Racial-Religious Decoupling in the University: Investigating Religious Students' Perceptions of Institutional Commitment to Diversity

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Muslims face racism based on their racialized religious identities, yet few address their experiences through critical race theory or campus racial climate. This paper addresses how religious students rate institutional commitments to campus diversity when considering racial and religious respect. This study examines undergraduate experience surveys across nine campuses and a Muslim student photovoice project through a mixed-methods design. I argue that racial and religious respect derived from interpersonal, discursive, and material sources influence Muslim students' perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity. I introduce racial-religious decoupling to refer to how the separation of race and religion as distinct social experiences hinders campus commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion for addressing anti-Muslim racism and intersections of race and religion. This study uses critical race theory to demonstrate how hegemonic Whiteness embedded in higher education includes Christian normativity, which racializes non-Christians as outsiders who have to justify their needs and resources for their communities.

Keywords: *campus diversity climates, racialized religion, racialized organizations, anti-Muslim racism, critical race theory*

In 2016, the local Bay Area news reported a hate crime against a Muslim student on a University of California (UC) campus who was threatened with having her hijab ripped off (Woodrow, 2016). For many years, hate crimes against Muslims have sparked a debate about whether religious discrimination and Islamophobia can be termed racist (Cainkar & Selod, 2018). *Islamophobia* commonly refers to hostility and unfair discrimination against Muslims and Muslim communities (Elahi & Khan, 2017). After the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, many scholars demonstrated how Islamophobia intertwines with racism beyond religious discrimination (Cainkar & Selod, 2018; Elahi & Khan, 2017; Love, 2017). Increasingly, scholars have adopted "anti-Muslim racism" as the term to describe how Islam is embedded with racial meaning, even prior to 9/11, as a result of ongoing imperial and colonial interventions in South, West Asia, and North Africa (i.e., the "Middle East") (Goldberg, 2006; Husain, 2017; Rana, 2007; Said, 1979). As racial hate crimes against Muslims increase across the United States and the globe, they also increase in higher educational settings (Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2017; Nadal et al., 2012). Muslims face racism based on their racialized religious identities (Nojan, 2022), yet few researchers have addressed these students' experiences through campus racial climates or both campus racial and religious climates (Nojan, 2019).

Campus climate remains an essential indicator of higher education success for students from different backgrounds, especially those historically underserved at predominantly White institutions (Clay, 2019; Hurtado et al., 2012). Every few years, higher education institutions invest in surveying opinions, beliefs, and experiences of students, staff, and faculty to assess campuses' academic, curricular, and diversity climates (Iverson, 2007). By analyzing campus racial climates, critical race theorists have especially been instrumental in examining how higher education institutions produce unequal outcomes for students of color. Building on these campus climate studies, religious scholars find that, in some cases, minoritized religious and nonreligious students also experience lower satisfaction on campus because of "Christian privilege" (Bowman & Smedley, 2013, p.746). However, among these studies of campus religious climates, few examine how religious students rate campus racial climates. In other words, scholars perceive race and religion to be different climates for analysis. The decoupling of racial and religious climates hinders understanding of how racialized religious groups, such as Muslims, and racial minorities in dominant religious groups, such as Black Christians (Allen, 2019), experience campus diversity climates (Wilde, 2018). This paper addresses this gap by answering the overarching research question, how are campus racial and religious climates related to religious students' perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity?

Using a mixed-methods convergence triangulation design (Creswell & Plano, 2006) and guided by critical race theory

(CRT; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), this study addressed how Muslim students rated and described campus religious and racial climates in relation to an institutional commitment to diversity. I used CRT to critically analyze the quantitative data while uplifting marginalized Muslim student voices and perspectives via qualitative photovoice data. I conducted a secondary analysis of undergraduate experience surveys ($N = 63,115$) collected in 2016 across nine UC campuses. I also analyzed a participatory-action photovoice project that I facilitated with Muslim students at one of these UC campuses. I integrated and interpreted the results comparatively in the writing of this paper to elaborate on the findings and address the limitations of any particular method by itself.

