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# Islamophobia in Scotland

A Rearticulation with Race and Racism

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MRes Sociology and Research Methods

## Abstract

Through a qualitative analysis of interviews with Muslim women living in two Scottish cities, this research attempts to problematise a number of assumptions relating to Islamophobia, race and racism in Scotland today. It draws on both empirical data and a number of theoretical strands to critique liberalism's simultaneous reliance on and dismissal of race, upon which I argue the contemporary defence of Islamophobia relies. I discuss the framing of Islamophobia as hate crime, and the limitations this places on our understanding of racism more widely. I then explore the role that visibility plays in the racialisation of Muslim women, and how this may explain particular patterns in Islamophobic attacks. The final chapter engages with place to look at how perceptions of Scotland underpin the ways in which Islamophobia can and cannot be talked about. My conclusion makes the case for a reconceptualisation of Islamophobia which is able to contribute to anti-racist work already being done by Muslim women in Scotland, and points to the need for further research into the gendering of Islamophobia as a form of cultural racism.

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## Introduction

It is one thing to have a world that is unequal, it is quite another if that inequality cannot even be noted (Valluvan 2016: 6).

Amongst the maelstrom of commentary, writing and research on Islamophobia in the UK today, two things appear strangely absent. Much of this burgeoning literature seems to have been divorced from sociological understandings of race and racism, specifically structural racism (see Hussain and Bagguley 2012; Moosavi 2014). Furthermore, Scotland's role in contemporary Islamophobia remains largely ignored by Scottish and English scholars alike (Kidd and Jamieson 2011). Various arguments have been put forward to justify these absences, some of which have come to be firmly embedded in 'common-sense' understandings. Indeed, 'Muslims are not a race' is a remark I often hear in response to my using the terms 'Islamophobia' and 'racism' in the same sentence; unsurprising when this is a narrative we hear echoed across the political spectrum (Tyrer 2013). To see that popular understandings of racism and Islamophobia – such as notions of intolerance and bigotry – are widely projected onto England perhaps requires a little more unearthing. However, a rudimentary look at contemporary Scottish politics suggests that this is increasingly the case, particularly in the 'post-Brexit' context in which we now find ourselves, and where we have seen Scotland vote overwhelmingly in favour of remaining in the EU against a current of renewed British isolationism (see Sturgeon 2016).

Such assumptions have always seemed to me to not only be couched in fundamental misunderstandings of how race and racism operate, but also to be obscuring some perhaps less palatable stories and experiences of life in Scotland. Statistics show that Muslim women are more likely to be targeted in Islamophobic attacks, and even more so if they are “visibly Muslim” (Tell Mama 2016: 10), yet much of the current literature on Islamophobia lacks the explanatory power to account for these patterns. My research is a response to this; it is an attempt at a theoretical interrogation of the relationship between Islamophobia, race and racism in Scotland, grounded in the experiences of Muslim women living here. I hope that it might make visible some of these connections, and ultimately contribute to efforts to tackle Islamophobia in Scotland.

This research project therefore sought to reconnect experiences of Islamophobia to sociological understandings of race and racism. Taking Scotland as its context, it began by asking the following questions: what is Islamophobia’s relationship to race and racism in Scotland today? How can the experiences of Muslim women living in Scotland contribute to our understanding of this relationship? And how are Muslim women living in Scotland organising to challenge Islamophobia? Methodological questions were also at the heart of a project which sought a commitment to anti-racist practice, and so emerged the question of how a qualitative approach might contribute to our understanding of Islamophobia and to anti-racist struggles more widely.

The literature review provides an overview of research and writing on Islamophobia more generally, touching on the contentious nature of the term, before focusing on a number of theories which contribute to our understanding of the relationship between Islamophobia, race and racism. Secondly, it addresses the ways in which Muslim women in particular remain central to Islamophobia’s functioning. Finally, the distinctive nature of the Scottish

context is introduced. This section identifies major gaps in the literature, and attempts to situate my research in relation to particular absences or disconnections.

The following research is based on a series of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Muslim women living in Glasgow and Edinburgh, working or volunteering for Muslim women's organisations. The methodology section follows from the literature review to discuss the methodological approach taken in light of the ways in which I understand Islamophobia. Aside from the ontological and epistemological implications for the research design, this section also provides an extensive discussion of ethical considerations, including some reflections on my own positionality as a white, non-Muslim researcher. Given the intense scrutiny currently faced by Muslims in the media and the increasing securitisation of Muslim communities in the UK, questions around research practice – and particularly representation – were paramount in conducting this research.

In chapter one I begin the analysis with the notion of Islamophobia as hate crime. This chapter looks at how the rise of the hate crime agenda, and the language which accompanies it, circumscribes the ways in which experiences of Islamophobia are conceptualised and expressed. In highlighting the explanatory weakness of hate crime statistics, it provides a sympathetic sociological critique of framing Islamophobia as hate crime, and begins to set out an alternative framework which is developed in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter two introduces visibility as a way of thinking through the Islamophobic violence directed at Muslim women that hate crime statistics point to. It makes the case that the hijab works as a signifier of difference through which Muslim women become racialised and fixed as culturally 'other'. In this way, the chapter works through the fundamental relationship between Islamophobia, race and racism.



The final chapter asks why it is that Islamophobia as a racism is so hard to 'name'. I make the case that a historic disavowal of racism in Scotland, which continues today, makes it particularly hard for those experiencing Islamophobia to express it as anything more than an anomalous attitude or behaviour. In this way, chapter three reconnects with the notion of hate crime, arguing that it provides an official recognition of, and a language with which to express experiences of racism in a context where liberalism engenders a commitment to 'racelessness' in politics and everyday life.

My conclusion makes the case for a re-interrogation of Islamophobia's relationship to race and racism, and therefore a reconceptualisation of Islamophobia itself. Reflecting on the substantive findings of the research, I argue that a carefully constructed sociological account of Islamophobia which re-engages with race and racism may be able to contribute to the important anti-racist work already being carried out by Muslim women in Scotland.

## Literature Review

### **Islamophobia, race and racism**

As a concept, Islamophobia remains contentious. It is difficult to pinpoint the coining of the term Islamophobia since debates surrounding its origin reflect the polarisation of opinions around its use. Nevertheless, the publishing of a report by the Runnymede Trust entitled *Islamophobia: a challenge for us all* (1997) is often cited as a key development which saw the emergence of a term now widely accepted within the mainstream vernacular. References to Islamophobia have recently appeared in the speeches of David Cameron (2015), a sure indication that at the very least, the term has now coalesced with the discourse of the UK's political elite. This research employs the term Islamophobia because of its popular recognition, but I acknowledge that the word itself belies the centrality of race and racism at its core, and furthermore, that there remains disagreement about the concept of Islamophobia, including within academia.

On one side of the debate, the likes of Kenan Malik (2005) argue that Islamophobia is no more than a 'myth', or as Richard Dawkins has put it, a 'non-word' (Saul 2015); a concept which obscures more than it illuminates. This line of argument rests on the assumption that, in Malik's own words, "there is a fundamental difference between race and religion. You can't choose your skin colour; you can choose your beliefs" (Malik 2005). As such, colour-coded racism is a 'real' social problem which deserves analytical – and more often than not quantitative – attention, while Islamophobia unhelpfully contributes to a "culture of victimhood" (Malik 2005) or is used to silence critics of Islam (see also BBC News 2006; Kamm 2012).

Social research into Islamophobia has not managed to escape the arguments of public intellectuals who continue to insist that Islam or Muslims 'are not a race', and we see this in

the treatment of Islamophobia as a concept within academic disciplines, including sociology. One approach has been to “analytically separate racism and Islamophobia” (Hussain and Bagguley 2012: 717). This reflects a tendency in the sociological literature to grant analytic import to the concept of Islamophobia, and indeed treat it seriously, but only as a form of individual prejudice. It is not, in this way, treated on the same level as colour-coded racism – which is understood to extend beyond everyday instances of hatred and bigotry to a system of domination. Racism is (at least sometimes) recognised as a structural problem, while Islamophobia is often constrained by somewhat pathological definitions such as the widely cited one by the Runnymede Trust (1997: 1) which describes Islamophobia as “a useful shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam – and, therefore, to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims”. Indeed, Claire Alexander (2016: 36) argues that Sociological research into Islamophobia continues to be, for the most part, divorced from understandings of racism, following a general “hollowing out of race research substantially, theoretically, and methodologically” in the UK. Research into the dynamics of Islamophobia, such as that conducted by Moosavi (2014), perhaps as a consequence of this disconnect, lacks the structural dimension that we would generally expect to find in sociological accounts of racism. Similarly, we find a burgeoning literature on far-right Islamophobia (see Fekete 2012; Copsey et al 2013; Busher 2015) suggesting again that Islamophobia is often understood as a fringe phenomenon, and in some cases simply symptomatic of a few “bad apples” (Ameli and Merali 2015: 16). This trend may be related to wider patterns of thinking and talking about racism, as described by Lentin (2016: 34):

Mainstream reactions to racism foreground either extreme or ‘casual’ racism and, while institutional or systematic racism are formally acknowledged, they are rarely prosecuted in the way that individual behaviour in public (or made public) is.

Despite this conceptual shrinkage, there have been a number of scholars who have attempted to situate Islamophobia within a more historical, and more structural framework. These analyses have more often than not emerged from the United States (Kumar 2012), although some straddle both US and UK contexts (Kundnani 2014a), and others have their origins in critical theory here (Sayyid 1997; Tyrer 2013). Such scholars have made use of postcolonial frameworks to make sense of the “racist and imperialist core” (Kundnani 2014b) of contemporary Islamophobia. They understand Islamophobia not as a problem of ‘race relations’ (see Miles 1993), that is, as an issue of interaction between groups, but as part of historical relationships of domination and exploitation. This sort of work is surely to be celebrated in light of Claire Alexander’s pleas to British sociologists to “connect our obsession with questions of culture and identities back to questions of social structure, inequality and, importantly, power” (Alexander, C. 2016: 37). Kundnani’s work in particular does just this, pointing to how ‘culture’ obscures the political, and is a prime example of how a postcolonial framework can enrich our understanding of how Islamophobia operates. Postcolonialism directs theory towards historical relations, in this way facilitating a move beyond Islamophobia as a product of the ‘War on Terror’, and points towards the role of economic exploitation in contemporary forms of racism in its emphasis on empire. Further, the central role of resistance in postcolonial analyses acts as a reassertion of the need to incorporate Muslim agency in any scholarly contributions to our understanding of Islamophobia.

