



Islamic Education Within the Muslim Minority Context of Europe:



Pedagogy, Politics, and Future Directions

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Lecture

Online Book Launch

UCSIA/Centre Pieter Gillis

-Islamic Religious Education in Europe. A Comparative Study-
(Ed by Leni Franken and Bill Gent)

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In Appreciation
of
my late colleague and friend
Dr Bill Gent's Contributions
to Islamic Education

Outline



□ Contextual challenge:

What is Europe's Islam question ?

□ Conceptual challenge:

How do we define 'Islamic Education' ?

□ Pedagogical challenge :

Why is it important to facilitate contextual/ reflective teaching of Islam-regardless of the educational setting-?

Q&A

Contextual Challenge:



- Europe's Islam question and Islam's Europe question:
- ✓ Challenges of migration, postcolonial community formation
- ✓ Positioning Islam-Muslims within European secular, liberal democratic societies: are they compatible ?
- ✓ Islamophobia, Extremism and Securitization
- ✓ Going beyond 'assimilation *vs* integration' binary within the radical diversity of contemporary Europe:
Living together/peaceful coexistence means 'reciprocity in accommodation/acknowledgement'

British Muslims: socio-economic disadvantage in statistics

- 48% British Muslims live in poverty, more than any other religious group.
- 46% of Muslim population in England lives in the most deprived 10% of local authorities.
- 15% of Muslims own their home, compared with 31% of the population overall;
- 5.1% Muslims live in homeless shelters/temporary accommodation (2.2% overall).
- The proportion of long term unemployed among working-age Muslim men is 10.3% compared with 4.3% for non-Muslims.
- For women, the difference is higher: 38.6% compared with 5.9 per cent, 89 % of Muslims also suffer the greatest levels of disadvantage in the workplace of any minority group in the UK
- There is a relatively high level of Muslim participation in higher education; however, Muslim students are more likely to find themselves on unsatisfying study programmes, experience higher dropout rates, and, most likely (particularly for females) not be able to gain access to post-university job markets.

Does secular-liberal state accommodate Islam in its 'inclusive' plural public space ?

Different interpretations of the secular, liberal and democratic principles:

Three approaches :



- J. Rawls' theory of justice (equal liberty and equality principle) has western moral traditions in mind and does not include *non-European religious/moral traditions*. Hence, his interesting view that a morally plural society cannot reach a consensus on 'public good' in secular democracies.
- Habermas' Communitive Action Theory/post-secular Europe argument is promising but even he requires none-western religious traditions/their self-understandings to be *translated* into the language of intelligibility of the mainstream secular rationality ' !
- A. MacIntyre's monolithic concept of 'tradition-knowing' makes traditions so unique they cannot talk to one another ! Their truth claims clash. He aims to return the clock backward: premodern/Enlightenment Aristotelian virtue ethics as appropriated by the medieval Christianity.
- An alternative view : decolonising the study of religions and RE ?

Conceptual challenge:



- What is Islamic Education ? Is it different from Is. Instruction, Nurture or Is Studies?

Is education different from nurture, socialization, instruction, indoctrination etc.?

‘Muslims in education’ is different from Education in Muslim contexts.

- Religion in secular curriculum: *diverse European models: from strict secularist to denominational and inclusive approaches to RE*
- Religious Education: is it a form of Religious Studies?
- How is Islam taught and represented in state schools, publicly-funded Islamic ethos schools and non-confessional classes of studying.

Two distinct political framings of IE :
whose interest is being served ?



The 'educational good' intended to serve :

- The secular state : securitization/citizenship and politically correct Islam agenda.
- The parents: replicating certain identity narratives of first generations or transnational religious movements...
- ❑ How about the needs and interests of children/young people ?

The Pedagogical Challenge : Questions for Muslim Educators



- How is education understood in Muslim tradition(s) ?
- What kind of educational good is intended by IE?
- Can Islamic nurture be contextual, open, critical, and capable of responding to the changing needs of European Muslim children and young people?
- Is education in Islam a rigid form of cultural transmission, instruction, and indoctrination incapable of generating a theological language of faith and personal development?
- Can Islamic ethos education promote intra-faith diversity and enable interfaith/intercultural understanding while sharing the broader ideals of Western civic and democratic education
- Is there an ideological bias behind invoking hermeneutics?
Should interpenetrative activity be guided by an ethical awareness/clarity?

Islamic Education Studies

Inclusive of Muslim Educators & RE Teachers of Islam



- A research-based reflective and critical IE that will be able to provide young Muslims with an Islamic literacy that integrates reflective thinking and inter-cultural and inter-religious understanding
- IE needs to become an interdisciplinary field of study, embracing empirical research and professional development.
- Achieving this goal largely depends on constructive, collaborative partnerships between Muslim educational institutions and mainstream universities with a view to bridging the pedagogic gap between the cultures of traditional Islamic and Western education
- Facilitating Islam literacy/public understanding of Islam/Muslims.

Developing a long-term community-embedded collaborative Action:

the Warwick Islamic Education project



- Educational/pedagogical challenges facing the Muslim education institutions require collaboration with universities, particular Education Science specialism.
- Positioning ‘Islamic Education’, within ‘Education Studies’, as an interdisciplinary field of empirical inquiry, scholarly study and professional development.
- Muslim learners’ life-world is informed by Islamic and western cultures
- Research-based pedagogical innovation/development.
- Education Studies, at UG/PG level, including diverse educational/pedagogical cultures (some are faith-based) is an effective way addressing its Eurocentric framing of ES and RE.

A Community-University Partnership Model of Developing a Professional Approach to Islamic Education in Europe



- Professional development opportunities for Muslim educators and teachers of Islam
- Developing Muslim teacher education, faith leadership education programmes
- Developing contextual pedagogies, curriculum and learning resources meeting the needs of Muslim children, young people and wider public.

- UK's first PGT level Islamic Education provision integrated into the wider Education Studies programme was developed.
- A special access course, PGA in Islamic Education, was developed to enable admission of the students coming from non- traditional education backgrounds such as *dar aluums*:

See:

<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ces/prospective/postgraduate/taught/islamicpga/>
<https://warwick.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/taught/courses-2021/islamiceducationma>

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