Drawing on both data sets, I argue racial and religious respect derived from interpersonal, discursive, and material sources influence Muslim students' perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity on UC campuses. I introduce *racial-religious decoupling* to refer to how the separation of race and religion as distinct social experiences hinders commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion for addressing anti-Muslim racism and intersections of race and religion. Racial-religious decoupling is an extension of *racialized decoupling*, a mechanism by which "racialized organizations separate espoused commitments of diversity, equity, and inclusion with formal practices and policies in ways that maintain racial hierarchies while appearing to be neutral" (Ray, 2019, p. 42). Perceiving Muslims as solely a religious group perpetuates anti-Muslim racism and enables the campus to claim separation of church and state, preventing them from providing resources for racialized religious groups. This paper focuses on extending studies of campus religious climates by integrating CRT to account for how hegemonic Whiteness is also embedded with Christian normativity, which homogenizes non-Christians and positions them as outsiders who have to justify needs and resources for their communities. Racialized-religious decoupling demonstrates universities' need to consider allocating intersectional resources and spaces for racialized religious student groups instead of silos. In the following section, I review campus religious climate literature and identify the importance of campus racial climates in assessing Muslim student experiences.

Background: Campus Religious Climates

Studies of campus religious climate focus on examining how different faiths perceive campus religious or spiritual climates to better understand the relationship between religiosity and well-being, civic engagement, and college satisfaction (Mayhew & Bryant, 2013; Rennick et al., 2013). In a longitudinal study of over 134 colleges, scholars found inclusive religious climates are positively related to participation in study abroad, service learning, engaged learning pedagogies, and interracial interactions (Bowman et al.,

2015). However, not all faith groups benefit from positive campus religious climates. Historically, higher education institutions have privileged Christian values and norms (Bowman & Smedley, 2013). Bowman and Smedley (2013) argued that Christian privilege shapes how minority religions experience the campus climate, even among secular institutions.

Studies that found negative perceptions of campus religious climates showed differences among faiths, noting lower satisfaction among minority students, such as Muslims and Jews, than among Protestants and Catholics (Mayhew et al., 2014). In another study, Cole and Ahmadi (2010) found Muslims perform academically similarly to other religious groups, such as Christians and Jews, yet they are less satisfied with their educational experiences than these groups (Nadal et al., 2012; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006). Prior studies suggested the burden of representation Muslims feel due to continually managing impressions with their professors and peers may cause these students' dissatisfaction (Ali, 2014; Nadal et al., 2012; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Sirin & Fine, 2008). Muslim students also reported experiencing blatant racism through stereotypes that associate Muslims with being foreign, terrorists, oppressed, and backward (Ali, 2014). Being perceived in this way creates anxiety for students and has implications for student success (Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006). Their dissatisfaction on campus may also result from structural conditions that sustain and perpetuate White and Christian normativity (Bowman & Smedley, 2013). Yet, few studies have focused on examining how Muslim students rate both campus racial and religious climates compared to their peers. Drawing on a CRT perspective, in this paper, I examine how campus racial climates may account for some of Muslim students' lower satisfaction rates.

CRT and Countering Racial-Religious Decoupling

According to CRT, racism pervades higher education institutions to create unequal outcomes based on racial status. With *race*—defined as a fluid, flexible social construct—racism can be overt, subtle, and covert; it can take the form of microaggressions or institutional norms and policies; and can intersect with other social markers (Bonilla-Silva, 2007; Collins, 2002; Crenshaw, 1990; Omi & Winant, 2014; Ray, 2019). The central tenets of CRT include (a) counter-storytelling from staff, faculty, and students; (b) the permanence of racism (idea that racism spans multiple sectors in society); (c) Whiteness as property (the historical and ongoing legacy of privileging White values and wealth); (d) interest convergence (the notion that diversity initiatives continue to privilege dominant groups; and (e) critique of liberalism (challenging the notion institutions are neutral, colorblind and meritocratic) (Bell, 1992; Bonilla-Silva, 2007; DeCuir, & Dixson, 2004;

Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; McCoy, & Rodricks, 2015; Solórzano et al., 2000).