However, the work of the likes of Kundnani and Kumar might be usefully supplemented by a more thorough analysis of the relationship between Islamophobia, race and racism. Namely, those theories which help to shed light on how, exactly, Islamophobia operates as a form of racism in the UK today, and the liberal contradictions which help to sustain it.

## **(Neo)Liberal Britain: Islamophobia as cultural racism**

A number of theorists have attempted to explain the shifting nature of racism, from a colour-coded, 'scientific' ideology, to what is now variously called "cultural racism" (Taguieff 1990), "neo-racism" (Balibar 1991: 17), and "differentialist" racism (Taguieff 2001: 5), amongst other things. Whilst these theorists are diverse in their disciplinary fields and theoretical traditions, the body of work that constitutes attempts to explain new formations of racism – and indeed the contingent nature of race itself – may provide an alternative framework to the 'race relations' paradigm on the one hand, and a more nuanced understanding, especially in relation to Scotland, than is currently offered by postcolonial analyses on the other. To be sure, proponents of theories around cultural racism do not suggest that cultural racism has completely replaced biological racism. We know that scientific racism continues to exist, rearing its ugly head in certain domains despite significant blows to its credibility (see Hall, S. 1997: 7). Rather, it is argued that cultural racism "supplements" (Tyrer 2013: 43) more traditional, colour-coded forms, drawing on a similar set of assumptions about the ontology of race. Indeed, it is exactly the assumptions which are couched in the supposed biological reality of race that theories around cultural racism seek to unsettle.

Their starting point is this: that race is not a fixed, biological reality, but socially constructed and historically contingent. 'Race' means different things at different times; Stuart Hall neatly describes it as a "floating signifier" (1997: 9). Perhaps even more vigorous in his attempts to challenge race as a concept is Robert Miles, whose critique extends to the use of the word 'race' itself in any analysis. Miles (1993) argues for conceptual clarity, proposing the term 'racialisation' as a more useful concept in articulating the process behind race-making. Racialisation, he suggests, provides "a perspective and a concept that is

inherently about process, and that opens the door to history, that opens the door to understanding the complexities of who gets racialized when and for what purpose, and how that changes through time” (Miles 2011: 2019).

Working with the understanding of race as socially and historically contingent then, Taguieff (1990; 2001) and Balibar (1991) have both attempted to trace shifts to ‘new’ forms of cultural racism, with a particular focus – especially for the former – on France. The fundamental argument put forward by the likes of Taguieff and Balibar is that whilst scientific racism works to essentialise racialised groups via appeals to an explicit idea of biological inferiority, cultural racism fixes groups through the idea of immutable cultural difference (Taguieff 2001: 4). What follows from this is an implicit assumption of incompatibility with the supposed ‘superior’ host culture. As Balibar (1991: 22) makes clear: “biological or genetic naturalism is not the only means of naturalizing human behaviour and social affinities ... culture can also function like a nature”.

At the heart of these appeals to cultural difference lies a “public disavowal” of racism itself (Goldberg 2002: 218), as well as an appropriation of various progressive discourses, both of which reveal racism’s capacity for adapting to changing social conditions. A number of writers have highlighted the survival of racism, not in spite of, but rather intrinsically linked to assertions that Western societies are now ‘post-racial’ or have reached a state of ‘racelessness’ (see Goldberg 2002; Bonilla-Silva 2003; Alexander, M. 2010), arguing that contemporary racism works through mechanisms that avoid appeals to explicit ontological racial difference. Paradoxically, racism today relies on the presumed biological reality of race as its defence (Goldberg 2002; Tyrer 2013): remember that Malik (2005) disputes the existence of Islamophobia based on the “fundamental difference between race and religion”.

This development is further consolidated by the co-optation of once-emancipatory discourses in the service of cultural racism. Farris (2012) has touched on this in relation to women's rights, coining the term 'femonationalism' – a rearticulation of Puar's (2006) notion of 'homonationalism' – which “describes the attempts of European right-wing parties, among others, to co-opt feminist ideals into anti-immigrant and anti-Islam campaigns” (Farris 2012: 187). Elsewhere Taguieff (2001: 7) discusses the way in which the anti-racist movement's rallying cry of the “right to difference” has now been taken up by the far-right in France and adapted for racist ammunition, so that an articulation of difference now acts as a call for the 'protection' of 'indigenous' culture.

Crucially, cultural racism relies on liberal claims of post-racial societies, as well as the evocation of liberal discourses. Liberalism then, as the political ideology to capitalism, remains an important point of inquiry in any discussion of Islamophobia as cultural racism. We can look to one particular body of work, namely research around the hijab<sup>1</sup>, to empirically anchor these theoretical connections.

## **Islamophobia and women**

The centrality women seem to assume within the Muslim Question debate is one that further reveals both the instrumental nature of this centrality as well as the orientalist and racist underpinnings of the Muslim Question. (Farris 2014: 304)

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<sup>1</sup> When used as a noun, hijab is an Arabic term for a head covering worn by Muslim women, also referred to as a headscarf or simply a scarf. Unlike the niqab or burqa - much less common in the UK - which cover part or all of the face, the hijab only covers the hair. The term 'veil' is also sometimes used to connote general head-covering.

In an article urging anthropologists to think about cultural difference in the context of the so-called ‘war on terror’, Abu-Lughod (2002: 786) suggests it might be “time to give up the Western obsession with the veil”. Well over a decade later this ‘obsession’ does not seem to have subsided, especially in France, where calls for the banning of various forms of veiling in public institutions and spaces have gained traction since the 2004 ban of headscarves in public schools (Louati 2016). Scott (2007) has also conducted extensive research into the role of the veil in France’s public imagination, exploring “the way in which the veil became a screen onto which were projected images of strangeness and fantasies of danger” (Scott 2007: 10). France is, of course, a very specific context. While anxieties around Muslim women’s choice of dress appear to be particularly acute there, writers have emphasised the historical role of colonialism as well as French republicanism in the state’s contemporary treatment of Muslim women who choose to wear a headscarf (Scott 2007; Louati 2016). Meanwhile, in the UK, Tyrer (2013) couches his analysis of the public discontent around the veiled Muslim subject in the intimate connections between Islamophobia and race, as touched upon earlier. He asserts that, generally, Muslims disrupt “ontological investments in race” (Tyrer 2013: 150) since they defy traditional colour-coded boundaries. As such, ‘Islamic’ clothing such as hijab becomes “a site for the inscription of Muslim lack in [corporeal] excess” (Tyrer 2013: 45) and therefore a site for the expression of – often violent – anti-Muslim racism. In other words, the hijab becomes a ‘signifier’ of difference, speaking to that “necessity for a foundation or guarantee” (Hall, S. 1997: 16) where Muslims disrupt the conventional ‘language’ of race (Hall, S. 1997).

Other writers have situated the West’s seeming compulsion to ‘unveil’ Muslim women within a political economy framework, looking to the double bind of historical colonialism and contemporary liberal capitalism. There is of course a critical tradition which takes as its



central concern the intimate relationship between race and class (see for example Balibar 1991; Wallerstein 1991; Miles 1993). Engaging with a gendered dimension within this broad field is Sara Farris (2012: 194) who, focusing on migrant and Muslim women in particular, argues:

The emphasis on the unveiling of Muslim women in Europe therefore combines both the Western male's enduring dream of uncovering the woman of the enemy, or of the colonized, and the demand to end the incongruence of hidden female bodies as exceptions to the general law according to which they should circulate like "sound currency".

This latter point highlights the need for a structural analysis of Islamophobia, pushing us to interrogate the inextricable connections between racism, gender, class and power. Valluvan and Kapoor (2016) have also pointed towards a need for more work around racism's links to contemporary war and militarism. In terms of gender, there have been some arguments made in relation to the role of a discourse of 'women's rights' in justifying military intervention in so-called 'Muslim' countries. For example, Abu-Lughod (2002) describes the ways in which support for the invasion of Afghanistan was mobilised in the US via the notion of 'liberating' Afghan women.

Of course black feminist writers have long challenged white feminists' erasure of the structuring power of race (hooks 2015: 57). Furthermore, the idea of "white men saving brown women from brown men" (Spivak 1985 cited in Cooke 2002: 469), or colonial feminism (Abu-Lughod 2002: 784) as it is otherwise understood, goes back a long way. But the employment of the idea of Muslim women being 'oppressed' by the political right in order to support neo-colonial ventures perhaps warrants more explanation, particularly in the

current climate of fear in the UK around apparently irreconcilable Muslim difference. This is only supported by the fact that so much of the political discourse around Muslims in the UK today revolves around the notion of a modern day ‘war on terror’, alongside a resurgence of racialised nationalism and ‘postcolonial melancholia’, as evidenced in the EU referendum debate (Ashe 2016).

