

Institution: Newcastle University		
Unit of Assessment: 14 Geography and Environmental Studies		
Title of case study: Challenging Scottish Exceptionalism on Racism and Islamophobia Across Politics, Education and Journalism		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2007–2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Professor Peter Hopkins Dr Robin Finlay	Professor of Social Geography Postdoctoral Research Associate	July 2007–present Jan 2016 –present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Hopkins' research directly challenges the assumption in Scotland that racism and Islamophobia are only of concern in England. It has confronted this Scottish exceptionalism through changing the political discourse, equipping educators and informing journalistic practice nationwide, with additional reach to the rest of the UK. Direct impacts of this research are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishing the first ever Cross-Political Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia in the Scottish Parliament; this led to the Scottish Parliament's cross-party adoption of a common definition of Islamophobia; 2. Training more than 50,000 educators who are now equipped to tackle anti-Muslim prejudice; 3. Providing guidance for journalists on reporting on Islam and Muslims; this was adopted by the National Union of Journalists (over 38,000 members) and IMPRESS (the independent press monitor), which regulates more than 150 digital and print publications with a combined daily readership over 15,000,000. 		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Research conducted at Newcastle University (NU) since 2007 has directly challenged the widely-held assumption that, in Scotland, racism and Islamophobia are insignificant ('Scottish exceptionalism'). Led by Hopkins, NU's research has explored issues of racism and Islamophobia in relation to young people (aged 12–25) in Scotland from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds (PUB1–4). Early research focused on how Scotland's political, policy and practice settings have avoided addressing racism, which has predominantly been viewed there as an English problem. Hopkins exposed this Scottish exceptionalism by revealing the persistence of Scottish policy-makers' disengagement from racism and Islamophobia (PUB1). This work points to the exclusion of young Muslims in the aftermath of key international events, such as the complex ways in which, after 9/11, political discourse and the media shaped our experiences of racism and Islamophobia. Follow-up research with Sikh men demonstrated - for the first time - how they resist everyday racism, educate others, and manage multicultural interactions to promote a strong sense of Scottishness (GRANT1; PUB2). A key finding is that young Sikh men experience Islamophobia because they are misrecognised as being of Islamic faith. Building upon this work, a project led by Hopkins explored the lived experiences of 382 black and minority ethnic young people (GRANT2) across urban, suburban and rural Scotland (PUB3). It demonstrated that diverse ethnic and religious-minority young people – including Sikhs, Hindus, other South Asian non-religious young people, asylum seekers and refugees and Central and Eastern European migrants – are regularly mistaken for Muslims and, as a result, experience racism and Islamophobia. NU's research was praised for its novel, ethical and respectful engagement with young people, and related work with students from ethnic minorities led to the co-production of a research protocol for schools. A further study by Hopkins and Finlay in 2016 on Muslim youth and political participation found that the effect of Islamophobia was either to politicise young Muslims or silence and marginalise them (PUB4).</p>		

3. References to the research

These outputs have been published following peer review in leading journals in human geography:

PUB1 Hopkins, P. (2007) Global events, national politics, local lives: young Muslim men in Scotland. *Environment and Planning A* 39(5) 1119-1133. doi.org/10.1068/a38129

PUB2 Hopkins, P. (2014) Managing strangerhood: Young Sikh men's strategies. *Environment and Planning A* 46(7) 1572-1585. doi.org/10.1068/a46263

PUB3 Hopkins, P., Botterill, K., Sanghera, G., and Arshad, R. (2017) Encountering misrecognition: Being mistaken for being Muslim. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 107(4) 934-948. doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2016.1270192

PUB4 Finlay, R. and Hopkins, P. (2020) Resistance and marginalisation: Islamophobia and the political participation of young Muslims in Scotland. *Social and Cultural Geography* 21(4) 546-568. doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2019.1573436

PI	Grant	Sponsor	Period	Value to NU
Hopkins	GRANT1: Young Sikh men in Scotland	British Academy	2006–7	GBP7,420
Hopkins	GRANT2: 'Non-Muslim' and Muslim youth: Islamophobia and geopolitics	AHRC	2013–16	GBP313,131

4. Details of the impact

NU's research has directly challenged Scottish exceptionalism on racism and Islamophobia by providing substantial qualitative evidence of serious and widespread issues in Scottish society. While its geographic focus is Scotland, its significance means that the research has had reach beyond Scotland to the rest of the UK. The research has (A) **changed the understanding of politicians** and policymakers; (B) **equipped educators with knowledge** and skills to address Islamophobia; and (C) **enabled journalists to report** on Islam and Muslims in a sensitive and well-informed manner.

