Political discourses on educational justice and Muslims in the UK

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About ETHOS

ETHOS – Towards a European THeory Of juStice and fairness is a European Commission Horizon 2020 research project that seeks to provide building blocks for the development of an empirically informed European theory of justice and fairness. The project seeks to do so by:

a) refining and deepening knowledge of the European foundations of justice – both historically based and contemporarily envisaged;
b) enhancing awareness of mechanisms that impede the realisation of justice ideals as they are lived in contemporary Europe;
c) advancing the understanding of the process of drawing and re-drawing of the boundaries of justice (fault lines); and
d) providing guidance to politicians, policy makers, activists and other stakeholders on how to design and implement policies to reserve inequalities and prevent injustice.

ETHOS does not merely understand justice as an abstract moral ideal that is universal and worth striving for. Rather, it is understood as a re-enacted and re-constructed 'lived' experience. The experience is embedded in firm legal, political, moral, social, economic and cultural institutions that are geared towards giving members of society what is their due.

In the ETHOS project justice is studied as an interdependent relationship between the ideal of justice and its real manifestation – as set in the highly complex institutions of modern European societies. The relationship between the normative and practical, the formal and informal, is acknowledged and critically assessed through a multi-disciplinary approach.

To enhance the formulation of an empirically-based theory of justice and fairness, ETHOS will explore the normative (ideal) underpinnings of justice and its practical realisation in four heuristically defined domains of justice – social justice, economic justice, political justice, and civil and symbolic justice. These domains are revealed in several spheres:

a) philosophical and political tradition,
b) legal framework,
c) daily (bureaucratic) practice,
d) current public debates, and
e) the accounts of the vulnerable populations in six European countries (Austria, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Turkey and the UK).

The question of drawing boundaries and redrawing the fault-lines of justice permeates the entire investigation.

Alongside Utrecht University in the Netherlands, which coordinates the project, five further research institutions cooperate. These are based in Austria (European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy), Hungary (Central European University), Portugal (Centre for Social Studies), Turkey (Boğaziçi University), and the UK (University of Bristol). The research project lasts from January 2017 to December 2019.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the volatile context created by Islamist attacks, counter-terrorism policies and anti-Islam populism, the education of Muslims has gained increasing prominence in UK political discourses. This report examines how different stakeholders (Muslim and non-Muslim civil society organisations, activists, school representatives or administrators, state agencies, politicians, think tanks and teachers) understand related problems and solutions through various dimensions and scales of educational justice. It shows that disagreements on the adequacy of specific policies or practices are often linked to the relative emphasis placed on redistribution, recognition, representation and other dimensions of justice, all of which can be upheld or undermined by social relations taking place at family, local, regional, national and other scales.

The report builds on qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis of 46 documents written between 2007 and 2018 as well as four semi-structured interviews. Documents were identified through snowballing from recent academic literature addressing Muslim education, with a view to covering the widest possible range of actors involved in political debates. Interviews lasted approximately an hour and served to delve into recurring themes. They were conducted in person, audio-recorded and fully transcribed. All sources were then imported into NVivo and iteratively coded into three discursive frames ('social cohesion', 'culture' and 'values') and sub-sections (definition of the frame, problems and solutions).

Findings suggest that Muslim education is most frequently interpreted through the lens of recognition. This is particularly evident in the discursive frames of social cohesion, promoting inter-group respect and the fight against prejudice, and values, which insist on the centrality of anti-discrimination in the British ethos. Redistribution and representation play a more significant role in the frame of culture, where student poverty and insufficient school funding are portrayed as important obstacles to the acquisition of knowledge that is necessary to participate in paid work and democratic politics. However, these dimensions are overshadowed by aesthetic considerations that revolve around the subjective aspirations of Muslim families and may be characterised as concerns of socio-cultural reproduction. Despite the acknowledgment of a link between Muslim poverty, area-based admissions and school segregation, few stakeholders explicitly link Muslim education to issues of class and economic policy. Across all frames, the perceived scale of social processes generating injustice is blurry and contested. Social cohesion discourses sometimes inadvertently shift from the national to the local, and the value discourse mobilises global principles but characterises them as British. Scale-related discrepancies are especially salient in the frame of culture, where the aspiration to provide all students with a 'broad and balanced curriculum' nationwide is tempered by the willingness to give Muslim families an education that caters to their specific preferences. Beyond references to international migration, European and global processes are seldom mentioned in UK educational debates. Sex-specific policies and practices frequently constitute a flashpoint of conflict between various dimensions and scales of justice, situating female Muslim students at the centre of an ideological battlefield where the advocates of gender, national and religious recognition/reproduction seek to assert moral and political authority.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BSI	British Schools Inspectorate
BMSD	British Muslims for Secular Democracy
DfCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfE	Department for Education
MCB	Muslim Council of Britain
MEND	Muslim Engagement & Development
NUT	National Union of Teachers
Ofqual	Office for Qualifications and Examinations Regulation
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
SACRE	Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
UKIP	UK Independence Party

1. INTRODUCTION

In February 2014 Birmingham City Council leaked to the press an anonymous letter received four months earlier. The letter enclosed a plan, purportedly found in the office of the sender's 'boss', to Islamicise schools by taking control of their governing bodies, replacing their head teachers, recruiting ideologically sympathetic teachers and reforming curricula and practices according to the tenets of Sunni Islam. The story immediately made the headlines, spurring the head of Ofsted, the education inspectorate, to order investigations into 21 Birmingham schools attended by a high proportion of Muslim pupils. Other investigations were simultaneously launched by the Secretary of State and the Education Funding Agency as well as the City Council to detect possible shortcomings in local authority oversight. While none of the reports found evidence of religious extremism, the main school at the centre of the controversy was described as supporting a misogynistic and homophobic ideology and dramatically downgraded for alleged failures in governance and pupil safeguarding. As a result, its funding was discontinued, its governing trust dissolved and various teachers underwent hearings for professional misconduct. In the summer of 2017, all hearings were suspended after the revelation of serious procedural irregularities, relieving the professionals concerned of the threat of a lifetime bar from the profession but depriving them of the opportunity to disprove the charges (Holmwood & O'Toole, 2018).

What became widely known as the 'Trojan Horse' controversy both encapsulated and catalysed deep-seated anxieties in relation to the position of Muslims in British society, and particularly in its education system. In 2001, following racialised urban unrest in northern English cities, the Cantle report had warned of ethnic minorities leading separate lives and advocated the promotion of 'meaningful' British citizenship (Cantle, 2001). In 2005, the chair of the Commission for Racial Equality similarly alerted about British society 'sleep-walking to segregation' and defended the need for 'core British values' to mitigate the trend. The London bombings that took place that summer reinforced the perception of segregated and alienated Muslims as posing a security threat, as did the Prevent counter-terrorism strategy aiming to quell support for 'violent extremism' (DfE, 2015). The Trojan Horse controversy was cited in the Government's 2015 counter-extremism strategy to illustrate the threat posted by 'institutional' extremism, alongside unfavourable Ofsted evaluations of independent Muslim schools and unspecified reports on opaque supplementary ones that may present children with 'twisted interpretations of their religion' (HM Government, 2015b: 13–14). In the same year, the Department for Education (DfE) issued specific guidance to schools and childcare providers on how to discharge their enhanced duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. This included the referral of students to Channel, a police-coordinated deradicalisation programme targeted at those 'vulnerable' to radicalisation (HM Government, 2015a).

Taking this highly securitised policy context as a starting point, the present report explores political and advocacy discourses concerning Muslims' right to education in the UK during the last decade. The study inscribes itself within ETHOS WP3 examining the discursive construction of justice in politics, civil society and the media, and particularly its relation to redistribution, recognition and representation. The overarching aims are to identify the main normative paradigms that are currently deployed to interpret perceived problems and solutions pertaining to the education of minority students, shed light on their similarities, complementarities and contradictions, and expose the ideals of justice that underpin the claims of various stakeholders. In the analytical parts of the report,

particular attention will be paid to the links between real-world normative discourses and the tri-dimensional conception of justice that informs the ETHOS project. The scale of justice claims will also be analysed to unpack the theoretical assumptions that pull specific institutional arrangements to the gravitational centre of public debates.

To enable an adequate interpretation of the discourses under study, the next section sketches the main social and policy trends that currently structure Muslim students' position in the English education system.[1] The emphasis is on the statistical patterns and legal provisions that will be referred to in subsequent sections as reported by the latest available sources at the time of writing. Section 3 describes the method used to select and analyse relevant discourses, from the identification of key educational stakeholders to the organisation of codified passages into three broad discursive frames. It also introduces the stakeholders themselves, classifying them according to their structural position in the British landscape of educational/religious politics. Sections 4 to 6, the core of the report, consecutively present the three discursive frames: social cohesion, culture and values. Each frame is itself subdivided into three parts, the first corresponding to the educational ideal it conveys, the second focusing on barriers to the fulfilment of this ideal, and the third laying out proposals for overcoming the barriers. The analysis combines direct quotes from sources (49 written documents and four semi-structured interviews), reformulated summaries of their content and critical analyses of their form and substance. Each section closes with a commentary on the scales and dimensions of justice that dominate the educational frame analysed. The conclusion brings the findings together and assesses their implications for theory building on justice and the education of religious minorities.

[1] The focus on England is due to the regionalised nature of the British education system, including related legislative and administrative powers, and to the concentration of the Muslim population in this part of the country.

2. NATIONAL CONTEXT

In the 2011 census 4.4% of the British population declared that they adhered to Islam, making it the second most practiced religion after Christianity (professed by 59.5% of the population).[2] Some 25.7% of respondents declared no religion. The proportion of Muslim respondents was several times higher in England (5%) than in Wales (1.5%), Scotland (1.4%) and Northern Ireland (0,2%). Since 2.66 million of the 2.79 million British Muslims resided in England, UK-wide data can safely be interpreted as capturing English trends. Nearly four-fifths of UK Muslims were UK citizens, but only 37% were born in the UK. Muslims are also heavily racialised. Only 7.8% of Muslim respondents identified as White, whereas 10.1% described themselves as Black and 67.6% as Asian. Breaking down the predominant 'Asian' categories into its constituting nationalities, 38% of respondents identified as Pakistani, 14.9% as Bangladeshi and 7.3% as Indian. Overall, Muslims made up about a third of the non-White population.

Muslims in the UK face strong religious stigma, one of whose manifestations is a perception of incompatibility between Islamic and British values. In three separate surveys conducted in 2016, more than half of respondents expressed their adhesion to this idea, and the proportion remained unchanged when the question was framed in terms of Islam posing a 'serious threat to Western civilisation'. In all polls, older respondents were significantly more likely than younger ones to perceive a clash in values, as were those who stood further right on the political spectrum. Whereas 39% of Liberal Democrat supporters perceived a clash, this proportion rose to 48% for Labour, 68% for Conservatives and 89% for the UK Independence Party (UKIP).

Muslims experience significant socioeconomic disadvantage in the UK. Only a fifth of them are in full-time employment, compared to a third of the whole population. This is partly due to their much younger demographic profile: their median age is 25 compared to 40 among the whole population, and 13% of Muslims are in education compared to 5.3% country-wide. However, Muslim unemployment, at 7.2%, is nearly double the UK average. Data from the 2006–2008 Labour Force Survey, before the financial crisis, also showed a significant Muslim penalty in hourly wages and household wealth. Median wealth stood at £42,000 for Muslim households, much lower than the national average of £205,000. Part of this gap was attributable to the exceptionally low household wealth of Bangladeshis, whose median value was £15,000 (versus £97,000 for Pakistanis). A 2013 study on English 13–14 year olds in England revealed that Muslim families were much more likely to rely on means-tested benefits than non-Muslim ones. Approximately 10% of the former (versus 5% of the latter) received Income Support, whereas the proportion was 9% versus 3% for Jobseekers' Allowance, 6% versus 3% for Employment and Support Allowance, 26% versus 16% for Housing Benefit and 61% versus 41% for Tax Credits.

Despite this disadvantage, the same proportion of UK Muslim and non-Muslim women between 21 and 24 years old (25%) have obtained a degree. However, the figure is slightly lower among Muslim than non-Muslim men (22% versus 26%), suggesting a reversal of traditional gender roles among the youth. This incipient trend is also visible in the educational aspirations of Muslim parents and children, which are markedly higher than those of other English families. While 64% of

[2] Unless stated otherwise, all the demographic and polling data in this section is drawn from Ipsos MORI (2018).

parents consider it 'very likely' that their Muslim boy will attend university, this figure rises to 70% for Muslim girls (versus only 34% for non-Muslim boys and 43% for non-Muslim girls). In the case of children themselves, 52% of Muslim boys and 60% of Muslim girls consider it very likely that they will get a university degree. In addition, 41% of Muslim parents of 13–14 year olds feel 'very involved' in the school life of their children, much higher than the 26% of non-Muslim parents. Results of the standardised tests administered to all pupils at the end of secondary school reflect this pattern, with Pakistani pupils doing as well as their White British counterparts and Bangladeshis faring significantly better. Beyond these test results, educational statistics do not disaggregate ethnicity by specific nationalities and religions but only by broad racial categories (White, mixed, Asian, Black and Chinese), none of which can serve as a proxy for Muslims. However, we do know that the very small number of pupils attending state-funded Muslim schools who were evaluated in the 2016–2017 school year, 611 of them identifying as Asian and 39 as Black, received much higher scores than those of the same ethnicity attending all other types of state-funded schools, be they Church of England, Roman Catholic, other Christian, Jewish, Sikh, Hindu or without religious character (DfE, 2018a).

Compulsory education in England is provided in primary schools (which typically accept pupils aged 5-10), secondary schools (age 11–16) and all-through schools who take students of all compulsory school ages (DfE, 2018b). In terms of management type, state-funded primary, secondary and all-through schools may either be run mostly by a local authority ('community' and 'foundation' schools), be under the joint control of local authorities and external, usually religious organisations ('voluntary aided' or 'voluntary controlled') or be governed by a private foundation entering a funding agreement directly with the state ('academies' and 'free schools'). There are also independent schools that do not receive government subsidies and are funded through student fees. In 2016–2017, approximately 8 million students attended state-funded schools and 0.6 million attended independent schools. At primary level, some 2.11 million students attended a community school, 184,000 attended a foundation school, 674,000 voluntary aided schools, 348,000 voluntary controlled schools and 1.4 million academies and free schools. At secondary level, 431,000 attended a community school, 203,000 foundation, 231,000 voluntary aided, 35,000 voluntary controlled and 2.4 million academies and free schools.

All state-funded Muslim schools, which are attended by some 5,000 students at primary level and 7,500 at secondary level, fall under the status of 'voluntary aided' or 'academy and free school'. In 2016–2017 13 of the state-funded primary schools were Muslim whereas 10,588 were not religious, 4,371 Church of England, 1,648 Roman Catholic, 35 Jewish, 6 Sikh and 5 Hindu. At secondary level, 16 state-funded schools were Muslim compared with 2,801 not religious, 213 Church of England, 316 Roman Catholic, 13 Jewish, 6 Sikh and 1 Hindu. It is interesting to note that the number of pupils attending state-funded religious schools is much lower at secondary than primary level in the case of the Church of England, but that this trend is considerably less pronounced for minority religions. By July 2018 the Association of Muslim Schools (AMS) listed 184 members (nursery, primary and secondary levels) in England and Wales, most of them independent (AMS, 2018a).

Two fundamental policy trends, both linked to the marketisation of the education system, have contributed to an increase in state-funded minority religious schools since the 1990s. The first is the Labour policy of facilitating the access of independent religious schools to voluntary-aided status, justified by the aim of increasing educational choices for minority families. The second, initiated by Labour but greatly accelerated by the Coalition government in 2010, is the transfer of school ownership

and governance from local authorities to private foundations. This shift has spurred a wide range of new actors, including religious organisations but also (other) charities, parents, universities and businesses, to take advantage of new funding opportunities and project their influence in the educational sphere (Walford, 2018; West & Bailey, 2013).

All schools in England supervised by local authorities (community, foundation, voluntary controlled and voluntary aided) must follow a national curriculum comprising three 'core' subjects (English, mathematics and science) and nine 'foundation' subjects (art and design, citizenship, computing, design and technology, languages, geography, history, music and physical education) (DfE, 2014d: 6–8). Academies, free schools and independent schools are not bound by the national curriculum but they must provide 'experience' in the following areas: linguistic (including lessons in written and spoken English, except where all pupils are temporary UK residents); mathematical; scientific; technological; human and social (especially through geography and history); physical (sports, fitness and health); and aesthetic and creative. Like local authority-supervised schools, they are also required to teach fundamental British values (DfE, 2016: 12–14).

State-funded schools must provide religious education and daily collective worship. However the procedure for determining the contents of religious education varies between those that fall under the supervision of local authorities and those that do not, as well as between schools with and without religious character. In schools without a religious character, religious education is developed through two organs appointed by the local authority and representing four constituencies: the main religious denominations present in the local area, the Church of England, teacher associations and the local authority. These organs are responsible for supervising and periodically revising an agreed syllabus imparted by individual schools. Denominational schools set their own contents subject to the approval of their religious sponsors and the Secretary of State, whereas non-denominational religious academies can choose between a local authority and a school-specific syllabus (DfCSF, 2010: 14–16). As to religious assemblies, they must be of a mainly or wholly Christian character unless they obtain a 'determination' from the Secretary of State allowing them to reflect other faiths espoused by the governing foundation or a significant proportion of their students (Holmwood & O'Toole, 2018: 92–97).

All state-funded schools receive annual subsidies whose amount is calculated based on the number of pupils enrolled. For the year 2019–2020, the rate was set at £3,500 per pupil for primary schools and £4,800 per pupil for secondary schools (Education Skills and Funding Agency, 2017). There is also a premium paid for socio-economically disadvantaged pupils. In 2018–2019, this extra funding was set at £1,320 at primary level and £935 at secondary level (DfE/Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2018). Funding rates are the same for all types of schools but voluntary aided schools are normally expected to pay at least 10% of capital expenditures (Education and Skills Funding Agency, 2018). In addition, academies manage all subsidies directly, unlike local authority schools supervised by local authorities, which partly receive them in the form of through the services provided by the latter. Academies' greater control over their budget has been identified as an important incentive for their rapid multiplication (West & Bailey, 2013: 139).

State-funded schools are prohibited from charging parents for education provided during school hours, except for their access to optional activities, materials and facilities. According to DfE guidelines, voluntary contributions can be sought but children should not be penalised for their

parents' inability or unwillingness to pay them (DfE, 2014a: 3ff). Independent schools charge tuition fees. A census conducted in January 2018 on the 1,326 members of the UK Independent Schools Council put the average fee (excluding boarding) at circa £5,000 per term / £10,000 per year (Independent Schools Council, 2018: 18). Around a third of pupils received scholarships and bursaries. In 2018 the gross annual income of a full-time worker on the national minimum wage was a little over £14,000.

Responsibility for student admissions is shared between local authorities (in the case of community and voluntary controlled schools) and the schools themselves (for voluntary aided, foundation and academies). Admissions arrangements for all schools in a given locality are collated and published annually by the local authority. Except designated 'grammar' schools, which are allowed to select all students based on their ability, undersubscribed schools must offer a place to all students who make the request, regardless of their place of residence or other criteria. Oversubscribed schools must rank applications against publicly available oversubscription criteria and send the list to the local authority. Distance from the school and residence within a designated, 'reasonable' and 'clearly defined' catchment area can be among these criteria. Faith-based criteria are also allowed in oversubscribed schools with a religious character, although those recently created must allocate at least half of their places without taking these into account (DfE, 2014b: 8, 12, 16). In addition, schools with a religious character enjoy certain exemptions from employment equality legislation. Foundation and voluntary controlled ones are allowed to select one-fifth of their teaching staff (including headteachers) based on their ability to impart religious education, whereas the others (voluntary aided, academies, free schools and independent schools) may apply religious criteria when recruiting or dismissing any teacher, including the compatibility of their conduct with religious precepts. However, voluntary or foundation schools that convert to academy status remain bound by their existing employment equality framework (DfE, 2014c: 43).