### **Islamophobia in Scotland**

There has been much written about the apparent ‘emergence’ of Islamophobia in the UK, particularly in a post-9/11 context, some of which has been outlined above. However, what the vast majority of this literature fails to capture are the nuances within the UK’s borders. That is, Scotland along with Wales and Ireland – what De Lima and Williams (2006: 498) term the “celtic rim” – are often analytically subsumed within England, Britain or the UK in writing and research on racism. For example, Ameli and Merali’s (2015) wide scale survey of experiences of Islamophobia amongst Muslims, while commendable, makes no attempt to distinguish between the experiences of Muslims living in Scotland and England. In terms of Scotland, the result historically has been “very little academic attention” (Miles and Dunlop 1986: 23) paid to the issue of racism, with the obvious exception of anti-Irish racism or sectarianism. This pattern is consistent with much work on Islamophobia, which has tended to focus on cities and towns in England with significant Muslim populations, such as parts of North-West England (see Hussain and Bagguley 2012; Moosavi 2014). This is despite the fact that some research suggests that areas with smaller ethnic minority populations – that is, ‘whiter’ areas – are the most “dangerous” in terms of incidents of racist attacks (De Lima and Williams 2006: 500), with Scotland and Wales ranking particularly badly. Elsewhere, other

scholars have argued that there is little evidence of any clear relationship “between the size of a migrant population and the development of conflict” (Miles and Dunlop 1986: 30), yet Scotland continues to be neglected in favour of areas with much larger migrant populations.

Of the narrow canon of research that does address the experiences of Muslims in Scotland, the tendency has been to focus on identity, out of which have emerged largely positive assertions around Scottish nationalism’s accommodation of Muslims (Hussain and Miller 2006). In terms of academic research on Islamophobia in Scotland, the field narrows even more, as Kidd and Jamieson (2011: 7) note. Whilst Scottish political figures have spoken out about rising Islamophobia in Scotland (Yousaf 2015), and statistics from Police Scotland indicate ‘spikes’ in ‘hate crime’ directed at Muslims (Brooks 2015), little has been produced in the way of sociologically-informed theory or indeed empirical research. Hussain and Miller’s (2006) work with Pakistanis in Scotland touches on Islamophobia, but is riddled with the kind of conceptual limitations I highlighted earlier; they seem to treat Islamophobia as simply one of Scotland’s ‘phobias’ and even make direct comparisons with ‘Anglophobia’ in the country. Again, there is a neglect of the historical role of racism in Scotland, and an uncritical reading of the perception that “there is less conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims in Scotland than in England” (Hussain and Miller 2006: 120). Unsurprisingly, they conclude that “Islamophobia is considerably lower in Scotland” (Hussain and Miller 2006: 35). Elsewhere, Hopkins (2004) has written on young Muslim men’s experiences of Islamophobia in Scotland, as well as how such experiences differ from those living in England (Hopkins 2008). Although Hopkins makes the case for a distinct Scottish experience for young Muslim men – related to discontinuities in demographics, politics and nationalism – he also echoes others in conceding that in research concerning race and racism, “Scotland has largely been ignored, or has been subsumed into research about race and ethnicity in the UK” (Hopkins 2008: 113). The final area of research worth mentioning comes from a more

policy-oriented perspective; in their research for the Scottish government, Kidd and Jamieson (2011) provide a wide-ranging overview of issues affecting Muslims living in Scotland, including “experiences of intolerance and discrimination” (Kid and Jamieson 2011: 53). While the collation of first-hand accounts of such experiences is welcome, once again the theoretical framework lacks a critical understanding of the relationship between Islamophobia and racism. For instance, the authors frequently refer to “religious intolerance” and “racism” as separate issues (Kidd and Jamieson 2011: 2).

There may be a number of reasons why the academic literature on racism in Scotland is so sparse compared to England. Miles and Dunlop (1986: 26) argue that, firstly “the absence of a racialisation of the political process in Scotland” has contributed to the overwhelming belief that racism is not a problem in Scotland. Secondly, they argue that a historical preoccupation with both the ‘Irish problem’ and Scottish nationalism has consumed any attention given to the notion of race in Scottish politics. Perhaps unsurprisingly, academic research has mirrored these public and political consensuses on the issue of race in Scotland. However, as Miles and Dunlop (1986: 23) have emphasised, “the absence of conflict is not synonymous with the absence of racism and exclusion”, and furthermore, the now well-documented racialisation of the Irish in Scotland should act as a warning of the potential – and some would say continuing existence – of widespread racism in Scotland (Miles and Muirhead 1986).

The supposed ‘fact’ of Scottish tolerance (Miles and Dunlop 1986: 25), and the widespread focus on racism as an English issue (even if articulated as a ‘British’ problem), might be understood in relation to Goldberg’s (2002) theorising of ‘racelessness’. Goldberg (2002: 219) suggests himself that those writing in a British context have diverged from US academics in their intellectual interest towards racism as a topic for sociological exploration. Importantly, he tempers this observation with a warning against “[overemphasising] official

British openness concerning its recent racial record” (Goldberg 2002: 219). Also worth pointing out though, is that when Goldberg (2002: 219) refers to a “British academic focus on racisms”, what he actually means is English. Scotland’s historical disavowal of racism, and the concurrent dearth of scholarship around racisms there, might be an indication that Scotland provides a particularly distinctive case study for Goldberg’s conceptualisation of ‘racelessness’.

It is worth clarifying at this point the ways in which this research draws on the various theories discussed above. Rather than aligning myself with a single school of thought, I borrow concepts from a number of different theorists in order to develop an argument for understanding Islamophobia as a form of cultural racism. I seek to reconnect cultural and structural accounts of racism, and attempt to capture the embedded nature of Islamophobia. In other words, I contend that racism finds articulation in many different realms, including culture and politics as well as economic relations. In this sense, the research attempts to move beyond the economic reductionism of Miles, but takes on Milesian concepts that are useful for explaining the social and historical contingency of race, namely racialisation (Miles 1993). Similarly, the research draws on Goldberg’s critique of liberalism in sustaining contemporary racisms – particularly the concept of ‘racelessness’ (Goldberg 2002) – but diverges from Goldberg in other respects. For example, Goldberg’s understanding of racism as being summoned into existence only with the explicit articulation of race is less useful for thinking through cultural racisms such as Islamophobia where Muslims disrupt “conventional racial grammar” (Tyrer 2013: 66). With this theoretical position in mind, the following section lays out the methodology for the research.

## Methodology

### **Ontological and epistemological approach**

The theoretical framing of race and racism as part of this research had significant implications for the ways in which I chose to explore them. That is, the ontological approach of the research reflected my conceptualisation of race as socially constructed and historically contingent. In contrast, much social research concerning race relies heavily on bounded categories of race or ethnicity which neglect the inherently fluid nature of race as a “floating signifier” (Hall, S. 1997: 9). This is particularly true of survey research, which not only demands that participants ascribe to a singular racialised category, but predetermines the categories that are available. As Lee (1993: 103) makes clear, “the survey assumes that social phenomena have an external, stable and verbalizable form. It is therefore an inappropriate instrument for investigating aspects of experience which are internal, *fluid*, or expressed in non-verbal ways [italics my own]”. Survey research often uncritically takes race to be a social fact; an ontological and indeed measurable reality. My research sought to reject such an approach for a number of reasons. Firstly, as I have outlined in the previous chapter, it fundamentally misunderstands the way that race operates in the service of racism. Secondly, a ‘scientific’ methodology that relies on bounded categories of race risks entrenching racialised difference and reinforcing biological racism. Finally, since Muslims as a racialised group disrupt traditional colour-coded categories associated with survey data, their very presence calls forth the need for alternative methods of studying the changing nature of race and racism. In an illustration of precisely this point, while discussing her “quite complicated” identity, which she described as incorporating aspects of her Pakistani heritage, as well as Islam and her Scottish upbringing, one of my participants quipped: “Try ticking a box when you get one of those ethnicity forms [laughs]”. In light of this, I continue to advocate a

methodology that “makes the familiar strange and investigates the self-evident” (Back 2007: 166). Any research concerned with the dynamics of race and racism also needs to be able to capture the nuances of often complex identities, and facilitate the “co-production” (Gunaratnam 2003: 117) of racialised meanings as part of the research process.

Furthermore, my understanding of racism presented particular epistemological questions. If we treat racism not as an individual attitude – or indeed ‘phobia’ – but as a system of domination articulated in culture and politics (Goldberg 1993) as well as economic relations (Miles 1993), then my own personal and political convictions are no necessary defence against its reproduction. As Said argued in his account of orientalism, academia plays an integral role in contributing to discourse around – and therefore reproducing knowledge of – the ‘other’ (Said 2003: 3). Similarly, as a white researcher, and with all the privilege that accompanies that, I cannot claim to ‘know’ racism in the same way as my research participants. A feminist epistemology provided the requisite tools to reflect upon and scrutinise my position of privilege in the research process. It positioned the Muslim women I spoke to as having unique insights into the nexus of Islamophobia and sexism. More than this, a feminist epistemology facilitated exercises in ‘listening’ (see Back 2007), as well as sharing, the importance of which has been long underscored in feminist research. Indeed, Oakley (2004: 264) has famously advocated researcher “reciprocity” in feminist research, which encourages “a process of mutual self-revelation” (Lee 1993: 108) between the interviewer and participant. Undeniably, a level of reciprocity helps to foster a sense of mutual understanding and trust with participants, yet in my research it always felt in tension with my positionality as a white non-Muslim. I was always “interviewing across difference” (Gunaratnam 2003: 79). I wasn’t able to respond to the openness of participants by sharing my own stories of discrimination in the workplace, nor could I relate to their experiences of violent street racism. Importantly though, I retained a sense that this did not render the

research encounter illegitimate. To argue that race and gender do not constitute fixed identities or homogenous experiences is to also acknowledge the “contingent manifestation of difference between the interviewer and research participant” (Gunaratnam 2003: 103). Arguably, apparent commonalities – I identify as a woman just like my participants, for example – are no more stable. Rather than shy away from these complex relationships, we must be “actively searching out and valuing the complexity and richness that comes with the mess” (Gunaratnam 2003: 104), ensuring that a commitment to rigorous reflexivity does not reinforce illusions of either sameness or insurmountable difference.

