

PART I: MUSLIMS, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND THE WEST. EXPLORING CHALLENGES FACED BY STIGMATIZED GROUPS

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SUMMARY

The rise of radicalisation, the 'demonization' of Muslims in the media and the immigration crisis in Europe have all contributed and colluded to heightened levels of Islamophobia in the West. The stigmatisation of Muslims can and has resulted in negative outcomes in this group such as elevated levels of psychological distress and an increase in hate crime and terrorist attacks perpetrated against Muslims from members of the far right. There are 1.6 billion Muslims on the planet and Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. Now, more than ever it seems, is a critical time to learn about what the true message of Islam is and who the blessed prophet Muhammad peace be upon him (PBUH) was from reliable and authentic sources. This paper aims to challenge the stigma attached to Muslims through the following means: 1. It contains information to educate people about Islam, debunk myths and challenge negative stereotypes; 2. It utilizes the power of 'story-telling' to engage readers and to equip them with facts and the necessary skills to combat Islamophobia. Part I includes a brief introduction of Islam and concludes with a concise description and evaluation of an anti-Islamophobia programme that was piloted in Cambridge University (UK) and delivered as a Keynote Address at the Carrick Institute for Graduate Studies International Symposium of Clinical Neuroscience in Orlando, (USA). Our hope is that through this initiative we can create a critical mass and inspire and empower people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike to stand in solidarity and collectively challenge extremism in any of its many forms. Our hypothesis is that this will result in better outcomes such as reductions in radicalization and Islamophobia.

Key words: stigma – Islamophobia – Muslim - psychological distress - mental health - social exclusion

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Background

The rise of radicalisation (Sheridan 2006), the 'demonization' of Muslims in the media (Shaver et al. 2017) and the immigration crisis in Europe (Anderson et al. 2014) have all contributed and colluded to an increase in Islamophobia. Islamophobia has been defined as, "An exaggerated, irrational fear, hatred and hostility towards Islam and Muslims perpetuated by negative stereotypes resulting in bias, discrimination and marginalization of Muslims from civic, social and political life" (<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/religion/reports/2015/02/11/106394/fear-inc-2-0/>, Creighton et al. 2015).

The stigmatisation of Muslims can and has resulted in negative outcomes such as psychological distress in this group (Kunst et al. 2013, Sheridan 2016, Rubin et al. 2013) and an increase in hate crime perpetrated against them (<http://www.met.police.uk/crimefigures/>) and fuels the flames of radicalization from members of the far right (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/01/30/quebec-mosque-shooting-two-students-arrested-gun-attack-mosque/>).

Islamophobia can also have important implications in relation to the provision and utilisation of healthcare services in the UK (Laird et al. 2007), the US (Samari 2016) and in the Middle East. For example, since the

1948 establishment of the state of Israel (an event described by Arab historians as Al-Nakbah ('The catastrophe')), Muslim minority groups in the 'Holy Land' have experienced oppression, trauma and social exclusion, all of which have been identified as risk factors for precipitating psychological distress. It has been reported in the literature that there is a feeling of distrust from Muslim minority service users towards non-Muslim mental health service providers in Tel Aviv (Al-Krenawi 2005). We speculate that this is likely due to concerns from the former that the latter may be a source of stigma and Islamophobia and thus discriminate against them. To overcome the Islamophobia barrier, non-Muslim mental health providers must always remain neutral and professional and receive teaching and training about the social, psychological, cultural and religious needs of Muslim service users that they assess and treat. Mindfulness, self-reflection, introspection, honesty and transparency are all crucial components of best practice (Tomkins et al. 2015) and may help non-Muslim mental healthcare providers address concerns expressed by Muslim patients and their families that Islamophobia is negatively influencing the provision of healthcare services.

There are 1.6 billion Muslims on the planet and Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world

(Walpole et al. 2013. Gefarakos et al. 2014). Clearly these are critical times to learn about what the true message of Islam is and who the blessed prophet Muhammad peace be upon him (PBUH) was from reliable and authentic sources.