Although public universities espouse commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion based on various identities such as race, gender, class, religion, and sexuality, they often fall short when implementing these commitments (Ahmed, 2017; Cabrera, 2020; Iverson, 2007; Mitchell, 2018; Nojan, 2020; Walcott, 2018). CRT proponents seek to deconstruct and transform higher education's structural and cultural aspects that uphold the marginal position and subordination of students of color produced by institutional shortcomings (Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998). Scholars apply CRT in higher education to deconstruct (a) colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2007), (b) selective admissions policies, and (c) campus racial climates (Harris & Patton, 2019; Ledesma & Calderón, 2015).

Campus racial climates significantly mediate student belonging, graduation, and retention, especially for historically marginalized students (Hurtado et al., 2012; Johnson-Ahorlu, 2012; Sáenz et al., 2016). *Campus racial climate* or *campus climate for diversity* is how "students, faculty, and administrators perceive the institutional climate for racial/ethnic diversity, their experiences with campus diversity, and their attitudes and interactions with different racial/ethnic groups" (Hurtado et al., 1998, p. 281). Harper and Hurtado (2007) found White and Asian students were more likely than Black, Latinx, and Native American students to express feelings of social satisfaction compared to peers (Marcelo et al., 2007). Black students reported the lowest satisfaction levels with campus climate across multiple studies (Ancis et al., 2000; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Solórzano et al., 2000). Yet, campus racial climate studies rarely assess how students of color's religious backgrounds may shape their campus experiences.

To address the gaps in the campus racial and religious climate literature, this study focused on building on campus climate scholarship in two ways: first, I extended CRT to the study of religious students through the tenet of intersectionality to reveal how racial power structures also produce religious inequalities. *Intersectionality*, a Black feminist theory, situates the gendered, raced, and classed experiences of Black women on the matrix of domination to call out systemic discrimination and facilitate social change (Collins, 2002; Combahee River Collective, 1983; Crenshaw, 1990). Engaging with intersectionality through CRT (Harris & Patton, 2019) enables an analysis of how the permanence of race, another CRT tenet, has become invisible to studies of campus religious climate. It also facilitates analysis of the experiences of Muslims who experience compound inequalities as a racialized religious group targeted by individual and systemic levels of discrimination. Methodologically, I used counter-storytelling, a critical race method, through photovoice to uplift the narratives of Muslims and demonstrate their critiques of liberalism by testing religious climates in supposed secular institutions. I identify a new concept, racial-religious decoupling, to illuminate how the discursive and material separation of race and religion contributes to the perpetuation of unfavorable campus climates for Muslim students.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine religious students' experiences with campus diversity climates through a CRT framework. Seeking to center marginalized voices and perspectives, I asked:

Research Question 1: How are campus religious climates (e.g., religious respect) related to religious students' perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity? **1a:** How do Muslim students describe religious climates in relation to an institutional commitment to diversity?

Research Question 2: How are campus racial climates (e.g., racial respect) related to religious students' perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity? **2a:** How do Muslim students describe racial climates in relation to an institutional commitment to diversity?

Answering these research questions contributes to understanding how race shapes religious students' on-campus experiences and how institutions can start addressing emerging disparities. Based on prior studies (Cole & Ahmadi, 2010; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006), I predicted Muslim students would rate campus racial and religious climates lower than other religious students, and both race and religion would play a role in shaping perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity because of racialized religious identities (Nojan, 2022).

I used a mixed-methods convergence design (see Figure 1), in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed separately and then triangulated by comparing and contrasting results in the interpretation to provide cross-validated information about a single phenomenon (Creswell & Plano, 2006). I answered the two primary research questions using secondary analysis of the 2016 UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES; $N = 63,115$). I answered each subquestion with qualitative data that included a 2018 participatory-action research (PAR) photovoice project I conducted at one UC campus where Muslim students' religious needs were overlooked (Nojan, 2020; Turk, Senzaki, Howard, & Rowther, 2012). In the findings and discussion, I integrate both analyses and use the qualitative data to explain and elaborate on the quantitative findings section. Both quantitative and qualitative data came from UC students; however, only the UC quantitative data can be generalized across campus contexts.
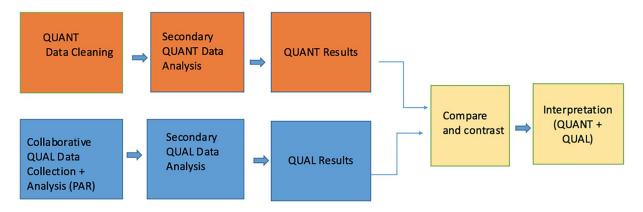
FIGURE 1   *A Mixed-Methods Convergence Design*
Note. Adapted from "Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research," by J. W. Creswell and C. V. L. Plano, 2006, p. 63.