## **Methods and analysis**

In light of the ontological and epistemological framing outlined above, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were central to the methodology. Over the course of three months I interviewed six women. I also interviewed a Muslim man prior to this as part of another project; this interview did not form part of the analysis here, but was an important factor in my choosing to focus on women. Most interviews were one-to-one, apart from one ‘group’ interview in which two women took part. Interviews lasted between one and two hours, with a total of around nine and a half hours’ worth of rich interview data generated. The interviews were semi-structured to the extent that I produced an interview guide (see Appendix A), although it was never strictly adhered to. Most often I used the interview guide less as a way of directing the conversation, and more as a prompt for myself to ensure I touched on themes that I felt were particularly important. As I conducted more interviews and my confidence in chatting to the women grew, the interview guide became increasingly redundant. In no small part thanks to the openness and enthusiasm of my participants, the majority of interviews for



me were spent listening intently, occasionally picking up on particular points and asking participants to elaborate further. Interviews sometimes ran over the original time we had allocated for them, often continued once the dictaphone was switched off, and participants would often apologise for ‘rambling on’ or forgetting the question altogether. I see these as generally positive indications that my epistemological approach translated into the research setting.

The sample itself consisted of six women who self-identified as Muslim, ranging from 22 to 54 years old. It was, however, a generally young sample, with four participants in their twenties, one in their thirties, and another in their fifties. All participants either worked or volunteered for one of two Muslim women’s organisations based in Glasgow and Edinburgh. These organisations, both explicitly ran by and for Muslim women in their respective cities, acted as gatekeepers for the research. That is, they were my point of recruitment, even when I had decided to recruit staff members and volunteers for interviews rather than service-users. The organisation based in Glasgow was particularly receptive and as such, five out of the six women I spoke to were recruited via that organisation. The organisation in Edinburgh was much smaller, volunteer-led, and covered a much smaller remit in terms of activity and outreach. Any or all of these factors may have contributed to the smaller number of women willing to take part in Edinburgh. The month of Ramadan also fell during the interview period which one woman suggested may have meant it was not a convenient time for some to take part. In terms of recruiting women to interview, there were initial suggestions that I may have trouble due to the Muslim community being somewhat over-researched. Both organisations had been approached recently by researchers, and as I discovered in later discussions, various media outlets. Furthermore, some women I spoke to – both in Edinburgh and Glasgow - felt they or their organisations had been misrepresented by either local or national media. Such a burgeoning interest in Muslim communities is unsurprising given the

overwhelming – and generally negative – attention they receive in the British press, particularly post nine-eleven (Saeed 2007: 454). The sense of ‘research fatigue’ (Clark 2008) is also perhaps exacerbated in Scotland where there are simply less community organisations on the ground that can be approached as potential spokespeople for Muslim communities. I did feel, however, that the use of a snowball sampling approach worked to lessen the effect of this as women heard about the project and what was expected of them through colleagues who had already taken part. Clark (2008) suggests that a lack of interest in the topics being discussed as well as “a lack of perceptible change attributable to engagement” (Clark 2008: 965) with previous research can contribute to research fatigue. It is hoped then that initial participants encouraged colleagues to take part as they felt the research to be worthwhile in some way. Nevertheless, although there were imbalances in the geographical areas represented, I did not struggle to recruit participants overall.

In terms of analysis, the research employed a thematic approach. From the initial few interviews, emergent themes developed which were further honed in on in the following interviews. For instance, as it became clear that ‘hate crime’ was a common way in which participants framed their experiences of Islamophobia, I began to include questions about hate crime in interviews where appropriate. In this sense, the research drew on some of the principles of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1968), particularly the notion of cultivating a mutually constitutive relationship between emergent theory and data collection. It is important to add, however, that the limited timescale of this project did not allow for a full and proper commitment to the “systematic procedures” (Charmaz 2001: 336) of a grounded theory approach. Once a set of themes were established, I made use of the coding software NVivo to collate the interview transcripts. I then developed the emergent themes into seven different codes which I used to code all my data. Some of these codes were descriptive, in that they referred to the participant’s explicit articulation of something; for example

references to hate crime, Scotland, the Prevent strategy and use of the term Islamophobia were all coded. Other codes were more analytical; what is described in grounded theory as developing “theoretical categories” (Charmaz 2001: 341). These included ‘(in)visibility’ and ‘perceptions of Muslim women’. I also coded for race when participants referred to skin colour or what is commonly understood as ethnicity, recognising the “dense interrelations between the categories [of race and ethnicity]” (Gunaratnam 2003: 4). Finally, these seven codes, and of course the connections between them, were developed into the three chapters of analysis that follow.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations were central to a project which touched on what some scholars would describe as ‘sensitive topics’ (Lee 1993). Although scholars such as Lee (1993) have attempted to problematise the notions of sensitivity and vulnerability in research, it was certainly worth considering in a project which included discussions around personal choices, such as wearing the hijab, and distressing personal experiences such as racist attacks. Aside from the potential for the research to pose what Lee (1993: 5) terms an ‘intrusive threat’ for participants, there was also local, national and indeed international political contexts to be grappled with. This resulted in some unanticipated discussions with participants which I hope will illustrate how research with Muslims in the current political climate in the UK poses quite particular ethical questions. I anticipate that such issues will only become more central to research with Muslim communities who face increasing public scrutiny.

The first point to make is that over the course of the three months of research, a number of significant and widely reported incidents took place – both in the UK and further afield – which entered into conversations with my Muslim participants. These incidents included the so-called ‘Islamist’ terror attacks in Brussels (Rankin and Henley 2016), the Orlando massacre in the US, and the shooting of MP Jo Cox in England. There is no doubt that these events profoundly affected various communities, particularly people of colour. However, I would argue that Muslims were implicated in these events in specific ways, namely the continuing association of Muslims with acts of violence – regardless of whether the perpetrators are Muslim or not – and the relentless demands and expectations placed on Muslims to apologise for, or condemn, actions they have absolutely nothing to do with (see Tufail 2015). Women described changing normal routines in the wake of ‘terror’ attacks, for example avoiding public transport or wearing less ‘Islamic’ clothing, for fear of being harassed by members of the public. These fears are not unfounded; there is plenty of evidence of spikes in attacks on Muslims following such events, with Muslim women being targeted the most (Travis 2015). At the same time, some participants described the pressure they felt to apologise for or condemn these very events simply because of their association with them as Muslims. As Mariam quite rightly said: “I do not need to apologise, or should not have to apologise, for the wrongdoings of another person”.

Furthermore, interviews took place in the run-up to the EU referendum. One participant described the EU referendum in terms of the “scaremongering and hate [...] around sort of immigration” in the context of what she called a “shift” towards growing anti-Muslim sentiment. The EU referendum is an event which is perhaps even more significant for Muslims than we could have even anticipated, given the result and the racism that has proliferated in its aftermath (Jeory 2016).

Punctuating this series of violent events was the more insidious theme of the government's policing of Muslim communities, one which not only revealed itself repeatedly in interviews, but which affected the research process itself. Almost all of the women I spoke to mentioned – with no prompt from me – the government's current 'Prevent' strategy. This is a piece of legislation that is having a profound impact on Muslims up and down the UK. Having been introduced as a mandatory duty in England in the summer of 2015, we are now seeing its implementation in Scotland almost a year later. Prevent makes it a legal obligation for institutions such as universities, schools, and NHS trusts, to monitor individuals for signs of potential 'radicalisation'. It has been widely condemned as problematic at best, and at worst deeply Islamophobic (Kundnani 2009; Kundnani 2015). This research project did not set out to explore the effects of this piece of legislation on the lives of Muslim women, but it reared its head nonetheless. A particularly salient moment came when I received an unexpected email from a woman after interviewing her earlier that day. The email asked if I had been asked by the university to report anything participants said in interviews to Prevent. After doing my best to reassure her that I had not, and in fact would refuse to engage with Prevent in any circumstance, she emailed back:

Thats [sic] good to know... I don't want to be suspicious about anyone but this policy is so crazy, makes me feel very uncomfortable.

A recently published report on Muslim women and employment (House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee 2016: 11) reported reluctance amongst Muslim women to participate in research for fear of its links with the Prevent agenda, suggesting that I am not alone in encountering these concerns as an emerging issue in this kind of research. As such, I would argue that the intense scrutiny Muslim communities currently face presents new

ethical questions for researchers: how do we conduct anti-racist research attached to institutions that are being co-opted by an agenda of state securitisation? Furthermore, how can we support Muslim communities to participate in research against a climate of suspicion and fear? And where does this position us as researchers? Furthermore, rather than divert researchers away from politically ‘sensitive’ subjects, it should push us to explore those connections – between political violence, the state, and racism – that the Prevent agenda seeks to obscure in its shutting down of spaces for political debate and dissent. A sociological practice that is bold in this way may even be able to contribute to defending the spaces that offer real ‘solutions’ to political violence, in other words: “political spaces where young people can politicize their disaffection into visions of how the world might be better organized, so that radical alternatives to terrorist vanguardism can emerge” (Kundnani 2014a: 289).

A final ethical consideration emerged at the analysis stage, where I encountered some tensions between the needs of different stakeholders in the project. Whilst my epistemological approach sought to centralise Muslim voices and expertise, the protection of participants through the use of standard ethical procedures, such as ensuring anonymity, remained paramount. In light of this, participants were informed prior to taking part in the research that the use of a pseudonym, as well as the censoring of any other personal information, would ensure full anonymity and confidentiality. The participant information sheet and the consent form which make clear these procedures can be seen in Appendix B and C respectively. However, this was complicated when one organisation requested that they be named in the final write-up of the research, while the other asked for full anonymity, raising a crucial ethical question: how do we represent participants in the fullest possible sense, with a commitment to working *with* rather than *on* communities, whilst also upholding our duty to protect them? Research that is qualitative, community-based and politically

committed poses particular challenges for reconciling the representation of and protection of participants (Connected Communities 2011). The solution that I arrived at was to anonymise both organisations and all individuals involved, but to also produce a secondary report for the organisation in question to use as a demonstration of their involvement in the research.