In addition to standardised tests developed by national agencies (Standards & Testing Agency at primary level and Ofqual (Office for Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) at secondary level) (Ofqual, 2018), educational standards are enforced by Ofsted, an inspectorate created in 1992 to elaborate and publish reports on the performance of individual schools (Baxter & Clarke, 2013). Ofsted inspectors are mandated to make judgements on five broad areas: 1) overall effectiveness, 2) effectiveness of leadership and management, 3) quality of teaching, learning and assessment, 4) personal development, behaviour and welfare, and 5) outcomes for pupils. Schools are rated on a four-grade scale as 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate' (Ofsted, 2018). Between 2008 and 2015, the inspection of religious schools was shared between Ofsted and a specialist inspectorate (Bridge Schools Inspectorate), whose members were drawn from the staff of schools themselves. This was abolished in 2015 in the aftermath of the Trojan Horse controversy, which raised concerns around inspectors' competence and impartiality (Ofsted, 2015).

3. METHOLODOGY

The selection of documents to be analysed in this report was shaped by the circumstances that converted Muslims into a salient category of public discourse in the UK. First, a preliminary list of the main political actors involved in debates on Muslim schools, religious extremism and Islamophobia was drawn up by sifting through the related academic literature and particularly Holmwood and O'Toole (2018) *Countering extremism in British schools?*. A web search subsequently revealed additional documents published by these actors, whose references and interpellations were used to identify other significant voices that were not mentioned in the academic sources consulted. As stipulated in ETHOS guidelines, these stakeholders included official agencies, political representatives and non-governmental organisations but excluded all types of media. To facilitate the contextualisation of discourses and maximise the possibilities of inter-discursivity, only documents published during the last decade (since 2007) were retained. Undated contents available on the websites of relevant organisations at the time of the research, between May and September 2018, were also compiled. This procedure yielded approximately 70 published documents in Word or pdf format. After a cursory reading, some 25 were discarded due to their insufficient focus on Muslims in education. The rest were imported into an NVivo file for systematic qualitative analysis.

In parallel, several educational stakeholders (teachers, parents, school administrators and activists) were approached for participation in the study, building on the networks of ETHOS UK coordinator Professor Bridget Anderson. Contact took place through an email explaining the broad aims of the project and proposing to arrange a one-hour in-person interview, which could would ideally be recorded but could remain anonymous. Four stakeholders accepted to participate, all of them anonymously. Interviews were conducted at interviewees' workplace, on University of Bristol premises or in other convenient locations. They followed a semi-structured format and were guided by a dozen open-ended questions addressing the main themes identified in documentary discourses. The questions aimed to stimulate recollections of participants' personal experiences in relation to Muslim education, but many also had an explicit evaluative dimension. For instance, participants were encouraged to share their views on specific educational policies or practices, and then to provide reasons for holding them. From the outset it was made clear that the study did not aim to identify right or wrong answers but to map different perspectives on problems and solutions in relation to the education of Muslims in England. Participants were also assured that they would have an opportunity to consult the report and request amendments before its publication. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and stored exclusively on a secure server specifically created for the ETHOS project at the University of Bristol in order to protect participants' privacy. They were then imported to the NVivo file, also stored on the secure server, to be analysed alongside the documentary sources.

Qualitative analysis proceeded in three steps. In the initial step, a list of discursive themes and sub-themes was elaborated based on the author's cursory reading of documentary sources and recollection of interviews. To address the study's overarching concern with problematisations of Muslim education, the themes were classified in three categories: 'roles of education', 'barriers' and 'good practice/demands'. All sources were then re-read in depth on NVivo. Relevant passages were coded according to the pre-set list of themes and sub-themes as well as new ones which appeared to shed light on the social position of Muslims in the UK education system. In the process, several themes and sub-themes were renamed, moved or removed with a view to reflecting as accurately as possible

the form and substance of the discourses under study. A significant minority of passages were coded under more than one theme or sub-theme when their semantic associations were multiple or ambiguous. Most coded passages were between a sentence and a paragraph long but some shorter and more focused documents (particularly press releases or other web contents) were coded entirely into one or two sub-themes. Upon completion of coding, passages were classified into a total of seven nodes falling under the 'roles of education' rubric, 13 nodes under 'barriers' and 21 nodes under 'good practice/demands'.

In step two, the seven 'roles of education' were intuitively clustered into three basic frames ('social cohesion', 'culture' and 'values') and all the categories under the 'barriers' and 'good practice/demands' rubrics were similarly regrouped under these three frames. This involved going through all coded passages and copying them individually into separate Word files broadly named after the subsections in Sections 4 to 6 of this report (e.g. 'social cohesion', 'social cohesion – barriers', 'social cohesion – demands'). Whereas the coded passages of some categories almost entirely coincided with one of the sub-sections, others were dispersed throughout several of them by the means of repeated readings. Some categories that maintained strong semantic associations with more than one frame where classified into the frame where they emerged most frequently, but the interconnections between frames were noted to enable their examination in the report (see following sections). To facilitate further analysis of the scope of justice claims, the Microsoft Word function 'search and replace' was used to highlight the following keywords: just, fair, ethnic, religious, European, global, universal, local, council, municipal and national.

Due to multiple readings and the spread of the codification process over several working days, some passages were copied into their respective Word file/sub-section more than once. These repetitions were eliminated in step three, when all relevant passages were brought together into a single Word file and reorganised according to the order in which they would be discussed. At the writing stage, they were re-read one last time in order to identify the continuities and contradictions between the discourses of different actors, as well as to select the most expressive words or sentences that would illustrate the report's arguments.

Before turning to these arguments, let us briefly introduce the discursive agents and the position they occupy in the British educational landscape. A first group of stakeholders is made up of associations representing religious schools. The Association of Muslim Schools (AMS) was established in 1992 and acts as an umbrella organisation for registered Muslim schools in the UK. Its leadership is democratically elected by affiliated schools and it works in close collaboration with the DfE (AMS, 2018b). The Church of England is an established church that currently manages most faith schools in the UK (see Section 2). Marcus Stock is a Catholic Bishop whose statement on Catholic schools was endorsed by the chairman of the Catholic Education Service, which comes a close second to the Church of England in the number of English schools managed.

A second group of actors corresponds to civil society organisations with a strong interest in the place of religion in the educational sphere. Accord Coalition describes itself as a 'coalition of organisations' that includes religious groups, humanists, teachers, trade unionists, educationalists and civil rights activists, working together for inclusive education' (Accord Coalition, 2018). The Coalition, created in 2008, does not take position on faith schools, unlike its older sibling, Humanists UK, which takes an explicit stance for non-religious philosophies and the absorption of religious schools 'back in

the wider schools sector' (Humanists UK, 2018). British Muslims for Secular Democracy (BMSD) was founded in 2006 and aims to promote dialogue about the separation of faith and state, social inclusion and civic engagement among British Muslims and the wider public (BMSD, 2018). The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) is a broad-based representative body for Muslim local organisations, mosques, charities and schools in the UK, established in 1997 (MCB, 2018). Official positions are captured in the documents and statements issued by the UK Department for Children, Schools and Families (DfCSF), its successor the DfE, the Conservative Government, Nicky Morgan (ex Secretary of State for Education) and Amanda Spielman (Ofsted Chief Inspector at the time of writing). The main UK political parties (Labour on the centre left, Liberal Democrats in the political centre, Conservatives on the centre-right and UKIP on the far right) are represented through their electoral manifestos and, for Liberal Democrats, their specific policy proposals on education. Ted Cantle (author of a high-profile report on community cohesion and founder of the Institute of Community Cohesion), Policy Exchange (a conservative-leaning think tank) and Muslim Engagement & Development (MEND, a non-for-profit company promoting Muslim civic engagement) (MEND, 2018) can all be characterised as influential producers and promoters of policy-oriented research. Finally, the National Union of Teachers (NUT) represents some 300,000 teachers and teacher trainees in England and Wales. Two of the study's interviewees, one Muslim and one non-Muslim, also convey the perspective of teachers. Another is a non-Muslim school administrator and a fourth is a Muslim activist engaged in educational issues.

The following sections will bring these actors into dialogue with the aim of unpacking contemporary understandings of Muslims' right to education as well as barriers to and conditions for its exercise.

4. MUSLIM EDUCATION AND SOCIAL COHESION

The social cohesion frame, sometimes labelled 'community cohesion', appears as the most consensual of all those deployed to discuss the education of Muslims in the UK. This frame portrays education as a means to promote 'respect', 'awareness', 'understanding', 'tolerance', 'dialogue', 'open minds', 'positive attitudes', 'harmony', 'mutuality', 'non-discrimination' and 'inclusion'. These ideals are often contrasted to problematic 'conflict', 'prejudice', 'intolerance', 'unfair divisions', 'bullying', 'anti-social behaviour' and 'discrimination'. 'You have to understand where you are living, who you are living with. It breaks down barriers,' summarises a non-Muslim teacher and parent. A noteworthy aspect of the social cohesion discourse, which distinguishes it from the closely related discourse of values (see Section 6), is that it rarely specifies which groups or 'communities' are the target of prejudice and which hold them. Hence, it reflects an underlying assumption of mutual, symmetrical prejudices. Notwithstanding sporadic mentions of equality as an aim of social cohesion programmes (e.g. Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007), the ideal of social cohesion has less to do with the reversal of inequality than with the prevention of conflict. In other words, it is a utilitarian concept that refers to the welfare of the whole society and can therefore easily be embraced by all its components, whatever their particular position in the social structure.

In most cases, social cohesion is deployed in an implicitly national framework, for it is British society that must be made more cohesive or united. This nationalist thrust is tempered by representations of Britain as 'multi-faith', 'multicultural', 'diverse', 'pluralist' or 'mixed-belief', but the modifier 'increasingly' frequently qualifies these assertions (Accord Coalition, n.d.f). This signals a more homogenous past that has been disrupted by large-scale international migration, creating conflicts and a need to overhaul education policy. Past homogeneity is also suggested through statements associating diversity with 'modern' Britain (BMSD, 2010: 6; HM Government, 2018: 14, 26, 28, 32, 34), brought about by the exogenous force of globalisation. The Accord Coalition (n.d.a) thus situates the need to teach about a variety of beliefs in 'the irreversibly plural nature of modern Britain, the challenges posed by globalisation, and the conflict that can and does take place among those of different cultures and beliefs.' The negatively connoted adverb 'irreversibly' underscores the notion that diversity is a new but unavoidable evil that must be coped with, together with the other 'challenges' of globalisation.

The linking of social cohesion to globalisation and international migration means that the 'communities' whose relations must be made harmonious are generally cultural, religious and racial. The occasional substitution of 'community' with 'background' indicates a historical continuity and intergenerationally transmitted 'customs, beliefs, ideas and views'. However, the Government's 2018 green paper on integrated communities also refers to 'socio-economic groups' (2018: 26) and in 2008 the NUT advocated an expansion of the cohesion agenda to 'LGBT communities' (2008: 8).

4.1. THE PROBLEM: SEGREGATION

The fundamental barrier to social cohesion in the educational sphere identified by all actors is segregation, understood as the uneven distribution of pupils from different religious, ethnic, racial and other 'communities' or 'backgrounds' among schools. The ensuing physical separation is seen as

reducing ‘opportunities for children and young people to mix with others from different backgrounds’ (HM Government, 2018: 26), thus fostering prejudices and conflicts. Ted Cantle (2013), a prominent figure in the segregation debate, has coined the term ‘parallel lives’ to describe this process of mutual alienation:

> They did not live in the same area, go to school together, work in the same places or occupations, or share social and cultural activities. As a result, they lived in fear of each other, had no real knowledge or respect of others and could easily be pushed into conflict by extremists. They had no opportunity to challenge stereotypes, confound myths and to see the human face of the ‘other’. There were no shared spaces and no reason to venture out of their comfort zones. They lived in self-confirming worlds, reinforcing prejudices and stereotypes.

For Cantle, (modern) cultural diversity is akin to a rough sea that children must learn to ‘navigate’, but segregation prevents them from acquiring the necessary tools: ‘Segregated schools mean that many young people never experience difference and emerge into a multicultural world with little or no cultural navigation skills. They are not equipped for the modern world.’ Cantle partly grounds his arguments in the authority of academic research on the roots of prejudice, but he also cites the more anecdotal and rhetorical evidence of MPs such Oonagh King:

> I have mentioned before in Parliament my shock at visiting two schools next door to each other soon after I was elected in 1997. They shared a playground with a fence down the middle. On one side of the fence there were white children playing with a smattering of Afro-Caribbeans and on the other there were brown, Muslim and Bangladeshi children. Perhaps it is because my father was brought up in the segregated south that I was horrified by that; I could not believe it. We read about such things, but when we see them in Britain, we must think that something is seriously wrong.’

In this statement, the ‘brown, Muslim and Bangladeshi’ enumeration establishes an explicit link between religion, ethnicity and race, and the ‘fence’ separating the ‘playgrounds’ captures in a tangible way the potential friendships obstructed by separation along these lines. The racial dimension is further reinforced by visual metaphor of an Afro-Caribbean ‘smattering’. By describing her surprise and horror at witnessing the scene, the MP charges her story with negative emotions and invites her (elite British) audience to respond to them by comparing Britain to the ‘segregated South’. Another MP cited by Cantle, Barry Sheerman, raises the scarecrow of Northern Ireland:

> I think very few people in the government have looked carefully at the implications of a society ten to twenty years down the line where there is a clear divide between the religions and schooling. We’ve only got to look at the painful, recent example of Northern Ireland within the Christian community to see what problems that produces.

By juxtaposing Britain to the significant others of the South and Northern Ireland, implicitly associated to backwardness and violent interreligious conflict, the MPs seek to build on the motivational capital of British nationalism. At the same time, they run into the paradox of rekindling stereotype-laden geopolitical imaginaries to argue for measures against cultural prejudices.

While segregation in the abstract is negatively evaluated by all actors whose discourses were analysed, disagreements arise in relation to its specific forms and causes. Religious or 'faith' schools, sometimes opposed to 'comprehensive' (secular) ones, are the most frequent targets of criticism among secular organisations. The NUT and Humanists UK both express 'concern' with the 'proliferation' of faith-based schools, the former linking them to 'divisiveness and discrimination' (2008: 10) and the latter to 'a more segregated future, particularly as religions whose believers tend to come from particular ethnic groups gain more state-funded schools' (n.d.a). As the latter statement shows, part of the reason why religious schools are deemed problematic is the overlap between religion and ethnicity, so that minority religious schools are seen as posing a particular challenge for social cohesion. This is exacerbated by the policy of extending state funding to all religious schools, initiated by the Labour government in the 1990s:

> The Muslim community in particular has a large number of independent schools which could attempt to gain state support. Evangelical Christian communities are beginning to wake up to the possibilities – an application has recently been made for one such school in Oxford and no doubt many more will follow. This can only mean an increasing balkanization of our schooling system (Cantle, 2013).

The 'balkanization' charge offers yet another illustration of how geopolitical others are rhetorically instrumentalised to attack segregation in the UK, but more importantly, the statement suggests that Muslims and other students with a recent family history of immigration to the UK are the most likely to be cut off from pupils of other backgrounds. This interpretation of the segregation problem is contested by the Accord Coalition (n.d.e), according to whom Catholic and Church of England schools bear responsibility not only for religious but also class segregation. Citing research by the Guardian, a left-wing newspaper, it argues that 'faith schools are increasingly serving the better-healed in their communities' as evidenced by the discrepancy between the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (an indicator of poverty) in their student intake and local area. Humanists UK (n.d.a) and Policy Exchange (2010) also link religious schools to socio-economic segregation but without signalling particular faiths or causal mechanisms. The non-Muslim teacher and parent interviewed similarly links Christian schools to class segregation: 'I mean, you could turn the degree of separation around and say well what about all the Christian schools, or grammar schools and all the prestigious schools that a lot of our politicians went to. How diverse are they? And so how integrated are they in today's society?'

Religious schools' leeway to select some of their pupils based on religious criteria is frequently signalled as a key reason for their segregationist tendencies. For Liberal Democrats (2009), therefore, the problem is not faith schools as such but rather 'faith-based admissions' or 'requirements'. Likewise, Cantle (2013) uses the 'developed' countries of the OECD as a point of reference to argue that Britain is an international 'outlier' in allowing religious selection. Humanists UK (n.d.b) warns that 'the principle of integrated education is under attack like never before in this country following the Government's announcement that it will introduce a new generation of state schools that can religiously discriminate against children for all of their places.' The NUT opposes 'admissions policies which either privilege or discriminate against children on the basis of the beliefs, motivations or practices of their parents' (2008: 11). When asked about religious selection, the school administrator interviewed described it as radically incompatible with social cohesion:

Interviewer: How much scope should schools have to select students based on religious or other grounds?

Respondent: None.

Interviewer: And why is this, that they shouldn't have that freedom?

Respondent: Why should they not discriminate?

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Because it's discrimination.

Interviewer: And what is the negative impact of this discrimination? How does it manifest itself?

Respondent: It just goes back to being exclusive, about creating a cohesive society, no critical thinking.

Interviewer: But at the moment it is allowed for some religious schools to select…

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: So you would oppose this?

Respondent: Totally.

Humanists UK and Liberal Democrats both argue that it is not 'necessary' for religious schools to resort to religious selection in order to preserve their ethos. This mode of reasoning, reminiscent of the proportionality tests often applied by the courts to determine whether a policy complies with human rights, is a nod to the (religious) 'culture' frame, which will be addressed in Section 4 and suggests a more accommodating position toward the presence of religious schools in the state-funded education system. The Green Paper adopts a similar stance by highlighting that, as a matter of fact, 'many faith schools have a diverse intake of pupils from a wide range of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. However, as with the wider schools sector, it is not the case for all faith schools' (2018: 26).

Beyond overt religious selection, segregation is attributed to residential separation and self-segregation: 'Segregated schools are a product of where people live, admissions policies and parental choice' (HM Government, 2018: 26). The 2017 Conservative manifesto decried the 'unfairness of selection by house price, where ordinary, working-class families find it difficult to access the best schools because they cannot afford to live in the catchment area.' Liberal Democrats (2009) have likewise denounced 'selection by neighbourhood', and all interviewees concurred that parents' wish to enrol their children in the nearest 'local' school indirectly translated residential segregation to the educational area. Class, race and nationality were all mentioned as significant axes of residential and educational separation: 'I think it's very much a consequence of how people are placed in the UK. So it's wider than the school system itself. It's more about housing and how housing is divided in racial lines or based on economic status and class. And I think those are the deciding factors of where people are placed in schools' For the school administrator, urban settings are especially prone to such

geographical sorting:

> This city talks about being multicultural. But it's pretty divided. It's got its pockets. In my opinion, it's just a mini London. You can generalise pretty much all the demographics of each area. You write those down on a piece of paper and hand it over to anyone in the city and say, 'write which nationality', it springs to mind immediately.

Unlike most other stakeholders, who mainly view residential segregation as a by-product of socioeconomic inequality, this interviewee emphasises the individual choices of Muslims who seek to maintain their identity. This account of segregation as a mainly 'inner-city phenomenon' is problematised by Cantle (2013), according to whom it also affects white suburban and rural schools where 'a substantial number of white children are growing up in a multicultural country without any direct experience of other cultures'. By shifting the focus from urban to rural areas, Cantle also shifts the critical lens of segregation from racialised 'other cultures' to the 'white children' who remain cut off from the reality of 'multicultural' Britain.