Researcher Positionality

As an ethnic minority in the Muslim and the academic community, a sociologist, and a critical pedagogist, I center epistemologies that democratize the process of knowledge production and include as many diverse voices as possible. PAR provides one pathway to center community experiences and voices as legitimate knowledge sources while questioning "objective" outsider research methods that value separation from the researcher and the "objects" of study. I am vigilant about misrepresentation, co-option, and complicity with the colonizer that emerge from living in the borderlands—in between multiple worlds of academia and community and quantitative and participatory methods (Anzaldúa, 2007; Pillow, 2003; Torre & Ayala, 2009; Villenas, 1996). I acknowledged resource differentials between community members and university affiliates and thus engaged in acts of reciprocity (Guishard, 2008), like giving students rides, course credit, letters of recommendation, and community service hours. I sought permission from participants to use the collaboratively derived photovoice data for this paper. In the following sections, I review the quantitative analysis, then the qualitative analysis, before integrating the results.

Quantitative Data and Analysis

Quantitative data for this study comprises secondary analysis of the 2016 UCUES ($N = 63,115$), which was employed online through a modular design that contained questions related to academic program review, demographics, campus climate, use of time, general satisfaction, student life and development, academic engagement, and civic engagement. The 2016 UCUES focused on surveying over 190,000 undergraduates at UC's nine undergraduate campuses. The 2016 database contains 63,115 final respondents, contributing to an overall response rate of 33%, based on a total of 191,095 undergraduates invited to participate in the survey (Institutional Research Assessment and Policy, 2018). This study focused on

a sample size of 39,244—62% of total respondents who completed the survey questions related to crucial study variables.[1] The subsample of respondents generally reflected gender, ethnicity, applicant status, and student level of all UC students (Institutional Research Assessment and Policy, 2018).[2]

Table 1 shows the total survey sample. The first column presents descriptive statistics for the entire sample. The right columns present information about the religious student subsample and Muslims, disaggregated by demographics. Most students identified as nonreligious (43%), followed by Christian (33%) and spiritual/other religions (13%). Muslim students made up 2% ($n = 1,065$) of the sample. Among Muslim students, most identified as White/Middle Eastern North African (44%) and South Asian (29%), followed by a minority of Southeast Asian (13%), Black/African (8%), and "Other non-White" races (7%).

Survey Measures. This study utilized the factor *"*institutional commitment to campus diversity climate*"* as its dependent variable. Religion, racial respect, religious respect, and race and ethnicity were key independent variables in the survey analysis.

Institutional Commitment to Campus Diversity Climate. Prior studies highlighted institutional commitment as a vital dimension of enacting campus climate overall (Harper, 2012; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Iverson, 2007). Given the CRT framework of this study, it was also important to assess students' perceptions of institutional commitments, as opposed to institutional-espoused commitments, to assess for discrepancies in enacted diversity policies and general campus liberalism. I utilized a composite factor to assess students' perceptions of meso-level commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion ($\alpha = .800$). The factor consisted of four indicators: (a) this campus values diversity; (b) channels for expressing discrimination or harassment complaints are readily available to students at UC [Campus]; (c) top campus administrators are genuinely committed to promoting respect for and understanding of group differences at UC [Campus],

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TABLE 1
Descriptive Statistics for All 2016 UC Students and Religious Students

Characteristic	Full Sample %	Religious Students %	Muslims %
Religious affiliation			
Muslim	2		
Christian	33		
Jewish	2		
Hindu	2		
Buddhist/Taoist	5		
Sikh	1		
Spiritual/other religion	13		
Nonreligious	43		
Demographics			
Race			
White/Middle Eastern	25	22	44
Black/African American	4	5	8
South Asian	5	5	29
Southeast Asian	8	9	13
Latinx	25	30	2
East Asian	5	20	1
Filipino/Pacific	5	6	1
Native American/Alaskan	1	3	0
Other race	3	3	3
Socioeconomic status			
Low-income background	17	19	18
First-generation college student	44	47	36
Gender			
Women	60	65	62
Nonbinary	2		
Immigrant background (1.5 or second generation)	46	55	82
Controls			
International student	9		
Lives off campus	56		
Transfer student	20		
Major			
Arts/humanities	15		
Social sciences	32		
STEM	45		
Undeclared	8		
Class level			
1st year	9		
2nd year	20		
3rd year	26		
4th year	44		
5th year+	0		

