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Two Islamophobias? Racism and religion as distinct but mutually supportive dimensions of anti-Muslim prejudice

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Abstract

Debates about Islamophobia have been blighted by the question of whether the prejudice can be defined as a form of racism or as hostility to religion (or a combination of the two). This paper sheds light on this debate by presenting the findings of a new nationally representative survey, focused on the UK, that contrasts perceptions of Muslims not only with perceptions of other ethnic and religious minorities but also with perceptions of Islam as a religious tradition. We find that prejudice against Muslims is higher than for any other group examined other than Travellers. We also find contrasting demographic drivers of prejudice towards *Muslims* and towards *Islam*. Across most prejudice measures we analyse, intolerant views are generally significantly associated with being male, voting Conservative and being older, although not with Anglican identity. We find, however, that class effects vary depending on the question's focus. Anti-immigration sentiment – including support for a 'Muslim ban' – is significantly correlated with being working-class. However, prejudice towards Islam as a body of teachings (tested using a question measuring perceptions of religious literalism) is significantly correlated with being middle-class, as is negative sentiment towards Travellers. Using these

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findings, the paper makes an argument for supplementing recent scholarship on the associations between racism and Islamophobia with analyses focusing on misperceptions of belief.

KEYWORDS
anti-Muslim prejudice, Islamophobia, racism, religion, tolerance

1 | INTRODUCTION

Islamophobia is a phenomenon that struggles for recognition in the West. Proposed changes in law and policy designed to counter the prejudice have faced fierce opposition, much of it alleging that the concept is ill-defined and therefore open to abuse (see Alinejad, 2022; Moore, 2019). At the same time, attempts to address this charge – by, for example, proposing definitions of Islamophobia – have often been hobbled by political representatives' refusal to engage. In Britain, for instance, on which this article will focus, the present Conservative government has dismissed all of the many definitions of Islamophobia published over the last 3 decades (All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, 2018; Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, 1997; Elahi & Khan, 2017; Tell MAMA, 2013), even while it has pressured bodies such as universities (Donelan, 2021) to formally adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism (IHRA, 2016).

One of the reasons Islamophobia has eluded public recognition is ambiguity about its status as either a religious prejudice or a form of racism. This has been a subject of discussion in both academia and the wider public sphere in recent years, although the nature of the discussion has varied markedly between these two contexts. Until recently, academic researchers had paid little attention to historical and contemporary associations between racism and Islamophobia (Meer, 2013; Rana, 2007). This is, however, slowly being corrected via the development of a literature interrogating linkages between the two (see, inter alia, Cheng, 2015; Gerteis et al., 2020; Jones et al., 2019; Meer, 2016; Meer & Modood, 2010; Moosavi, 2015; Sealy, 2021; Sian, 2017). Outside academia, in contrast, this ambiguity has not been interrogated so much as utilised to deflect demands to recognise Islamophobia. Arguments defining Islamophobia as racism have been brushed aside with the claim that Islam is 'not a race', while discussions of religious prejudice have met the objection that religions are bodies of ideas and so should not be given the same protection as characteristics, like race or gender, that one cannot choose. These two objections often appear together in the writings of influential public figures (Jenkins, 2018), where they function to keep the concept open to question.

In this article, we use a new nationally representative survey of the British public to argue that there exist two distinct but overlapping forms of Islamophobia, one 'racial' and the other 'religious'. For this survey, we developed items designed to measure 'racial' prejudice towards groups (including Muslims) and prejudice towards religions (including Islam). In what follows, we first highlight the *extent* of Islamophobia in the UK, showing how it is more acceptable than prejudice toward any group studied other than Gypsy and Irish Travellers.[1] We then use binary logistic regression models to show how 'racial' and 'religious' forms of Islamophobia are *situated differently* in Britain. We find that hostility towards *Muslims* – what we regard as anti-Muslim racism – follows a pattern that is consistent with almost all forms of anti-group prejudice. This tends to be consistently concentrated among men, Conservative voters and older people, while certain forms of prejudice are associated with being working class. When we examine items designed to test prejudice toward Islam as a religious tradition, however, we find a different pattern. Prejudice is still concentrated among men, Conservative voters and older people, but in this case belonging to a middle- or upper-class occupational group emerges as a significant predictor of holding prejudiced views about Islam (but *not* other religions).

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Based on these findings, we challenge current scholarship on Islamophobia, arguing that increasingly dominant analyses of the racialisation of Muslims are, although correct, *incomplete*. Attending to distinctly religious prejudice alongside Islamophobia's racial dimensions, we argue, helps enhance our understanding, especially of 'elite' manifestations of the prejudice. We argue, further, that this implies a modified approach to opposing Islamophobia, with religious *and* racial literacy both being necessary components of effective opposition. We propose that recognising Islamophobia as racial *and* religious, and specifying the different ways these may be addressed, offers the possibility of closing the gaps through which the prejudice currently slips.

2 | RELIGION AND RACE IN SCHOLARSHIP ON ISLAMOPHOBIA

Within UK civil society, there have been important changes in how Islamophobia has been defined and reviewing these offers a useful introduction to recent scholarship and its influence. The 1997 report that helped popularise the term 'Islamophobia' – *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All* (1997), published by the think-tank The Runnymede Trust – made religion central to its definition, with the prejudice being defined in terms of 'closed' views of Islam that picture the tradition as monolithic, violent and irrational. In contrast, more recent efforts to define Islamophobia place greater emphasis on associations between Islamophobia and racism. A revised definition published by Runnymede in 2017 defined Islamophobia as 'anti-Muslim racism' (Elahi & Khan, 2017), while the most influential definition, by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims, defined it as 'a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness' (APPG on British Muslims, 2018). While there are differences between these two, with the latter leaving greater room for religious prejudice, both new definitions pay less attention to representations of Islam and more to claims made about Muslims *as people*.