This paper challenges the stigma attached to Muslims through the following means: [1] It contains information to educate people about Islam, debunk myths and challenge negative stereotypes and [2] it utilizes the power of 'story-telling' (Gray 2009) to engage readers and to equip them with facts and the necessary skills to combat stigma.

Part I includes, a brief introduction of Islam and concludes with a concise description of an anti-Islamophobia programme that was piloted in Cambridge University (UK) and delivered as a Keynote Address at the Carrick Institute for Graduate Studies International Symposium of Clinical Neuroscience in Orlando, (USA) (the latter of which was against a backdrop of high-levels of Islamophobia as a result of the horrific terror attack perpetrated by Omar Mateen on the 12th of June 2016 in a nightclub in Orlando and the issuance of Executive Order 13769 titled, 'Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States' banning people from 7 Muslim majority countries from temporarily entering the US from 27th January 2017 until March 16th 2017). We have included written qualitative feedback from delegates who attended the programme in Leeds University (UK) and Orlando (USA).

Part II contains a succinct summary of radicalization and includes data from a survey conducted on Muslims residing in the UK and their perceptions of British combat troops.

Our hope is that through this initiative (and ones like it i.e. Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND) <https://mend.org.uk/>) we can create a critical mass and inspire and empower people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike to stand in solidarity and collectively challenge extremism in any of its many forms. Our hypothesis is that this will result in better outcomes such as reductions in radicalization and Islamophobia.

Research on Muslim mental health in the West: Opportunities and challenges

Amer et al. conducted a review of the literature on the mental health of Muslim Americans to formulate recommendations for mental health policy and provision in the US. A total of 559 relevant publications were identified through a PsycINFO database search. The investigators revealed that during the decade after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in USA, there was a surge in the annual number of publications (greater than 900% increase). The review revealed barriers to research on the mental health of Muslim Americans included: Unclear definitions of the target sample, unavailability of culturally sensitive measures, sampling difficulties, and obstacles in the recruitment of participants (Amer et al. 2013).

Stigma and its egregious effects

Professor Erving Goffman, the 73rd. President of the American Sociological Association, is one of the most highly cited and respected scholars in the humanities and social sciences. Goffman defined stigma as, '*... a deeply discrediting attribute that reduces the bearer from a whole and usual person to a tainted and discounted one. The individual is [thus] disqualified from full social acceptance...*' (Goffman 1963).

Social exclusion in and of itself is a contributory factor to developing psychopathology and suicidal behaviour (Morgan 2007, Hankir 2013, Hankir 2014). The stigmatized group also faces discrimination when applying for housing (Link 1982) or employment opportunities (Segal 1980). Subsequently, this can result in unemployment, poverty and homelessness all of which are social determinants of physical and mental ill health (Marmot 2005). Indeed, University College London researcher Dr James Cheshire spearheaded a fascinating study entitled, 'Lives on the Line' and revealed that for every station stop from Lancaster Gate to Mile End (travelling eastbound on the Circle Line on the London Underground) life expectancy decreased by 1 year (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-18917932>).

Immigration and Islamophobia

Immigration studies have yielded fascinating insights into the phenomenon of Islamophobia. Population surveys indicate that negative public attitudes toward immigrant groups stem from attitudes toward their (perceived) Islamic affiliation. Denmark is currently experiencing the highest immigration rate in its modern history. Anderson et al. set out to investigate the explicit and implicit attitudes of Christian and Atheist Danes toward people framed as Muslims or as immigrants. Unsurprisingly, their results revealed that explicit and implicit attitudes were more negative when the target was framed as a Muslim, rather than as an immigrant. Interestingly, analyses revealed that Christians demonstrated more negative implicit attitudes toward immigrants than Muslims. Conversely, Atheists demonstrated more negative implicit attitudes toward Muslims than Atheists. These results reveal that the religious affiliation of the perceiver and the perceived religious affiliation of the target are key factors in social perception. Strategies that aim to challenge Islamophobia should take these research findings into account (Anderson et al. 2014).

