
The Islamophobic Experiences Of Muslim Converts In Britain

The article I chose for this assignment is 'The Racialization of Muslim Converts in Britain and Their Experiences of Islamophobia', written by Leon Moosavi in 2014, and published in the 'Critical Sociology' journal. This article is about how Islamophobia negatively affects the lives of the majority of white converts in Britain. Their conversion to Islam can impact their family relationships along with their 'membership' from the dominant white majority. It also demonstrates the crucial connection between Islamophobia and racism. Moreover, the article highlights how even though physical violence is uncommon, Islamophobia can be expressive in a discreet manner. The reason I chose this article is because I am a Muslim, so I feel that I can relate to this article on a personal level due to the fact that I have a clear understanding of what it is like to be Muslim. Although, prior to reading this article, I believed I have not experienced Islamophobia myself, yet now I can recognize that I was a victim of elusive Islamophobia. I am able to comprehend how this hurtful behaviour can negatively impact people's lives, especially Muslims. A few ways I analyzed and evaluated this article is by paying close attention to the use of key words and phrases and observing the references to see if they are reliable. In addition to this, I took notes and searched for definitions of words I did not understand in order to be able to fully grasp what the article is really about. Additionally, some noteworthy concepts of the article include how white converts can lose their 'white privilege' when they convert to Islam because Islam is perceived as a 'non-white' religion, and that Islamophobia can be tough to distinguish because it often manifests in a very subtle approach. Ultimately, the article shines a light on racism against Muslims and white Muslim converts, and I believe that being educated on racism and racialization is important because it has affected history for thousands of years, and by expanding our knowledge, it can improve our self-awareness.

In the article, Moosavi does an outstanding job of getting the audience to have the ability to observe what Islamophobia is like from the perspective of a white convert. The sociological theory used to compose this article is the 'social conflict theory'; an approach that analyzes society as a place where inequality is the cause that generates conflict and social change. Moosavi claims that white converts tend to lose their 'white privilege' as "their conversion to Islam can signal the end of them being racialized as 'white', and rather, they can begin to be considered as 'non-white' (Moosavi, 2013, pg. 43). The significance of this quotation is that it demonstrates how Islam can shape an individual's 'whiteness'. Muslim converts are then referred to as 'Other' even if they were a part of the dominant majority. This notion of white people converting to Islam is considered as a deviant act to majority of the people in Britain. This 're-racialization' can be considered a role strain between ascribed status (white) and one's religious beliefs. It is evident that the social conflict approach is exceptional to use in order to evaluate this matter of racialization faced by converts because it helps us better understand conflicts between dominant and disadvantaged people, in this case, the disadvantaged are the white converts. The social conflict theory addresses social issues and inequalities and does not disregard them. However, this approach believes all of society is dysfunctional, and it ignores how shared values and neutral interdependence unifies society.

This article was highly judicious with illustrating how the conversion of white people to Islam can reveal insights on race, racialization, and racism. Some strengths of this article is that Moosavi

presents concrete examples to be able to fully support his claims and strengthen his points. He interviews a few white converts; which was a good idea, in my opinion, because it does not base his article on just research, but also real life experiences. He provides definitions to key words to help the readers better understand the context given. Additionally, by having a strong vocabulary and giving definitions, the article is easy to follow along, yet also very informative. The article used many well-grounded sources that were dependable, such as BBC News. Moosavi writing contained several great hooks that are able to keep the audience interested and engaged through his flow of sentences and choice of words. Lastly, his utilization of headings was organized and simple to apprehend. Moosavi's article was very educational, nevertheless, there were a few weaknesses to it. Some weaknesses of this article is the repetition of words and phrases, such as 'discreet' and 'whiteness'. Moreover, there is no 'clear' argument for this article and this was difficult for me when analyzing it because I was trying to understand what the main argument was. I do not think this article is meant to have an argument, but rather it educates readers on how Islamophobia is not a myth. Finally, Moosavi is Muslim, so there may be a slight bias to his research.

Moosavi mentions that the reason Islamophobia is considered a 'myth' to some people is due to the fact that Islamophobia "surfaces more frequently on a mundane and discreet level" (Moosavi, 2013, pg. 48). From this, it is evident that the majority of Muslim converts are not fully informed on the subtle racism they may experience every day. He states that there are several layers to Islamophobia, not just physical and violent. Consequently, it is apparent that Islamophobia is a form of racism and racial prejudice because it singles out and discriminates against a category of people that can result in tragic consequences. There is also a clear connection between being racialized and discriminated because the process of racialization can lead to discriminatory comments and behaviour from others. Furthermore, Moosavi proclaims that there are many racist jokes that can be considered as humor, however, if one applies Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic approach, one can see how these jokes are representations of a person's subconscious ideas. All in all, Moosavi believes that white converts do not see the pervasive subtle Islamophobia because they are unable to recognize it due to the lack of knowledge on the subject, and I completely agree because I have experienced such jokes, but I have always brushed them off as good humor, though, now that I look back at those jokes, I realize that those jokes were in fact discreet Islamophobia.

In conclusion, this article by Leon Moosavi was very insightful and informative. He was able to fluently communicate his ideas and research in an orderly fashion that is easy to follow along. His examples and use of interviewees was especially a notable feature because it strengthened his work due to the fact that the information he provides in the article was not just research-based, but also from experiences told by real white converts. His weaknesses, however, were his lack of presenting a 'clear' argument, and that there may be a slight bias to his work because of Moosavi's Muslim background. One idea that the author failed to shine a light on is how Islamophobia affects the lives of those who have been following Islam their entire lives. This contrast between Muslim converts and those who were born into the religion could have further strengthened the article.