This move toward emphasising Islamophobia's status as a form of racism responds to shifts in scholarship on Islamophobia, where reflections on this 'emergent' concept (Allen, 2010; Bleich, 2011) have given way to renewed focus, across various disciplines, on the racialisation of Muslims (Galonnier, 2015; Meer, 2016; Meer & Modood, 2010; Moosavi, 2015). Historical scholarship has shown how medieval representations of Islam prefigured the emergence of modern racism (Heng, 2019; Matar, 2009). Sociological analysis has highlighted how Muslimness is conflated with ethnic identities (Levey & Modood, 2009; Moosavi, 2015). Social theorists have applied the concepts of 'cultural racism' (Modood, 1997) and 'racial formation' (Omi & Winant, 1995) to Muslims (Meer & Modood, 2010). This, in turn, has informed research showing how visible Muslimness is targeted for discrimination (Aidenberger & Doehne, 2021).

This scholarship has done much to clarify the reality of anti-Muslim hostility and, along with the policy literature it has influenced, has had some success in winning recognition for Islamophobia.[2] We do not criticise it here, aside from noting one curious omission. These arguments about Islamophobia and racism are rooted in a discursive view of race as something that is continually re-made, influenced by material interests (Massoumi et al., 2017) and the cultural resources that allow racial worldviews to appear compelling (Gidley et al., 2020). Racism is, in Solomos and Back's (1996: 18–19) apt phrase, a 'scavenger ideology' that constructs racialised 'others' strategically, utilising whatever ideas and values facilitate its appeal. Yet although 'race' is viewed as discursively constructed (Hall, 2021, p. 364), little attention is paid to discursive shifts *between* the categories of 'race' and 'religion' – or specifically, to how switching between racial and religious vocabularies allows Islamophobia to avoid censure. Attention has been paid, by Alana Lentin (2018) and others, to the systems of justification that elites use in liberal democracies to deflect the stigmatising charge of racism. Yet the technique of eschewing racialised language *in favour of* emphasis on religion is given less consideration.

What this misses out, we maintain, is one distinctive way that prejudice toward Muslims manifests and is sustained. We distinguish between racial prejudices towards groups (Muslims) and religious prejudices towards beliefs (Islam) to highlight how certain (middle-class) sections of British society evince prejudice toward the latter

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but not the former (or perhaps, express prejudice towards the latter as cover for prejudice towards the former). Our analysis of prejudice towards Islam focuses on stereotypes about *literalism*, drawing on earlier writing by Said (1997) and others that has highlighted how Islam has been characterised as the anti-intellectual, fundamentalist antithesis of Western rationality. By analysing public views about Islam as a 'literalist religion', we point to poorly recognised prejudices that nevertheless have implications for how Islamophobia is addressed. We do not object to conceptualisations of Islamophobia as racism but point to ways these conceptualisations can be *supplemented*.

3 | RELIGION AND RACE IN QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Before doing this, it is important to emphasise that this lack of interest in prejudices about Muslims' beliefs carries across into quantitative research. To the best of our knowledge, ours is the first large-scale survey that separates out measures designed to compare prejudices about *groups* and prejudices about *belief systems*. Political tolerance research overwhelmingly uses questions about the former. Across most data sources, such as the Pew Global Attitudes Survey (Ciftci, 2012), the European Values Study (Ribberink et al., 2017) and the British Social Attitudes Survey (Storm et al., 2017), questions focus only on what respondents think about Muslims as people. This does allow for comparison of anti-Muslim views with other prejudices. Strabac et al. (2014), for example, compare anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes across Europe and the US, finding that the latter are higher than the former. Some surveys of Islamophobia also separate out aspects of anti-Muslim prejudice. Gerteis et al. (2020), for instance, split Islamophobia into 'racial', 'religious' and 'civic' dimensions. Even in this case, however, the questions all focus on *Muslims* and not on *Islam*, meaning questions about Islam have been limited to shorter surveys by campaigning organisations (see Hope not Hate, 2019).

A clearer separation between race and religion has been made in qualitative sociology and social psychology. In the latter context, Lee et al. (2009) have developed two scales designed to test 'affective behavioural' and 'cognitive' aspects of Islamophobia – that is, items focusing on wariness of Muslims and items measuring the belief that Islam is harmful. This proves a productive approach: they find their 'affective-behavioural' scale significantly correlates with respondents' race, religion and likelihood of maintaining friendships with atheists, while their 'cognitive' scale does not. Similar distinctions are found in the qualitative work of Cheng (2015) and in Jones et al. (2019). In Jones et al.'s interviews, a distinction emerged among the participants who evaluated Islam negatively, between those who expressed hostility toward both Islam as a belief system *and* Muslims, and those who expressed openness towards Muslims but nevertheless made false generalisations about Islam as a religion. This distinction, moreover, corresponded with social differences, with the latter group typically being middle-class and politically liberal. Our survey was designed to investigate this further, using a larger sample.

4 | RESEARCH METHODS

The survey used for this article was designed by the authors and conducted by YouGov using an online interview with members of YouGov's participant panel, comprising over one million people. It was conducted from 20 to 21 July 2021, with the questions previously being tested by the authors in 30 cognitive interviews. Individuals on YouGov's panel were contacted at random by email based on sample criteria designed to gather data on a representative sample of the adult population of Britain. In total, 1667 people completed the survey. Prior to analysis, the sample was weighted by age, political behaviours, gender, social grade, region and level of education to ensure representativeness (with the census, Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics estimates and other large-scale datasets being used to inform quotas).[3] It should be noted that it is not a probability sample, as this would have been prohibitively expensive. Pew Research Center found that YouGov's panel survey 'consistently performed the best' in their evaluation of online non-probability surveys

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(Kennedy et al., 2016). We also considered an online survey the most appropriate choice for this study, given that we wished to minimise any interviewer effect that might lead to underreporting of the prejudices we analyse.