Islamophobia, stigma and psychological distress in Muslims

Kunst et al. developed and validated the Perceived Islamophobia Scale (PIS) (Kunst et al. 2013). They conducted two separate studies on Muslims residing in Europe (total sample size n=1344) and revealed that in all samples PIS was positively related to psychological

distress. The authors conclude that, '... *Anti-discrimination laws may be insufficient in protecting Muslims of the negative effects of stigma on psychological well-being...*' (Kunst et al. 2013).

Rubin et al. collected data from 1010 randomly selected adult members of the London population following the 7th July 2005 bombings in the Underground and Overground public transportation systems. They revealed that this terrorist attack caused heightened levels of distress among some members of the general community. The authors concluded that in the short-term the strongest predictors of distress were exposure and demographic related and that distress was most notable in Muslims and members of ethnic minority groups. The authors speculate that the reasons for the association between Muslims and elevated levels of psychological distress is the plausible fear of a backlash against their community following a terrorist attack (Rubin et al. 2013).

Psychological distress in Muslims is particularly problematic since recent research has revealed that there are elevated levels of mental health stigma in this group (Kadri et al. 2004). Budhwani et al. conducted a study to explore associations between internalized stigma and depression in Muslim women residing in the United States. They revealed that internalized stigma was associated with depression (Budhwani et al. 2002). It is well known that stigma is a barrier to care seeking and consequently many Muslims with psychological problems (precipitated by Islamophobia or not) suffer in silence despite the availability of effective treatment (Caroppo et al. 2009, Chowdhury 2016). Mental health stigma in Muslim communities may be partly due to the explanatory models that Muslims formulate about psychological phenomena such as visual hallucinations and/or delusional beliefs (i.e. jinn-possession, 'the evil-eye'). Islam et al. conducted an intriguing study on the Arabic text of the Qur'an and four English translations to explore whether the connection between jinn-possession and insanity exists in the Muslim holy book. The authors revealed, through thematic analysis, that no connection between spirit-possession and madness or mental illness was found. Islam et al. conclude that educating Muslims about this finding may help to reduce the stigma associated with such conditions in their communities (Islam et al. 2014).

Islam: Origins and relevance to contemporary society

The Message is a 1976 epic, historical, drama motion picture directed by Moustapha Akkad, chronicling the life and times of the blessed prophet of Islam Muhammad (PBUH) (<http://bbfc.co.uk/releases/message-arabic-version-1970>). For anyone interested in learning about the pure and unadulterated message of Islam the authors would highly recommend watching The Message since the material for this film was derived from reliable and authentic sources and thus accurately, in our opinion at

least, portrays the august character of the blessed prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and that of his companions and what it truly means to be a Muslim.

Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him)

Muhammad (PBUH) was born in Mecca Saudi Arabia circa 600 A.D. His father died before his birth and his mother died in his early infancy thus rendering him an orphan. Muhammad (PBUH) was from a respectable family in Mecca however he was of limited means, which had implications on his social situation particularly in relation to marriage. Muhammad (PBUH) was commissioned by Khadija (my God be pleased with her), a successful businesswoman, to conduct trade and commerce of her commodities on her behalf (Salahi 1995).

There was no shortage of men who would approach Khadija for her hand in marriage. Her resounding reputation of being a beautiful and successful lady spread throughout Arabia. But she approached Muhammad and asked him for his hand in marriage, which was a flagrant breach of protocol in the higher echelons of Arabian society at the time. But she did not care about this since she realised just how special a man Mohammed (PBUH) was (Salahi 1995).