## Chapter 1

### Islamophobia as Hate Crime

According to Nathan Hall (2005: 51), the publication of the McPherson Enquiry in 1999 into the police handling of the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence “[propelled] the problem of violent racism to the top of the political and social agenda”. Since then, the notion of ‘hate crime’ has proliferated, and with it a shift to a victim-led definition in which the identification of a hate crime is derived from the victim’s perception of the incident rather than the police officer’s (Hall, N. 2005). Police Scotland define hate crime as “Crime motivated by malice or ill will towards a social group” within which is included “race, sexual orientation, religion/faith, disability, transgender/gender identity” (Police Scotland 2016). Alongside a growing awareness of hate crime, there has also been an increase in allocated resources in a drive to tackle it, and Police Scotland now deem hate crime a ‘high priority’.

When I began this research, I didn’t anticipate that conversations about Islamophobia would be punctuated so much by this legal turn of phrase. Perhaps unsurprisingly though, the language of the hate crime agenda appears to have been fully embraced by the women I spoke to. This may well not be representative of the wider Muslim community in Scotland, but rather down to the fact that all of my participants were either staff or volunteers of two different Muslim-led community organisations which – importantly – are now designated third party reporting centres<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, the ease with which some women I spoke to referred to their experience of ‘hate crime’, as well as the important role of these organisations as representatives of the Muslim community, prompted me to ask a number of

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<sup>2</sup> A third party reporting centre acts as a point of contact for those wanting to report a hate crime but who are reluctant to speak to the police. Third party reporting centres are often community organisations, charities or housing associations.



questions. What can the proliferation of this terminology tell us about the ways in which Islamophobia is conceptualised or understood? And what might be the limitations of such a conceptualisation? The women I spoke to were generally positive about the recent attention paid to experiences of Islamophobia via the emphasis on hate crime, and understandably so. I do not want to undermine this sense of achievement, and indeed I do believe that the acknowledgement by the state that racist violence, including anti-Muslim violence, is a serious lived reality is something to be celebrated. This important shift can be seen in the way that a number of participants described how abuse that was previously accepted as “a price that you have to pay for the colour of your skin”, now has a name or a ‘label’.

However, there seems to me to also be space for a sociological critique of Islamophobia as hate crime, particularly in light of the discussion so far around Islamophobia’s relationship to race and racism. The first thing to highlight is the nature of the hate crimes that women referred to. The majority of participants had been verbally abused at least once, and in some cases on multiple occasions. If they hadn’t experienced abuse themselves, they knew of other women who had. One woman, who I call Mariam, had been attacked by a group of men while driving. Mariam’s husband and baby were also in the vehicle at the time. This is an extract from the account she gave of her experience:

Before you know it, I do not know at what point or what second, he’s in front of me and the dog’s on my side, and he’s like ‘get the dirty paki bastards’. He smashed the metal lead down onto my windscreen. And then this guy, the other guy, on my husband, the passenger’s side, had a stone, so he’s smashing the window, my hand’s on the horn and I look back and the taxi’s seen in my rear view, taxi’s seen and done like a three point turn and gone. I’m at the traffic lights, he’s standing in front of me,

so I would have knocked him over, and he just went ‘oh Osama bin Laden lovers’ and just kept on going, kept on going.

The above quote is illustrative of a number of things. Firstly, the slippage between race and religion, as suggested by the content of the abuse, which speaks to the racialisation of Muslims more widely; this is a process elaborated on in the following chapter. Secondly, it reflects patterns in hate crime statistics which suggest that the vast majority of those targeting Muslim women in verbal and physical attacks are white men (Tell Mama 2016: 11). This was echoed by other women I spoke to, as well as in the organisations’ understanding of the typical victims and perpetrators in Islamophobic attacks. What hate crime statistics fail to capture, and I would argue may even obscure, is why exactly Muslim women are being targeted by white men. This is because the legal language of hate crime portrays Islamophobia as episodic rather than endemic; that is to say, “racist victimisation does not occur in a moment, but rather it is ongoing, dynamic, and is embedded in time, space and place” (Hall, N. 2005: 195). The language of hate crime renders racist violence “describable and measurable but [seemingly] random and inexplicable to outsiders” (Hall, N. 2005: 196).

Furthermore, hate crime statistics cannot capture the ‘everyday’ dimension of anti-Muslim racism. Yes, many of the women I spoke to had experienced what would be classed as hate crime, but they referred much more frequently to ‘low-level’ Islamophobia. This included comments from strangers (again, white men) on the participant’s choice of clothing on a hot day. It included assumptions from white men about the inability of them as Muslim women to organise a successful community event. It also included women checkout attendants ‘blinking’ them, and a seeming reluctance from members of the public in general to sit next to them on public transport. We might understand this simultaneity between the

explicitly hateful incidents which become classed as hate crime, and the everyday experience of Islamophobia, in terms of what Mondon and Winter (2016) call ‘illiberal’ versus ‘liberal’ Islamophobia. Crucially, these Islamophobias reinforce each other; while illiberal Islamophobia, “or ‘anti-Muslim’ hate [...] falls outside the remit of what is considered acceptable in the hegemonic discourse”, liberal Islamophobia – normalised by the sectioning off of its illiberal counterpart – is reproduced in the notion of the incompatibility of ‘Muslim culture’ with a “culturally homogenous, superior and enlightened West” (Mondon and Winter 2016). Put another way, the banality of Islamophobia, or what others have described as “subtle Islamophobia” (Moosavi 2014: 8), disappears from view when we allow our understanding of Islamophobia to be circumscribed by hate crime as it is currently defined. But furthermore, the liberal discourses which help to sustain multiple forms of Islamophobia are rendered invisible.

These critiques are not new. Sociological writings on ‘racial harassment’ that emerged some twenty years ago describe a lack of connection between policy designed to deal with what we would now call hate crime, and understandings of structural racism and its impact on everyday life. Virdee (1995: 53) suggests that violent incidents are “extreme examples of an underlying climate of racism that exists in Britain today”, while Hesse et al (1992: xv) argue that statistical data around ‘racial harassment’ “has generally resisted any attempt to be linked to a wider concept of racism”. The sense that state efforts to tackle racism are still today only scratching the surface was echoed by one participant, Nadiya:

I just find, you know, the police when they’re talking about this Islamophobia, whenever we talk to them, oh yeah we have to come back to it and what can we do next... they’re not looking at the root of the problem. If they looked at the root of the problem and dealt with that, they wouldn’t have all these problems. They’re throwing

so much money you know at all these things that they're doing, these events and oh I don't know what else they're doing but... you know [sigh] it's not gonna stop. It's not gonna stop until you fix the root of the problem.

There were also suggestions from those I spoke to that when women do make attempts to call out wider experiences or understandings of racism that fall outwith the 'hate crime' remit, they face resistance from various places. In talking about the need to ensure her young son is 'resilient' to low level Islamophobia, Mariam told me how she felt that:

People often are too scared to say 'by the way what happened to you, it was rubbish, dya know it wasn't right', and call it what it is. And quite often it's put down to 'it's an isolated incident'. You know, so it's almost kind of playing it down.

This sense of fear around 'calling it what it is' was echoed by Nadiya who described how a group of women in her home town had faced resistance from the police as well as members of the Muslim community when trying to organise an anti-racist meeting in a local mosque:

And the police had said to them if you have an anti-racist meeting there, there's gonna be a lot of right wing people who would come and demonstrate outside the mosque. That won't be a good image for the mosque, and so you shouldn't do it [...] and then the director said, if we don't have it here in a mosque – we wanted to have it in a mosque, you know? – if we don't have it in a mosque then that'll be like, you know, we're not free to do whatever we want in our mosque. It's an anti-racist meeting. It's not a racist meeting, it's an anti-racist meeting. You know we Muslims should be believing in anti-racism [...] So he [the director] said yes, so we had it here, there

were about a hundred people in the hall, there was about a hundred people outside who were protesting against it. The police were all here. But it was great, you know. It made it in the papers you know, which was what that mosque was afraid of. Why are you afraid of it? Muslims are so scared, I don't know why.

Another incident that Nadiya spoke about suggested that where the police were supportive of Muslim women organising around a broad understanding of racism, there were attempts by police to co-opt these efforts. Nadiya was convinced that money offered to her organisation by the local police to hold an anti-racist event – this time focused on celebrating cultural diversity, so perhaps perceived as less ‘threatening’ than an anti-racist meeting – was linked to the government’s Prevent agenda. Whether this is true or not, it is clear that some of the women I spoke to felt there were a number of barriers to organizing anti-racist events independently of the police.

Aside from this, women I spoke to had their own considered critiques of the way the ‘hate crime’ agenda operates, the main complaint being that the punitive treatment of perpetrators was perhaps not the best path to eliminating Islamophobia. Anna had faced Islamophobic verbal abuse on a bus and reported it to the police, but decided not to pursue the case, telling me she “[didn’t] want to ruin someone’s life just because they’ve made a bad decision”. Drawing on her own experience running awareness-raising workshops in schools, Anna suggested an alternative might be an educational approach:

I’d rather that someone sat with them, or they had to go to something like what we provide with the schools stuff, and they had to like think about the impact that had on people? Rather than go up in court, think they’ve done nothing wrong and then be told ‘oh you’re gonna get fined’ and then hate me more.

Similarly, Mariam felt that a ‘restorative justice’ approach could be a more useful long-term strategy in cases where there is no physical threat from the perpetrator. She pointed to the need for a “safe space” where “people are given the opportunity to learn more”. What the experiences and indeed expertise of these women suggest is that one problem with treating Islamophobia as ‘isolated incidents’ committed by individuals who only respond to post hoc punishment, is that it limits what kind of responses and solutions can be imagined. If Islamophobia is understood in this way rather than as symptomatic of a wider, more entrenched problem, then the argument for preventative action is undermined. Conversely, situating Islamophobic attacks in their social and historical context, and understanding them “as a process” (Hall, N. 2005: 195) rather than as episodic, helps to make clear Islamophobia’s indelible relationship to race and racism, to liberalism, as well as its intersections with other forms of structural oppression. This may facilitate more radical, grassroots approaches to challenging Islamophobia.