The survey covered five question themes, as follows:

- Items testing attitudes towards religion generally;
- Items testing prejudice against named religious traditions;
- Items testing respondents' feelings toward specific ethnic and religious minorities;
- Items testing belief in conspiracies about Muslims and Jews;
- Items testing respondents' support for discriminatory treatment.

Examples from each question theme, including full question wording, can be found in Table 1. We have included six example questions in this table, labelled Q1 through to Q6 (two examples are given of positivity/negativity items). From here, rather than use the full question wording, we refer to questions using these labels. These six example questions encompass all the questions that are used as dependent variables in our analysis. Other questions were included in the full script (available on request) that are not included. Some of the survey items we used to investigate religious belief (Q1), tolerance (Q6) and conspiracy (Q5) replicated, or were adapted from, questions found in surveys such as the British Social Attitudes Survey. One item about perceptions of religion in Q1 also replicated an item used in the US General Social Survey (GSS). To the best of our knowledge, no large-scale survey has sought to test public perceptions of the teachings of different religious traditions. The questions on this theme (including Q2) were therefore all designed by the authors with contributions from YouGov.

Underrepresentation of minorities is a common problem in survey research, including ours. In our survey, most ethnic and religious minorities are underrepresented, and YouGov's weighting formula does not include religion or ethnicity. As Table 2 shows, Muslims represent just 1% of our sample despite making up 6.5% of the population of England and Wales according to the 2021 census. We exclude Muslims from our analyses and, more generally, because our interest is in the majority's views about minority populations, minority views are of less interest. Even so,

TABLE 1 Example survey questions.

Question category	Example question wording
Dislike of religion measures	Q1: 'Please consider the following statements and tell me whether you agree or disagree [5-point Likert scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', with options for 'don't know' and 'prefer not to say']: - We trust too much in science and not enough in religious faith - Looking around the world, religions bring more conflict than peace - People with very strong religious beliefs are often too intolerant of others - Religious people tend to be less rational than nonreligious people - Science and religion are fundamentally incompatible - In general, religions make a positive contribution to the progress of society.'
Religious prejudice measures	Q2: 'For each of the following religions please say whether you think the religion teaches its followers that its sacred text should be taken literally, word for word, or symbolically, understanding its poetic meaning and historical context [4-point Likert scale including 'totally symbolically', 'more literally than symbolically', 'more literally than symbolically' and 'totally literally', with options for 'don't know' and 'prefer not to say']: - Judaism and its scripture, the Hebrew Bible or Tanakh - Islam and its scripture, the Qur'an - Christianity and its scripture, the Bible - Sikhism and its scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib'

(Continues)

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TABLE 1 (Continued)

Question category	Example question wording
Positivity/negativity measures	Q3: 'What is your personal attitude towards members of the following ethnic groups? [In both cases, 5-point Likert scale from 'very positive' to 'very negative', with options for 'don't know' and 'prefer not to say']: - White-British people - Black African or black Caribbean people - Pakistanis - Gypsy or Irish Travellers' Q4: 'What is your personal attitude towards members of the following religious groups? - Muslims - Jews - Sikhs - Christians
Prejudice/conspiracy measures	Q5: 'Below are some statements that people have made about different ethnic or religious groups in the UK. Some people may agree with them, some may disagree, and some may not have an opinion at all. Please tell me to what extent you would agree or disagree with someone who made the following statements [two examples of eight statements, 5-point Likert scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', with options for 'don't know' and 'prefer not to say']: There are areas in Britain that operate under Sharia law where non-Muslims are not able to enter. Since arriving in the UK, Muslim migrants have made a positive contribution to British society and culture'
Tolerance measures	Q6: 'To what extent do you support or oppose banning the migration of people from each of the following groups to the UK? [5-point Likert scale from 'strongly support' to 'strongly oppose', with options for 'don't know' and 'prefer not to say'] - Christians - Jews - Muslims - Sikhs - White-British people - Black African or black Caribbean people - Pakistanis - Gypsy or Irish Travellers'

this under-representation does weaken our claims about 'British people' and, as we did not commission any booster samples, we are unable to report any minority views.

5 | SURVEY RESULTS

We have presented the descriptive results of the survey in more detail elsewhere (Jones & Unsworth, 2022) but provide an overview here to contextualise our regression models. Figure 1 shows the results of our two positivity/negativity questions (Table 1, Q3 and Q4). Muslims emerge from these questions as the second 'least liked' group, with 25.9% of the sample stating they feel negative towards Muslims. This compares with 8.5% for Jewish people, 6.4% for black people, and 8.4% for white people. In our survey, only Gypsy and Irish Travellers are regarded more negatively, with 44.6% viewing this group negatively.

This does not necessarily demonstrate that Muslims and Travellers suffer the highest levels of prejudice in the UK. Our survey asked respondents to make judgements on a predetermined list rather than using a 'content-controlled' approach in which respondents are invited to suggest their own 'least-liked' group (see Djupe, 2015). This means there may be other groups we did not cover whose members are viewed more negatively. Moreover, there is no neat link

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TABLE 2 Unweighted sample frequencies and percentages.