Once, before they were married, Khadija sent Muhammad (PBUH) on an important trade deal. Unbeknown to Muhammad (PBUH) she had also sent a scout to observe him. The scout reported to Khadija that the prophet secured a large surplus and that his character was impeccable. Everyone seemed to enjoy doing business with the prophet since there wasn't a trace of corruption in his heart. He was an honest tradesman, a rarity in those days and his clients trusted that he would not bamboozle them (Salahi 1995).

Upon receiving the revelation that he was God's vicegerent on earth to humankind and beholding the spectacle of the angel Gabriel before him he returned home frightened, trembling in fear imploring his wife to cover him in sheets. Indeed, according to renowned Islamic chronicler Al-Tabari in his magnum opus, 'Ta'rikh al-Rasul wa'l-Muluk' volume VI page 68 the prophet (PBUH) developed suicidal ideation and even contemplated hurling himself from a mountain crag to end his life lest he be castigated and humiliated by members of his own community for espousing the ravings of a soothsayer. Such was the degree of public and self-stigma attached to psychological distress in pre-Islamic Arabia.

One can imagine how Khadija reacted, for the love that she had for Muhammad (PBUH) was a romantic one. She had never seen her husband in this state of mind before and so she began to utter soothing words to try to calm him down and comfort him. Not for one moment did she doubt that he was telling the truth and Khadija (may God be pleased with her) was the first person to embrace Islam. She started to list his qualities and said to him that no harm will come to you (Salahi 1995).

Who was this man who would look in your soul with his eyes? Mohammed (PBUH) was a humble and self-effacing individual who would always say, 'I am a man among men' whenever immortality or divinity was ascribed to him. He was mild-mannered, softly spoken and evinced a congenial and approachable aura. Indeed, in the marketplace there was not a single person he would pass by that he would not smile to. Muhammad (PBUH) was a man of resolve. For example, when Islam was starting to increase in popularity the leaders of Mecca sent a delegation to the prophet's protector his uncle Abu Talib and made him a proposition. They proposed that, "If wealth is what your nephew seeks, we will make him the richest person in Arabia. If it is women that he desires, we will give him a harem full of the most beautiful belles in the land. If it is power he seeks we will appoint him as our king." Abu Talib approached Muhammad (PBUH) with this proposition to which the prophet responded, "If you were to place the sun on my right hand and the moon in my left I will not renounce this message". Any other mortal would have been seduced by these worldly temptations, but not the blessed prophet, who was a mercy to humankind. Muhammed (PBUH) loved his nation and his nation love him in return and continue to do say centuries after his death and until the end of time. Muhammed (PBUH) sacrificed a life of luxury, fame and fortune and chose persecution and exile instead. He made this sacrifice for his nation and for humanity. This is who Muhammad (PBUH) was (Salahi 1995).

Selected quotes of the blessed prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

"What actions are most excellent? To bring joy to the hearts of human beings, to feed the hungry, to help the destitute, to lessen the burden upon the sorrowful, and to sponsor and support the orphan..."
(Bukhari)

"Kindness is a mark of faith, and whoever is not kind has no faith."
(Muslim)

"No man is a true believer unless he sincerely desires for his brethren that which he desires for himself."
(Bukhari and Muslim)

"Do you know what is better than charity, fasting and prayer? It is keeping peace and good relations between people as quarrels and bad feelings destroy humankind."
(Bukhari and Muslim)

"The ink of a scholar is nobler than the blood of a martyr".

Non-Muslim views towards the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

"I wanted to know the best of the life of one who holds today an undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind... I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the

rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I closed the second volume (of the Prophet's biography), I was sorry there was not more for me to read of that great life.'