While the segregation discourse mainly focuses on students, religious discrimination against teachers in faith schools is also criticised on social cohesion grounds by Humanists UK and especially the Accord Coalition (n.d.c): 'By helping faith schools employ teachers who hold the same religious views (and often the same views as the family of pupils), the law helps them become more religiously ghettoised […] and serve to further undermine community cohesion.' Once again, the organisation bolsters its claim through a proportionality analysis, arguing that teachers can 'uphold a religious or philosophical ethos at a faith school without the need to be discriminated against'. To underscore the exceptional nature of the powers enjoyed by religious schools, it compares them to those of (other) religious charities who, to comply with anti-discrimination standards, would need to justify any religious discrimination in employment through a 'genuine occupational requirement'. When it comes to schools, however, 'the law drives a coach and horses through the idea of fair employment rules'. Such a situation is depicted as especially egregious given schools' dependence on public funds.

Lax state oversight is portrayed as explaining segregatory patterns, with Cantle (2013) characterising as a 'retrograde step' the removal of schools' duty to promote community cohesion from Ofsted inspections, and Humanists UK (n.d.b) denouncing 'near-universal non-compliance' with the statutory School Admissions Code (issued by the Government in 2014) by religious secondary schools: 'This includes some very serious Code breaches, such as schools breaking the law by selecting on the basis of race and/or gender […]. Religiously selective secondary schools across England may be breaking the Admissions Code some 12,000 times between them.' In this statement, the number 12,000 works as a rhetorical device highlighting the systemic scale of non-compliance and suggesting reckless state disengagement from the problem. In another publication Humanists UK (n.d.a) talks of a single school breaking the admissions code in '105 different ways.' Stakeholders also problematise the national policy of removing academies from the supervision of local authorities and their Admissions Forums, which eliminates a buffer against discriminatory admissions. Cantle (2013) diagnoses that 'the growth of more faith schools, free schools and academies means more partial admission policies.' In the same vein, the NUT cites the Institute for Public Policy Research according to whom religious schools whose admissions are not supervised by the local authority are ten times more likely to be 'highly unrepresentative of their surrounding area', a proportion that goes down to six times in the case of non-religious schools (2008: 7). Echoing concerns about religious discrimination

against teachers, it deplores that staffing structures and decisions about reserved posts in 'academies with a faith designation' will be 'taken outside the local authority framework', posing a 'particular problem' and representing 'dangers for community cohesion' (2008: 9).

4.2. THE SOLUTION: MIXING

The natural corollary of representing religious, ethnic, racial and class segregation as a key challenge for social cohesion is to advocate mixing, 'integration', 'diversity' or 'representativeness' as a key remedy. The general reference point for assessing diversity or representativeness is schools' (local) catchment area. For instance, the Accord Coalition (n.d.e) advocates for 'classrooms to be as diverse as the area from which schools draw their pupils.' This stands in some tension with the aforementioned claims that school segregation can partly be attributed to its residential counterpart: in segregated neighbourhoods, reflecting the diversity of a catchment area may not amount to much. Interestingly, the NUT posits that 'faith schools must reflect the diverse nature of British society and their local community' (2008: 10), without addressing the possibility of diversity gaps between local and national communities. The underlying assumption is that, in Cantle's (2013) formulation, 'integrated education' will improve 'outgroup contact' and 'outgroup attitudes' through a range of 'cognitive' and 'affective' processes, as evidenced by academic research on prejudice reduction.

For the NUT, BMSD and Humanists UK, diverse student intakes can only be achieved by replacing religious schools with 'secular', 'comprehensive' or 'state' ones. The somewhat unsteady labels used to designate alternatives to religious schools, as well as the scarcity of references to a 'secular' education system except in the statements of Humanists UK, may partly be due to the religious dimension of the national curriculum (see Section 5), but it also suggests a broader uneasiness with the contested idea of secularism. The most radical stance is that of Humanists UK (n.d.a), whose campaign 'against faith schools' and for an 'inclusive, secular schools system' affirms that the latter should not fund religious schools that 'bring children up in a particular religion when they are too young to make up their own minds on such matters'. Humanists UK challenges faith schools' 'admissions, employment and curriculum policies, as well as the privileged processes by which new faith schools continue to open.' Its aim is to see religious schools 'eventually absorbed back into the wider schools sector', presumably meaning a sector that escapes the influence of religious organisations. On a more conciliatory tone, the NUT supports 'a move away from the current position in which 33% of maintained schools have a religious character' (2008: 11) and BMSD considers that 'state schools provide the best environment for the wholesome development of the child' since 'young people of all cultures, faith and no faith come together representing the environment these young people will have to face in real life'. This is opposed to religious schools 'where the opportunity of interacting with the other is entirely absent' and which cannot, 'by definition, provide the priceless experience of living in a cosmopolitan, multi-cultural and multi-faith environment which is crucial for any child living in the diverse world of the 21st century and for social cohesion among the various peoples of Britain' (2010: 5). Both Humanists UK and NUT go on to specify that 'comprehensive' or 'state' schools should also accommodate the needs and wishes of religious families, thus distancing themselves from more 'muscular' versions of secularism seeking to discourage individual religious beliefs and practices. Further blurring the line between religious and other schools, Cantle (2013)

proposes that faith schools should convert to 'multi-faith institutions' and open up to children of no faith to 'secure a mixed environment' and 'begin to undo much of the segregation children currently experience'.

Other stakeholders see no necessary incompatibility between a religious ethos and student diversity. The non-Muslim teacher and parent interviewed cites the example of a Catholic school where she did supply work:

> I've never once stepped inside a school where there was so – it was like the world was in this school and what they said was that the church on a Sunday, it would be completely full and there would be people queuing to go into that church. But I think that the setting, you had a lot of people that were migrants, economic migrants that moved into the area and I felt that was a very exciting place because the Catholic Church, there's something about the fact that it's worldwide and because it's worldwide every colour and every language is accepted.

From a slightly different perspective, the Muslim teacher interviewed considered it could be a positive experience for migrant Muslim students to attend a Church of England school, especially if they had few opportunities to learn about Christianity in their country of origin. In her view, this would also provide them an opportunity to explain their faith to their Christian peers so that all could 'work together' and 'show respect'.

Notwithstanding examples of good practice, most stakeholders insist that a significant overhaul of school admissions is needed, putting special emphasis on religious schools' ability to discriminate based on pupils' faith. Accord Coalition (n.d.e) 'calls on the Government to remove the ability of faith schools to treat children differently according to their faith and discriminate in their pupil admissions' and the NUT takes the position that 'securing inclusive and equitable school admissions arrangements is the key to bringing down the barriers between schools' (2008: 7). The NUT also deploys the public funding argument for opening religious schools to the 'wider community' in the interest of social cohesion (2008: 8). In its 2007 policy statement, the Department for Children, Schools and Families takes a more gradualist position. Welcoming the 'willingness of the faith school providers […] to admit pupils not of the faith where circumstances allow', it cautiously adds that it would 'normally expect any new faith Academy (other than one replacing an existing faith school) to give priority for at least 50% of their places to pupils of other faiths or none' (DfCSF, 2007: 16–18). It also recalls that religious schools that are undersubscribed with members of their faith 'cannot keep places unfilled'. This statement, which combines a legal requirement and a more aspirational norm, signals that the exceptional exemptions from anti-discrimination provisions so far enjoyed by religious schools may not last for long, even if as a matter of fact they are still in place more than a decade on. The NUT also calls for an end to teacher discrimination based on religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity and marital or civil partnership, and breaks a general taboo by supporting 'positive action to tackle any under representation of diverse groups' (2008: 10). According to the school administrator interviewed, teachers should not only be protected from faith-based discrimination but also given the freedom to openly express their beliefs in the classroom as long as they allow students to question them: 'I have no problems with staff letting the students know about their religion. I don't think that should be hidden. It doesn't need to be hidden. So, they can discuss it as long as it is part of a discussion. It's not the discussion. It's part of a discussion.' This coincides with the personal account of the Muslim

teacher: 'If we are asked about something [about religious beliefs], we do that within our knowledge. If I know the answer, I will do. Otherwise I will say okay, I will get the answer for you. I'll print it for you.'

Cantle (2013) and others have pointed out that 'break[ing] down the mono-cultural nature of schools, [or] even reversing the evident trend towards them', is likely to require more than ending explicit religious discrimination. Additional remedies include 're-defining catchment areas', reaching out to a range of communities to change their perception of the school and convincing them that they are welcome in it, and 'responding sensitively to a broader range of diverse needs'. As an example of good practice, the DfCSF cites the Community Cohesion Programme of a Muslim school in Leicester, which includes 'extensive contacts with places of worship, community groups and leaders', as well as 'a range of sports, recreational and educational activities that enhance social cohesion' (2007: 15). The Muslim parent and teacher proposed that non-Muslim schools could invite 'knowledgeable persons' from the wider community to talk about Islam.

Another popular way of fostering interactions, propounded by religious and non-religious organisations alike, is through collaboration between schools with different student profiles. The MEND manifesto thus simultaneously supports 'faith school provisions in the state sector for Muslim pupils' and 'twinning of faith and non-faith schools to encourage cultural exchange between pupils of different racial, religious, ethnic and other backgrounds' (2017: 6). According to the DfCSF, 'collaborative working can enrich education and cultural development and help build up lasting relationships between members of school communities from different ethnic backgrounds and the wider community'. Such collaboration, ideally based on 'shared curriculum projects' is seen as having the potential to 'break down negative stereotypes'. The suggested list of joint activities includes 'shared assemblies that respect the faith of those present; shared playtimes; joint production of a drama performance open to all parents; or collaborative volunteering for community projects.' (2007: 13). The Church of England illustrates this through one of its schools attended by a large proportion of recent Muslim immigrants:

> Every class at Easton is linked with a contrasting class in either a different part of Bristol, a more rural part of the country, or somewhere overseas (links include schools in Uganda and Jamaica). The school has successfully fundraised over recent years to purchase a range of camping equipment, which means they can take pupils to other parts of the country and also invite other schools to stay on Easton's school field in their 10 large canvas tents. […] In addition, pupils from Easton regularly visit less diverse schools in Bristol to talk about their faith and practice as a Muslim, Sikh, etc (2009: 10).

The Government's green paper also cites as good practice reciprocal visits to Catholic and Muslim schools and places of worship (HM Government, 2018: 29).

In terms of specific policy recommendations the Labour manifesto, Liberal Democrats and the NUT favour a stronger local authority supervision of school admissions, with both Labour (2017: 38) and Liberal Democrats (2009: 22-23) stressing the importance of democratic accountability to the local community. The NUT's proposals are by far the most detailed, including procedures for reconciling the policies of individual schools and the local authority's School Admission Forums as well as for dealing

with ‘crossborder flows of pupils’ between local authorities (2008: 7). They also specify that local authorities should act in accordance with national code of practice on school admissions. In contrast, the Government’s 2018 green paper makes few references to the role of local authorities, relying mainly on the national code of practice and individual schools’ funding agreements with the DfE as a regulatory framework for admissions. In this sense, it stresses that all applicants who wish to open a free school will need to show how they will, inter alia, ‘seek to attract pupils from a range of different backgrounds and communities, and provide evidence of their efforts to reflect the social and ethnic make-up of the area’. More generally, the Government’s green paper places considerable emphasis on voluntary experiments with ‘new approaches to admissions’, such as enlarging catchment areas to include diverse neighbourhoods, and it commits to developing ‘a range of model admissions arrangements’ for local authorities to adopt. Financial incentives for inter-school linkages aimed at promoting meetings and relationships between ‘children and young people from diverse communities’ are cited as good practice (HM Government, 2018: 28–31). Yet the Conservative manifesto pledges to ‘never introduce a mandatory lottery-based school admissions policy’ (2017: 50), a position that may be read in light of the green paper’s support for the ‘principle of parental preference’ (2018: 28). This principle is also used by Cantle (2013) to oppose the ‘bussing of children’ or other ‘coercive policies’ which ‘will be counter-productive’.

Liberal Democrats (2009) and Accord Coalition (n.d.c) both call for the repeal of legislation allowing the religious selection of a certain proportion of teachers in faith schools, although Liberal Democrats support an exemption for teachers of religious instruction. Despite the existence of such legislation, the DfE recalls that even in faith schools, ‘teachers other than those appointed as reserved teachers must not be treated unfavourably in any way because of their religion’. Hence, ‘they cannot be dismissed because of their religious opinions or attendance at religious worship, they cannot be required to deliver RE and cannot be subjected to a detriment for not giving religious education or attending worship.’ As in other organisations, the prohibition of religious discrimination in recruitment is qualified by a ‘genuine occupational requirement’ proviso, which may apply to staff ‘required to give pastoral care to pupils’ (2014c: 43–44).

4.3. Synthesis

Given the centrality of respect and its opposites in discourses around social cohesion, this frame seems most closely related to the recognition dimension of justice. However, the justice-related or moral contents of this frame are considerably diluted by utilitarian overtones that relegate to the backstage problems of inequality. As a consequence, it is not Muslim students specifically but rather society as a whole that is viewed as subjected to the injustice of intolerance and conflict. The scope of justice claims appears unstable and contradictory, with participants frequently switching between a local and national frame of reference for the ideal itself (cohesion), the underlying problem (segregation) and the proposed solutions (state supervision of student admissions and teacher recruitment). Stakeholders disagree on the appropriateness of resorting to legal sanctions or financial incentives to secure inclusive admissions policies, but only the teacher’s union takes an explicit stance in favour of positive action. The promoters of the social cohesion discourse are overwhelmingly non-religious organisations, and Muslim representatives seldom intervene in debates. This may partly be

attributable to the emphasis put on faith schools as drivers of segregation, not least due to their exemption from anti-discrimination laws, although structural factors such as residential segregation by class, ethnicity and religion are also signalled as driving segregation. Contrasting with the detailed proposals on school admissions, however, little attention is paid to the measures that would be necessary to counteract residential segregation.

5. MUSLIM EDUCATION AND CULTURE

In the 'culture' frame, education is judged based on the amount and kind of knowledge acquired by children. Unlike the social cohesion frame, which takes 'society' or the 'community' as its unit of analysis and evaluation, the cultural perspective mostly focuses on individual improvement or 'development'. In a strongly teleological fashion, it conceives the child chiefly as a future 'adult', and it is the anticipated opportunities and duties of this life stage that provides the measuring rod against which to assess the adequacy of knowledge acquisition. The hypothetical and contested nature of future adulthood inevitably creates considerable room for disagreement regarding the culture or knowledge that should be learned by Muslim and non-Muslim children alike.

Development is widely understood as a complex, multidimensional process, encompassing 'spiritual', 'moral', 'social', 'cultural', 'mental' and 'physical aspects' (DfCSF, 2007: 9; Policy Exchange, 2010: 11). These formulations echo Section 78 of the Education Act 2002, according to which the curriculum must 'promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils'. The concept of 'development' is sometimes replaced or complemented with 'self-fulfilment', 'enrichment', 'welfare', 'health' and 'safety', all of which may be seen as abstract but widely embraced components of the good life. In a distinctly perfectionist vein, BMSD (2010: 6) advocates the maximisation of children's 'potential' so they can 'excel' in all areas of life, whereas Spielman (2018) expresses her commitment to improving their 'life chances' and 'set them up for future success'.

The other basic aim of the curriculum identified by the Education Act 2002 is to prepare pupils 'for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life' (Policy Exchange, 2010: 11) by encouraging them to become 'well-rounded individuals' (DfCSF, 2007: 9). Adult life is frequently linked to the 'responsibilities' of work and citizenship whereby children will be called upon to promote the 'common good' (Stock, 2012: 13). The Muslim Council of Britain (n.d.a) states that 'the primary responsibility of schools is to prepare children for life, assisting them to acquire skills and help them to be successful citizens and professionals.' Liberal Democrats 'recognise the dual role of education in giving young people the knowledge and skills they need to be part of a productive, competitive economy, and to help them grow into happy, healthy and engaged members of their community' (2017: 25) The DfCSF and faith schools commit themselves to 'providing all their pupils with equal opportunities to gain employability and enterprise skills through participation in work-related learning activities in and outside school' (2007: 16). The NUT endorses as one of education's fundamental outcomes the achievement of 'economic well-being', which is defined as follows: 'engage in further education, employment or training on leaving school, ready for employment, live in decent homes and sustainable communities, access to transport and material goods, live in households free from low income' (2008: 6). According to the Muslim activist interviewed, these aims are embraced by many working-class Muslim parents: 'We just want our kids to do well. We just want our kids to live decently. Maybe a lot of families have struggled to come here, financially. So it's about financial security as well I would say'.

As the references to pupils' 'spiritual and moral development' suggest, what exactly constitutes knowledge and how it differs from or relates to values (discussed in Section 6) is a matter of debate. The MCB blurs the line between them by dividing knowledge between the 'revealed' type ('Qur'an and Prophetic sayings') and the 'acquired' one ('natural sciences, physics, astronomy, history,

mathematics etc.'). According to this stakeholder, it is the simultaneous pursuit of both types of knowledge that has provided Muslim scholars with the open-mindedness needed to 'absorb and assimilate the various contributions of the Greek, Roman, Persian, Indian and Chinese civilisations.' (2007: 10). BMSD contrasts this attitude with the intellectual climate of contemporary Islam as well as modern Europe:

> This is part of an age-old debate between philosophers, beginning in the twelfth century when Ibn Rushd (Averroes) from Muslim Spain raised the question that the ultimate truth can be arrived at by both human logic and spiritual faith. This double commitment to reason and revelation is what distinguished Islam in the heyday of Muslim civilisaton. In Europe, over time this perpetual debate was settled some 300 years ago in favour of human reason taking precedence over faith. While much of the contemporary Islamic World has taken the polar opposite view, there is a growing tendency amongst Muslims to return to the golden rule pioneered by Ibn Rushd and endorsed by the Holy Qur'an (2010: 11).

The intertwining of knowledge, values and spirituality reemerges in various guises across discourses, with Spielman (2018) enjoining school leaders to provide 'rich and deep' education by 'making sure the focus of their schools is, in the words of Psalm 119, to "teach knowledge and good judgment".' The AMS (2014) claims that 'a school's pedagogy needs to not only aim for academic excellence and enrichment, but also nurture the character and conduct of its pupils that is befitting to serve the world in which we now live.' The Catholic Church claims to care for children 'in such a way that their physical, moral and intellectual talents may develop in a harmonious manner, so that they may attain a greater sense of responsibility and a right use of freedom' (Stock, 2012: 11). All these statements reveal a concern to embed knowledge in a religious, spiritual or philosophical framework able to infuse it with meaning and purpose. As the Liberal Democrats' aforementioned reference to happiness suggests, this purpose can also take more aesthetic forms, signalling personal pleasure and enjoyment. The non-Muslim teacher and parent powerfully captures this dimension through the image of a child standing on the beach with the waves caressing her feet:

> If there is a poem where it looks at footprints in the sand, and if you put your footprint in the sand, if you've been on a beach and how the sea will wash it away. You have a duty to enable the children to have had that experience. You cannot get it from watching a video, they have to go there, and you have to stand on the beach, and you have to be there with the children experiencing that for them to understand. It needs to be one where they need to sense it in all forms. They've got to hear it, they've got to touch it, got to taste it, and all that. So the best part of education is this, I don't know if I'm expressing it right. But it is this rounded, inclusive, rich curriculum where it's all connected, and where it's based on some of the things that are things children need to experience.