Age	Freq.	%	Gender	Freq.	%	Social grade	Freq.	%
18-24	118	7.1	Male	810	48.6	A	158	9.5
25-49	666	40.0	Female	857	51.4	B	309	18.5
50-64	423	25.4				C1	483	29.0
65+	460	27.6				C2	350	21.0
						D	175	10.5
						E	192	11.5

Ethnicity	Freq.	%	Religion	Freq.	%	Vote (2019 GE)	Freq.	%	Vote (EU ref)	Freq.	%
British (inc. nations)	1484	89.0	None	901	54.1	Conservative	565	33.9	Remain	618	37.1
Irish	12	0.7	Anglican	390	23.4	Labour	413	24.8	Leave	660	39.6
Other white	54	3.2	Roman Catholic	99	5.9	Liberal democrat	150	9.0	Didn't vote	346	20.7
Mixed	19	1.1	Presbyterian	24	1.4	SNP	50	3.0	Can't remember	43	2.6
Indian	22	1.3	Orthodox Christian	8	0.5	Plaid Cymru	7	0.4			
Pakistani	7	0.4	Pentecostal	6	0.3	Brexit party	25	1.5			
Bangladeshi	8	0.5	Evangelical (ind.)	22	1.3	Green	33	2.0			
Chinese	10	0.6	Other Christian	62	3.7	Other	20	1.2			
Other Asian	10	0.6	Judaism	9	0.5	Don't know	27	1.6			
African	5	0.3	Hinduism	9	0.5	Didn't vote	376	22.6			
Caribbean	7	0.4	Islam (*excluded*)	17	1.0						
Other black	2	0.1	Sikhism	1	0.1						
Other	2	0.1	Buddhism	13	0.8						
Prefer not to say	25	1.5	Other	40	2.4						
			Prefer not to say	38	2.3						
			Missing	28	1.7						

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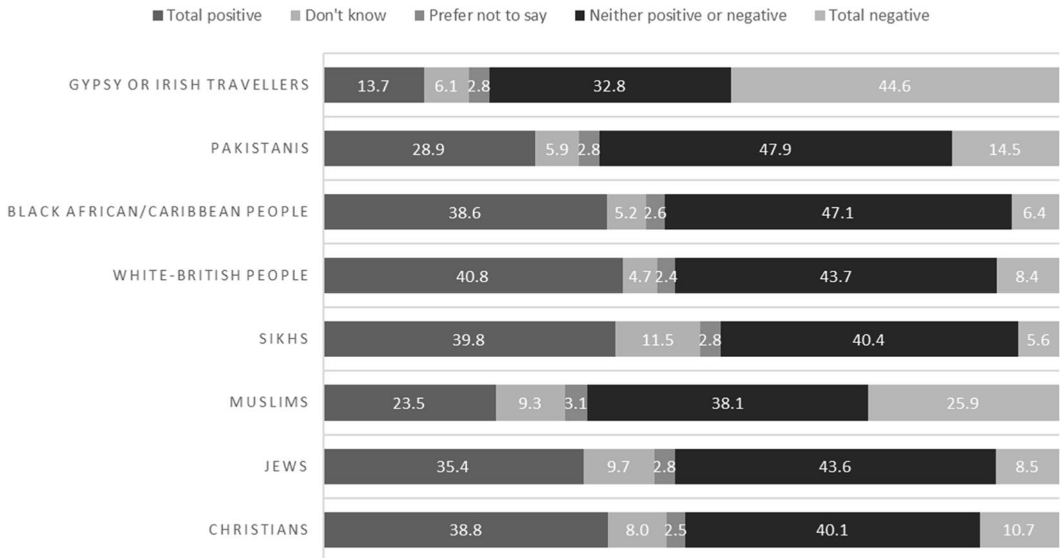

FIGURE 1 Negative and positive attitudes toward different ethnic and religious groups.

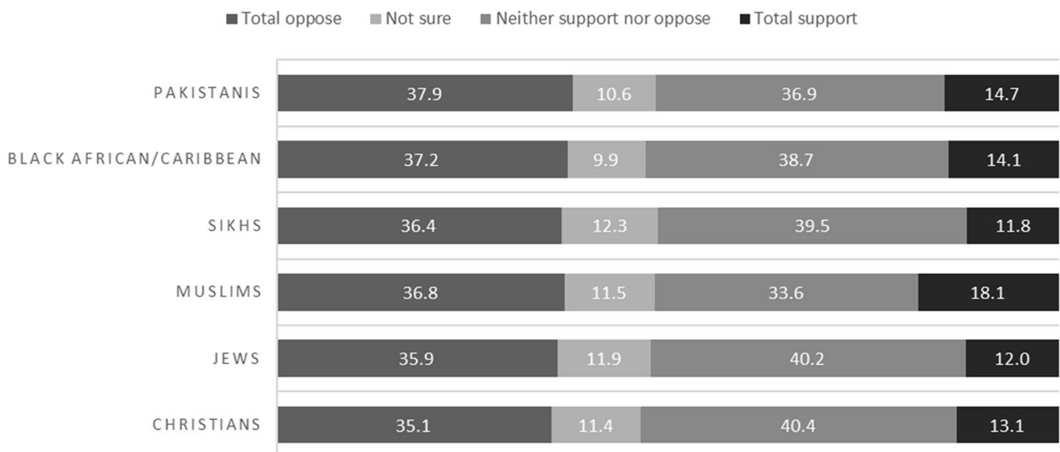

FIGURE 2 Support for discriminating on the basis of ethnicity and religion in immigration policy.

between survey responses and experiences of discrimination. Certainly, in Britain Muslims and Travellers do suffer acts of hatred (Allen et al., 2013; James, 2020) and discrimination (Greenfields & Brindley, 2016; Khattab & Johnston, 2015). However, in some contexts – such as policing (House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2021, p. 93) – black people suffer the worst penalties. We suggest reading the results in Figure 1, therefore, not just as an indicator of prej-

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FIGURE 3 Prejudice against religious traditions.

udice but as an indicator of prejudice alongside a *lack of social sanction* against that prejudice. Travellers and Muslims are the groups in our survey where respondents not only held negative views but also were comfortable expressing this. The very low levels of negativity toward black and, to a lesser extent, Jewish people indicates that, while prejudice may exist, it is stigmatised, meaning that members of the public tend to be reluctant to admit to it.