Note. Source: UCUES 2016. $N = 63,115$ ($n = 30,535$ for religious students and $n = 1,065$ for Muslim students).

and (d) faculty are genuinely committed to promoting respect for and understanding of group differences at UC [Campus].

Religion. I coded 27 religions into the following seven distinct categories: Muslim, spiritual/other religion, Buddhist/Taoist, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, and all Christians. Students who reported no religious preference, "not particularly spiritual or religious," agnostic, or atheist were included in a nonreligious category.

Racial Respect. Campus racial climate in this study was based on students' responses to the statement, "Students of my race and ethnic background are respected on this campus." Responses ranged on a 6-point scale of *strongly*

disagree to *strongly agree*. Prior studies have used these questions as proxies for understanding racial, ethnic, and religious prejudice on campus and have found students of color's perceptions of respect for their race and ethnicity on campus are lower than White students (Cabrera, 2020; Harper & Hurtado, 2007).

Religious Respect. Campus religious climate studies have suggested that Muslim students and other minority religious groups rate campus climate lower than dominant Christian groups (Mayhew et al., 2014). As a result, I expected Muslim students might rate feelings of respect for religion and race/ethnicity lower than other religious groups, as prior studies have found (Cole & Ahmadi, 2010). Students responded on a 6-point scale of *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* to the statement: "Students of my religious preference are respected on this campus."

Race and Ethnicity. Though race is a social construct and can be both an outcome and an independent variable, in the ways that multiple characteristics such as culture, language, nationality, and phenotype can start to connote race (Omi & Winant, 2014), in this particular data set, race referred to ways students ethnically and racially self-identified. Based on the available UC data, I created seven racial categories: Native American/Alaskan; African/Black/Caribbean; Latinx (Mexican American, Latino/Other Spanish American); East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean); Filipino/Pacific Islander (I included Pacific Islanders in this group because there were minimal respondents); South Asian (East Indian/Pakistani); Southeast Asian (Vietnamese, Indonesian, Malaysian, Cambodian, Thai/Other Asian); other races (some students marked other and filled in the blank with another race); White (European and Middle Eastern North African). Unfortunately, the White racial designation included people from European, Middle Eastern, West Asian, and North African backgrounds despite their different social experiences of racialization, and it could not be disaggregated with the data available. The UC application automatically sorted multiracial students into racial groups with the lowest number of students.

Analytical Techniques. I used bivariate analysis to understand the relationship between the key independent variables: religion, race, racial, and religious respect. I then entered the key independent variables into three regression models. The first is a baseline with demographic measures and the dependent variable, students' perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity. In the second and third models, I tested the relationship between campus racial and religious climate and the dependent variable. Because respect for race and religion were both significantly correlated (.51), I added each one separately to regression models

to avoid multicollinearity errors. I present robust standard error and significance results in models 1–3. Finally, I conducted a mediation analysis to confirm the explanatory relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Qualitative Data and Analysis

The qualitative data for this study came from a purposeful sample of a year-long PAR photovoice project conducted at one UC campus in the quantitative data set. Photovoice is a method based on grassroots social action that addresses a social problem through the power of photographs and written narratives to communicate lasting stories (Wang & Burris, 1997). Unlike quantitative methods, photovoice does not seek legitimacy from generalizing but on affecting social change (Agarwal et al., 2015; Clay, 2019; Langhout & Fernandez, 2014; Nojan, 2020). The photovoice research project was conducted at one specific UC campus because of the need to develop an actionable strategy for change to address the gap between the institution's promises and actions with regard to supporting Muslim students in the anti-Muslim aftermath of the 45th US president's Muslim ban (Ahmed, 2017; Nojan, 2020; Turk et al., 2012). This campus lacked any culturally relevant centers, staff, and meditation spaces to support Muslim students' basic religious needs (Nojan, 2020).