To conclude then, I have attempted to outline some sociological critiques of framing Islamophobia in terms of hate crime. A commitment to a structural analysis of Islamophobia – both in terms of race and racism but also in terms of its liberal underpinnings – provides a theoretical grounding for these critiques, and demands that we look beyond the extremities of anti-Muslim hate in conceptualising Islamophobia. To reiterate, such a critique does not undermine the very real reasons for why hate crime might provide such a compelling framework within which experiences of racisms of various kinds may be situated. Hate crime may provide a ‘language’ through which previously marginalised experiences of Islamophobia can be expressed and, more importantly, recognised as legitimate by the state. However, as I have tried to demonstrate, just as the hate crime agenda works to legitimise and make visible certain forms of Islamophobia, it excludes others.

The following chapter attempts to explore those gaps left by an overreliance on the notion of hate crime. In rearticulating Islamophobia within understandings of race, racism and gender, it attempts to answer the ‘why’ of what hate crime statistics point to: the targeting of Muslim women by white men. Building on this theoretical foundation, the final chapter engages place to ask how the particularities of a Scottish context might impact on how Islamophobia is talked about and understood.

## Chapter 2

### Hijab and Visibility: Reconnecting with Race

In the previous chapter, I set out a critique of framing Islamophobia in terms of hate crime. This chapter attempts to use what hate crime statistics can tell us – namely that Muslim women are disproportionately targeted by white men – to rearticulate Islamophobia within structural understandings of race and gender. I therefore ask the question: what structural forces are at play in this pattern of violence? I begin by drawing out the theme of visibility from interviews, particularly in reference to the hijab, to make the case that the hijab works as a ‘floating signifier’ of difference, so that Muslim women who wear it are effectively racialised (see Miles 1993). I then explore how this re-engagement with race might help to make sense of other forms of power which can be understood as converging around the hijab as a symbol of cultural difference.

One particularly striking conversation around visibility which emerged from interviews came from Anna, a white Muslim convert. Anna was born and raised in rural Scotland within a white, Catholic family. After converting to Islam a few years ago, she now wears the hijab. Her experiences as a white hijabi<sup>3</sup> provide particularly compelling examples of the racialisation at work in the treatment of Muslims. I argue that the concept of racialisation is particularly useful in describing how a diverse group of people, such as those who identify as Muslim, and who defy ‘classification’ along strictly phenotypical lines, come to be identified as a homogenous group who share fixed characteristics of difference. Here Anna describes her experience of attending a quintessentially ‘white’ cultural event:

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<sup>3</sup> Hijabi is a popular term for a Muslim woman who wears a hijab.



SH: So do you think that [wearing a hijab] almost confuses people a little bit when they first meet you?

A: I think so [laughs]. I think people get a bit confused because they don't know what to do, and there's things like, for example... there's some things that are quite fun as well because the kind of things I enjoy doing, like I like going to the theatre, or going and seeing... like [my husband] and I went to see *Blazin' Fiddles*, and I thought... I looked round and I thought even though I'm born and brought up in Scotland, Scottish through and through, I'm the most ethnic person in the room, because everyone else was from, ya know, the Highlands and Islands.

Anna's description of herself as 'the most ethnic person in the room' is particularly telling. Elsewhere she describes someone saying to her "you're very ethnic, aren't you?". These comments illuminate the ways in which Muslims unsettle ontological understandings of race, and in doing so provide a real-life counterpoint to the arguments made by the likes of Malik (2005) who insist on a conceptual separation of race and religion in understanding Islamophobia. Anna's previous experience of being deemed a 'confusing' presence is only exacerbated when she is part of an overwhelmingly white audience, attending a 'traditional' Scottish music concert. In this case, it does not matter that Anna also recognises herself as white, or in her words that "all [her] cultural baggage is very white", because she unsettles whiteness in her visibility as a Muslim through her wearing of the hijab. In this way, we might think of the hijab as working as a "floating signifier" (Hall, S. 1997: 9) in the same way that race does. Conversely, the sense that Anna had the option to reverse this process of "re-racialisation" (Moosavi 2014: 3) was also clear, as she talked about her ability to "go stealth" if she wanted to, insisting that nobody would know she was Muslim if she took off

her scarf. What this suggests is the power of the hijab alone as a signifier of difference, but perhaps also the way that colour-coded racism intersects with Islamophobia. Anna's ability to 'go stealth' and therefore to avoid the racialising gaze if she so chooses is not a privilege afforded to non-white Muslim women. A thorough exploration of the differential experiences of white and non-white Muslim women is beyond the scope of this research, however Anna's experience serves as a reminder of the ways in which cultural racism, rather than replacing scientific or colour-coded racism, operates alongside it. This is precisely what Stuart Hall (2000: 223) meant by "racism's two registers".

This being said, Anna was quick to point out that she had absolutely no intention of removing her hijab, which brings me to an important point. Most women I spoke to, despite facing such things as harassment, Islamophobic attacks, pressure from their own family, and job discrimination because of their visibility as Muslim women, remained determined to wear their hijab. Sometimes this was simply a desire to identify themselves as Muslim, as a 'believing woman' as one participant said, which was an issue not just for white converts such as Anna, but also for Nadiya who told me:

If I don't wear the scarf, they might not think I'm a Muslim woman, they might think I'm Indian or, you know like, a Hindu I mean or some other culture. You know, lots of people have brown skin, right?

This choice to make oneself visible as a Muslim appeared to be intimately tied to a desire to push back against the prevailing stereotypes of Muslim women as – in the words of participants – oppressed, uneducated, close-minded, 'locked up' and foreign:

SH: and why is it, why is it that you feel more strongly that you want to wear it?

N: I just want to show them that you know, I'm a Muslim woman and I can do all this other stuff, you know. I can read and write and I can go out and I can work and I can... I can do everything.

As a point of comparison we can look to Leila's experience as someone who chooses not to wear a hijab. She spoke of friends treating her as 'less Muslim' because of this:

I've had this with friends as well at university where they might want to say something about Muslims or people with scarves, and I would like try and remind them like 'I'm Muslim guys, hello' and they'd be like 'yeah but you're different, like you don't wear the scarf and you don't do this and you don't do that'.

What these experiences suggest is that the meaning of the hijab is not fixed but rather a site of struggle. Like Miles' (1993) and Stuart Hall's (1997) arguments around race, the meaning of the hijab is socially and historically contingent. As Miles (1993) makes clear, processes of racialisation are not only foundational to exclusionary practices which sustain the capitalist mode of production, "but also [to] resistance which has as its objective the elimination of racism and exclusion" (Miles 1993: 51). Applying this same theory to the hijab as central to a process of (re)racialisation of Muslim women, we see a complex picture: at the same time that the hijab is understood by some as a symbol of cultural incompatibility, elsewhere women are using the hijab as part of their individual as well as collective efforts in unsettling these claims. This is exemplified further by a project ran by one of the organisations that some participants worked for. As part of this project, young people are asked to complete an exercise which involves looking at pictures of women wearing various head coverings,

including the Queen and Mother Theresa, before being asked to decide which women are Muslim. Such a project speaks directly to this struggle over the meaning of the hijab and its association with indelible cultural difference.

In reconnecting Islamophobic attacks on women with processes of racialisation, we move the analysis of Islamophobia beyond the purely interactional. Individual prejudice no longer provides an adequate explanation for the pattern of violence which sees Muslim women targeted by white men. Since racist violence is always gendered – and gender-based violence necessarily intersects with race – any analysis of Islamophobia as experienced by Muslim women must also take account of this relationship.

How can we understand the role of sexism in Islamophobic attacks on Muslim women? When Mariam talks of feeling underprotected by the police in the wake of an Islamophobic attack, it needs to be understood in the context of a widespread and entrenched neglect of victims of gender-based violence within the legal system in the UK. Equally, when participants talk of the impact of Islamophobia on their children, we might do well to remember the gendering of care, and how women continue to do over twice the amount of unpaid care work than men in the UK (OECD 2010: 15). In reflecting on Islamophobic attacks on Muslim women in Britain, Hopkins (2016: 187) suggests that what we are seeing is a form of “racist violence [...] inflected with gender and bolstered by sexism, patriarchy and white supremacy”. I agree with Hopkins’ intersectional approach, but it seems to fall short of properly interrogating the relationship between Islamophobia, racism, and sexism.

Conversely, a number of writers have pointed to the sexism at work in the notion of ‘unveiling’ the oppressed ‘other’, and the ways this operates – both historically and more recently – in the service of racism. In his essay ‘Algeria Unveiled’, Fanon (1965) describes how the colonial French regime appropriated the image of the veiled Algerian women as part of the “destructuring [of] Algerian culture” (Fanon 1965: 39). Fanon understood that the

“method of presenting the Algerian as a prey fought over with equal ferocity by Islam and France with its Western culture” (Fanon 1965: 41) was a conscious political strategy, enacted to weaken the colonised and strengthen the colonisers. He also recognised though, that at the heart of this apparent need to ‘unveil’ the colonised woman lay a particularly gendered violence. Of the coloniser’s relationship to the Algerian woman, he says: “There is in it the will to bring this woman within his reach, to make her a possible object of possession” (Fanon 1965: 44). Similarly, since the turn of the twenty-first century, we have seen how a discourse of women’s liberation – couched in Enlightenment thinking (Fekete 2006) – has been appropriated in order to justify contemporary imperialist projects (see Abu-Lughod 2002; Fekete 2006; Farris 2012). Scholars have already made these links between liberalism, gender, Islamophobia, and racism as a system of domination; is it beyond possibility that the Islamophobia we see on the streets of Scotland operates in similar ways, or garners strength from similar places?