Anti-Muslim sentiment stood out in other questions too (where we did not include items about Travellers). In our question measuring tolerance (Table 1, Q6), which asked about prohibiting migration from specified groups, support for a 'Muslim ban' (18.1% support) was between 6.3% and 3.4% higher than a ban for any other ethnic or religious group (Figure 2). The margins in this question were smaller though and, as we highlight below, much of this support is explained by overarching anti-immigration sentiment among our sample.

Finally, in our questions testing prejudice against named religious traditions (Table 1, Q2) respondents judged Islam as more literalistic than other traditions by a wide margin. Q2 asked respondents whether they thought given religions teach their followers that their sacred text should be taken literally or symbolically, with participants being given options ranging from 'totally symbolically' to 'totally literally'. Of course, there is a wide range of reasonable responses to this question principally because the religions we focus on contain a vast range of traditions of interpretation. Precisely because of this, however, we contend that viewing any religion as 'totally' literalistic, without scope for poetic meaning or historical context, suggests stereotyping and prejudice. This includes the case of Islam. While Muslims overwhelmingly agree that the Qur'an is the revealed word of God, it is emphatically not the case that the Qur'an is only interpreted literally. There are mainstream Islamic traditions identifying unclear or parabolical (*mutashabihat*) verses and indeed Arabic words (e.g., *ta'wil*) describing allegorical interpretation of the Qur'an. Historical contextualisation has also been fundamental to Qur'anic exegesis. We thus read Q2 as giving insight into the prevalence of stereotypes about Islam being uniformly 'anti-philosophical' and 'fundamentalist' (Jones et al., 2019; Said, 1997; for an extended discussion see Jones & Unsworth, 2022). As Figure 3 shows, such stereotypes have purchase in the UK: 21.1% agreed that Islam is 'totally literalist', compared with 7.5% for Judaism, 3.9% for Sikhism and 4.8% for Christianity.

One notable thing about these percentages is that the difference is, in the case of the non-Christian religions examined, accounted for primarily by variations in willingness to respond. Respondents were more likely to offer a view in the case of Islam than they were in the cases of Sikhism or Judaism, where most respondents selected 'don't know'. Rather than disregarding such responses, we read this as an indication of greater *confidence* among respond-

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ents in their ability to make a judgement about Islam – a confidence that is present even though, in contrast to the other religious traditions included, the most popular response was one that is demonstrably wrong.[4]

6 | REGRESSION MODELS

We turn now to our regression models, which examine the socio-demographic drivers of the levels of prejudice expressed.

6.1 | Independent variables

The independent variables we use are age, gender, political affiliation, class and religious identity. In our models, age is coded as a continuous variable. Gender is coded as a binary variable with 'Male' = 1. Political affiliation is based on YouGov's standard question: 'Which party did you vote for at the General Election in December 2019?' We coded this as a dichotomous variable with 'Voted Conservative' = 1. Religious identity is based on the question, 'Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion?' To examine effects associated with (English) Christian nationalism, rather than coding religious identity a dichotomous (religious/non-religious) variable we coded responses into five categorical variables, 'No Religion', 'Anglican', Catholic, 'Other Christian' and Other (non-Christian)', with 'No religion' as the reference category.

YouGov uses NRS social grades, a standard British system of occupational classification, to determine class. This allocates people to: A = 'Higher managerial roles, administrative or professional'; B = 'Intermediate managerial roles, administrative or professional'; C1 = 'Supervisory or clerical and junior managerial roles, administrative or professional'; C2 = 'Skilled manual workers'; D = 'Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers'; and E = 'State pensioners, casual and lowest grade workers, unemployed with state benefits only'. Class was coded as a dichotomous variable with 'ABC1' used for upper/middle class and 'C2DE' used for working class. In our models ABC1 = 1.

6.2 | Dependent variables

We present regression models for all the questions in Table 1 that focus on Muslims, as well as a limited number of other groups for purposes of comparison. This enables us to contrast significant effects for questions focusing on: attitudes towards religion generally (Q1); prejudice against Islam (Q2); positivity/negativity toward Muslims and some other ethnic (Q3) and religious (Q4) minorities; conspiracies about Muslims (Q5); and support for discriminatory treatment against Muslims and some other ethnic and religious minorities (Q6). Each question was recoded as a dichotomous variable where 1 is an indicator of prejudice – for example, expressing negativity towards an ethnic/religious group (Q3, Q4), expressing support for a ban on migration from a group (Q6), and agreement with propositions including that areas of Britain 'operate under Sharia law' or that Muslims have not made a positive contribution to British society (Q5). When measuring prejudice against Islam (Q2) we take expressions of agreement with the idea that Muslims read the Qur'an 'totally literally' as an indicator of prejudice.