A. Changing the political discourse

NU's research has directly contributed to and changed political discourse on racism and Islamophobia by: (i) prompting the establishment in 2017 of the first ever Cross-Party Group (CPG) on Tackling Islamophobia in the Scottish Parliament; (ii) shaping the definition of Islamophobia of the UK All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims; and (iii) influencing two House of Lords inquiries. In more detail:

(i) In 2017, Hopkins' team shared with an experienced elected MSP (Member of the Scottish Parliament) its report about Muslim youth and political participation (culminating in PUB4). This rapidly led to the establishment of Scotland's first ever **CPG on Tackling Islamophobia**. The MSP writes:

Peter [Hopkins] and I have worked together to establish a Cross-Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia; Peter's research has been key to shaping the agenda of this group. (IMP1)

This CPG has the largest membership of any CPG and is one of the most active in the Scottish Parliament. The issue of Islamophobia was raised through **four Parliamentary questions** written by Hopkins and submitted through the MSP's Parliamentary office (IMP1), focusing on Hopkins' team's specific findings on Islamophobia: the importance of its omission from key initiatives on race (PUB1); its gendered nature (PUB3); and its vital role in political participation (PUB4). In 2019/20, through the CPG, Hopkins led the first ever **Public Inquiry on Islamophobia in Scotland**. The inquiry included a survey devised by Hopkins to focus on key issues identified in PUBS1–4. In February 2020, the findings of the Public Inquiry received widespread media coverage in the main Scottish newspapers, BBC Radio Scotland and BBC News Scotland. In 2019, the Public Inquiry was cited at Westminster by the Leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP), in oral evidence to the Home Affairs Committee Islamophobia Inquiry (IMP2).

Hopkins' contribution to changing the political discourse directly influenced the wording of the question on religion (Islam) in the next **Scottish Population Census** (IMP3). He recommended that, to maximise clear demographic information, an option be included to indicate Islamic affiliation in relation to 'denomination or school'. This was agreed by the National Records of Scotland Census team and is now incorporated into the Census form.

(ii) Extending its reach beyond Scotland, Hopkins' submission to the **UK APPG on British Muslims** is cited nine times in its report, *Islamophobia Defined* (IMP4). This makes points about the risks of not adopting a definition and about 'those mistaken for being Muslim' (PUB2; PUB4). It cites Hopkins' recommendation to 'overtly illustrate the nuances and complexities of Islamophobia'. Further influence is shown by a quote: 'Hopkins opposes the idea of the index [proposed to measure the intensity of Islamophobia] because "this runs the risk of particular Islamophobic incidents being regarded as more or less serious than others and potentially therefore more or less worthy of attention"'.

The Leader of the SNP confirmed that the Parliamentary Group of the SNP in Westminster adopted the APPG's definition, like most parties in Westminster (IMP2). To date at least 22 local authorities (covering a population of almost 12,000,000) and over 30 universities across the UK also adopted it. Hopkins' research on Islamophobia was cited on 25 April 2019 in **First Minister's Questions** (IMP2), when the MSP urged the First Minister to endorse the APPG's definition. This intervention led to the First Minister and all political parties in Scotland doing so on 26 April 2019 (IMP2).

Locally, the findings of NU's research directly informed a Local Councillor's motion that **Newcastle City Council** adopt the APPG definition of Islamophobia (IMP5; PUBS1–4). Following a public lecture by Hopkins (29 November 2019, attendance of 400), it was unanimously resolved: to adopt the APPG definition; to express support for the Home Affairs Committee Islamophobia inquiry; and to write to all mosques and Islamic community organisations in the City to inform them of the Council's adoption of the motion. This led to an invitation to Hopkins to serve on the advisory group of **Citizens UK** and to subsequently inform their report on everyday hate in the UK (IMP5).