Importantly, Fanon’s account also points to the ways in which the veil became a source of anti-colonial resistance in Algeria, with women becoming more resolute in their wearing of the veil in the wake of “the colonialist’s frenzy to unveil” (Fanon 1965: 46) them. While it may seem a stretch to make comparisons between the French colonial regime in Algeria and the treatment of Muslim women in Scotland today, Fanon’s understanding of the “historic dynamism of the veil” (Fanon 1965: 63) may provide a starting point for thinking about the ways in which signifiers of difference – whether perceived phenotypical features or items of clothing – become sites of struggle.

To conclude, the targeting of Muslim women in hijab needs to be explored against the backdrop of complex interactions between the visibility of supposed cultural difference, and the liberal drive to ‘save’ the ‘oppressed’ cultural other. Beginning with a reconnection with race via Miles’ (1993) concept of racialisation, I have framed the hijab as a signifier of

difference upon which different forms of power – namely racism and patriarchy – coalesce. Importantly, these forms of power do not go unchallenged, but are subject to resistance from Muslim women themselves who are harnessing their visibility both individually and collectively to unsettle such processes. I would argue that these expressions of resistance warrant further research, since they may offer a starting point for a grounded reconnection of Islamophobia and (anti)racism. The following and final chapter interrogates the politics of place to explore how a liberal aversion to talking about issues of race and racism in Scotland may in fact facilitate Islamophobia as a kind of cultural racism.

## Chapter 3

### Talking about Islamophobia in Scotland

This chapter is concerned with how participants talked about their experiences of Islamophobia in relation to living in Scotland. It attempts to bring together the previous two chapters to engage with a sense of place, exploring how the sometimes contradictory stories that people tell about race and racism in Scotland help to obscure the structural nature of Islamophobia in Scotland today, as well as the role played by liberalism in reproducing it. Finally, I suggest that the narrow framing of Islamophobia as hate crime can be understood in light of Scotland-specific processes.

As part of research which explored young people's experiences of racism in Manchester, Harries (2014: 2) describes how the young people she spoke to struggled to articulate their experiences of everyday racism "when they also [situated] themselves in a broader context of tolerance and post-racialism". Participants expressed contradictory narratives around racism as they grappled with their understanding of Manchester as a cosmopolitan city, resulting in a 'disavowal' of racism. Crucially, Harries' research illustrates the ways in which the silencing of race within the apparently post-racial city impacts on peoples' ability to talk about racism in their everyday lives. This piece of research resonated with my own discussions with participants, who seemed to present a similarly mismatched story of racism in Scotland. As I have demonstrated in previous chapters, the women I spoke to shared with me multiple examples of the Islamophobia they had experienced first-hand living in Scotland. This ranged from the mundane to the violent, and included occasional references to institutional racism. Yet, when participants were asked to reflect on Scotland as a context for these experiences, there was a frequent resort to the benign 'nature' of Scots,

and a widely held assumption that whilst Scotland is far from perfect, England is decisively worse. The following extracts from conversations with Hadeel, Mariam and Nadiya exemplify the characterisation of Scottish people as generally ‘nice’ (people from Northern Scotland being ‘the nicest people’), with England or English people providing a point of comparison:

H: I don’t know, but generally, I don’t wanna be racist right but generally as well, like Scottish people are known to be like nicer than the English? For whatever reason. Maybe it’s ‘cause it’s way too busy in England, maybe because it’s way too mixed, but I dunno, maybe they’re not that welcoming but...

M: [...] there’s a comparison between Scotland and England, and while I’ve never lived in England, it’s just wee trips down south, from friends down south, it feels like there is a difference between Scotland and England as well. And it seems a lot better up here than down south.

N: I mean when I first came here [to Scotland] I was about fourteen, and um, I just felt the people were different, they were a bit more caring and they were a bit more understanding. Whereas in England, they would just come out as if it was a normal word you know, ‘oh you paki’, or dya know what I mean? Nobody really said that to me here when I came to Scotland, so I dunno why.

It might be important to note here that these comparisons *in particular* may have been influenced by my own presence as a white English woman. If anything, the expectation would be for participants to temper criticisms of England and racism in discussions with an



English person. This claim might be supported by – for instance – one participant’s comment of ‘no offence’ directed at me following a reference to the understanding ‘nature’ of Scottish people, or the preamble of “I don’t wanna be racist but...”, as seen above. Indeed, Harries (2014: 4) mentions in her article her own presence as representing “the white position from which the demand to ‘explain’ oneself originates”, and the ways in which the discussions around race and racism may be implicated in this.

There is a small body of research which suggests that Scottish nationalism has – at least to some degree – managed to avoid being racialised to the same extent as English nationalism (Miles and Dunlop 1986; Hopkins 2008). There is, then, a useful comparison to be made between Scotland and England when it comes to talking about race and racism, and perhaps the expressions of difference between the two as meted out by participants represent an obfuscated way of articulating this difference in *political* racialisation. However, there is also something to be said of the conscious representation of Scotland in contemporary politics as “an outward looking, open and inclusive country” (Sturgeon 2016), constructed in opposition to England. Arguably this juxtaposition has been buttressed by the Scottish independence referendum in 2014, and the more recent results of the EU referendum, in which Scotland, differing from the majority of England, voted overwhelmingly to remain.

To some extent, these comparisons may be well founded. Indeed, while Stuart Hall (2000: 222) asks “when has [Britishness] connoted anything but whiteness?”, many Scottish Muslims – all of my participants included – present a compelling case for Scottish exception to this rule. Many of those I spoke to talked about the pride they felt in their Scottish Muslim identities, as well as the compatibility of Scottish and Muslim values. There are also examples from my research, however, that suggest an enduring association of Scotland with ‘whiteness’. Leila, for example, told me the following:

Yeah, there is that... that feeling you get sometimes from Scottish, you know white Scottish people that's... that you're still not from here. In England I feel like sometimes it's more accepted that there are people from England that are Black or Asian, Arab. Whereas here, it's more like there is an acceptance that yes you're you. We will accept you for what you are, but you're not Scottish.

Leila's insightful comment touches on something important: that Scottish 'tolerance' only extends so far. The presence of the racialised other will be tolerated so long as they do not try to stake a claim in nationhood. This is further illustrated in Mariam's description of some people's inability to accept that she – as a third generation migrant – identifies as Scottish:

I know the number of times I've been asked that [where are you from?] over the years, you know like 'oh Scotland', or I've said 'Glasgow'. But where are you from? 'Darnley...?' No no, no no, where are you *really* from? 'Scotland...?' You know you're going round and round and people will not accept that. And sometimes it's genuinely... what they mean is, well you're different.

The danger then, is that an overemphasis on Scotland's apparently more progressive brand of civic nationalism as juxtaposed to English nationalism, may reproduce a silencing of the complex role of race and racisms in Scotland (see Kyriakides et al 2009), and an inability to talk candidly about experiences of racism, including Islamophobia. If Scotland is never 'as bad as England', responsibility for having these conversations gets deflected elsewhere, and as Miles and Muirhead (1986) make clear in their historical analysis of racism in Scotland, a lack of racialisation in Scottish politics does not equate to a lack of racism. I argue at this juncture that Goldberg's (2002) theorising of 'racelessness' may help to frame such a

situation, particularly in terms of Islamophobia in Scotland. This is because, as Valluvan makes clear in his discussion of the contribution of ‘post-race’ to our understanding of contemporary racisms, “the post-racial is not merely a significant feature of contemporary racisms, but it is its very constitutive *base*” (Valluvan 2016: 2). If we understand Islamophobia as a form of cultural racism which relies on a disavowal of its fundamentally racist nature, then Islamophobia and the notion of the ‘post-racial’ make for inseparable bedfellows.

Goldberg’s assertion that a condition of ‘racelessness’ fosters the “unspeakability” of “racial conditions” (Goldberg 2002: 222) certainly resonates with the ways in which participants were (un)able to articulate their experiences of Islamophobia within a Scottish context. But if structural racism cannot be ‘named’ (Harries 2014), how can experiences of Islamophobia be expressed? Perhaps through the language of ‘hate crime’, which as we have seen, posing no threat to the hegemony of the neoliberal ‘post-racial’ consensus, ensures that “culpability for instances of racism are reductively located at the level of the individual” (Valluvan 2016: 1). For those who are forced to negotiate the lived experience of everyday and institutional Islamophobia in Scotland with the heavily entrenched assumption that racism is an ‘English’ problem, hate crime not only provides a ‘language’ through which to express these experiences, but provides a discursive framework that is recognised, legitimised and even actively promoted by the state. It is no wonder then, that the drive towards tackling hate crime – despite its theoretical limitations – garners support from a wide range of interests. In light of this, a sociologically-informed re-engagement with race should provide a critical perspective on the ways in which Islamophobia is understood and accordingly challenged in Scotland today.

## Conclusion

The argument that I have attempted to put forward relies on the understanding that Islamophobia is about much more than individual intolerance to cultural or religious difference. I contend that Islamophobia – despite its name – draws on understandings of race, albeit in complex and sometimes contradictory ways, and functions as a form of racism. I have referred to Islamophobia as cultural racism, but I have also attempted to reiterate the structural processes which sustain it, moving my critique of Islamophobia beyond the purely interactional. Unpacking Islamophobia’s relationship to race and racism depends on a thorough exploration of what exactly we mean when we talk about race. It requires, as a starting point, an interrogation of taken-for-granted assumptions around race’s ontological reality, upon which the defence of cultural racisms relies. This defence includes simultaneously an invocation of the reality of race, and the liberal assertion that we are now ‘post-race’ (Valluvan 2016). I have therefore tried to bring together a number of theoretical concepts in a bid to unsettle such claims, and lay the foundation for an alternative conceptualisation of Islamophobia.

