosity in the Iranian Diaspora.* London and New York: Routledge.

Gholami, R. 2014. 'Is This Islamic Enough?' Intra-Diasporic Secularism and Religious Experience in the Shi'a Iranian Diaspora in London. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 40, no. 1: 60-78
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1369183X.2013.782150

Gillborn, D. 2014. Racism as Policy: A Critical Race Analysis of Education Reforms in the United States and England. *The Educational Forum* 78, no. 1: 26-41, DOI: 10.1080/00131725.2014.850982

Gillborn, D. 2006. Critical Race Theory and Education: Racism and Antiracism in Educational Theory and Praxis. *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education* 27, no. 1: 11-32

Hill, Jonathan P. 2017. Religion and Higher Education in the United States: Extending the Research. In *Religion and Higher Education in Europe and North America,* ed. K. Aune and J. Stevenson, J., 25-39. London and New York: Routledge.

Hobbel, N. and T. Chapman. 2009. Beyond the Sole Category of Race: Using a CRT Intersectional Framework to Map Identity Projects. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 25, no. 2: 76-89

Horowitz, Juliana, Brown, Anna and Cox, Kiana. 2019. Race in America 2019. *Pew Research Centre*
https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/04/09/race-in-america-2019/ (retrieved 06/05/2020)

Housee, S. 2012. What's the point? Anti-racism and students' voices against Islamophobia. *Race Ethnicity and Education* 15, no.1: 101-120. DOI:10.1080/13613324.2012.638867

HM Government. 2019. Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent programme.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/853646/individuals-referred-supported-prevent-programme-apr2018-mar2019-hosb3219.pdf
(accessed 24/11/2020)

HM Government. 2015. *The Prevent Duty* https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance

Hurd, Elizabeth. 2008. *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jouili, J.S. 2009. Negotiating Secular Boundaries: Pious Micro-Practices of Muslim Women in French and German Public Spheres. *Social Anthropology* 17, no.4: 455-470.

Khosrojerdi, F. 2015. Muslim Female Students and Their Experiences of Higher Education in Canada. PhD Thesis, University of Western Ontario, Canada. Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository
https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/2896

Kundnani, Arun. 2015. *The Muslims Are Coming! Islamophobia, Extremism, and the Domestic War on Terror.* London: Verso

Ladson-Billings, G. 1998. Just What is Critical Race Theory and What's It Doing in a Nice Field Like Education?. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 11, no. 1: 7-24
https://doi.org/10.1080/095183998236863

Lean, Nathan. 2017. *The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Hatred of Muslims.* London: Pluto Press

MacCarthy, Claire. 2020. How Racism Harms Children. *Harvard Health Publishing* https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/how-racism-harms-children-2019091417788 (retrieved 25/04/2020)

Maghbouleh, Neda. 2017 *The Limits of Whiteness: Iranian Americans and the Everyday Politics of Race.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Mahmood, S. 2006. Secularism, Hermeneutics and Empire: the Politics of Islamic Reformation. *Public Culture* 18, no. 2: 323-347.

Macmaster, Natasha. 2020. Research Insight: Religion and Belief in UK Higher Education: Analysis of Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student data for 2017/18. *Advance HE.* https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/research-insight-religion-and-belief-uk-higher-education (retrieved 17/04/2020)

Moffat, J. and H. I. Yoo. 2020. Religion, Religiosity and Educational Attainment: Evidence From the Compulsory Education System in England. *Applied Economics* 52, no. 4: 430-442. DOI: 10.1080/00036846.2019.1646872

Moosavi, L. 2015. White Privilege in the Lives Of Muslim Converts in Britain. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38, no. 11: 1918-1933. DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2014.952751

Novelli, M. 2017. Education and Countering Violent Extremism: Western Logics from South to North. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 47, no.6: 835-851 http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2017.1341301

National Union of Student. 2018. The experience of Muslim students in 2017-18. *National Union of Students.* https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/the-experience-of-muslim-students-in-2017-18 (retrieved 16/04/2020)

Pilkington, A. 2013. The Interacting Dynamics of Institutional Racism in Higher Education. *Race Ethnicity and Education* 16, no. 2: 225-245. DOI:10.1080/13613324.2011.646255

Reid, Lydia. 2017. Navigating the Secular: Religious Students' Experience of Attending a Red-Brick University. In *Religion and Higher Education in Europe and North America,* ed. K. Aune and J. Stevenson, J., 149-163. London and New York: Routledge.