Hence the senses also need to be educated, 'cultivated', so as to enhance children's capacity to enjoy the pleasures of daily life. But where will daily life take place, and what aesthetic, spiritual, economic and political opportunities will it open? Expectations in this respect diverge considerably. For Policy Exchange the answer is Britain: 'Children should be educated about the history, tradition and values of Britain and taught a positive British identity. Respect for Britain's democratic institutions should be

fostered' (2010: 52). According to Morgan (2014), however, opportunities must be much wider: 'Schools should prepare children for life in modern Britain, and indeed the modern world.' Discussing the requirements of education in religious schools, Policy Exchange cites a judicial decision simultaneously referring to the child's 'community' and 'country': 'Education is "suitable" if it primarily equips a child for life within the community of which he is a member, rather than the way of life in the wider country as a whole – so long as this does not foreclose the child's options in later years to adopt some other form of life, if the person wishes to do so' (2010: 11). Following a similar approach, Muslim schools present themselves as 'important educational institutions which seek to nurture young people into becoming proud and active members of British society, who are confident in both their religious and national identity' (AMS, 2016).

Family relationships figure prominently among the social contexts expected to shape children's adult lives. According to BMSD, 'working with the school to find solutions to problems and issues will foster a good relationship between families – the agents of primary socialisation and the school – the agent of secondary socialisation. Both must work in tandem' (2010: 6). Significantly, families are frequently represented as members of particular cultural or religious communities and thus cited as an argument to impart religious knowledge. For instance, a recurrent aspiration is children's right to be educated 'in accordance with the wishes of their parents', drawn from international rights law, which is sometimes invested with an explicitly religious meaning. Policy Exchange observes that religious schools are 'often promoted because they enable minority groups to maintain their distinctive identities, thereby defending the parental right to educate their children according to their own values' (2010: 7), and the DfCSF considers 'it is only fair that pupils of all faiths and none have the opportunity to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents' (2007: 3). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the AMS (2014) sustains that 'parents and children of all faiths and none should have their beliefs and views respected within the educational setting they choose' and the Catholic Church defines its mission as 'assisting parents, who are the primary educators of their children, in [their] education and religious formation' (Stock, 2012: 8). The precise balance to be struck between family/religious and other communities in the transmission of culture is a contested one, and BMSD denounces educators who have 'over-emphasised Muslimness at the expense of Britishness and the whole child' (2010: 6). In an attempt to cast the different communities of reference as complementary rather than opposed to each other, the MCB (2007) proposes that schools should build on their 'fusion': 'All children, to whatever extent possible, whatever their background, should be educated in the fullness of their being in consistency with their beliefs and the wishes of their parents, in a spirit that values their multiple identities (faith, cultural and British).' To achieve this, 'it is vital that school curriculum in particular takes adequate account of pupils' backgrounds and builds on the fusion of their faith, cultural and British identity. What the nature of this fusion is and how it is responded to, goes to the very heart of what it means to be a British Muslim in contemporary society' (2007: 19).

Likewise, the non-Muslim teacher and parent sees foreign national backgrounds as providing 'resources' upon which to build new learning.

5.1. THE PROBLEMS: POVERTY, NARROW CURRICULA AND RELIGIOUS RESTRICTIONS

Divergent understandings of the knowledge or culture to be imparted in compulsory education have a knock-on effect on the perceived obstacles to its acquisition by Muslim students. At the most general level, MEND links their educational disadvantage to socioeconomic inequality and residential segregation:

> Muslims are concentrated in some of the most deprived local authorities, with 46% of Muslims living in the 10% most deprived districts in England and Wales. Policies on educational attainment, social mobility and policies tackling bullying in schools will subsequently have a larger impact upon Muslim youth. Using figures from the Participation of Local Areas (POLAR2) and Free School Meals, the Independent Commission on Fees found that in 2010, school leavers in England who were in the least disadvantaged POLAR2 quintile were 3.2 times more likely to enter higher education than the most disadvantaged. This ratio fell to 2.8 by 2013. Although the gap in application and entry rates between advantaged and disadvantaged students have slightly narrowed, the Independent Commission on Fees concluded that it remains 'unacceptably large'. The Sutton Trust has found that children who have parents in professional and managerial positions are 3 times more likely to enter a high status university than those with working class parents (2017: 16).

Similarly linking religion, geographical concentration and poverty, the non-Muslim teacher and parent interviewed pointed out that Muslims, especially where they live in large groups, 'are often living in very poor circumstances' compared to other religious groups. This socioeconomic disadvantage, which also has a racial dimension, visibly manifests itself in children's housing conditions:

> My experience or where I taught at schools where there weren't any white children, I know there was this economic review of the area and I think it was seen as one of the – it was the poorest within the city. And it was based on, at the time, outside toilets. Some people hate that. So it was – when you realise then the starting point, you're going home to houses, they didn't have double glazing, you went outside, the toilet in the back. The tiny poor quality brickwork, on the side of the city where… Low-quality housing. But I know that the Council then had started to – the windows were all being replaced. The toilets were, they addressed the fact that they had all these outside toilets and things like that.

In turn, poverty impairs knowledge acquisition by depriving children of the physical and mental resources that are necessary for learning:

> Children have all sorts of things. You don't know when they come in they've had a proper breakfast. You don't know if they've had a proper night's sleep. You don't know whether they've had a bed to sleep in. You don't know whether it's been safe overnight. You don't know whether there's been – I've taught children where the police have raided the house so they come in emotionally very troubled obviously, they're not going to be able to focus on a combination of facts after this. They can present with very challenging behaviour because they're deeply distressed. Or just

> because you've been given food, is the quality of the food appropriate? The food could be too much sugar or too many carbohydrates. You're talking about children that are coming to school where the way that they're being brought up, they are – they have serious underlying health problems. […] I remember I've taught bilingual children where one group of children was a family where the oldest child is raising the children because both the parents have died from tuberculosis. And that's terrible.

The interviewee explains how children's learning difficulties can result in low morale among the school personnel, creating a vicious cycle of lower-quality education and further learning problems:

> Respondent: So, I'll give you an example of where I was last week, a very similar school to where I used to work, and there was lots and lots and lots of low-level misbehaviour going on that actually fundamentally affected how you could teach, so the learning. But the teachers were just used to it, everybody was used to it, and they were exhausted. But the school didn't understand – they didn't have a vision to understand how to take it any further and they didn't want to talk about it and they didn't ask any questions about it.
>
> Interviewer: Everyone was just putting up and trying to –
>
> Respondent: Just putting up with it, yes.

The Muslim educational activist thus recounts his personal experience of 'completely dysfunctional' schooling in a minority working-class neighbourhood where only a fraction of students passed GCSE exams:

> For me, I feel like growing up in a working-class family, a minority family in the UK specifically, I went to one of the poorest comprehensive secondary schools in my borough and it had a 22% GCSE pass rate. I was one of the 22% that passed but I think that was pure luck. And it was difficult operating in a school that was completely dysfunctional. We had some teachers just coming in and out. And the educational lectures, attainment, and level that I had was really poor. So I don't know if education for like inner-city children of colour works in the way that we want it to work.

According to Labour and Liberal Democrats, inadequate national funding of the education system has compounded these problems, in part by reducing the time available for teachers to understand and engage with the personal situation of their students. The Labour 2017 manifesto attacks Conservative cuts for 'starving schools of the funding they need to deliver a first-class education. Crippling underfunding is driving up class sizes and forcing schools to cut corners' (2017: 37). By contrasting the ideal of 'first class education' to the reality of overcrowded classes, Labour deals a side blow to the British ruling elite, disproportionately educated in private schools who take pride in the tailored teaching enabled by their high teacher/student ratios. Diagnosing an 'unprecedented funding crisis' in the education system (2017: 26), Liberal Democrats zoom in on the problem of low pay, which creates difficulties in teacher training, recruitment and retention, particularly in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and schools:

> The existing teacher pay scales and the national pay agreement give insufficient freedoms to schools to pay more to attract and retain the best staff. They effectively discriminate against schools and colleges in disadvantaged areas where there can be a real problem in attracting teachers. That is why so many challenging schools have to rely on supply or substitute teachers, or teachers who lack specialist degrees in the subject they are teaching (2009: 19).

The result is that 'English educational performance is only average, because we have a huge tail of underachievement which is strongly associated with poverty and social disadvantage. […] Educational success in England is highly correlated with family income, and social mobility is lower than in almost any rich developed country' (2009: 8).

The socioeconomic perspective on barriers to knowledge acquisition mainly focuses on the mode of teaching, highlighting the higher amount of time, qualification and motivation required of teachers in disadvantaged schools. In contrast, the socio-cultural perspective turns the spotlight on educational contents. In this discourse, the problem is represented as an inadequate articulation of the curriculum with the experiences, interests and values of Muslim and other students who see themselves, or are seen by others, as not belonging to the cultural 'majority'. Importantly, the contours of this majority and, by extension, of its correlative minorities are not drawn in the same way by all participants in the educational debate. For Humanists UK (n.d.e), the majority is made up of believers, meaning that non-religious families are relegated to a minority position. As an indicator of this state of affairs, it points to the exclusion of 'non-religious worldviews and Humanism' from religious studies at GCSE and A' level. Adopting a slightly different stance, Accord Coalition (n.d.b) criticises mandatory assemblies 'of a broadly Christian character,' which put both non-religious families and non-Christian believers at a disadvantage:

> Many schools have some form of regular worship, and this can be exclusory to families of different religions or of no religion. Parents can opt-out their children from assemblies, but this right is rarely used as most parents are not aware of it, and because opting children out is often found to be very unsatisfactory. Pupils who are opted out may be singled out by their peers, not provided with alternative activity and may miss out entirely on receiving the communication of school information and the ethical or moral teaching that is so often entwined with worship.

The DfCSF proposes yet another vision of majority/minority relations in the educational field, acknowledging that 'there are relatively few faith school places in the maintained sector available to Muslim, Sikh and Hindu children compared to the provision available for Christian and Jewish families' (2007: 3). Here the Jews join Christians in the list of dominant or well-served religious groups, whereas the position of non-religious families remains ambiguous. The MCB does not perceive British schools as too religious, Christian or Jewish but rather as too secular. As a result, it views the needs of all religious students as overlooked by 'community' schools, which tend to address cultural difference through the lens of ethnicity rather than faith:

> Some community schools adopt a policy where the religion and faith of their pupils is strictly regarded as a matter of private and personal concern for each pupil and is therefore not appropriately addressed within the school. This approach makes it more

> difficult for schools to appreciate and respond positively to meeting some of the distinctive spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs of Muslim children, particularly if they are inappropriately categorised as 'Asians'. Asian needs and Muslim needs are not necessarily the same (2007: 18).

The MCB goes on to provide an extensive list of school practices considered inadequate for Muslim students, such as: encouraging children to break their fast early; scheduling sex and relationship education and swimming during Ramadan; requiring fasting children to engage in over-demanding exercises during physical education; holding parents' meetings and other school social events during Ramadan; holding balls and discos to celebrate Islamic festivals; serving alcohol at functions; obliging boys and girls to change in mixed or communal environments; programming dance activities involving sexual connotations; drawing pictures or playing roles involving God or the prophets; obliging students to participate in non-Islamic acts of worship; promoting pre-marital, extra-marital and homosexual relationships; promoting obscene or blasphemous music; putting up theatrical plays involving gender-role reversal; encouraging the production of three dimensional figures of humans; and encouraging pupils to buy or sell raffle tickets (2007: 12–58). According to the Council, educational environments that create 'conflicts of belief or conscience' may lead Muslim students to assume that progressing in society will come at the price of compromising or giving up 'aspects of who they are' and affect their 'considered opinion of the school and, indeed, education itself' (2007: 18). The Muslim activist encapsulates this process in the metaphor of a 'fractured' identity, partly due to the scarcity of Muslim teachers who could act as role models: 'It's broken from the beginning, because you never see people like you in all levels of society.' Unlike the MCB, however, he specifically identifies 'Catholic' or 'Christian' schools as responsible for this fracture:

> A lot of my friends, who've gone to one of the Catholic schools or Christian schools, but they are people of colour or Muslims. And they have told me about the kind of difficulties they've faced unless they deconstruct their identity to become almost white and non-Muslim. Then they're accepted within the peer circle or kind of subconsciously. At that point, it's more about friends and stuff.

According to this respondent, the whiteness of schooling is reinforced by a specific blindness to global and migration issues:

> I was having a conversation with one of my friends who is a teacher at the moment and we were talking about how there is no space to talk about migration in the context of minority communities that have come in the '60s and '70s to the UK. There's no understanding of it, there's no promotion of oral history projects that we can learn from and see and understand – these are the kinds of contexts that we come from. […] I think there's something a bit more specific that could happen and that's to understand newly arrived communities, to understand the wider political context of where they are coming from. So, for example, if we take people coming from Eritrea, the context of climate change and where they're coming from, the context of conscription and all that kind of stuff. So I think there needs to be more kind of nuanced understanding of migration, and how people immigrate, and why people immigrate.

To explain the narrowness of the curriculum, he compared the 'point-based' educational system to 'factories where you churn out qualifications just to get to the next level of college', without 'promoting any kind of critical thinking' or 'taking in the individual needs of how people learn and how people absorb'. Tellingly, both this interviewee and the non-Muslim teacher and parent illustrated these trends through history classes focused on 'the Tudors and the Kings and the Queens': 'It was not about kind of like the British empire or imperialism or colonialism and how that has impacted and shaped the way that minority communities are seen in the UK today'. The perverse incentives created by testing are also denounced by the Liberal Democrats, Labour and Spielman. The Liberal Democrats cite a report characterising the post-14 curriculum as 'heavily academic', 'stale', 'narrow' and 'dumbed down', and warns against the introduction of new external assessments, which would lead to even more 'teaching to the test' (2009: 16-17). A decade later, Spielman (2018) denounced how schools' 'hunt for prizes and stickers' has 'taken on greater importance than the substance of education', while 'ensuring that young people have the body of knowledge they need to succeed is playing second fiddle to a focus on maximising league table positions.' According to Labour, standardised curricula and a 'culture of assessment' do not only put off students but also teachers, exacerbating the 'recruitment and retention crisis' (2017: 37).

Taken together, these discourses put forward a coherent set of causal relationships starting from the highly hierarchised character of the British education system and concluding with a curriculum that confines itself to the transmission of the dominant culture. While several stakeholders perceive this as insufficient, their discourses reveal implicit disagreements on the direction in which cultural acquisition should be expanded, be it non-religious philosophies, Islamic customs, human mobility or global history. However, all agree that governmental overreach in the form of over-prescriptive curricula and/or standardised assessment are to blame for the fundamental issues. This contrasts starkly with the image of state supervision that emerges in debates on specifically religious obstacles to scientific or aesthetic education, where the problem is often perceived as a lack of regulation or inadequate enforcement. Broadly speaking, these obstacles fall in four categories: the confusion of religious dogma with scientific knowledge, biased representations of 'other' religions or non-religious philosophies, the refusal to impart subjects out of religious principle and the withdrawal of Muslim children from certain classes by parents.

Regarding the first line of criticism, Policy Exchange specifically highlights schools where creationism is taught as part of the science curriculum (2010: 7) and Humanists UK (n.d.a) stress abortion or assisted dying being 'approached from an explicitly religious perspective, with all the potential for misinformation that this entails.' In addition, Humanists UK complains that religious education in faith schools 'is usually confessional in nature, with the aim of instructing children in the doctrine and practices of a particular religion. RE in such schools does not have to cover other religions and almost certainly fails to give a fair account of non-religious views.' Citing an academic study conducted a decade earlier, Policy Exchange points to conservative 'governors from the mosque' who may object to the teaching of music, suggesting that this is compounded by the attitudes of children's families:

> The BBC visited the Herbert Morrison Primary School in Lambeth which has had up to 22 children removed from music lessons. The headteacher Eileen Ross was quoted saying, 'Some of the parents don't want children to play musical instruments and they

> don't have music in their homes. There's been about 18 or 22 children withdrawn from certain sessions, out of music class, but at the moment I just have one child who is withdrawn continually from the music curriculum...For goodwill I allow that parent to withdraw their child from all music, but I am in fact denying the child the opportunity that the other children in the class have' (2010: 12).

While this account stresses the aesthetic aspects of culture, both Muslim interviewees signal parental taboos on sexuality-related contents: 'It is very annoying to have strict parents who try to tell you what to do', comments the teacher and parent. Another difficulty, she adds, relates to problems in participation due to time or energy-consuming rituals:

> Last year there were Somali students who started to practice praying, and they had to pray on a specific time so some of them wanted to leave their lesson to do their prayers. And because I'm a Muslim Chaplain here the teachers came to me and asked 'Is that ok?' I said, 'No. Don't allow them to leave the lesson. We have lunch time. They can take 5 minutes.' During Ramadan, some of them wanted to fast and it was a long day in summer, a school day. 'Oh, I have a headache. I want to go home.' 'Why?' 'Because I'm fasting.' I said 'No. They're only 11 years old so they can break their fast. Don't send them home.' So I phoned the families, explained that to them. They can't do that because of the faith. They're not allowed to skip school.

Humanists UK and Policy Exchange both establish a clear link between religious interference in knowledge acquisition and patchy state supervision of (religious) schools. In particular, Humanists UK (n.d.e) notes that the system of local Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) overseeing religious education syllabuses 'is becoming increasingly irrelevant, especially at secondary school level, as Academies (including Free Schools) are not bound by the [SACRE approval], and a strong majority of secondaries are now Academies.' (The organisation also criticises that religious education in all faith schools, regardless of their status, is inspected by 'someone chosen by the governors (which typically means the diocese) rather than Ofsted. The situation is even worse in privately funded ones, which are 'not required to meet the same standards as state-funded schools and are subject to a significantly less rigorous inspection regime. As such, private schools are more free to influence various aspects of school life.' Apart from their exemption from the national curriculum, independent schools have come under scrutiny for their special general inspection regime, perceived as less rigorous than the one applicable to their publicly funded counterparts. Policy Exchange details how the Bridge Schools Inspectorate (BSI), which supervised Muslim and Christian schools from 2008 until it stopped operating in 2015, paid little attention to music education:

> The independent inspectorate […] has inspected 20 Muslim schools to date. Six of the BSI's reports make no mention of music, while the remaining reports specifically state that music is not taught. Nine of the latter say that the pupils study the subjects of the national curriculum except for music, though some mention that pupils do listen to and sing nasheed (Islamic songs). Only one report out of 20 comments on the lack of this provision, saying 'Taking into consideration the shari'ah (religious) concerns held by the school about figurative art and the use of musical instruments, the curriculum should offer pupils access, at some stage during the term or year, to a wider range of planned aesthetic and creative activities (2010: 13).

According to Humanists UK (n.d.d), the 'independence and impartiality' of private schools' inspectorates have been significantly undermined by the influence of schools themselves or the 'associations representing them' in their appointment. This was partly addressed through a 2014 reform that is described as catalysing the abolition of BSI, but another independent inspectorate, the School Inspection Service, remains in charge of Exclusive Brethren and Steiner Schools. Ofsted is portrayed as enjoying greater independence, having judged as 'failing' the majority of schools inspected by BSI. Policy Exchange nevertheless qualifies this general impression by recounting the case of Ofsted inspectors whom a headteacher persuaded to 'tone down their remarks about music because she did not want it made too public in the community' (2010: 13).

5.2. The solutions: public investment, accommodation and 'broad and balanced' curricula

To address socioeconomic obstacles to education, all major political parties defend an overall increase in education spending, most of it targeted at children from disadvantaged backgrounds or at the improvement of teacher training and pay. In their 2009 policy document Liberal Democrats set out their proposals for the individually-based Pupil Premium to be paid to schools on top of their regular budget, which were followed through by the Coalition government in 2011. The key principles of the Premium included its decoupling from the socioeconomic profile of schools or neighbourhoods, its exclusive use in the state-funded sector (as it intended to 'strengthen education in the maintained sector and not to act as an exit route from it') and the progressive extension of its coverage to 'children from low income households where one or more parent is in employment'. The Premium could be spent on increased one-on-one tuition, additional support staff, reduced class sizes, after-school activities and weekend and holiday provision (2009: 10–12). In their 2017 manifestos, the Conservatives pledge to increase schools' budget over and above inflation levels every year until 2022 (2017: 51) and Labour promises to reduce class sizes to less than 30 for students up to seven years old (2017: 38). In terms of teacher training, recruitment and retention, the Liberal Democrats' 2017 manifesto proposes to end the 1% cap on teacher pay rises, include teacher workload, sickness and retention in Ofsted inspections and introduce a professional development entitlement of 25 hours per teacher per year by 2020 (2017: 26-27). Conservatives commit themselves to the provision of bursaries to 'attract top graduates into teaching' as well as 'offer forgiveness on student loan repayments while they are teaching' (2017: 51). Like the Liberal Democrats, Labour proposes ending the pay cap, but also reintroducing a nationwide negotiating body and pay settlement. In addition, it announces its intention to 'consult on introducing teacher sabbaticals and placements with industry' (2017: 38).