Our dichotomous measure of attitudes to religion-in-general is somewhat different to the others in that it is based on an additive 'anti-religion scale' of all the six items listed in Table 1, Q1. The coding for the four 'anti-religion' items was: 2 = 'Strongly agree', 1 = 'Agree', 0 = 'Neither agree nor disagree', −1 = 'Disagree' and −2 = 'Strongly disagree'. The coding for the two 'pro-religion' items was the same, but with the number order reversed. This gave a scale with a lowest value of −12 and a highest of 12 (mean = 3.7). Cronbach's alpha for the scale is 0.815 for the whole sample.[5] We grouped responses into three categories of 'positive' (−12 to −5), 'neutral' (−4 to 4) and 'hostile' (5 to 12) toward religion. In the regression analysis presented in Table 3, we collapsed 'positive' and 'neutral' groups to create a dichotomous variable derived from the scale. We intentionally do not refer to 'prejudice' in relation to this measure because we do not see hostility to 'religion', as a generic category, as inherently prejudiced.

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TABLE 3 Binary logistic regression models for hostility to religion, religious prejudice, ethnic prejudice and tolerance items (key: light grey = significant positive association; dark grey = significant negative association; see Table 1 for full question wording).

	Q1: Hostility to religion		Q2: Assumed Islamic literalism		Q3: Feel negative towards travelers		Q3 feel negative towards Pakistanis		Q4: Feel negative towards Muslims		Q5: Agree sharia no-go zones		Q5: Muslims have made a positive contribution (disagree)		Q6: Support for a Muslim migration ban		Q6: Support for ban on black migration	
Dependent variable	Sig./*p*	Exp(B)	Sig./*p*	Exp(B)	Sig./*p*	Exp(B)	Sig./*p*	Exp(B)	Sig./*p*	Exp(B)	Sig./*p*	Exp(B)	Sig./*p*	Exp(B)	Sig./*p*	Exp(B)	Sig./*p*	Exp(B)
Ref: No religion																		
Anglican	<0.001	0.233	0.371	1.149	0.133	1.218	0.386	1.168	0.423	0.889	0.113	1.261	0.399	1.145	0.414	1.145	0.121	1.330
Catholic	<0.001	0.171	0.141	1.455	0.289	1.260	0.100	1.605	0.718	0.911	0.040	1.658	0.072	1.593	0.685	1.124	<0.001	2.646
Other Christian	<0.001	0.138	0.150	1.393	0.973	1.007	0.135	1.488	0.819	0.949	0.064	1.509	0.709	1.100	0.009	1.839	0.027	1.791
Other (non-Christian) religion	<0.001	0.276	0.047	1.763	0.935	0.979	0.001	2.662	0.383	1.278	<0.001	2.701	<0.001	2.619	<0.001	2.884	0.016	2.106
Age	0.069	1.007	<0.001	1.019	0.001	1.011	0.015	1.012	<0.001	1.021	<0.001	1.026	0.116	1.007	0.101	1.007	0.932	1
Gender (male)	0.007	1.381	0.003	1.442	<0.001	1.463	<0.001	1.669	<0.001	2.017	<0.001	1.624	<0.001	1.604	0.031	1.330	0.030	1.369
Social grade ABC1	0.520	1.082	0.028	1.323	0.001	1.427	0.081	0.778	0.988	0.998	0.668	0.950	<0.001	0.589	0.015	0.726	0.009	0.684
Voted conservative	0.013	1.390	<0.001	1.679	<0.001	1.837	<0.001	2.022	<0.001	2.111	<0.001	2.747	<0.001	2.438	<0.001	1.889	<0.001	1.730
Constant	0.265	0.726	<0.001	0.039	<0.001	0.165	<0.001	0.068	<0.001	0.067	<0.001	0.047	<0.001	0.193	<0.001	0.146	<0.001	0.157

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7 | MODEL RESULTS

The results of the regression models are presented in Tables 3 and 4. In Table 3 we highlight significant effects on our indicators of ethnic/religious prejudice and hostility toward religion. We can see from this table that the most consistent predictors prejudice are gender and voting record; indeed, being male and voting Conservative makes one significantly more likely to be hostile towards religion and prejudiced towards minorities, irrespective of the question asked and the target group. The effect sizes for gender and voting record are generally large. For example, for our question about negativity towards Muslims (Q4) the Exp(B) for gender is 2.017 and for voting record it is 2.111. The effect is largest for our question asking whether people believe areas of Britain 'operate under Sharia law' (Q5), where the Exp(B) for voting record is 2.747.

Age is similar, although effects are weaker and less consistent. Being older significantly predicts negative views of Muslims, Travellers and Pakistanis. It also significantly predicts agreeing that Islam is literalistic and that there are Sharia 'no go areas'. There is, however, no significant relationship between age and some questions, for example, agreement with the proposition that there should be a ban on Muslims or black people migrating to the UK (Q6).

Age also has an important moderating effect on religious identity, as shown in Table 4. Previous quantitative research into tolerance and prejudice in Europe has found that religion has an ambiguous effect on attitudes to outgroups. Storm's (2017) analysis of the European Social Survey finds that it is not religiosity but 'conformity to national rates of religiosity' that is associated with concerns over immigration. Similarly, she (Storm, 2011) finds, in analysis of the 2008 International Social Survey Programme, that Christian identification predicts the view that immigration is a threat, but Church attendance is negatively associated with the same view. Descriptive analysis of our data initially seems to indicate something similar: 29.7% of Anglicans view Muslims negatively, while the figure for non-religious people is 25.2%. Yet, as Table 4 shows, this 'Anglican effect' becomes non-significant once we control for age. Only 'Other (non-Christian) Religion' has a significant effect and, while these effects are sometimes large, it is hard to draw conclusions about this group as it comprises a variety of small sub-samples. While Table 4 presents sequential models for Q2, we find similar results across all questions in Table 1: for no question does Anglican identity predict prejudice.