Roberts, Joe. 2020. High number of BAME coronavirus deaths 'magnifies UK's institutional racism'. *The Metro,* https://metro.co.uk/2020/04/23/high-number-bame-coronavirus-deaths-magnifies-uks-institutional-racism-12597470/?ito=cbshare (retrieved 28/04/2020)

Rollock, Nicola. 2019. Staying Power: the Career Experiences and Strategies of UK Black Female Professors. *University and College Union.* https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/10075/Staying-Power/pdf/UCU_Rollock_February_2019.pdf (retrieved 07/05/2020)

Runnymede Trust. 1997. *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All.* Runnymede. https://www.runnymedetrust.org/companies/17/74/Islamophobia-A-Challenge-for-Us-All.html (retrieved 10/05/2020)

Scott-Baumann, A. 2017. Ideology, Utopia and Islam on Campus: How to Free Speech A Little From Its Own Terrors. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice* 12, no.2: 159–176. https://doi.org/10.1177/1746197917694183

Shain, Farzana. 2010. *The New Folk Devils?: Muslim Boys and Education in England.* Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.

Shryock, Andrew. 2010. Introduction: Islam as an Object of Fear and Affection. In *Islamophobia/Islamophilia: Beyond the Politics of Enemy and Friend*, ed. A. Shryock, 1-29. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Sides, John. and Michael Tesler. 2018. Donald Trump is a symbol of white identity politics in Europe, too. *The Washington Post* https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/06/21/donald-trump-is-a-symbol-of-white-identity-politics-in-europe-too/ (retrieved 27/04/2020)

Smith, William A., Man Hung and Jeremy D. Franklin. 2011. Racial Battle Fatigue and the Miseducation of Black Men: Microaggressions, Societal Problems and Environmental Stress. *Journal of Negro Education* 80, no. 1: 63–82. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41341106

Statham, P. 2016. How ordinary people view Muslim group rights in Britain, the Netherlands, France and Germany: significant 'gaps' between majorities and Muslims?. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42, no. 2: 217-236. DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2015.1082288

Stevenson, Jacqueline. 2018. Muslim students in UK higher education: Issues of inequality and inequity. *Bridge Institute for Research and Policy*, http://azizfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Bridge-Higher-Education-report-2-FINAL.pdf (retrieved 30/04/2020)

Stevenson, J. 2014. Internationalisation and Religious Inclusion in United Kingdom Higher Education. *Higher Education Quarterly* 68, no. 1: 46–64. DOI: 10.1111/hequ.12033

Streeting, Wes. 2019. Yes, Islamophobia is a type of racism. Here's why. *The Guardian,* https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/15/islamophobia-racism-definition-free-speech-theresa-may (retrieved 09/05/2020)

Taras, Raymond. 2012 *Xenophobia and Islamophobia in Europe.* Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press.

Ulriksen, Lars, Lene M. Madsen, and Henriette T. Holmegaard. 2017. The First-Year Experience of Non-Traditional Students in Danish Science and Engineering University Programmes. *European Educational Research Journal* 16, no. 1: 45-61 DOI: 10.1177/1474904116678628

UK Home Office. 2018. Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2017 to March 2018. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/763254/individuals-referred-supported-prevent-programme-apr2017-mar2018-hosb3118.pdf (retrieved 22/10/2020)

Universities UK and National Union of Students. 2019. *Black, Asian And Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities: #CLOSINGTHEGAP.* https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2019/bame-student-attainment-uk-universities-closing-the-gap.pdf (retrieved 15/04/2020)

Van Dijk, Teun. 1993. *Elite Discourse and Racism.* London: Sage Publications

Vincent, C. 2018. Civic virtue and values teaching in a 'post-secular' world. *Theory and Research in Education* 16, no. 2: 226-243. DOI: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1477878518774128

Virkama, Anna. 2017. Invisible Islam: Muslim Student Migrants' Everyday Practices in French Secular Universities. In *Religion and Higher Education in Europe and North America,* ed. K. Aune and J. Stevenson, J., 90-109. London and New York: Routledge.

Warmington, P. 2019. Critical Race Theory in England: Impact and Opposition. *Identities* no.1:20-37 DOI: 10.1080/1070289X.2019.1587907

Zieler, Christoffer. 2016. Danish People's Party wants to shut down University of Copenhagen prayer room. *Uniavisen* https://uniavisen.dk/en/danish-peoples-party-wants-to-shut-down-university-of-copenhagen-prayer-room/ (retrieved 30/04/2020)