Data Collection. In line with the principles of CRT, the PAR photovoice project aimed to document the strengths and concerns of the community, move away from deficit-oriented methods and frameworks, and produce research addressing institutional shortcomings (Nojan, 2020). I worked for a student success equity research center during the study and was well integrated into the campus Muslim community. I reached out to the Muslim community due to the institutional shortcomings amid a heightened climate of anti-Muslim racism during Donald Trump's election and inauguration to see if students were interested in collaborating on a project. The project idea and photovoice methodology emerged from a preliminary reading group of four undergraduate students and myself examining campus climate for Muslim students. We came up with preliminary research questions during the reading group and explored participatory methodologies. After the chancellor's office funded our photovoice project proposal, we began recruiting students through a purposeful design that centered underrepresented Muslim students across student organizations that campus administrators often overlooked.[3] The seven PAR photovoice participants represented different racial-, ethnic-, and gender-marginalized backgrounds that identified religiously or culturally as Muslim yet may have been marginal to the broader Muslim student association community.[4] Table 2 shows the participants and their demographic information. All names in this paper are

TABLE 2

Demographic Characteristics of Photovoice Study Participants

Name[a]	Standing	Division	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Hijab
Gizem	3rd year	Social sciences	Nonbinary	Latinx	Part time
Wasma	3rd year	Social sciences	Woman	Mixed race (South Asian/White)	Most of the time
Mina	2nd year	Humanities	Woman	Afghan	All the time
Afifa	2nd year	Social sciences	Woman	Palestinian	None
Negine	2nd year	Humanities	Woman	Iranian	None
Saliha	4th year	STEM	Woman	Sudanese Black	Former (all the time)
Yasmine	Graduate	Social sciences	Woman	Mixed race (Filipinx/Indian)	None
Facilitator	Graduate	Social sciences	Woman	Afghan	None

[a]All names are pseudonyms; demographics were recorded at the time of the study.

pseudonyms. All seven students participated in the PAR project by submitting photos ($n = 110$) with narratives ($n = 55$) and participating in weekly focus group discussions to analyze them collectively.[5]

Analytical Techniques. I conducted a secondary analysis of the photovoice narratives ($n = 55$) to answer the research questions and triangulate with the quantitative data. I coded data through a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) with NVivo 12 software. Therefore, I limited open coding to the context of the dependent variable, perceptions of institutional commitment to campus diversity climates. Some repeating codes after the first round included "access to basic needs (halal food, safety)," "access to space (religious and cultural)," "Ramadan resources," "curriculum and staff representation," "instances of overt racism," "cultural racism," "hyper(in)visibility," "intersectionality," and "anti-Blackness." In the second round of analysis, I went through the data and took analytical notes or memos related to the tenants of CRT (e.g., intersectionality, critique of liberalism, the permanence of racism, and counter-storytelling). From these analytical memos and codes, I began to identify how data supported CRT and how the narratives of Muslims complicated or departed from it (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

I refined the themes by considering them in relation to the research questions. It was clear from the narratives that religious respect was not the only means by which Muslim students sought institutional commitments. Their experiences pointed to how their religion was also tied to race and racism. Thus, I organize the findings by describing and defining how Muslim students discussed religious respect, followed by racial respect.

Findings

This study found that non-White Muslims rated institutional commitment to diversity significantly lower than White Christian students. When accounting for a positive campus racial and religious climate separately, in both cases, being Muslim no longer predicted a significantly lower rating of institutional commitment to diversity. Further mediation analysis revealed racial and religious respect significantly explained Muslim perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity compared to Christian students. Qualitative findings confirmed this result, showing Muslim students perceived both racial and religious climates as essential to their perceptions of institutional commitments to diversity.