TABLE 4 Sequential binary logistic regression models for religious prejudice (key: light grey = significant positive association; see Table 1 for full question wording).

Dependent variable: Assumed Islamic literalism (Q2)	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
	Sig./*p*	Exp(B)	Sig./*p*	Exp(B)	Sig./*p*	Exp(B)	Sig./*p*	Exp(B)	Sig./*p*	Exp(B)
Ref: No religion										
Anglican	0.002	1.555	0.237	1.196	0.152	1.244	0.132	1.258	0.371	1.149
Catholic	0.105	1.495	0.193	1.387	0.145	1.445	0.144	1.448	0.141	1.455
Other Christian	0.029	1.629	0.231	1.314	0.187	1.353	0.199	1.343	0.150	1.393
Other (non-Christian) religion	0.068	1.665	0.062	1.695	0.051	1.738	0.047	1.758	0.047	1.763
Age			<0.001	1.023	<0.001	1.023	<0.001	1.023	<0.001	1.019
Gender (male)					0.001	1.514	0.001	1.489	0.003	1.442
Social grade ABC1 (ref: C2DE)							0.016	1.356	0.028	1.323
Voted conservative in 2019 GE									<0.001	1.679
Constant	<0.001	0.218	<0.001	0.076	<0.001	0.06	<0.001	0.037	<0.001	0.039

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Most relevant to our wider argument about Islamophobia are the effects linked to class. In the UK, as in other Western states, debates about 'national populism' (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018) regularly present working-class people as opposed to minority inclusion and immigration, supposedly because white working-class communities in former industrial towns have been badly impacted by the population and capital flows associated with neoliberal globalisation. Our survey does provide evidence supporting this. Table 3 shows that ABC1s are significantly less likely to support a ban on Muslims or black people migrating to the UK, and to disagree with the claim that Muslim migrants have made a positive contribution to British society (Q5). Class effects, however, do not all go in the same direction. We do not find any significant class effects on negative feelings toward Muslims and Pakistanis. Most notably, we find significant *positive* associations between being ABC1 and two prejudice indicators: negativity towards Travellers and the assumption that Islam is 'totally literalistic' (Exp[B] 1.437 and 1.323 respectively).

This heightened prejudice toward Islam is also not, according to our data, a by-product of middle-class animus toward religion-in-general. There is no significant association in the models presented in Table 3 between class and hostility towards religion-in-general. Furthermore, the positive association between being upper/middle-class and prejudice towards Islam remains when we add in additional controls, as we see in Table 5 and Table 6. In these two tables, we repeat the models for two questions that have sharply contrasting class effects in the models in Table 3. Table 5 looks at support for a Muslim migration ban, while Table 6 revisits assumptions of Islamic literalism (see Table 1, Q2 and Q6). In these two tables, however, we add a second model with an additional control variable. When the dependent variable is support for a 'Muslim ban' we introduced as a control variable 'support for ban on Black African/Caribbean migration'. There is very high correlation between these two variables (Exp[B] 18.345) and, notably, gender and social grade are rendered insignificant. This suggests that among working-class people and men there is not a specific anti-Muslim sentiment outside of a general anti-immigration sentiment towards out-groups. (Notably, this is not the case for Conservative voters, who do appear specifically concerned about Muslim immigration.) By contrast, in Table 6 when 'assumed Islamic literalism' is our dependent variable, we find no change. In the revised model in Table 6, we introduced 'assumed Christian literalism' as a control variable. Again, there is high correlation between the two variables (Exp[B] 5.791), but in this case all the sociodemographic variables that were previously significant remain so. Indeed, the class variable increases slightly in effect size (Exp[B] 1.417). We find, then, that working-class opposition to Muslim migration dissolves into racialised anti-immigration sentiment, but middle-class animus towards Islam focuses *on* Islam.

TABLE 5 Binary logistic regression models for our tolerance question. In Model 2, 'Support for ban on Black Africa/Carib' is added as a control variable (key: light grey = significant positive association; see Table 1 for full question wording).

	Model 1		Model 2	
Dependent variable: Support for muslim ban	**Sig./*p***	**Exp(B)**	**Sig./*p***	**Exp(B)**
Ref: No religion				
Anglican	0.121	1.330	0.909	1.022
Catholic	<0.001	2.646	0.137	0.603
Other Christian	0.027	1.791	0.077	1.624
Other (non-Christian) religion	0.016	2.106	<0.001	2.759
Age	0.932	1	0.078	1.009
Gender (male)	0.030	1.369	0.266	1.184
Social grade ABC1 (ref: C2DE)	0.009	0.684	0.203	0.824
Voted conservative in 2019 GE	<0.001	1.73	0.002	1.676
Support for ban on black Africa/Carib	--	--	<0.001	18.345
Constant	<0.001	0.157	<0.001	0.067

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TABLE 6 Binary logistic regression models for our religious prejudice question. In Model 2, 'Assumed Christian Literalism' is added as a control variable (key: light grey = significant positive association; see Table 1 for full question wording).