The Liberal Democrats and Conservatives both put forward proposals to fill perceived gaps in school governance, but whereas the latter's broadly mirror teacher-related measures (better pay and increased training opportunities) (2009: 28), the former's rely on coercing external actors into taking on greater responsibilities in this field. In particular, Conservatives wish to 'make it a condition for universities hoping to charge maximum tuition fees to become involved in academy sponsorship or the founding of free schools' and adopt a similar approach with 'at least 100 leading independent schools […] keeping open the option of changing the tax status of independent schools if progress is not made.' (2017: 50).

The recourse to school exclusion as a response to student misbehaviour, which tends to entrench class biases, is addressed explicitly albeit ambiguously in the Liberal Democratic 2009 policy paper. To limit the application of this extreme measure, the paper advocates early intervention for children displaying poor behaviour or falling performance, the establishment of internal exclusion zones and evening or weekend schools and assistance for children with caring responsibilities. At the same time, it expresses concern about 'a small but important number of cases where decisions to exclude are overturned and pupils have to be re-admitted under difficult circumstances' and commits to striking a balance between 'maintaining school discipline and upholding the rights of pupils and parents' (2009: 30–31). Somewhat provocatively, the Conservative and UKIP 2017 manifestos both suggest that creating greater scope for the selection of pupils would improve outcomes for those of working-class backgrounds. Citing 'official research' according to which 'slightly more children from ordinary, working class families attend selective schools as a percentage of the school intake compared to non-selective schools', Conservatives pledge to 'lift the ban on the establishment of selective schools, subject to conditions, such as allowing pupils to join at other ages as well as eleven.' They also propose to relax 'unfair and ineffective inclusivity rules' hampering the establishment of Roman Catholic schools, which have a reputation for higher achievement (2017: 49–50). UKIP gives the argument a subtly nostalgic twist:

> The state education system of grammar, secondary modern and technical schools was designed to make a high standard of education available to all, irrespective of social background. Grammar schools improved social mobility by giving children from poorer backgrounds access to career paths they might have previously thought out of their reach. When the national grammar school system still existed, 25 per cent of schools were grammar or technical schools and nearly 65 per cent of their pupils came from the working class. They were not socially elite institutions, as anyone who attended one will confirm (2017: 25).

The discourse of socioeconomic inequality foregrounds the amount of knowledge acquired by children, generally remaining agnostic on its content. As UKIP's allusions to 'social mobility' and 'career paths' suggest, however, the purpose of knowledge is implicitly framed in terms of labour market value, at the expense of citizenship or aesthetically-oriented perspectives. While the reasons for this trend can only be surmised, it may partly be attributable to a classist propensity to view deprived children as (aspiring) future workers rather than fully-fledged citizens, or alternatively to a cognitive association of socioeconomic disadvantage with economic paradigms. When the focus of discourse shifts from material to cultural barriers, both the exact content and aesthetic dimension of school-transmitted culture come to the fore. Rather than objectively quantifiable conceptions of academic 'achievement' or 'success', stakeholders stress responsiveness to the cultural or religious 'needs' or 'wishes' of Muslim students and families. Instead of test results, the measure of quality becomes their subjective satisfaction and engagement with educational institutions.

Procedurally, several stakeholders highlight the importance of consulting parents (and sometimes community leaders) when designing dress codes, schedules, curricula and other school policies. The idea is to use the information thus gathered in the benefit of 'accommodation', a central concept referring to the adaptation of established rules or practices to take into account minority preferences. The NUT succinctly captures this idea in the following statement: 'Comprehensive

education based on equality should enable the accommodation of beliefs within which faith groups and non-faith groups can attend happily' (2008: 10). The concept of 'comprehensiveness' connotes diversity of intake, and what should be equalised is the 'happiness' of different 'faith' and 'non-faith' groups attending the school. Interestingly and in contrast to other actors who regard faith schools as a vehicle for accommodation (see below), the NUT partly justifies accommodation as a way of reducing the latter's popularity: 'Perhaps if such accommodations were extended in breadth and depth, the call for the establishment of an increased number of faith schools, and with it the negative impact of educating children from different cultures and religions, could be avoided' (2008: 10). Among the actions it regards as examples of 'good practice' and 'inclusive' are 'the provision of adequate private prayer space within schools; recognising religious holidays which embrace all faiths; flexible arrangements around school uniform to allow for religious and cultural differences; provision of suitable food in school canteens catering for all religious requirements'; and the 'the provision of space for religious instruction in addition to religious education for the children of parents who wish it' (2008: 9–10).

The NUT portrays these actions as motivated by a desire to 'meet the religious and cultural wishes of parents and communities' and recommends 'forging respectful partnerships between teachers, families and students' (2008: 9). In its advice on the setting of dress or appearance policies, the DfCSF offers a more detailed list of stakeholders to be consulted, mentioning not only 'prospective' pupils and parents but also 'representatives of different groups within the wider community, taking care to identify community leaders who represent minority ethnic and religious groups' (2007: 12). The MCB states that dress codes should be drawn up by 'the governing body and implemented by the headteacher', giving 'due consideration' to the views of 'all stakeholders, including parent governors, other parents and pupils' (2007: 21).

But what forms should consultation take? The Church of England (2009) offers as a model one of its schools attended by 80% of children from Muslim families, many of them from Somalia:

> Supporting families arriving from conflict zones is a key priority for this inner city school, which has adopted an 'open door' policy for parents to drop into the school to help their children with their first activities of the day and also give them an opportunity to discuss with trained staff a whole range of issues, such as access to other public services. The school also runs English for Speakers of Other Languages classes for parents to learn alongside their children, in addition to parenting classes and a range of other workshops (2009: 10).

When conflicts arise, the MCB insists that problems 'can and should be resolved with mutual recognition, understanding and flexibility' (2007: 18). Illustrating this cross-cultural, semantic or anthropological approach, it accompanies its list of accommodations for Muslim students with comments explaining the meaning of religious practices: beards 'are considered to be an adornment on a man's face' and those who grow them follow 'the example of the Prophet Muhammad' (21); during Ramadan 'some adults will spend their time observing additional religious activities, like the special evening prayers (Taraweeh) at the mosque' (30); teaching Arabic will offer children 'greater access to their religious and cultural heritage, thus giving them a stronger sense of self-esteem and achievement' (50); the name Abdullah means 'servant of Allah' but, when negligently abbreviated to 'Abdul', it evokes a 'servant' or a 'slave' (58); and the central Islamic value of 'haya' encompasses

notions of 'modesty, humility, decency and dignity […] and applies to all aspects of human behaviour and conduct' (20).

The Muslim teacher interviewed describes how she negotiates parental requests on a case-by-case basis, building on her own religious identity and alternatively adapting her practice or explaining her refusal to do so:

> If they are very strict person and they see me approaching them, they feel first, 'Oh, good. We have an adult here who is Muslim so will understand the culture.' We try to explain them, to introduce them to everything about the school, speak openly with them, especially the ladies. They like to know, 'Oh, my daughter, she's a very shy girl. She doesn't like to sit by a boy.' No boy will come and sit by her if she doesn't want that. She will live her school life the way she likes. At the same time, within our rules. You have to know these are our rules. We know your rules. Your daughter is going to fit within our rules. I don't want to sit by a boy. Okay, don't sit a boy. You'll sit by a girl. The PE [physical education] here, we encourage them – PE we have four boys and we have four girls. […] So, 'Oh, I don't want my daughter to play with boys.' She won't play with boys because we have a football team for girls, a football team for boys, so it's going to be segregated, you don't have to worry. We explain things and they try to let me do that for them. It relieves the parents, it makes them feel relieved that, 'Oh, our kids are in a safe place.' So we speak openly with them and tell them what is their limit and what is our limit, and we're not going to clash with each other.

As this account makes clear, the enforcement of gender norms figure prominently in debates on cultural or religious accommodation. The MCB's recommended accommodations thus include allowing Muslim girls to wear a 'full-length loose school skirt or loose trousers, a long-sleeved shirt and a head scarf to cover her hair' (though schools may specify the 'colour, styling and size' of the scarf, and headscarves can be safely tied for work in science labs, food technology areas, design and technology workshops and sports areas) (2007: 20-21); considering requests for 'separate prayer facilities for boys and girls' (26); in primary schools where there are no separate changing facilities, using portable partitions to allow girls and boys to change in single-gender groups within the classrooms and as a permanent solution, 'consider providing separate changing facilities that include individual changing cubicles' (37); in secondary schools, include individual changing cubicles within changing facilities (37); organise contact sports in single-gender groups (37); provide a single-sex environment for swimming and allow girls to wear 'full leotards and leggings in the pool', or excuse them from swimming on religious grounds (38); teach sex and relationship education in single-sex groups with a teacher of the same gender (49); and avoiding mixed-gender groups when organising overnight trips (56). This has triggered concerns that accommodation may clash with the principle of gender equality. Espousing an intersectional perspective, the NUT recalls that 'discussions about dress code or school uniform should be conducted in a way which promotes inclusion for individual children and counters stereotypes about gender, faith and culture' (2018). In its guidance on the implementation of the Equality Act, the DfE sketches the fine lines that separate legal from illegal forms of gender segregation:

> Whilst there is no express exemption in the same way that there is for same-sex schools, it is not necessarily unlawful to have some single-sex classes in a mixed school, provided that this does not give children in such classes an unfair advantage or

> disadvantage when compared to children of the other sex in other classes. […] Although the Equality Act forbids discrimination in access to benefits, facilities and services; the Act does contain an exception which permits single-sex sports. It applies to participation in any sport or game, or other activity of a competitive nature, where the physical strength, stamina or physique of the average woman (or girl) would put her at a disadvantage in competition with the average man (or boy). But while this exception might permit a mixed school to have a boys-only football team, the school would still have to allow girls equal opportunities to participate in comparable sporting activities. The judgment on whether girls would be at a physical disadvantage needs to take into account the particular group in question, so it is much less likely to justify segregated sports for younger children. Where separate teams exist, it would be unlawful discrimination for a school to treat one group less favourably – for example by providing the boys' hockey or cricket team with much better resources than the girls (2014c: 20–21).

The qualifying expressions dispersed throughout the normative statements, such as 'while', 'but', 'although', 'necessarily', 'provided that', 'compared to', 'contain an exception', 'average' woman or man, 'might', 'still' and 'less likely' betrays the highly contested and context-sensitive nature of judgements on appropriate and inappropriate accommodations. This is also indicated by the adjective 'reasonable' that frequently accompanies the substantive concept. The offshoot is that different actors draw the lines in different places, depending on their ideological outlook and more specifically on their attitude to secularism and the place of religion in the public sphere. BMSD, which adopts a more sceptical stance than the MCB, thus considers it 'perfectly legitimate' for schools to prohibit the jilbab and niqab, 'both for health and safety and integration reasons.' In the same vein, it encourages schools to reject demands to set aside a 'dedicated separate room for the weekly Friday prayers', to avoid visiting other places of worship, to prevent interactions between the sexes or to opt out of sex education. Like the MCB, it justifies its positions in part through Islamic doctrines and traditions, such as men and women praying together in the Great Mosque of Mecca or Prophet Muhammad inviting a Christian delegation to pray in Islam's second most holy place of worship. However, it complements these with a greater amount of non-religious reasons: for example, schools should explain to parents who wish to withdraw their daughters from swimming lessons 'the resulting dangers to life should the child be placed in a situation where loss of life through drowning could have been prevented or avoided if the child had learned how to swim.' Other considerations cited as justifying a refusal to accommodate include avoiding interference with lessons, 'school routine' or the 'school programme', space limitations, the importance of teaching respect towards other faiths and preventing the youth from seeking information about sex from 'disreputable sources' (2010: 7–13). The non-Muslim teacher and parent interviewed offers as an example of good practice a school that reached an agreement with a supplier of uniform hijabs to prevent students from wearing decorated ones, which were seen as less functional.

The accommodation paradigm stressing diversity of educational provision *within* schools is not the only perceived solution to Muslim families' dissatisfaction with the curriculum. In the statements of all except secularist actors, it coexists in dynamic tension with a parental choice paradigm that places the emphasis on diversity *between* schools. In this case, religious schools are often portrayed as an ally in the fulfilment of families' cultural preferences, in part because the competition they generate

harnesses the force of markets in order to drive up 'innovation' and 'quality'. As mentioned earlier, the discursive alignment of school markets and quality is made possible by a more subjective conceptualisation of educational quality that stresses the compatibility between school-transmitted knowledge and individual aspirations. However, it should be noted that this greater attention to cultural diversity complements rather than displaces the objective conception, as enhanced commitment to schooling is also expected to yield a quantitative increase in learning.

The Liberal Democratic policy paper articulates a comprehensive and elaborate vision of this ideal, which it grounds in its own liberal worldview and uses to advocate freedom from government interference for all schools rather than an increase in faith schools specifically:

> Liberal Democrats believe in choice. It is one of the key freedoms in a liberal society. The UN Charter of Human Rights enshrines the basic freedom for parents to choose the right education for their children – including home education. It should include the power to choose to apply to any school which meets the criteria to provide state funded education and to be admitted if there are sufficient places, and to do so without a requirement for any top-up payment. […] The priority for most parents and pupils is to be able to attend an excellent local school or college. Consequently, ensuring that there is an excellent school or college in every area is our priority. […] However, we also wish to expand choice, and if there is to be real choice, each neighbourhood must have, where viable, more than one excellent school or college, with places available in more than one. Real choice must also mean enabling schools to offer different approaches to education and a greater choice of curriculum – often in partnership with other schools and colleges. The parental right of choice is also an important mechanism for holding schools to account,and ensuring pressure for improvement. […] We believe that strong Governance, freedom from government micro-management and ability to innovate are crucial for all schools. […] All schools would therefore be granted the freedoms to innovate currently available to just a few (2009: 23–25).

According to this ideal, local authorities would support the smooth functioning of the educational market by 'providing a single prospectus' to parents-consumers on the options available (Liberal Democrats, 2009: 16). The end result would be an expansion of curricular, pedagogical and organisational offerings, arguably going well beyond those enabled by intra-school accommodations. Belief in markets' 'self-improving' character also lies behind Spielman's (2018) 'ecumenical' approach to school diversity:

> We see schools in all shapes and sizes providing an outstanding education. While the ethos of a school undoubtedly matters – more on that in a moment – there is no one-size-fits-all approach. At Ofsted, we are interested in what works for children, what improves their life chances and what sets them up for future success. And viewed from that perspective, system diversity should enable schools to learn from each other's successes and challenges. Indeed, I think it is only through that combination of innovation, experimentation and collaboration that we will realise a self-improving school system.

Spielman and the Liberal Democrats both conceive family preferences in very broad terms, leaving unstated the specific profile of these educational consumers. For other actors in the debate, however, it is religious identities and preferences in particular that are seen as structuring educational choices. In 2007 the DfCSF expressed its commitment to 'supporting the establishment of new schools by a range of providers – including faith organisations – where local consultation has shown that this is what parents and the community want, and where this greater diversity will help to raise standards' (2007: 4) (emphasis added). This commitment was backed with hard cash:

> In particular, the Government will encourage independent [faith] schools to enter the maintained sector in their existing premises so that the need for capital funding is not a barrier to entry. Where existing premises are not available and the local authority is generally supportive of the proposal, it may offer premises, or arrange to acquire them, and also offer any capital investment that may be needed. Where it does not itself have the necessary resources, it may approach the Department for Children, Schools and Families for additional funding to support low cost options (2007: 18).

The Department reckoned that such a course of action would be especially beneficial to deprived religious minorities, as suggested by the 'nearly 15,000 Muslim children and around 11,000 Jewish children, including those from low-income families, whose parents chose to send them to independent schools with a particular religious character'. In a striking departure from the social cohesion discourse advocating 'comprehensive' schools, it argued that bringing these schools into the maintained sector would contribute to 'integration and empowerment'. From a more principled stance, the NUT claimed that 'any faith group which can demonstrate a reasonable need and demand for their own schools, has the right to equal treatment of provision'. Consequently, independent minority faith schools should be 'incorporated in the maintained sector' (2008: 8). Similarly stressing equality of treatment between majority and minority faiths, MEND defends that 'providing parents with choice in education and removing the stigma attached to faith schools is necessary to cultivate a context in which faith school provision is not seen as an exemption for religious minorities but as part and parcel of the mainstream education system' (2017: 19).

For some stakeholders, the fulfilment of families' religious preferences justifies faith schools' power to select some of their students on a religious basis. The DfCSF explicitly states that it 'recognises and supports the right of faith schools that are their own admission authority to give priority for some or all of their places to children from the faith concerned when they are oversubscribed' (2007: 16). The non-Muslim teacher and parent interviewed considered that 'if you are of a particular faith, and you really feel strongly that you want to go to a school that has that faith, then you can understand that the school should allow that child.' While stressing that he did not have a strong view on this topic, the Muslim activist agreed that Muslim schools should be allowed to 'select a pool of people from a specific background' since 'we can't disregard parents' religious choices'. However, he contextualised this opinion by specifying that it was formulated with Muslim schools in mind and linking it to secularist ideologies:

> I would say for Muslims, religion is so much embedded in the way of life and in the culture that it's very hard for them to distinguish what is religion and what is out of religion. So I think countries like this one and also France probably and the whole secularism thing and a lot of western countries, they've tried to separate state and

> religion and I think Muslims operate in a completely different way. So when Islam is part of your life, it very much means that it's part of your education, it's part of your work, it's part of everything that you live and breathe. And I think for the state or secular institutions it's very hard to understand that. So I don't really see a problem in people sending their kids to religious schools as long as those young people are not just being confined to understanding a doctrine.

The DfCSF and MCB also put forward the religious selection of teachers as a way of ensuring responsiveness to families' religious beliefs. Citing the statutory exemptions from anti-discrimination laws for some teachers and support staff, the DfCSF presents their purpose as 'secur[ing] the faith character of the school' through the religious identities and practices of the staff exercising 'influence' over pupils (2007: 12). The MCB stresses the role of teaching and support staff as 'role models for all children' as well as bridges between schools and parents to advocate the recruitment of Muslim personnel in 'schools with a significant or high numbers of Muslim pupil composition' (2007: 60). Zooming in on acts of collective worship, it states that they should 'only be conducted or led by a person who is of the same faith background as that of the pupils' (45). The non-Muslim teacher and parent interviewed concurs with the significance of religion in terms of teaching practices but nuances the previous statements by differentiating between teachers' knowledge of a faith and their personal adherence to it:

> Respondent: I think that if you are in a school where there is a faith like a church school, you have to clearly follow the line of the faith school. And you don't necessarily have to believe in this, you just follow it. You just teach it. It's difficult.
>
> Interviewer: So that means the teacher would have to identify with the school's policy?
>
> Respondent: Yes. You would have to. If you don't feel comfortable with it, then you don't work at that school.
>
> Interviewer: But then that would mean that all the teachers in, for instance, a Muslim school or a Catholic school would have to be Muslim or Catholic.
>
> Respondent: No. They don't have to believe in that faith. You don't have to believe in that faith but you have to follow it correctly.