As a result of his work creating the CPG and informing the APPG definition, Hopkins also worked with TellMAMA (the leading UK service measuring anti-Muslim prejudice and supporting victims of Islamophobia) to set up its first advisory group in Scotland. Hopkins also led on setting up its first advisory group in North East England, subsequently publishing a report co-authored with TellMAMA on Islamophobia in the North East (IMP5). Hopkins was also invited to serve as a key panellist on the ongoing North East England Chamber of Commerce Commission into Ethnicity and Discrimination. **Four Parliamentary questions** written by Hopkins, based on findings from the co-authored report with TellMAMA (IMP5), were addressed by Newcastle North's MP in Westminster.

(iii) NU's research on Islamophobia has impacted on UK political affairs. Findings from GRANT2 **directly informed and are cited in two House of Lords Committee reports** (IMP6):

Citizenship and Civic Engagement Committee report – cites NU's evidence that:

gender and everyday sexism should be considered as a barrier to the participation of British Muslim women in public life... we also observed a growing confidence in young Muslim women, with a number of participants engaging in politics and taking on publicly prominent roles. There are positive signs, then, that young Muslim women are rejecting and challenging gender prejudices and becoming visibly involved in politics and campaigning. (p.29)

The results of the UK Government's response to NU's recommendations on gender and everyday sexism from GRANT2 included: (i) project funding of GBP5,000,000 to increase women's democratic participation; (ii) a new programme to encourage young women from diverse backgrounds to become leaders; and (iii) a National Statement of Expectations on engagement with marginalised communities (IMP6).

Democracy and Digital Technologies report – refers specifically to Hopkins’ finding that abuse and hate speech deter people from participating in public life:

Professor Peter Hopkins ... told us about his research with young Muslims in the UK, which showed that young people engaged with democracy through social media also received racist and Islamophobic abuse. This had the effect of making them feel more marginalised and less inclined to participate. As discussed above the societal harm to democracy is closely linked to the harm these children experience as individuals. (p.39)

The UK Government’s response to this finding indicated that companies are required to have appropriate systems to deal with harmful online content and that the regulator, Ofcom, may take action against those that fail in their duty of care in this respect. It confirmed that the report will inform its response to the Online Harms White Paper Consultation (IMP6).

Equipping educators

NU’s research played a pivotal role in equipping educators to better respond and react to issues relating to racism and Islamophobia by: (i) advising a Scottish Parliament inquiry about prejudice-based bullying; (ii) informing national educational guidance on anti-Muslim prejudice; and (iii) improving anti-racist educational practice. In more detail:

(i) Based on Hopkins’ research, in 2018 the **Education Institute for Scotland (EIS)** published guidance on challenging anti-Muslim prejudice. This EIS guidance directly cites both PUB4 and a briefing paper written by the GRANT2 team in 2014. It notes specifically that *‘Muslim members, and members from BME backgrounds, who are sometimes misrecognised as Muslim, are subject to similar prejudice’*, citing PUB3 (IMP7). The EIS is the largest Scottish teaching union and has a key role as one of Scotland’s most respected voices in education (almost 55,000 teachers and lecturers in Scotland are members, covering 80% of the entire profession).

(ii) NU’s research directly informed the **Scottish Parliament’s Equality and Human Rights Committee** inquiry into school bullying (IMP8). Its final report notes the *‘need for teacher training on prejudice-based bullying and harassment with a focus on the content of that training in order to improve the confidence of teachers’*. In June 2018, findings from NU’s research from GRANT2 were included in oral evidence as part of a review for this inquiry. The 2018–19 annual committee report responded to the issue of racist and Islamophobic bullying by noting the need for *‘preventative and reactive measures against bullying through more support and training... evidence from our draft budget scrutiny showed £4,000,000 has been invested so that schools can collect better data on types of bullying’*.

In March 2017 at the University of Edinburgh, more than **120 teachers and educationalists** across Scotland participated in training on race equality and Scottish school education. All reported that their knowledge of how to recognise and respond to issues of Islamophobia in their classrooms had improved significantly: *‘I’m now more equipped to recognise the problems of misrecognition and act to fix them’* (IMP8). The training included insights about Islamophobia and misrecognition drawn directly from GRANT2/PUB3.