Mahatma Gandhi, Young India, 1924

Islam: Essence

Islam literally means peace through the voluntary submission of your will and volition to Allah. A Muslim is essentially an individual who glorifies Allah in the manner that was prescribed by Him and can emancipate oneself from the urge to commit sin, be that adultery or finding faults in others. A person who describes oneself as a Muslim must abide by the Five Pillars of Islam, which are as follows:

- The shahadah (i.e. the declaration that there is no Deity worthy of worship save Allah and Muhammad (PBUH) is the messenger and the last prophet of Allah);
- Prayer (which must be offered five times per day);
- Fasting during the holy month of Ramadan;
- Zakat or almsgiving. Muslims are duty-bound to donate 2.5% of their net disposable income annually to the poor and destitute (interestingly, research conducted by Just Giving and ICM revealed that British Muslims give more to charity per capita than all other religious groups);
- Pilgrimage for those who can (Muslims from all over the world travel to the holy place of worship in Mecca in the Arabian Peninsula which was first constructed and consecrated by God through His vicegerent on earth the prophet Ibrahim). Mecca is the direction where Muslims throughout the globe pray towards. In this context, it is known as the Qibla.

Ulamma or scholars of Islam posit that Islam is more than just a religion but a complete way of life that should govern a person's existence 24 hours a day, 7days a week, 365 days a year up until an individual's final breath (and even after one's death one can continue to accrue rewards or punishment for the enduring effects of the deeds that they have done on Earth i.e. an erudite academic may continue to receive reward for the knowledge created as a result of his or her research since it can continue to be used for the benefit of human kind and bequeathed to future generations) (Hankir et al. 2015).

Challenging Islamophobia through the power of social media

As enumerated already in this manuscript, the demonization of Muslims in the media plays a key role in Islamophobia and perpetuating negative stereotypes.

Professor Baker from Lancaster University published a book entitled, *'Discourse analysis and media attitudes: the representation of Islam in the British Press'* which includes data from a study the authors conducted on the portrayal of Islam and Muslims in print media. Professor Baker's methodology includes a detailed analysis of over 140 million words of newspaper articles on Muslims and Islam (Baker et al. 2013). Professor Baker revealed that for every 1 positive word describing Muslims there are 21 negative words (Baker et al. 2013).

Islamophobia fuels the flames of radicalization from members of the far right on the political spectrum. On the 29th January 2017 Alexandre Bissonnette opened fire in a Quebec City mosque in Montreal, Canada, killing 6 civilians who were peacefully praying to their Lord and injuring many more. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau condemned the shooting as terrorist attack and issued the following statement on his official Twitter account thus illustrating the power of social media to challenge Islamophobia:

"Know that we value you. You enrich our shared country in immeasurable ways. It is your home. Last night's horrible crime against the Muslim community was an act of terror committed against Canada and against all Canadians. We will grieve with you. We will defend you. We will love you. And we will stand with you..." (<https://twitter.com/JustinTrudeau/status/825934457471434752>)

Dalia Mogahed is an American scholar of Egyptian origin. She is the Director of Research at the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) in Washington, D.C. and former Executive Director of the Gallup Centre for Muslim Studies, a non-partisan research centre that provided data and analysis to reflect the views of Muslims all over the world. Dalia was selected as an advisor by U.S. President Barack Obama on the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. In Dalia's Ted Talk (which has over 2 million views), entitled, *'What do you think when you look at me?'* she eloquently and passionately challenges negative stereotypes of Muslims and emphatically exclaims that, *"Muslims are like canaries in a coalmine, we might be the first to feel it, but the toxic fumes of fear are harming us all..."* (https://www.ted.com/talks/dalia_mogahed_what_do_you_think_when_you_look_at_me).

Prominent Muslim personalities who challenge Islamophobia and negative stereotypes

Sir Mohamed Farah (also known as 'Mo' Farah) is a Somali-born British distance runner (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mo-Farah>). Sir Mohamed Farah is the most successful British track athlete in modern Olympic Games history. He is the first man in history to defend both distance titles (10,000 meters and 5,000 meters) in both major global competitions (the Olympic Games and World Championships). (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mo_Farah#cite_note-11).