According to the MCB, another way of ensuring responsiveness to Muslim families' religious preferences is to involve Muslim teachers and support staff in 'decision-making and management' as well as to appoint (other) Muslim governors on boards. To bring this about, it recommends cultivating positive interactions and building relationships with 'parents, local mosques and community organisations' (2007: 59).

The limit to inter-school diversity identified by most of the stakeholders is that the curriculum, however tailored to families' religious and other aspirations, should remain 'broad and balanced'. This requirement usually denotes the mandatory teaching of 'core' knowledge, attitudes and skills, set out in a national curriculum. While few actors go as far as calling into question the contents of the current national curriculum, they predictably diverge in terms of the emphasis they put on some of them. The Conservative description of an 'academic, knowledge-rich curriculum' developed with the

collaboration of 'Britain's leading cultural and scientific institutions, like the British Museum' reflects an Enlightenment or positivist ideal of time-defying knowledge informed by scientific inquiry (2017: 50–51). The Liberal Democrats and the DfCSF both stress preparation for the workplace, with the former pledging to 'inspire more children and young people to follow technical and scientific careers through partnership with relevant businesses' (2017: 29) and the latter promoting 'work-related learning and enterprise education', including 'work experience opportunities for all Key Stage 4 pupils', to ensure that students will 'understand the part work plays in human fulfilment' (2007: 16). Replacing the ideology of free markets with that of (British) democratic nationalism, Policy Exchange asserts that 'children should be educated about the history, tradition and values of Britain and taught a positive British identity. Respect for Britain's democratic institutions should be fostered. The teaching of narrative British history should be compulsory' (2010: 52). Cantle (2013) steers a middle course and adds a global dimension to children's economic and political environment: 'We need to see the curriculum change put into reverse – by all means teach our history, the national story and pride in Britain, but we desperately need a broad based intercultural education to equip today's children with the skills they will need to work in a globalized and competitive world.' The non-Muslim teacher and parent interviewed concurs: 'I do think you need to understand the culture of the country that you're living in because it helps to understand things. You need to understand about the state religion here, and about the history of this country because it will help you to appreciate things. But I also think you need to understand it in a global setting.' Both teacher participants also stress the importance of instrumental linguistic and mathematical skills. In what may be partly interpreted as an indirect criticism of religious restrictions on arts and sex education, the Liberal Democrats promise to 'protect the availability of arts and creative subjects in the curriculum', to 'remove barriers to pupils studying these subjects' and to address issues surrounding sexual consent, LGBT+ relationships and explicit images (2017: 29). The NUT also insists that 'no child should be exempt from receiving Sex and Relationships Education' but allows that it 'can occur within single-sex classes in order to allow teachers to cater for specific needs' (2008: 10). BMSD reckons that visits to galleries where nudes are on display may pose problems to Muslim parents but that 'ignorance is not an option' and 'these works of European art are part of the heritage of the continent, and also the great Muslim Moghul artistic traditions' (2010: 9). Like the NUT and Liberal Democrats, it endorses gender-separate sex education and encourages normative debates around 'sex before marriage, promiscuity, modern society, family values etc' (2010: 11).

Religious education occupies a special place in curricular debates around the education of Muslims. Somewhat paradoxically, the discourses analysed reveal the existence of a firm consensus around the need for all children to learn about a variety of religious and non-religious 'worldviews', 'beliefs', 'spiritualities' or 'philosophies'. The justifications for this stance partly rely on the social cohesion and value frames (see Sections 4 and 6), but BMSD, Humanists UK and Accord Coalition all add a knowledge-based argument. BMSD expresses this as broadening children's minds and promoting 'lateral thinking', 'philosophical inquiry', 'spiritual reflection' and 'intellectual development' (2010: 10-11). Accord Coalition (n.d.a) sees one aim of religious education as 'recognising beliefs as "lived realities", not simply textbook propositions'. Humanists UK (n.d.e) offers a comprehensive ideal stressing interdependency between religious education and the humanities: 'We want a subject on the curriculum which […] enriches pupils' knowledge of the religious and humanist heritage of humanity and so supports other subjects such as History, English Literature, Art, Music, and Geography'.

The non-Muslim school administrator and teacher interviewed both conceived inclusive or egalitarian religious education as going beyond the classroom strictly speaking, encompassing the celebration of festivals and visits to different places of worship. The school administrator and parent thus praises how the primary school attended by his children strives to 'include all religions' by 'celebrating Eid as much as it celebrates Christmas the same as it celebrates Diwali as much as you celebrate Easter. All the same. No one takes priority over the others and that's just fantastic.' The teacher recalls how religion was managed at a diverse school where she used to work:

> By the time they got to the end of Year 6, they'd gone to a synagogue, they'd gone to the mosque, they'd gone to a church, they'd gone to a temple. So you don't just do the textbook. You have the experience. You have to go to the place, and also there was an equal weighting of certain celebrations that were part of the country. So there was a huge celebration of Christmas, a huge celebration at the end of Ramadan, and there would be a huge celebration – because there was a large Hindu community – for Diwali.

National tests, funding agreements, school inspections and sanctions are put forward as instruments to enforce compliance with the 'core' national curriculum. The Conservative 2017 manifesto includes a pledge to ensure assessments at the end of primary schooling 'draw from a rich knowledge base' but also that every 11 year old will 'know their times tables off by heart'. At secondary level it promises to 'increase accountability' and increase the proportion of students obtaining qualifications to pursue higher academic training (2017: 50–51). The DfCSF recalls that academies are bound by their funding agreements to deliver a 'broad and balanced curriculum' and 'carry out national curriculum assessments' (2007: 9) and the NUT supports the principle that 'all schools must be accountable to the level of state funding received' (2008: 9). Going a step further, the Conservatives promise to 'prohibit councils from creating any new places in schools that have been rated either "inadequate" or "requires improvement" by Ofsted' (2017: 50). The Liberal Democratic 2017 manifesto includes a promise to expand Ofsted's remit by allowing it to 'inspect both local authorities and academy chains' (2017: 28). Humanists UK (n.d.d) campaigns for it to inspect and grade private schools 'equivalently to state schools, and for equivalent action to be taken if they fail to provide a broad and balanced education.' The Accord Coalition (n.d.a) believes that 'religious education, sex education and citizenship education 'should be made accountable under a single inspection regime to ensure the highest possible standards of content and teaching.' BMSD (2010: 12) approvingly points to legislation subjecting parents to fines or imprisonment if they intentionally prevent their children from attending school.

While reaffirming the role of national authorities in education governance, the Liberal Democrats qualify its nature through several proposals aiming to shield school supervision from executive interference and transfer day-to-day enforcement to local authorities. The first objective would be served by the creation of an arm's-length Educational Standards Authorities, 'completely independent of Ministers and accountable through a Parliamentary Select Committee', empowered to oversee Ofsted and 'all national tests' as well as to carry out 'a sampling process across all schools on an annual basis to assess changes in educational standards over time'. The expected result would be to 'help restore public confidence' and 'ensure that debates about education are informed by facts and not prejudice'. Decentralisation would take the form of local authorities assuming primary responsibility for upholding standards and Ofsted concentrating on 'schools and colleges with the

weakest performance', as well as holding local authorities to account for their own work. As a result, 'the central Whitehall department would be dramatically reduced in size', the national education budget would be 'devolved to schools and local authorities' and 'central initiatives would be scrapped' (2009: 22). Procedurally, local authorities would tackle underperforming schools through an iterative process starting with promotional support and advice and progressing with Ofsted inspections and directions for school governors to prepare a recovery plan. As a last resort, they could also remove headteachers and/or governors or require a change in management structure. A final way to curb the powers (and responsibilities) of 'Whitehall' would be to categorise schools as 'public authorities for the purposes of the application of human rights laws', subjecting their actions to judicial review and freedom of information legislation (2009: 26-27).

5.3. Synthesis

The culture frame, while related in some way to all three dimensions of justice, does not seem to fit neatly into any of them. School-imparted knowledge may provide students with a greater understanding of different social groups (recognition), support their incorporation in the labour market (redistribution) and enable their civic participation (representation), but when it comes to defending Muslim students' participation in artistic or physical education, or to advocating their accommodation in the curriculum or other school practices, it is a more subjective, aesthetic or hedonistic conception of culture that comes to the fore. The culture that should be imparted to all (Muslim) students is alternatively conceived as religious/ethnic, national/British and general/global, but there is no mention of local culture except implicitly in discussions on the supervisory role of local authorities in religious education. This is in stark contrast with the predominance of the local scale of justice in the social cohesion frame. Regardless of the dimension and scale of justice through which culture is addressed, all stakeholders identify lack of resources as an impediment to its acquisition. However, the Conservatives suggest that various social actors should assume more unpaid responsibilities for educational governance and the Liberal Democrats propound financial incentives for teachers in disadvantaged schools. Beyond this area of relative consensus, discourses reveal a tension between the desire to make school culture responsive to family aspirations, which calls for the maximisation of parental choice and decentralised governance, and the prevention of disparities in knowledge acquisition, which calls for greater state oversight. This tension often emerges in gendered discourses that alternatively cast Muslim girls as unable to maintain gender-specific religious practices in unresponsive schools and deprived from important cultural experiences in Muslim ones.

6. MUSLIM EDUCATION AND VALUES

The value framing of Muslim education both overlaps with and significantly differs from the social cohesion and culture frames in that it stresses the importance of respect towards and knowledge about the different 'communities' and institutions found in British society, but also a host of other moral principles understood as essential for individual and collective well-being. An indicator of this frame's prominence in recent educational debates is the DfE's publication in 2014 of a guidance document entirely devoted to the promotion of 'fundamental British values' as part of schools' duty to foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. The document opens with a concise statement distilling these values into four principles: 'democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs'. After warning against 'attempts to promote systems that undermine' these values, it goes on to offer a much more extensive list of specific requirements for schools to comply with. These include developing students' 'self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence'; enabling them to 'distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England'; encouraging them to 'accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely; facilitating 'broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England'; furthering 'tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures; encouraging 'respect for other people; and cultivating 'respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England'. The specific knowledge and attitudes acquired as a result of this teaching was described as 'an understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process'; 'an appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety'; 'an understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence'; 'an understanding that the freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law'; 'an acceptance that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour'; and 'an understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination' (2014e: 4–6).

Several aspects of this account of British values deserve highlighting. The first is its somewhat disorderly presentation, as the values listed do not seem to follow any logical progression. The basic list contains a mix of highly abstract precepts (democracy, the rule of law, individual freedom) and much more specific ones (mutual respect and tolerance), but the relationships they maintain with each other and the recommendations that follow remain unexplained. The list is also stipulative in the sense that it is presented as self-evident or self-justifying. No details are given regarding the process that led to its formulation. In addition, the possibility of disagreement on the values themselves or their meaning is only alluded to in passing through an acknowledgement that 'different people may hold different views about what is "right" and "wrong"' and an invitation to introduce materials on the 'strengths, advantages and disadvantages of democracy'. The list of values, as opposed to the actions recommended to promote them, is presented as exhaustive despite its rather succinct character and omission of principles such as equality and justice. It is also context-insensitive, as the values are

assumed to be equally important to all students regardless of the environment or position in which they find themselves. It is highly directive, setting out specific moral convictions that students should acquire over the course of their compulsory education.

Turning to the phrasing of the values themselves, the recurring references to the law as a guide for public morality are especially noteworthy. Obedience to 'civil and criminal' law is portrayed as a moral necessity, and the half-page introduction finds room to specify that 'pupils should be made aware of the difference between the law of the land and religious law.' Courts are positively described as more 'independent' than other institutions and judges are invested with the moral authority to protect citizens' 'wellbeing and safety'. This authority, rather than any underlying principle, is then deployed to justify the 'freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs'.

The other strongly recurring theme is anti-discrimination, and more particularly cultural or religious equality, which adds a 'value' layer to the social cohesion discourse on the education of Muslims. This theme can also be traced in other value-oriented discourses emanating from public institutions. The Government's 2018 green paper states that 'children and young people should be taught about fundamental British values and should have the opportunity within school, further education, and beyond the school gates to mix and form lasting relationships with others from different ethnic, religious or socio-economic groups so they are well equipped for adult life' (2018: 26). In their 2017 manifesto, the Conservatives pledged to 'work with schools to make sure that those with intakes from one predominant racial, cultural or religious background teach their students about pluralistic, British values and help them to get to know people with different ways of life' (2017: 55).

The focus on anti-discrimination as a core component of the British ethos can sometimes be understood as a thinly veiled criticism of religious traditions, as in the following statement in the DfE's document on promoting British values: 'It is not necessary for schools or individuals to 'promote' teachings, beliefs or opinions that conflict with their own, but nor is it acceptable for schools to promote discrimination against people or groups on the basis of their belief, opinion or background' (2014e: 6). On some occasions this criticism becomes more explicit and spurs calls for a 'muscular liberalism', arguably an oxymoron with anti-religious overtones:

> Rather than adopting a passive liberalism that says 'anything goes' for fear of causing offence, school leaders should be promoting a muscular liberalism. That sort of liberalism holds no truck for ideologies that want to close minds or narrow opportunity. Occasionally, that will mean taking uncomfortable decisions or having tough conversations. It means not assuming that the most conservative voices in a particular faith speak for everyone – imagine if people thought the Christian Institute was the sole voice of Anglicanism. And it means schools must not be afraid to call out practices, whatever their justification, that limit young people's experiences and learning in school (Spielman, 2018).

While this quote criticises Anglican fundamentalism, the fact that important values are simultaneously depicted as British and at odds with 'conservative' religious 'ideologies' facilitates the problematisation of religious minorities. Eight years earlier, secularist Muslims had argued: 'The school is there for the betterment of your children, the citizens of tomorrow. It is imperative that they are raised as well informed individuals with open minds not closed beings, isolated without regard to or interaction from

those immediately around them, or the embedded values of this country' (BMSD, 2010: 6). The school administrator interviewed characterises the inculcation of gender equality to Muslim students as a challenge:

> That not one person is superior to another and I'm referring to gender and that women should have the same rights as men and are important to society if not more important to society than men. And for Muhammad from Mogadishu, that's quite a shock. Having been told from [a very early age] that he is the most important thing in the world. It's always a bit of a blow to find out that's not really the case. If you want to live here that's not quite how it works. So we've got to be quite delicate and quite sensitive but it is important that it is very much discussed. It can't be implicit because it needs to be explicit. And you cannot presume they will infer what we are meaning, we have to be quite clear.

Some Muslim representatives have reacted by reaffirming the compatibility of British and Islamic values. The AMS (2016a) thus claims that 'Muslim schools throughout the country promote Fundamental British Values and teach children that extremism and terrorism are antithetical to Islam' and MEND recalls that expressing a 'minority culture' can go hand in hand with observing majority values:

> The integration narratives based on 'British values' and 'national unity' is concerning given the vast number of ethno-religious communities in Britain who share a tendency to observe British values alongside the legitimate expression of minority culture. 'British values' encompasses 'tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs'. It is important that in championing strategies for integration and inclusion, we do not lose sight of the rich diversity of modern Britain (2017: 14).

Even while agreeing with the idea of a tension between Islam and gender equality, the school administrator also displays an uneasiness with the conflation of values and Britishness:

> Respondent: I'm not a big fan of the word British values but I am a fan of what it represents. So I think they got the title wrong.
>
> Interviewer: What would you call them instead of British values?
>
> Respondent: I don't know yet [laughter]. Anything but that.

The stigmatisation of Muslims through anti-discrimination discourses is not the only paradox enclosed in the value-based frame. Despite the frequent problematisation of religious traditions in terms of their discriminatory implications, these very traditions are also mobilised to justify the content or even the existence of values. Drawing on the Bible, Spielman (2018) thus affirms that 'good leaders make sure the focus of their schools is, in the words of Psalm 119, to "teach knowledge and good judgment".' The AMS (2011) claims that its students 'go on to make significant and positive contributions to the Muslim community and the wider society' due to their adhesion to 'the core Islamic principles of morality and compassion'. The Catholic Church advocates a pedagogy where Gospel values are 'explicitly named, their meaning unpacked and pupils helped to understand how they relate to their lives both at school,

at home and in society' (Stock, 2012: 17). Accord Coalition (n.d.a) describes religious beliefs as a key driver of moral values:

> Beliefs and values' are the core convictions, stories and propositions about the nature of life and the human person which motivate and inspire people in their social, cultural, political and economic life. For millions of people, these beliefs and values take specific religious forms. Others develop their life-stance on the basis of an outlook that rejects faith but seeks 'good faith' in all areas of life. An increasing number see themselves as 'spiritual but not religious'.

The perception of values as stemming from religious beliefs entails that, as Policy Exchange puts it, faith schools are frequently praised as having 'a strong ethos that instills discipline and respect for authority, the virtues of hard work and a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to high ideals and to the conception of a higher objective moral order' (2010: 6–7). Spielman (2018) considers that 'in faith schools in particular, [the] focus on the spiritual, moral dimension of young people's education tends to be exemplary.' Accord Coalition (n.d.d) recommends that 'in the case of religious foundation schools, a positive ethos can helpfully be expressed through convictions derived from the belief background of that school, in conscious dialogue with those of other life-stances and beliefs.'

Notwithstanding the DfE's authoritative and purportedly exhaustive enumeration of British values, it is worth highlighting that its vision of the issues does not go uncontested. Additional stakeholders, driven by different priorities and inspired by different authorities, have drawn up their own lists of values, sometimes expanding considerably on the government's four key precepts. Commenting on daily assemblies, Accord Coalition (n.d.b) propounds a series of aesthetically and existentially oriented values that has little to do with the Government's focus on the rule of law: 'Assemblies could explore topics such as happiness, sadness, beauty and the arts; encourage kindness, sharing and creativity; consider life, love, and death; and examine what it means to be human.' The NUT focuses on the different facets of health ('physically healthy, mentally and emotionally healthy, sexually healthy, healthy lifestyles, choose not to take illegal drugs') and safety ('safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation, safe from accidental injury or death, safe from bullying and discrimination, safe from crime and anti-social behaviour in and out of school, having security, stability and care') (2008: 6). Policy Exchange cites the Education Act 2002 to complement the DfE's defence of democracy and freedom with a mention of equality (2010: 52). Drawing on the Gospel, the Catholic Church makes up for some of the DfE's omission of economic issues by promoting 'social justice, peace, love for the poor, solidarity among nations and respect for the integrity of creation' (Stock, 2012: 23). Equality and economic justice also figure prominently in the 'radical' vision of the Muslim activist interviewed, who advocates 'teaching about privilege, teaching about power, teaching about inequality, teaching about critical thinking, about the economic system and how that is not in favour of the working class.' Several stakeholders refer to the basic principle of dignity, inflecting it with particular ideological connotations. In an implicit allusion to abortion and euthanasia debates, the Catholic Church propounds 'respect for the dignity of human life from conception until natural death' (Stock, 2012: 10), whereas the DfCSF stresses the dignity of 'each individual […] of all faiths and none' (2007: 7) and Accord Coalition (n.d.d) stands for 'the dignity and wellbeing of pupils with Special Needs'. More generally, the NUT mobilises the authority of international law to claim that 'all schools should promote human and civil rights […] enshrined in international human rights'

instruments' (2008: 6).

6.1. The problems: religious extremism and Islamophobia

Unsurprisingly given the salience of anti-discrimination, the rule of law and religion in the value framing of Muslim education, the discursive construction of related problems largely revolves around the empirical links between religion and state enforcement of anti-discrimination laws. Two sharply opposed discourses emerge from the sources analysed. The first points to religious extremism as a driver of discrimination and denounces insufficient state oversight of religious, and particularly Muslim, schools. The second also stresses the value of anti-discrimination but it uses it to criticise Islamophobia, reflected and exacerbated by a double standard in the enforcement of equality laws across school types and discrimination grounds. When analysed in parallel, these discourses reveal a surprisingly strong agreement among stakeholders on the value(s) at stake but equally strong discrepancies on the interpretation of social reality. It is also worth noting the extent to which anti-discrimination overshadows most other values deemed important by educational stakeholders, except in some wholesale attacks on Islam that portray it as entirely immoral or uncivilised and thus antithetical to all values.