	Model 1		Model 2	
Dependent variable: Assumed Islamic literalism	**Sig./*p***	**Exp(B)**	**Sig./*p***	**Exp(B)**
Ref: No religion				
Anglican	0.371	1.149	0.165	1.244
Catholic	0.141	1.455	0.221	1.376
Other Christian	0.150	1.393	0.367	1.242
Other (non-Christian) religion	0.047	1.763	0.022	1.844
Age	<0.001	1.019	<0.001	1.019
Gender (male)	0.003	1.442	0.006	1.413
Social grade ABC1 (ref: C2DE)	0.028	1.323	0.007	1.417
Voted conservative in 2019 GE	<0.001	1.679	<0.001	1.727
Assumed Christian literalism	--	--	<0.001	5.791
Constant	<0.001	0.039	<0.001	0.032

8 | DISCUSSION

Explaining the positive associations between being upper/middle-class and expressing prejudice towards Islam and Travellers is difficult. In the case of the latter group, where we have less data and a limited body of prior research, we are only able to offer conjectures and a call for more research. The higher negativity among ABC1s towards Travellers may be linked to the fact that both affluent ABC1s and contested Gypsy and Irish Traveller sites tend to be, in Britain, located in rural and suburban contexts. There could be a class dimension to anti-Traveller prejudice: Travellers are disadvantaged and, in their public representation, often aligned with 'undesirable' elements of working-class life and culture. These explanations remain, however, somewhat speculative.

Explaining our findings about Islam is also difficult, but we have evidence that points to two possibilities. We have already seen that our survey respondents tended to be more confident in making a judgement about Islam than other non-Christian religions, with fewer selecting the 'don't know' option. This tendency has class dimensions. 44.4% of C2DEs indicated they were 'not sure' about how Islamic scripture is interpreted, compared with 37.7% of ABC1s. People from middle-class backgrounds seem to be more confident in their ability to make a judgement about Islam, even when – as in the case of our question about Islamic literalism – this results in a higher percentage of people making wrong assumptions about the religion. Prejudice towards Islam, then, appears to be partly a function of misplaced middle-class confidence.

The second possibility relates to questions of race and social sanction. As we noted earlier, Jones et al.'s (2019) qualitative study found a similar split to that found in this research. In the interviews that formed this study, racialised claims about Muslims as people tended to be made by people without a degree education, from lower socio-economic groups and with conservative political tendencies. 'Scriptural determinist' narratives about Islam, however, were more widespread, occurring also among those from middle-class socioeconomic groups and with liberal political leanings. These narratives were also offered unselfconsciously: they were not seen by participants as potentially prejudiced – as something that would attract social censure – but as obvious common sense. While this survey does not evidence distinctive 'liberal' forms of Islamophobia in the same way, the class differences we uncovered could point to something similar: that religion acts, for middle class people, as a conduit through which prejudice can be expressed in a 'respectable' way without attracting the public stigma associated with ideas popularised by 'populist' politicians such as the 'Muslim ban'.

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9 | CONCLUSION

These two proposals, while evidenced, remain somewhat inconclusive and open to further exploration. What can be said with more confidence is that our data show how anti-Islamic prejudice and anti-Muslim prejudice, rather than being one and the same, are located differently in UK society and are thus phenomena that need to be analysed as two distinctive (although overlapping and potentially related) forms. This, in turn, provides compelling reasons to avoid *containing* Islamophobia within the vocabulary of race and racism. If racism is thought of expansively as the practice of creating a hierarchy of human sub-groups, then it makes sense to describe narratives that seek to inferiorise Muslims as one variety of racism. When narratives about Islam as a tradition facilitate such derogatory images of Muslims then they, too, could plausibly be viewed through the lens of race and racism. Doing this, however, does involve risks. As Jones et al. have noted, scholars who define Islamophobia as racism have typically steered past the realm of religious ideas, with some arguing that entering this terrain confuses the discussion. Our contention, however, is that this means ignoring certain (middle-class) manifestations of Islamophobia that play a role in 'mainstreaming' the prejudice (Mondon & Winter 2017). It also, we suggest, entails bypassing difficult but important questions, with relevance to policy and civil society, about how to respond to prejudices about beliefs. Rarely in scholarship on race and discrimination is the subject of religious literacy considered, but our research indicates it is important to achieving fair and equal treatment. After all, to robustly challenge the claim that Islam is an inherently 'literalist' tradition one needs to engage with Islamic history and the character of Muslims' beliefs today.

If our argument challenges discursive approaches to race, our research also suggests that there is benefit in following the logic of such approaches more carefully. Discursive approaches to conceptualising race are increasingly dominant in academia, while the discursive study of religion, though more marginal, is gaining influence (Taira, 2013). The two areas of study are, however, generally kept separate – something that hiders the study of Islamophobia. What we have suggested in this article is that anti-Muslim prejudice can elude capture by moving between these two discursive domains, and that, among elite populations, religious prejudice can act as a mask for anti-group sentiment. It follows from this that a more integrated study is needed. Gerteis et al. (2020: 772) remark that, 'Rather than looking for a universal definition or theory of Islamophobia, we should look, instead, to how social narratives take shape in a given era and context'. In keeping with this, we argue that the way the boundary between 'race' and 'religion' is constituted and policed should form a fundamental part of that examination.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

No conflicts of interest are known to the authors.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The Excel summary data and the full SPSS files will be deposited in the University of Birmingham's Ubira eData Repository on publication: https://edata.bham.ac.uk/.

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ENDNOTES

[1] In the UK, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) is a common umbrella term used in policy settings (see Bhopal & Myers, 2009). In this article (and our survey) we shorten this to 'Gypsy and Traveller' due to this term being more easily understood in cognitive interviews.

[2] The APPG of Islamophobia definition has been adopted by, inter alia, all major UK political parties, except for the English Conservatives, for use in internal processes.

[3] For full details see: https://yougov.co.uk/about/panel-methodology/.

[4] We draw here on methodological scholarship on 'don't know' responses (Beatty et al., 1998; Iannario et al., 2020) that rejects the idea such responses always reflect a lack of memory relevant to the question.

[5] Removing three of the six items has little (and in one case, no) effect on the Cronbachs alpha score; the removal of all three reduces it to 0.796. There are no items whose removal improves the overall score.

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