Farah is a devout Muslim (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/olympics/london-2012/9452253/London-2012-Olympics-Mo-Farah-wins-gold-medal-in-the-10000-metres-final.html>) and he has reported in interviews that Islam plays a vital role in his preparation for competitions stating that, *"I normally pray before a race, I read dua (Islamic prayers or invocations), think about how hard I've worked and just go for it."* Mohamad Farah notes that *"the Qur'an says that you must work hard in whatever you do, so I work hard in training and that's got a lot to do with being successful"* (<http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/olympics/news/mo-farah-seeks-a-peaceful-haven-as-he-prepares-for-second-date-with-olympic-destiny-8031603.html>).

Riyad Mahrez is a professional footballer who plays for 2015-16 English Premier League Champions Leicester City Football Club and the Algerian national team as a winger. In the 2015-16 season Mahrez was the Algerian Footballer of the Year, the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) Player of the Year, and was a member of the Premier League PFA Team of the Year as he helped Leicester City win the Premier League (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riyad_Mahrez).

The Right Honorable Sadiq Khan is a British politician and the current Mayor of London since 2016. Khan's election of Mayor of London made him the city's first ethnic minority mayor, and the first Muslim to become mayor of a major Western capital. Following his successful campaign to be Mayor of London, Khan emphatically exclaimed that, *'... I am so proud that London has chosen hope over fear and unity over division...'* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sadiq_Khan).

These are but some of the many examples of prominent Muslims who contribute to the betterment of our world and this should help to sound the death knell that all Muslims are solely preoccupied with causing chaos and making mischief (i.e. caricatures of Muslims portrayed in the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11341599/Prophet-Muhammad-cartoons-controversy-timeline.html>) and negative stereotypes perpetuated by the media such as the Sun (newspaper <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media/ipsos-sun-british-muslims-story-headline-significantly-misleading-a6953771.html>)).

Challenging Islamophobia through the power of protest

Chris Herbert is a British veteran who sustained a non-fatal traumatic injury (amputation of his lower limb) whilst on a tour of duty in Iraq. Fanatics on the far right felt that this was an opportunity for them to recruit Herbert to join them on their propaganda campaign against Muslims. However, Herbert vehemently opposed their futile efforts. In a poignant statement on social media, Herbert eloquently stated, *'... A Muslim man also lost his arm that day wearing a British uniform... A Muslim surgeon performed the life-saving procedure that prevented me from dying...'* Herbert went on to add that:

“...Blaming all Muslims for the actions of groups like Daesh (ISIS) is like blaming all Christians for the actions of the KKK...”
(<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/army-veteran-chris-herbert-hits-out-at-anti-muslim-sentiment-a6765986.html>)

Challenging stigma through the power of contact

The three broad components of stigma are problems of knowledge (ignorance), problems of attitudes (prejudice) and problems of behaviour (discrimination). The three main ways to challenge public stigma are through protest, education and contact (Corrigan et al. 2002). Corrigan et al. conducted a meta-analysis of outcome studies (13 randomized controlled trials) on challenging public stigma (towards a stigmatized group) and revealed that social contact was the most effective way of reducing stigma (Corrigan 2012). Interestingly, Hopkins et al. conducted a qualitative study on Islamophobia in the UK from the viewpoints of the majority (non-Muslims) and the minority (Muslims) that was consistent with the findings of Corrigan's meta-analysis. Both Muslims and non-Muslims in Hopkins et al's study shared a willingness to improving Muslims' collective position in Britain and agreed that facilitating intergroup contact would improve relations (Hopkins et al. 2006).

There have been multiple initiatives launched in the West to encourage integration and facilitate contact between Muslims and non-Muslims with the aim of promoting peaceful co-existence and challenging Islamophobia. In New York City, USA, for over twenty years, West African Muslims from the Murid Sufi Brotherhood have organized the annual Cheikh Amadou Bamba Day parade. The parade provides a platform for members of the Murid Sufi Brotherhood to express their African American identities and challenge Islamophobia. The event includes the brandishing of national flags and banners advocating community cohesion and the chanting in unison of nasheeds or Islamic songs. Such initiatives offer valuable insights into the Islamic faith and have been warmly received by the people of New York City and contribute to the rich tapestry of this vibrant and cosmopolitan global city.