The Depute Head of Shawlands Academy (one of Scotland’s most ethnically diverse secondary schools) states that NU’s research *‘had a direct impact on the management. It didn’t just embolden our anti-racist strategy, it shaped it. It has changed practice, it has informed CPD for staff’*. A research protocol co-produced in 2016–17 by Hopkins and a group of 25 ethnic minority Shawlands students has been used since 2016 by Glasgow City Council to regulate all researchers wishing to access pupils in city schools for participation in research. This protocol is regarded by the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement as an important resource for supporting quality engagement (IMP9).

Motivated both by participating in GRANT2 and by co-producing the research protocol, in 2017 students from Shawlands were inspired to work with ‘Young Scot’ (a national information and citizenship service for young people) on developing young people’s vision for race equality. This made 22 recommendations and contributed 40 ideas for change to promote race equality. When asked about the impact of NU’s research on pupils, the Depute Head exclaimed: *‘Phenomenal!’*

Absolutely phenomenal! I think that the whole process had a profound effect upon those young people' (IMP9).

(iii) Reaching beyond Scotland and utilising NU's research, a specific case study on Islamophobia features in an animated video produced by Hopkins and used since 2018 by **Northumbria Police** as a mandatory component of their training for Hate Crime Champions. To date, those who have participated (IMP9) are from school and colleges (more than 5,200 students and 150 staff), local authorities (150 staff) and voluntary sector groups (125 staff), as well as 200 police officers and 40 front-office staff.

Changing journalistic practice

NU research changed journalistic practice on reporting on Islam and Muslims. In late 2019, Hopkins and Uzma Mir co-authored Scotland's **first set of media guidelines** for reporting on Islam and Muslims. This draws directly on NU research findings on media representation (PUB1), misrecognition (PUB2; PUB3) and political participation (PUB4). The guidelines were adopted by the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) (membership over 38,000). The lead organiser of NUJ's Scotland office noted that the guidelines are '*informed, detailed and take into account the working practices of journalists*' and are thus key to '*developing responsible, informed journalism in this area*'. Although published only recently, the guidelines have already impacted on and changed the practice of key users. The lead news and feature writer at *The Courier* newspaper (daily readership 35,000) noted: '*these guidelines provide a valuable checklist on ensuring that a piece is accurate and avoids inadvertently offending members of Scottish society*' (IMP10).

Demonstrating the extended reach of NU's research, these media guidelines have been officially adopted by IMPRESS (Independent Monitor for the Press), the UK regulator of over 150 digital and print publications that reach more than 15,000,000 readers each month (IMP10).

Working with these key stakeholder groups (politicians, educators and journalists) has not only debunked the notion that Islamophobia is not an issue in Scotland; it has gone much further in addressing the effects of Islamophobia through informing policy and practice both there and across the UK. As the MSP notes (see IMP1):

For too long Islamophobia was seen as an English problem which made it almost impossible to tackle politically and in everyday practice in Scotland. Peter Hopkins' research has been instrumental in providing the evidence needed to challenge this perspective and address the effects of Islamophobia in the country. This has directly led to the formation of the first ever CPG and the subsequent adoption of a common definition of Islamophobia which means we are now equipped to tackle its effects.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- IMP1 Letter of testimony from MSP about the CPG on Tackling Islamophobia.
- IMP2 MP's evidence to Home Affairs Committee's Islamophobia inquiry; and First Minister's endorsement in April 2019 in First Minister's Questions.
- IMP3 Email exchange with team at National Records on Scotland 2021 Census.
- IMP4 Minutes of Newcastle City Council unanimously endorsing motion on Islamophobia; and written questions on Islamophobia that were addressed in Westminster.
- IMP5 Citations in APPG's report on British Muslims, *Islamophobia Defined* (see also IMP2).
- IMP6 House of Lords Select Committee reports on *Citizenship and Civic Engagement* and on *Democracy and Digital Technologies*, with official Government responses.
- IMP7 Education Institute for Scotland's guidance on anti-Muslim prejudice.
- IMP8 Oral evidence for Scottish Parliament Equality and Human Rights Committee inquiry into school bullying; and feedback by educationalists in March 2017 on race equality.
- IMP9 Transcript of interview with Depute Head; and email from Northumbria Police.
- IMP10 Letter of testimony from National Union of Journalists about media guidelines.