In the religious extremism discourse, Muslim schools are seen as falling under the control of dubious leaders who pose an indeterminate but definitive threat to the British moral order. According to Policy Exchange, 'the drive for state-funded faith schools is not simply the result of acceptable safeguards […]. Some of the impetus comes from well-organised pressure groups with long-term strategies and clearly-defined goals, not all of them necessarily desirable. Potential problems can exist in all types of faith schools; but particular concerns have arisen in connection with certain Islamist-run institutions' (2010: 7). Spielman (2018) concurs: 'Ofsted inspectors are increasingly brought into contact with those who want to actively pervert the purpose of education. Under the pretext of religious belief, they use education institutions, legal and illegal, to narrow young people's horizons, to isolate and segregate, and in the worst cases to indoctrinate impressionable minds with extremist ideology.' Through the accumulation of strongly connoted verbs such as 'pervert', 'isolate', 'segregate' and 'indoctrinate', Spielman creates a feeling of gravity, urgency and even fear. The same statements clarify the nature of the danger. For Policy Exchange, 'many [Muslim] schools must adapt their curriculum to ensure that [they provide] pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England and help them to acquire an appreciation of and respect for other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony' (2010: 24). Spielman (2018) warns against the undermining of 'equalities law' and illustrates this with the display of books 'encouraging husbands to beat their wives'.

Discriminatory practices in Muslim (and sometimes other religious) schools are mainly portrayed as following the lines of gender, religion/culture, sexual orientation and age/childhood. Policy Exchange identifies a problem with 'schools that promote a divisive and exclusivist ideology, and advocate discrimination on the basis of religion, sect, race, gender or sexual orientation' (2010: 7). It also criticises an independent Muslim school using 'inflammatory language to describe the situation in Palestine' and pupils in a Jewish one deploying 'strong language in describing events in the Middle East' (2010: 24). The school administrator interviewed believes religions 'cannot help but see

themselves as slightly superior to other religions so that for me is an issue for a school that focuses on one religion. You're not creating a space for critical thinking.' Inclusive religious schools are therefore 'a contradiction in terms'. Cantle (2013) describes faith schools as 'part of a system which props up faith leaders and gives them a level of undeserved credence and power'. He goes on to cite multiculturalist philosopher Will Kymlicka:

> The proliferation of separate religious schools is regrettable, particularly when they will be controlled by conservative religious leaders who preach that their group is the chosen people, that people outside the church are evil and damned, that inter-marriage is a sin, etc. These schools may in fact generate precisely the sort of fear of 'otherness' that our conceptions of intercultural citizenship were intended to overcome.

Humanists UK expresses concern that sex education in religious schools 'may be taught in ways that are homophobic, gender discriminatory or that otherwise violate principles of human rights' and purports to have identified a number of Muslim schools unlawfully 'discriminating against staff on the basis of gender' (n.d.a). Relying on the authority of Ofsted inspectors, it characterises the education provided in many unregistered religious schools as 'narrow in its scope, predominantly scriptural in its content, and deeply conservative, intolerant, and extreme in its outlook', as well as supported by 'inappropriate books and other texts including misogynistic, homophobic and anti-Semitic material' which put 'children and young people… at significant risk of harm and indoctrination' (n.d.c). BMSD cites reports of Muslim parent governors campaigning against the distribution of leaflets on forced marriage: 'By giving in to the demands of these governors, the schools serve to deprive youngsters of the information that is necessary and is their right. When to marry, where to marry, and most important whom to marry is the right of every child' (2010: 10). The organisation describes itself as 'deeply concerned' by the news reports on misogynistic books in Islamic schools. In a series of grating statements it condemns 'books and other teaching materials that denigrate women as inferior beings, unequal and subservient to men', that 'promote misogyny, segregation of genders and hatred against the wider society' and 'the perpetuation of misogyny and hatred for liberal values.' Simultaneously acknowledging and perpetuating the paradox of anti-discriminatory Islamophobia, it specifies that such practices 'can erode the hard work that members of [Muslim] communities are involved with to promote their image' in a context of far-right resurgence, 'the negative image of Muslims in the media and growing anti-Muslim sentiment' (2012).

The Trojan Horse controversy marked a high point in the discourse of religious extremism, with Morgan (2014) commenting on a government investigation into the schools concerned in decidedly bellicose terms:

> [Peter Clarke's] report sets out compelling evidence of a determined effort by people with a shared ideology to gain control of the governing bodies of a small number of schools in Birmingham. Teachers have said they fear children are learning to be intolerant of difference and diversity. Instead of enjoying a broadening and enriching experience in school, young people are having their horizons narrowed and are being denied the opportunity to flourish in a modern multicultural Britain. […] There has been no evidence of direct radicalisation or violent extremism. But there is a clear account in the report of people in positions of influence in these schools, with a

> restricted and narrow interpretation of their faith, who have not promoted fundamental British values and who have failed to challenge the extremist views of others. Individuals associated with the Park View Educational Trust in particular have destabilised headteachers, sometimes leading to their resignation or removal. Particularly shocking is the evidence of the social media discussion of the Park View Brotherhood group whose actions 'betray a collective mind-set that can fairly be described as an intolerant Islamist approach which denies the validity of alternative beliefs.'

In this statement, Muslim school leaders are not only portrayed as hostile to British values in general and tolerance in particular but also as forming a cohesive group, united by a 'shared ideology' and a determination to 'gain control' over schools in order to 'destabilise' headteachers and spread their 'restricted and narrow' interpretation of their faith. In other words, they are represented as a formidable enemy. Three years later the UKIP manifesto took the war rhetoric a step further by recalling how 'Islamists had attempted to take over several schools in Birmingham and use them to propagate their warped ideology. The plot nearly succeeded, and hundreds of young minds were at risk.' Having thus succinctly outlined, in terms meant to evoke rather than to describe, the nature of the Islamist 'plot', it concluded with what may be characterised as a call to arms: 'We must never again be caught napping like this: we must wake up to the reality that extremism is taking hold in our country' (2017: 37).

The metaphor of British society being 'caught napping' by Muslim extremists captures a widespread perception that government passivity is to blame for the rise of value-threatening religious schools, though the precise location of the failure is highly contested. Morgan (2014) lays the blame of the Trojan Horse 'scandal' squarely at the door of the Birmingham City Council, which she accuses of being 'a vehicle for promoting some of these problems, with headteachers being eased out through profligate use of compromise agreements rather than supported.' Perhaps anticipating anti-racist criticism of her interpretation of the events, she adds that this was exacerbated 'by a culture of not wanting to address difficult problems where there is a risk of accusations of racism or Islamophobia.' Conversely, Accord Coalition (n.d.f) regards 'the increased marginalisation of local authorities in the provision of education due to the boom in the number of Academies since 2010' as undermining standards in religious education. Similarly, Humanists UK (n.d.a) deplores that religious schools, unlike 'community' ones, do not have to follow the syllabus locally agreed through SACREs. Policy Exchange takes a dimmer view of SACREs, which it suspects of being vulnerable to 'exploitation by any group that can secure nomination: SACREs do not vet their members, nor are they subject to confirmation by anyone else.' As a result, 'it is not realistic to expect that SACREs might perform a serious and useful regulatory role in tackling extremism' (2010: 14).

Several stakeholders problematise the insufficient oversight of 'unregistered' religious schools, some of which are suspected as functioning illegally under the radar of educational authorities. According to Humanists UK (n.d.c), 'such settings serve a variety of different religious communities, including Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities – all of which in some respect tend to be fundamentalist, extreme, or isolationist in their outlook. It is for this reason that these communities see illegal schools as preferable to registered ones, which face inspection and must meet a variety of minimum standards.' Humanists UK decries that Ofsted and local authorities have insufficient powers to 'investigate and close' such schools. The Government's 2018 green paper

directly addresses this issue, linking the 'lack of specific regulation for and coordinated oversight of such settings' to risks of 'emotional or physical abuse, and exposure to views which encourage isolation, intolerance, and a lack of respect for, or even hostility towards, others' (2018: 27).

In its detailed and somewhat prescient review of inspection mechanisms applicable to religious schools, published several years before Trojan Horse, Policy Exchange identifies a number of gaps in national legislation and enforcement procedures. The first of them has to do with the vetting procedures applicable to sponsors of new academies and free schools, which was not 'configured to tackle ideological extremism'. While the excluding criterion of 'presentational risk' may, in theory, be used to bar extremist sponsors, this is hampered by the concept's fuzzy boundaries, the list of examples provided by official guidance (e.g. drugs, alcohol and pornography) and the insufficient expertise of co-sponsors and DfE staff, who respectively 'may not know as much as they ought to of what warning signs to look for amongst potentially problematic sponsors or governors' and have 'specialist staff' with knowledge of 'foreign languages', 'comparative religion' and the 'structures of extremist movements in the UK and beyond' (2010: 15–19). As these last expressions suggest, Policy Exchange largely conceives extremism as a threat from abroad and religious schools as a vector of foreign influences. This construction of the problem is reinforced by its criticism of another excluding criterion, that of links to political parties, 'primarily designed to investigate links between Free School proposers/academy sponsors and the major British political parties.' To smoke out extremists, officials should look beyond UK borders and party politics:

> The company contracted under the existing bidding process is highly unlikely to consider political parties largely outside of the UK (such as the various branches of Jamaat-e-Islami in South East Asia or the BJP of India), or bodies which may not be political parties as defined by the Electoral Commission but are potent ideological and organisational forces nonetheless (for example, Hizb ut-Tahrir which calls itself a 'party', or the Islamic Forum of Europe) (2010: 19).

After a school has been created oversight is nominally ensured by Ofsted, but Policy Exchange claims that its 'framework is not currently designed to facilitate inspection of schools that may have developed links to extremism, or whose teachings oppose the ethos of a democratic British way of life'. This is mainly due to the fact that its regular inspection schedules do not incorporate this criterion, so that investigations on the matter are launched on an ad hoc basis based on media reports and other external allegations. In addition, the government does not compile the reasons for school closures (which may include possible links with extremist organisations), there is no statutory definition of extremism beyond anti-terrorism legislation, and Ofsted inspectors do not receive specific training on extremism. More generally, Policy Exchange blames a 2005 reform in Ofsted operations that reduced inspection times, increased reliance on school self-reporting and shortened the reports themselves, meaning that the 'unfamiliar nuances of theological extremism may be more likely to go undetected' (2010: 21). The 2008 reform creating the Bridge Schools Inspectorate is also criticised by citing a Conservative Lord ('If there is a separate inspectorate for Muslim schools it'll be much easier for extremists to infiltrate them and to radicalise the students'), a Labour MP (local councils find it 'difficult to know what is going on in some faith schools — particularly Muslim schools') and a chief inspector ('we believe it would be difficult for an organisation to form an objective view of the quality of schools inspected if it dealt with only one type of school and therefore lacked a broad perspective') (2010: 26).

The counter-discourse of Islamophobia, mainly articulated by Muslim individuals and representatives, reverses the roles of villain and victim. Rather than a threat to the egalitarian British ethos, Muslims become cast as the primary targets of its racist streaks. Unlike the utilitarian discourse of social cohesion, this one does not conceive intergroup hostility as a reciprocal affair harming society as a whole but as a unidirectional process that consolidates and exacerbates existing inequalities. The MCB defines Islamophobia as 'an extreme and abnormal fear of and/or aversion to Islam in general and Muslims in particular.' This aversion can manifest itself 'both personally and institutionally through forms of marginalisation, discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping.' Citing a teachers' association and an equality body, the MCB argues that Islamophobia may be understood as a form of racism that encompasses 'organisational structures, policies and practices which result in ethnic minorities being treated unfairly and less equally, often without intent or knowledge.' It also refers to reports including education among the spheres where 'the greatest degree of discrimination is likely to be encountered' (2007: 15). The Muslim activist interviewed explains how Islam has been pushed at the bottom of the British religious hierarchy by value discourses that cast it as more oppressive than other faiths:

> I think religion is hierarchised in the UK. I feel like the way that we look at organised religion is very much – it correlates or it's very similar to the understanding of superiority and white supremacy. So I would say there are certain religions like, well, Christianity that are seen very differently and are perceived very differently to Islam. I would say something about Hinduism and Sikhism as well in the sense that Hinduism, Sikhism – at the moment Hindus are seen as the community to model the rest of minority communities on. They're seen as being 'integrated'. They've made it. While the Muslim community, it's not seen that way. We're going back to this kind of idea of the clash of civilisations and the barbaric, very oppressive religious doctrine Islam has, and then the more liberal or progressive, like maybe acceptance of sexualities – people are picking and choosing. And that difference is being negatively constructed in a way that is in favour of certain religions and not others.

As a result young Muslims are feeling 'socially and structurally oppressed […]. It's a difficult place. It's a place where constantly you are questioning your existence, you are questioning your identity, you are questioning your beliefs. Basically, you are questioning your way of life.'

Bullying between students is signalled as a widespread manifestation of Islamophobia in the education context. Drawing on various studies, MEND claims that Muslim children are frequently harassed through denigrating labels such as 'bomber' and 'terrorist' as well as told to 'go back to where [they] came from' (2017: 17). Islamophobic incidents tend to increase with reports of domestic and international terrorism, such as the Paris attacks in 2015. Citing 9/11 (the World Trade Centre attack), 7/7 (the London bombings), Charlie Hebdo and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Muslim activist talks of 'certain watershed moments' that 'have had a huge impact on Muslims and how Muslims are portrayed and treated in the UK'. The Muslim teacher interviewed concurs that bullying can be a significant problem for Muslim students in schools with 'lots of white, rich people' or in 'racist areas where the people don't accept any Muslim or migrants from different countries to live in that area', especially when 'anything happens': 'So a Muslim chap did that. Oh, he's from a Muslim background. This encourages bullying of Muslims in some racist areas.' Teachers sometimes compound the problem by 'giving incomplete ideas or information about the faith'. According to the Muslim activist, this is

particularly likely when they 'blindly' entrench their own race and class privileges in the classroom:

> Respondent: I knew a teacher who was from middle-class white background and was teaching in a school which was 90% Somali. And the conversation that I was having, the way that she was talking about working-class Somali students was really worrying me because she is quite progressive but I think there is a certain blind privilege that doesn't make you understand where students are coming from. So you have some people who are blinded by their privilege and blinded by what they've been entitled to.
>
> Interviewer: Was it more of a race or class privilege?
>
> Respondent: I think it was – you can't singularise that. I think it was both race and class. You know, middle-class background, and the stuff that we were talking about and the way that she would talk about these... She would mimic the way that they would speak in a very derogative way, very much taking the piss out of their working-class accents. And even though her politics were great, she didn't see this as problematic. She did not understand good allyship. She did not understand what it meant to be a white, middle-class woman, and the privilege she brought into that room with people that had come from three years, or four years from a war-torn country. She had no understanding of it. That's just blindness.

MEND and the MCB argue that teacher biases may also manifest themselves more subtly in their choice of teaching materials. The former criticised that 'materials on Islam awareness and on Islamophobia are underdeveloped and underutilised in the education sector' (2017: 18), whereas the latter warns that teachers 'may unwittingly buy Islamic books for the school that are written by non-specialist or unfriendly authors and that may have factual inaccuracies and may even misrepresent Islam' (2007: 54). In this sentence 'misrepresent' appears to take on a dual meaning, simultaneously denoting the failure of 'non-specialist or unfriendly authors' to portray Muslims and to advance their interests (see ETHOS deliverable 5.2 for a discussion on the multiple meanings of representation).

Several accounts suggest that teacher attitudes are partly shaped by the legal and political framework in which they carry out their activities, and particularly by the interaction between their 'safeguarding' duty and the Prevent programme. According to MEND, 'the suspicion placed around Muslim children and students has led to thousands of young Muslims being referred to counter-extremism authorities, including hundreds of primary-school aged children' (2017: 38). Inadequate teacher training has led to 'erroneous interpretations of Muslim practices' and referrals for drawing pictures, wearing T-shirts or campaigning. BMSD (2017b) illustrates how the policy is 'contaminating the social and educational environs' with the story of a teacher who felt obliged to interview a girl after she was reported by a white parent saying she wanted to go and help Syrian people. The Muslim activist recounts the case of a nursery teacher who reported a child to the school's safeguarding officer after mistakenly interpreting one of his drawings as a bomb (it turned out to be a cucumber). In his view, this absurd outcome can only be understood in light of the hysteria generated by the government's vague definition of radicalisation and the incentives created for community policing, which 'has now become embedded in schools'. This respondent adds that Muslim students have become so accustomed to Prevent-related discipline that 'if they misbehave in class then they jokingly

say to their teacher, "Are you going to report me to Prevent?"' Behind the jokes lie real damage: 'I think it's a really toxic and inherently racist policy that has really divided the Muslim community', particularly by generating mistrust toward Muslim activists who accept to collaborate with Prevent programmes. Even more worryingly, Prevent seems to have been used to stifle criticism of British foreign policy within and beyond the classroom:

> I have been on quite a few Prevent trainings and they are very directional in the way they talk about stuff, in the way they frame politics and if you challenge them… For example, I was on a course where our group was asked, 'Where did ISIS come from? And so my answer was, 'ISIS grew out from the incarceration of a hundred-thousand Iraqis in Camp Bucca'. And I was told by the facilitator, 'No. It was from a mosque in Syria.' And I was like, 'No, it wasn't. It was because of the destabilisation of Iraq and Afghanistan and Al Qaida like expanding out – so no, it was truly a mosque in Syria. And this is coming from – I mean, it's worrying how much propaganda is infiltrated through this programme.

BMSD (2017b) echoes this concern through the damning assessment of an NUT representative of Prevent: 'Self-censorship has entered schools. If difficult topics are no longer freely debated in schools, there is a real risk that young people will be pushed towards the internet and dangerous websites.'

Another institutional vector of Islamophobia that frequently surfaces in the discourses of Muslim representatives and their allies is Ofsted's inspection regime. Reacting to the agency's plans to 'downgrade schools if inspectors suspect the face veil has interfered with learning', the AMS (2016b) retorts that 'inspectors should focus on what schools achieve rather than what people wear', thus calling into question the rigour and impartiality of assessment criteria. It also alerts that 'such actions by inspectors could lead to discrimination and hatred, increased Islamophobia and intolerance of other forms of Islamic dress by association.' In a separate statement, the AMS (2017) expresses deep concern about inspectors being encouraged to 'question Muslim girls in primary schools who wear a hijab'. In addition to interfering with young girls' 'right to express their faith', this brings into question 'a practice which is entirely lawful in any other context' and, once again, may stimulate 'further attacks on other forms of religious dress by association'. The MCB (2017) emphasises these points by characterising the questions as 'targeting and quizzing' and drawing attention to the symbolic impact of the measure: 'It sends a clear message to all British women who adopt this that they are second class citizens, that while they are free to wear the headscarf, the establishment would prefer that they do not.' In this statement the characterisation of Muslim pupils as 'British' works hand in hand with the dismissal of Ofsted inspectors as part of the 'establishment' to destabilise white representations of British society and elicit solidarity with its Muslim members. Interestingly, this stance has been espoused by the majority non-Muslim NUT (2018), which expresses fears that the policy could 'lead to further marginalisation of, and increased physical and verbal attacks on, Muslim women and girls'. In 2018, another statement by Spielman supporting the prohibition of the headscarf and Ramadan fasting in a London school was condemned by the AMS (2018c) as hypocritical, formulated without clear evidence base or consultation with Muslim representatives, going against British values and alienating children.