While the increasing popularity of a discourse of hate crime appears well intentioned, I have argued that it may obscure as much as it reveals. Certainly, the state’s recognition of everyday violence directed at Muslims is to be applauded, and is an achievement of years of anti-racist campaigning. However, a sociological critique of the ‘language’ of hate crime is necessary if we are to make the case for the continued existence of structural and institutional racism, and for the inclusion of Islamophobia within that understanding. Framing Islamophobia as hate crime reinforces the idea of it as an episodic, individualised, even pathological phenomenon, which is best tackled through punitive measures. The focus on

hate crime belies the embeddedness of Islamophobia in everyday life; the ‘low level’ Islamophobia to which so many of my participants referred. Further, it obscures the sanctioning of Islamophobia by the British state, which has seen Muslims constructed as would-be terrorists via the Prevent agenda. Ultimately, hate crime excludes in its very definition Islamophobia’s liberal underpinnings (Mondon and Winter 2016). Despite this, it is of little surprise that Muslim-led organisations are complying with, and even actively promoting the government’s focus on hate crime, since it provides a means of expressing experiences of racism in a climate in which ‘naming’ race can be difficult.

What hate crime statistics do provide us with is an indication of particular patterns in Islamophobic attacks. I have attempted to apply a sociological critique to the significant trend of Muslim women being attacked overwhelmingly by white men, but I would argue that this relationship deserves more sociological attention than it currently attracts. My second chapter probed further into the relationship between Islamophobia, race and racism, taking the visibility of many Muslim women as a starting point. I contend that the visibility that the hijab provides plays a central role in how Islamophobia directed at Muslim women operates. In the same way that perceived phenotypical differences such as skin colour are used to fix humans in particular ways, the hijab racialises women, deeming them an immutable cultural ‘other’. At the same time, the meaning imbued in the hijab is never fixed, but struggled over. Rather than abandon the hijab altogether, many of the Muslim women I spoke to were engaged in personal and collective efforts to unsettle associations of the hijab with apparent cultural difference. Crucially, debates around the hijab also speak to how Islamophobia works through gender, and any analysis of the racialising effects of the hijab needs to intersect with a critique of gendered violence, specifically with those narratives which facilitate the controlling of women’s bodies in their demand to unveil. Ironically, it is these same narratives which un-reflexively and unrelentingly focus their energies on a supposed

misogynistic ‘Muslim culture’. The relationship between the disproportionate targeting of visibly Muslim women in Islamophobic attacks and the apparently liberal calls for Muslim women to unveil might be a fruitful avenue for further research, especially in light of recent developments in France which is witnessing an unprecedented level of state intervention into what Muslim women choose to wear (Manzoor-Khan 2016).

These critiques only make sense with some context. What is it about Scotland in particular which enables and constrains certain ways of conceptualising Islamophobia? I believe the answer lies with liberalism’s appeal to ‘racelessness’ (Goldberg 2002), and the ways that this combines with (self)-perceptions of Scotland and its relationship to England. What seems to be the result of this is the expression of experiences of Islamophobia of all kinds, and at all levels, without the ability to properly name it. Unless these experiences fit into the narrow remit of what constitutes a hate crime, they are in danger of being rendered invisible through the everyday and political construction of liberal Scotland. Again, a rarely questioned assumption that there is simply less racism, discrimination and general intolerance in Scotland needs to be challenged if there is any hope of seriously tackling Islamophobia. The stories that the women I spoke to shared so generously with me provide ample illustration of the very real existence of Islamophobia in Scotland. However, the assumption that Islamophobic abuse is the result of a few ‘thugs’, rather than widespread structural inequality, only serves to limit our understanding of Islamophobia and therefore the scope of action that desperately needs to be taken.

In one of his many seminal essays, Stuart Hall (2000: 224) argues for an “expanded conception” of racism. The results of this research suggest that a more nuanced understanding of race, and concurrently a more generous definition of racism, might contribute to a useful rearticulation of Islamophobia. Of course there are various challenges to this approach. Widening our definition of racism cannot come at the expense of “historical,

geographical and political context” (Lentin 2016: 41) without which racism is in danger of being universalised and diluted. The notion of ‘reverse racism’ serves as a reminder of the perils of this tendency. I also argue that by widening our conception of racism to include Islamophobia – and indeed other racialised groups which defy traditional racial categories – may provide new avenues for anti-racist resistance. If nothing else, this research has demonstrated that Muslim women continue to be at the forefront of important anti-racist work, just as they have been elsewhere and at other historical junctures. However, current mainstream definitions of Islamophobia may be limiting the ways in which Muslim women can organise and articulate resistance to Islamophobia. Tyrer (2013: 31) suggests Muslims are currently forced to “mobilise by appropriating notions of offence rather than under the rubric of racism”; I would add to this the language of hate crime, or the politics of hate, which as I have demonstrated present their own conceptual limitations. Tyrer (2013: 31) talks of the “impossibility of countering Islamophobia in the absence of a clear conceptualisation of its centrally racist nature”, neatly capturing the real-life consequences of an uncritical understanding of Islamophobia. But such a statement also points to the ways in which social theory and sociologists might usefully contribute. It is the job of sociologists to support the important work already being done by Muslim women in Scotland, and indeed further afield, by developing critical conceptual frameworks which enable, rather than restrict, anti-racist practice.

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## Appendix A: Interview Guide

*Provide overview of themes/types of questions (mainly personal/some drawing on participant's professional experience).*

*Start by hearing a little bit about participant – age, what you do for a living, where you live etc. Remind them that this will all be anonymised.*

### **1. Everyday experiences of Islamophobia**

- What does being a Muslim mean to you?
  - How about in relation to living in Scotland/Glasgow/Edinburgh?
  - How do you think others in Scotland see Muslim women today?
  - Do you have a specific experience – generally - as a Muslim woman?
  - Has your sense of what it means to be a Muslim woman changed over time?
- Have you ever had a personal experience of racism or Islamophobia?
  - Can you tell me a bit about that?
  - How did you deal with the incident?
    - E.g. report to police?
    - What was the outcome of any action you took?
- Other women I've spoken to have suggested that Muslim women are particularly visible as Muslims and therefore more likely to be targets for Islamophobia.
  - Have you had any experiences yourself in terms of being particularly visible (or not) as a Muslim?
  - Has this affected your thoughts around wearing a hijab/headscarf yourself?

### **2. Challenging Islamophobia**

- Thinking about your personal experience of everyday Islamophobia, do you feel like you are able to challenge this as an individual in your day-to-day life?
  - How?
- How does the community organisation you work/volunteer for engage with or challenge Islamophobia?

- Who else do you think is responsible for challenging these representations?
  - E.g. other institutions? What can they do?
- Do you think Islamophobia is taken as seriously as other forms of discrimination?
  - Why/why not?
- What do you think is the most useful way/strategy of challenging Islamophobia re Muslim women?

## Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet



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### **Participant Information Sheet**

#### Muslim women in Scotland: exploring 'race', racism and Islamophobia

Researcher: Scarlet Harris, MRes Sociology and Research Methods

Email: [2211427H@student.gla.ac.uk](mailto:2211427H@student.gla.ac.uk)

Supervisor: Professor Satnam Virdee

Email: [satnam.virdee@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:satnam.virdee@glasgow.ac.uk)

You are being invited to participate in an interview which is part of my MRes in Sociology and Research Methods at the University of Glasgow. Please read the following 'frequently asked questions' and answers carefully before you decide whether or not to take part. Feel free to ask me directly, or email me with any other questions you have about the project or your participation in it. Thank you for your time.

#### 1. What is the purpose of the research project?

The purpose of this project is to explore Muslim women's everyday experiences of what is commonly called Islamophobia. I am interested in the relationship between Islamophobic narratives around Muslim women, and understandings of 'race' and racism in Scotland. I am also interested in exploring how Muslim-led community organisations are engaging with these narratives. Between May and September 2016, I hope to talk to Muslim women living in the Glasgow and Edinburgh areas about their own experiences and thoughts around these issues.

#### 2. Why have I been approached to take part?

You have been approached to take part because you are an adult Muslim woman living in Glasgow or Edinburgh, with some connection to a Muslim women's organisation working in the area. Altogether, around eight to ten people will be taking part in interviews for the project.

#### 3. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. You have the right to stop taking part in the research at any time, and without giving a reason. You also have the right to refuse to answer any question you do not feel comfortable answering, and this will not affect your participation in the research.

#### 4. What will happen to me if I take part?

If you choose to take part, you will be asked to participate in an informal interview that will last for approximately one hour. The interview will be audio recorded and will be held either in a local café, or the offices of a relevant community organisation where appropriate. It will be arranged at a time that is convenient for you.

5. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Yes. Your involvement in the study will be kept strictly confidential. All personal information that you give will be made anonymous, so nobody will be able to identify you in any results from the research. Data will be kept securely and only myself as the researcher will have access to it.

**Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.**

6. What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results of the research project will form part of the dissertation for my MRes (Masters of Research) in Sociology and Research Methods at the University of Glasgow. You will be able to read the results of the project, and will be invited to give feedback, once the dissertation has been submitted in September 2016. Results may also contribute to future publications such as a PhD thesis, journal article, or conference paper.

7. Who has reviewed the research project?

This research project has been reviewed by the School of Social and Political Sciences Ethics Forum.

8. Who can I contact for further information?

Researcher: Scarlet Harris  
MRes Sociology and Research Methods  
Department of Sociology  
University of Glasgow  
Email: [2211427H@student.gla.ac.uk](mailto:2211427H@student.gla.ac.uk)

Supervisor: Professor Satnam Virdee  
Department of Sociology  
University of Glasgow  
Email: [satnam.virdee@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:satnam.virdee@glasgow.ac.uk)

**If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact the School of Social and Political Sciences Ethics Officer, Professor Keith Kintrea, by email: [keith.kintrea@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:keith.kintrea@glasgow.ac.uk)**

## Appendix C: Participant Consent Form



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### **Consent Form**

Muslim women in Scotland: exploring 'race', racism and Islamophobia

Researcher: Scarlet Harris  
Supervisor: Prof. Satnam Virdee

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above research project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonym in any publications arising from this research.
4. I consent to interviews being audio-recorded   
I **do not** consent to interviews being audio-recorded
5. I agree to take part in this research project   
I **do not** agree to take part in this research project

Name of Participant .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Name of Researcher .....

Signature .....

Date .....