A 'tripartite' programme to challenge Islamophobia

We conceived and developed a 'tripartite' approach to challenging Islamophobia that incorporates the components of protest, education and contact. The programme was piloted in the 2015 Biennial International Conference on Mental Health in Cambridge University (n=25) and has been delivered as a Keynote Address in the University of East Anglia (n=150) (Figure 1), in Leeds University (Medsin Global Health event, n=100, Leeds Muslim Medics (n=50) (Figure 2)) and as a

Keynote Address in The Carrick Institute for Graduate Studies International Symposium in Clinical Neuroscience (n=500). The programme has been described as inspirational by Trump and non-Trump supporters alike and people across the ideological and political spectrum.

Below are excerpts extracted from qualitative feedback we obtained from delegates who attended the event at Leeds University:

“Really informative talk to address stereotypes. Need to have more talks like this to get the public more informed.”

Participant 1, Leeds University School of Medicine

“Very, very good. Made me consider Islam in a different light. Very glad I came.”

Participant 48, Leeds University School of Medicine

“He was very enthusiastic and kept everyone engaged for the full hour. The overall message was very clear and helped change my view on Islam”.

Participant 17, Leeds University School of Biomedical Sciences

“Such a brilliant talk! Absolutely amazing, inspirational, thought provoking and brilliant public speaking! Can't express enough how great I thought it was!”

Participant 24, Leeds University School of Biomedical Sciences

Below is qualitative feedback from a delegate who attended the Keynote Address at the Carrick Institute for Graduate Studies International Symposium in Clinical Neuroscience and a response to a query that was submitted to the primary author:

“...Thank you so much for your fascinating and timely lecture. I am so grateful to have your wise and passionate perspective and with the research basis support as well... As you explained, what we are seeing as the face of Islam is really not, but is the perverted ideology of Daesh... Thank you for saving so many from deep misperceptions that can so negatively impact our human experience... Whenever the discussion of interfaith tolerance is engaged, almost always someone says something like:

‘Well ya know, it is a basic Islamic tenet that you get martyred if you 'kill all the infidels' and anyone who does not believe in Islam is an Infidel, so we are all potentially assassin's targets. There are way more Muslims than any other faith and they won't stop until we are all dead, and they can take over the world...’”

Authors response:

In 628 C.E. Muhammad (PBUH) granted a Charter of Privileges to the monks of St. Catherine Monastery in Mt. Sinai. It consisted of several clauses covering all aspects of human rights including such topics as the protection of Christians:

“...This is a message from Muhammad ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them.

RELIGION

RACE

& CULTURE

Headucate Keynote Event 2016
Religion, Race & Culture

Thursday 14th April 2016, 6.30pm
Lecture Theatre 2, The University of East Anglia, Norwich

Guest Speakers:
Dr. Ahmed Hankir, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Carrick Institute for Graduate Studies, Florida, USA
"Islam, Mental Health and being Muslim in the West"

Dr. Julian Beezhold, Consultant in Emergency Psychiatry, Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust
"Examples of Nazi Germany, South Africa and the Black Lives Matter movement in relation to mental health"

Talks: 6.30-8.30pm, followed by a food reception in the foyer

A free event, all are welcome

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Figure 1. Flyer for Keynote Event at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, England

Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by Allah! I hold out against anything that displeases them.

No compulsion is to be on them.

Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their monasteries. No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to

damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslims' houses.

Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God's covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter against all that they hate.

No one is to force them to travel or to oblige them to fight.