Muslim mistrust toward inspection authorities crystallised during the Trojan Horse controversy, when they were consecutively accused of bias in the interpretation of their own school assessment criteria, passivity towards anti-Muslim discrimination, Islamophobic staffing and

contradictory reporting. The MCB (2014b) pointed out how the rating of some schools had dropped from 'outstanding' to 'requiring special measures, despite achieving improved results and no change in their governance policy.' This 'dramatic' revision was based on the new benchmark of preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, which seemed to be 'arbitrarily and inconsistently applied'. The MCB complained about receiving no reply from Ofsted to its letter asking 'whether all these criteria are being applied to all schools or only those with a large number of Muslim pupils and Muslim run faith schools.' The Council also enquired about Ofsted investigations into schools' actions to 'prevent and tackle discriminatory and derogatory language', and more particularly 'anti-Muslim bigotry given the growing Islamophobia in this country'. The agency's silence was implicitly equated to an admission of guilt in the Council's terse conclusion, underscored with dramatic effect through a one-line paragraph: 'We are yet to have an answer on both questions.' In another press release, whose title evocatively compared the Trojan Horse controversy to a 'witch hunt' and thus to the darkest aspects of medieval Europe, the MCB (n.d.a) described as 'desperately unfortunate' the appointment of a former counter-terrorist chief to head the investigation into Birmingham schools, arguing Muslims would once again be viewed 'through the narrow prism of security and counter-terrorism'. The MCB saw these predictions confirmed in a report finding 'a number of people, associated with each other and in positions of influence in schools and governing bodies, who espouse, endorse or fail to challenge extremist views' and identifying a movement to promote a 'particular hard-line strand of Sunni Islam that raises concerns about their vulnerability to radicalisation in the future.' According to the MCB, these findings were contradicted by other statements stating the investigation had revealed no evidence of 'terrorism, radicalisation or violent extremism', or governance shortcomings in general.

6.2. The solutions: (coercive) anti-extremism and inclusion of Muslims in the curriculum

Among the sources analysed an overwhelming majority of concrete proposals for promoting values in British schools either explicitly fall within the religious extremism discourse or leave unstated the precise location of value conflicts, which arguably invites their interpretation through the dominant frame. This trend is particularly visible when the focus is placed on anti-discrimination, such as in the DfE guidance on the implementation of the Equality Act 2010. In a section devoted to sexual orientation, the document states that 'there is a relationship between protection because of sexual orientation and protection of religious freedom', to the extent that 'many people's views on sexual orientation/sexual activity are themselves grounded in religious belief.' For this reason, 'some schools with a religious character have concerns that they may be prevented from teaching in line with their religious ethos.' Striving to find a balance between the perspectives of conservative believers and sexual minorities, the guidance details:

> Teachers have expressed concerns that they may be subject to legal action if they do not voice positive views on same sex relationships, whether or not this view accords with their faith. There are also concerns that schools with a religious character may teach and act in ways unacceptable to lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils and parents when same sex relationships are discussed because there are no express provisions to prevent this occurring (2014c: 22).

Despite these difficulties, the guidance stresses that 'schools need to make sure that all gay, lesbian or

bi-sexual pupils, or the children of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual parents, are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils.' Among other things, this should be done by 'accurately stat[ing] the facts about marriage of same sex couples under the law of England and Wales', making sure that gay pupils are not barred from taking up roles as prefects and avoiding transmitting beliefs in way that involves 'haranguing, harassing or berating a particular pupil or group of pupils.' The NUT also defends that 'the importance of universal application of equality legislation in all schools, including in faith schools should be emphasised', particularly 'the promotion of equality on the basis of sexual orientation, gender, race and gender identity.' Like the DfE, it alerts to the prevalence of 'faith-based homophobia [and] transphobia', which should be eliminated together with 'institutionalised prejudice towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people' (2008: 6). The Government's 2018 green paper recalls that 'in formulating their policies, schools need to ensure they act within their duties under equalities and human rights law. Pupils have the right to manifest a religion or belief, but not necessarily at all times, in all places or in a particular manner.' Schools should thus balance any request for accommodation against 'the objectives of creating a unified school ethos for the safety of pupils' (2018: 32).

Stakeholders put forward a number of ways to include the promotion of values in the school curriculum. Citizenship education should 'help young people to develop social and moral responsibility and to engage actively in their communities', particularly by incorporating a module on 'identity and diversity: living together in the UK' (DfCSF, 2007: 10). It should 'equip pupils to explore political and social issues critically, to weigh evidence, to debate, and to make reasoned arguments,' teach them about 'democracy, government and how laws are made and upheld' and about 'the diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding' (DfE, 2015: 8). Religious education should provide an 'impartial, fair and balanced teaching about all major worldviews, including nonreligious ones' as well as an 'understanding of the range of beliefs found in a multicultural society and the values shared by most religions and ethical worldviews' (NUT, 2008: 10). Rather than inculcating 'one particular belief system', it should 'develop the analytical tools and human sympathies needed to appreciate and understand different beliefs and values while developing and adhering to one's own life-stance' (Accord Coalition, n.d.a). It should explicitly address Humanism, atheism and 'the historical and social contexts of the emergence and development of religions and worldviews' (Humanists UK, n.d.e). Collective worship should stimulate pupils to explore 'social and moral issues and their own beliefs' (DfCSF, 2007: 10), 'whether it is Islamic, Christian or of any other character' (MCB, 2007: 45). Alternatively, it could take the form of 'inclusive assemblies which further the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils and staff, regardless of their religion or belief' (Accord Coalition, n.d.c). Extra-curricular activities such as mock elections (DfE, 2014e: 6; non-Muslim teacher and parent interviewed) and engagement with religious charities (Stock, 2012: 24; MCB, 2007: 59–60) have also been put forward as ways for students to learn values by putting them into practice.

Various sources insist that all these initiatives should not remain in the realm of good practice but be legally enforced through a stronger inspection regime, alongside social cohesion and knowledge-related standards. In its 2018 green paper, the Government commits to reviewing 'the prominence and the weight attached to fundamental British values', ensuring they are a 'priority' in future inspection arrangements. Even in independent schools, failure to comply with related requirements will be addressed with 'a range of powers […] ranging from requiring the school to

produce an action plan showing how it will meet the standard, to sanctions such as restrictions on school operation, and ultimately de-registration'. To improve proactive compliance, it will also publish guidance clarifying expectations. The green paper states that additional resources have been mobilised to inspect 'suspected illegal schools' operating full-time but not registered as such. As a result, 125 settings were visited by Ofsted between January 2016 and August 2017, 34 of which were found to be operating unlawfully. In addition, the government announces its intention to legislate with a view to registering all full-time schools, whatever the curriculum they provide, and strengthen Ofsted's ability to 'collect evidence and interview those suspected of running illegal schools, to meet the stringent requirements for criminal prosecutions and ensure the schools close' (2018: 33–34). In her speech a month earlier, Spielman had expressed 'regret' regarding the Church of England's resistance to legal changes allowing Ofsted to inspect unregistered schools and ensuring that 'the small minority of settings that promote extremism are not able to evade scrutiny'. In an apparent attempt to dispel the initiative as an attack on religion, she added: 'If we are to protect many of the tenets that the Church holds dear, we need the power to tackle those trying to use education to undermine them'.

Interestingly, the AMS (2011) had previously taken position in favour of Ofsted inspections in 'supplementary' religious schools, in response to a BBC programme documenting physical abuse of children. Yet, Humanists UK and the UKIP 2017 manifesto both target Muslims in their proposals for action against illegal faith schools. The former thus offer madrassas and yeshivas as examples of out-of-school settings or part-time schools operating covertly as full-time illegal schools (n.d.c). The latter introduces with the phrase 'until such time as the Muslim community is better integrated' pledges of 'strong action' (as opposed to 'political correctness') against girls' 'unequal access to music, dance, PE or drama lessons', staff or governor 'anti-Western, anti-Semitic, or anti-equality views' and bullying of 'pupils who challenge or do not share hardline views' (2017: 38).

When these statements were issued the link between Muslim schools and counter-extremism had already been engraved in the public imagination by the Trojan Horse controversy, as can be inferred from Morgan's speech upon complimentarily receiving Peter Clarke's report on the schools concerned. Insisting that the 'system of standards and accountability for all schools should better withstand the threats of extremism of all kinds', the Education Secretary advocated measures such as barring from the profession teachers who undermine British values, such as by 'exposing pupils to extremist speakers'; strengthening inspections on 'how well all schools are actively promoting fundamental British values through their curriculum'; barring 'unsuitable' persons from running independent schools; introducing unannounced inspections in some or all schools; increasing scrutiny of new academy sponsors and governance arrangements; improving the capacity of the Department's counter-extremism division; and working with the Home Office and other agencies 'to improve the intelligence available to us on whether other parts of the country are similarly vulnerable to the threats that have been exposed in Birmingham' (2014). Many of these coercive steps were in turn foreshadowed in 2010 by Policy Exchange, whose fine-grained recommendations included asking the following questions to aspiring school sponsors:

> 'Is the school a separate entity or is it associated with a place of worship (church, synagogue, mosque, temple, gurdwara etc) or with another organisation?
>
> If it is a church, synagogue, mosque, temple, which version of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism does it adhere to? If it is a separate entity, is it run by a charity?

> Find the names behind the school/charity/organisation/church/synagogue/ mosque/temple/gurdwara. Are any of the trustees of the church/synagogue/mosque/temple/gurdwara or charity also foreign diplomats? Are any of the individuals involved in local government? Which groups do the individuals belong to e.g. political/religious groupings? Are the groups connected to foreign organisations?
>
> Is there any evidence of funding by foreign organisations or Governments?
>
> Note the uniform codes for boys and girls. What headdress is required — are boys compelled to wear a yarmulke or a Dastar? Are primary-age girls compelled to wear a hijab? Are secondary-age girls compelled to wear a niqab in school, or to and from school?
>
> How much time is devoted to prayers in school hours? What is the balance between time devoted to Christian/Jewish/Islamic/Hindu/Sikh studies, and to the rest of the curriculum?
>
> Are the names of the Christian/Hebrew/Islamic/Hindu/Sikh texts used by the school and their authors available?
>
> Are music and drama taught at the school?
>
> Does the school mention that secular aspects of the curriculum are being Christianised/Islamised/Judaised? Which subjects?
>
> Is Creationism taught as a scientific theory? (2010: 50).

Taken together, these questions betray a systematic association of extremism with religion (as organised group, culture and individual practice) and foreignness (in the form of international organisations, governments and diplomats).

Government guidance on schools' Prevent-related duties, issued a year after the eruption of the Trojan Horse controversy, pushed anti-extremism a step further. Not only did the legal framework oblige school administrators and teachers to promote British values, refrain from undermining them and stop others from doing so, but it also bound them to detect possible signs of 'radicalisation' among students, with the stated aim of stopping them from 'being drawn into terrorism'. For school administrators, this entailed designating a 'safeguarding lead' to undertake Prevent awareness training (delivered by Home Office-accredited 'facilitators' in local authorities, the police, health and higher education) and 'provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.' Teachers were enjoined to 'be alert to changes in children's behaviour' indicating a 'risk of radicalisation', and 'act proportionately'. Appropriate action may include referral to the government's Channel deradicalisation programme, which is described as 'entirely voluntary at all stages', or seeking advice from the local authority Prevent 'lead', the local police or the Ministry of Education (2015: 5–7). The guidance also encouraged staff to follow an on-line training module on Channel and other counter-terrorist measures.

The guidance specifies that 'even very young children may be vulnerable to radicalisation by others' but that they 'may display different signs or seek to hide their views' (2015: 6), hence evoking

classrooms filled with covert terrorists and conceiving teaching as a form of counter-espionage. This is reinforced by the fact that, beyond support for indeterminate 'extremist' ideas, the document does not pin down any of the 'signs of radicalisation' it ominously alerts against. Since the 'general risks' may 'vary from area to area', it leaves it to local authorities and local police to 'provide contextual information to help schools and childcare providers understand the risks in their areas' (2015: 6). This exemplifies a form of dynamic multi-level governance whereby national authorities deliberately entrench counter-terrorism into local political agendas and school policies. The only nationwide risk identified by the government is that of on-line radicalisation, as 'terrorist organisations such as ISIL seek to radicalise young people through the use of social media and the internet' (2015: 6). To counter this schools should equip their IT systems with 'suitable filtering' (2015: 8).

Contrasting with the coercive nature of the anti-extremism discourse, advocates of measures against Islamophobia mainly confine themselves to soft recommendations on curricular reform and accommodation, defending the greater inclusion of Muslim experiences and perspectives in a range of subjects. The special emphasis they place on this particular religious category, together with the anti-discriminatory justifications for doing so, distinguish their proposals from the closely related ones addressed in Section 5. The MEND manifesto thus calls for the elaboration of 'teaching materials to educate young people on Islamophobia, racism, and antisemitism' (2017: 6) and the MCB claims that developing 'an accurate understanding of Islam and Muslims in Britain' is particularly important 'in a climate of fear and suspicion brought about by negative and inaccurate portrayals of Islam and Muslims' (2007: 42). To foster understanding of 'the substantial Muslim contributions to European and world civilisation', the organisation adds that schools should 'explore opportunities to emphasise common and shared aspects of the Islamic and European civilisations in various fields, such as religion, culture, linguistic and intellectual exchanges' (2007: 11). Libraries should be made 'culturally inclusive' through the purchase of 'relevant and authentic books on the Islamic heritage and civilisation for the school library and for class use. This could be done in consultation with Muslim teachers, Muslim parents and local Islamic centres' (2007: 54).

Both Muslim respondents established a link between the visibility of Muslim identities and practices and their acceptance in the school setting. The activist illustrates this with the example of 'normalising' the celebration of Eid and Ramadan in schools with Muslim students, 'just normalising understanding around that,' 'just normalising how you talk about that.' The teacher pointed to the flags flying around in the atrium of her school, representing all student's countries of origin, as well as the halal food and the two prayer rooms:

> [Students who pray] represent their faith, their culture. Some people don't know about the way we practice our prayers. So if you see me praying in my room, they'll say, 'What is this lady doing?' 'She's praying.' 'Oh, is that the way the Muslims do?' So it helps the others to understand the way of practicing our worship and the Islamic faith or Muslim faith.

The AMS (2016) puts forward a similar argument for allowing religious clothing:

> Having people wearing clothing which is different, such as a niqab, vestments, kasaya, sari, turban or kippah, is something to be celebrated not suppressed. It is a chance to show acceptance and to set an example to our children – that people of all

> backgrounds and religious preferences are welcome anywhere in this country and that they are equal citizens with equal worth, stake and value in Britain. We should use diversity to bring us closer together to work for the common good, not drive us apart.

In terms of binding regulatory standards, the DfE (2014c: 16) and Liberal Democrats (2009: 31) advocate stronger policies against bullying and the Muslim activist supports anti-bias training for teachers:

> When a middle-class, white, politically-centred, young person, wants to make a difference to an inner-state school and goes in, there needs to be some kind of acknowledgement around, 'Okay. You come from this background. This is how class operates. This is how race operates within that class structure. This is how the underclass operates, or other kinds of aspects of religion, race, sexuality and gender, all that kind of stuff operates.' So it's an intersectionality that essentially needs to be taught in training from very get-go.

6.3. Synthesis

Rather than 'relating' in some way to dimensions of justice, the value frame may helpfully be understood as 'embodying' a justice perspective on the aims of education. Its premise is that morality should be actively transmitted to students through a combination of knowledge and practice. Dominant discourses emanating from state institutions depict educational values as British, a choice of scale that is contested by racialised actors on the grounds that it implicitly characterises external influences as moral threats. The British scale also stands in some tension with religions, which are sometimes depicted as informing British values and sometimes as conflicting with them. As one would expect, the values themselves are far from settled. In the context of Muslim education, however, a broad-based consensus emerges on the importance of upholding the principle of non-discrimination (recognition). Strong discrepancies between Muslim and non-Muslim stakeholders arise when it comes to identifying the sources and extent of discrimination against women, sexual minorities, Muslims and other cultural or religious groups. Whereas non-Muslim stakeholders portray Islamic extremism as a problem for several discriminated groups, it is the problematisation of Islam itself that attracts the criticism of Muslims. Again, Muslim women often find themselves cast as victims of misogynistic Muslim schools or Islamophobic state inspectors. While the measures proposed by the critics of religious extremism mostly rely on the coercive state, anti-racist activists advocate more voluntary reforms centred on the inclusion and accommodation of Islam in school curricula and practices.

7. Conclusion

The political discourses analysed in this report suggest that the education of Muslims in the UK is often analysed through the lens of justice, and that divergences in the identification of problems and solutions partly stem from stakeholders' deployment of multiple dimensions and scales of justice. Just as importantly, the discourses also reveal cases where stakeholders agree on normative principles but disagree on social facts and, therefore, on the appropriateness of specific political interventions.

When educational debates focus on the Muslim population, justice is overwhelmingly conceived in terms of recognition. This is particularly evident in the discursive frames of social cohesion (promoting inter-group respect and the fight against prejudice) and values (where anti-discrimination tends to be presented as the core British value). Redistribution and representation play a more significant role in the frame of culture, where student poverty and insufficient school funding are portrayed as important obstacles to the acquisition of knowledge that is necessary to 'succeed' in the labour market and to participate in democratic politics. However, these dimensions are somewhat overshadowed by aesthetic considerations that centre on the subjective desires, wishes or aspirations of Muslim families. These do not seem to be adequately captured by the three dimensions of justice informing the ETHOS project but may helpfully be characterised, following Fraser's recent work (Fraser, 2014: 61–62), as concerns of social reproduction. Despite the significant socio-economic disadvantage experienced by the British Muslim population and the acknowledgment of a link between poverty, area-based admissions and school segregation, few stakeholders explicitly link the problems of Muslim education to issues of class and economic policy.

The scale at which educational justice is sought derives from the perceived scale of social processes generating injustice. Across all discursive frames, this latter scale of reference is blurry and contested. Social cohesion discourses sometimes inadvertently shift from the national to the local, incurring in apparent contradictions where cohesion is sought at the national level but schools are criticised for failing to reflect the diversity of the local community. The dominant value discourse mobilises global principles but characterises them as 'British', prompting racialised Muslims to resist their implicit stigmatisation as immoral others. Scale-related discrepancies are especially salient in the frame of culture, where the aspiration to provide all students with a 'broad and balanced curriculum' nationwide is tempered by the willingness to give Muslim families and communities an education that caters to their specific preferences. These tensions have knock-on effects on the perceived locus of legitimate authority. The Conservative drive to transfer the educational powers of local authorities to national agencies and individual schools is met with claims that the former are better positioned to foster social cohesion, redistribute certain resources and uphold standards. Among advocates of educational markets, parents are invested with the authority to decide on their children's education, but the limits of this authority are brought to the fore in debates on religious accommodation. Despite sporadic references to globalisation, European and global authorities are seldom mentioned in UK educational debates.

Gendered policies and practices frequently constitute a flashpoint of conflict between various dimensions and scales of justice, particularly in the frames of culture and values. In discussions on accommodation, claims of justice as family reproduction (defending parents' right to shape their children's education) simultaneously collide with those of justice as national reproduction (defending Muslim girls' right to a national curriculum) and national recognition (advocating a sexism-free

education). In controversies around Muslim schools, justice as national gender recognition (purportedly upheld by state inspectorates) is perceived as clashing with justice as religious reproduction (embodied by schools' autonomy to set their own curricula and practices) and religious recognition (as freedom from Islamophobic inspectors and politicians). These discursive trends suggest that explicitly acknowledging the centrality of reproductive claims in contemporary debates on justice could shed much light on the treatment of female Muslim students in the UK.

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