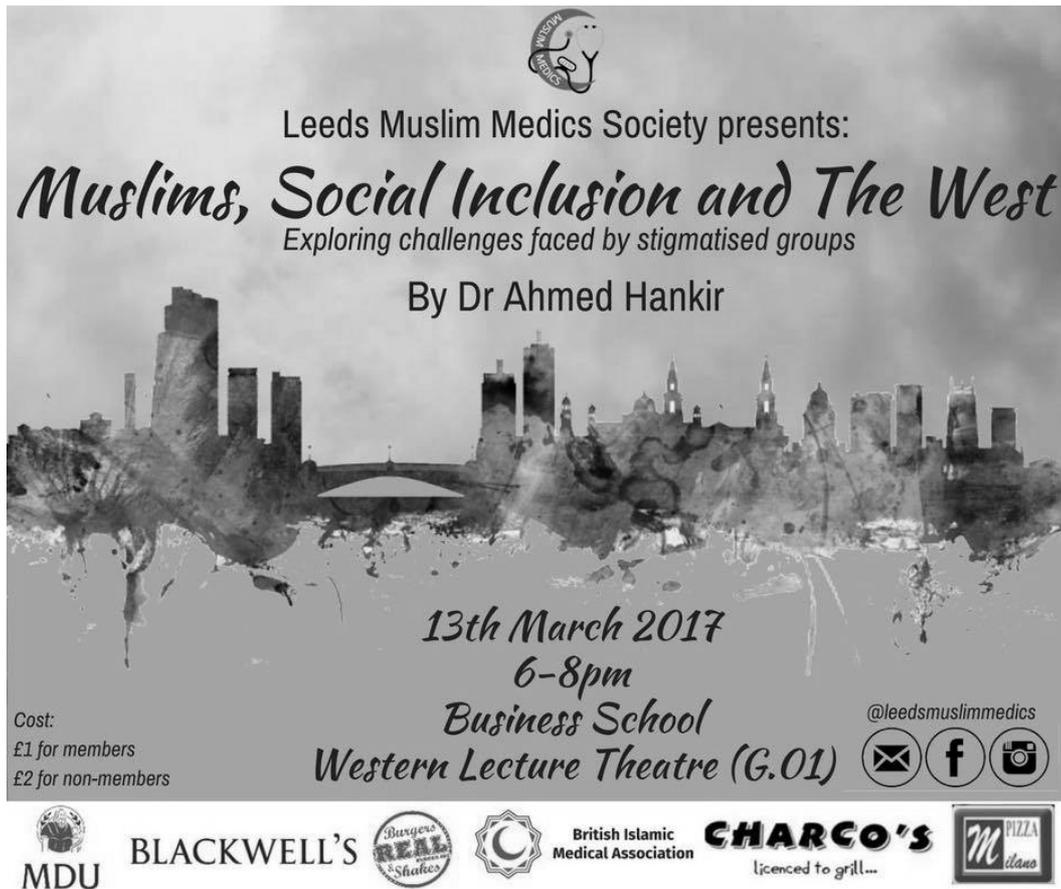


Figure 2. Flyer for Keynote Event with Leeds Muslim Medics, Leeds, UK

The Muslims are to fight for them.

If a female Christian is married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray.

Their churches are to be respected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor the sacredness of their covenants.

No one of the nation (Muslims) is to disobey the covenant till the Last Day (end of the world) ...” (Haddad 2004)

In part II of this series of papers on radicalization, Islamophobia and Muslim mental health, we resume our thread and present data from a study conducted on Muslims residing in the UK and their perceptions of British combat troops with discussion and conclusion for both papers.

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Conflict of interest: None to declare.

Contribution of individual authors:

Ahmed Hankir conceived the idea for the paper, conducted a review of the literature on Islamophobia and the history of Islam and carried out the evaluation of the anti-Islamophobia programme.

Frederick R. Carrick conducted the review of the literature for the entire manuscript.

Rashid Zaman supervised Ahmed Hankir, made substantial revisions to the manuscript and was responsible for the design of the paper.

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