Part 1: Examining Campus Religious Climate

This section focuses on using quantitative and qualitative data to answer the first research question and its subquestion describing Muslim students' perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity as it relates to campus religious climate. Results indicated that Muslim and Jewish students rated institutional commitment to diversity lower than Christian students in a baseline model among religious groups. When analyzing how campus religious climates shaped religious students' perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity, I found a positive religious climate explained a positive perception of institutional commitment to diversity. However, accounting for campus religious climate in the model did not equate to a significantly positive evaluation from Muslim students in the regression. I then drew on qualitative data to explain why Muslim students did not positively rate campus religious climates and institutional commitment to diversity, which I discuss after the survey analysis results.

Survey Results. The following section describes analytical strategies utilized on the survey data to understand the relationship between religious respect and religious students' perceptions of institutional commitment to campus diversity climates.

Descriptive Statistics. I first conducted bivariate analyses to understand the relationships among key variables. The
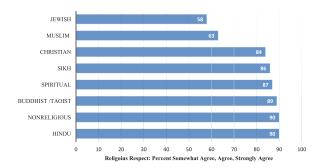
FIGURE 2 *Proportion of Religious Students Who Agreed With the Statement: "Students of My Religious Beliefs Are Respected on Campus"*

dependent variable institutional climate was positively correlated with respect for religion (.330, $p < .0001$). Respect for race and respect for religion were also positively correlated (.517). Among religious groups, Muslim students rated religious campus climate significantly lower than most of their religious peers. Sixty-three percent of Muslim students agreed, strongly agreed, or somewhat agreed that "students with my religious beliefs are respected on campus," compared to 84% of Christian students, 87% of spiritual students, and 90% of nonreligious students (see Figure 2).[6] Only Jewish students rated religious campus climate lower than Muslims (58% agreement).

Regression Analysis. Religious respect was significantly and positively related to students' perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity (0.581, $p < .0001$). The baseline model (model 1; see Table 3) focused on assessing institutional commitment to diversity for racial and religious groups. To check for multicollinearity, I ran a variance inflation test that returned a mean value of less than four with an average of 1.61, suggesting that multicollinearity was not a critical concern in this baseline model.

Model 1 revealed that although accounting for student characteristics such as major, first-generation college student, transfer student, on-campus housing, etc., and religion, Black students had significantly lower ratings of institutional commitment ($-.851$, $p < .0001$) compared to the reference group Whites, followed by East Asians ($-.399$), Filipinos ($-.359$), Southeast Asians ($-.350$) other race ($-.335$), South Asians ($-.187$), and Latinx ($-.083$) students. While accounting for being of a White race, the most negative perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity came from Jewish students ($-.412$, $p < .001$), followed by Muslims (-0.389, $p < .0001$) when compared to Christians. While accounting for students' differential racial identities among religious groups, Sikh ($-.126$, $p < .0001$), Hindu ($-.346$, $p < .0001$), and spiritual/other religions ($-.256$, $p < .0001$) all rated significantly lower institutional commitment ratings than Christians.

TABLE 4
Testing Mediation Effects on Students' Perceptions of Institutional Commitments to Diversity Between Muslims and Christians

Effect	M	95% CI	
Respect for race mediation effect			
ACME	0.312	0.243	0.391
Direct effect	0.024	−0.115	0.176
Total effect	0.336	0.174	0.525
% of total effect mediated	0.92	0.593	1.79
Respect for religion mediation effect			
ACME	0.421	0.349	0.492
Direct effect	0.007	−0.14	0.194
Total effect	0.428	0.264	0.635
% of total effect mediated	0.985	0.662	1.59

Note. ACME = average causal mediation effect.

Model 3 addressed the relationship between students' ratings on perceptions of religious respect as a proxy for campus religious climate and institutional commitments to diversity. Non-Christian religious groups continued to rate institutional commitment to diversity lower than Christians. When accounting for respected religion. Muslim and Jewish religious identities were not statistically significant predictors for determining student perceptions of institutional commitment to campus diversity. However, the addition of religious respect in the model did change the direction of the relationship for Muslims and Jews to positive, suggesting campus religious climates may still explain a portion of their perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity. Results in Table 4 confirm that respect for religion explains 98% of why Muslim students rate institutional commitment to diversity lower than Christians. Through a CRT lens, this has implications for liberal campus cultures that assume secular neutrality and do not explicitly direct resources toward serving minoritized religious student groups.

Among racial-ethnic groups, respect for religion did not mitigate the negative relationship between Black, Asian, and other-race students with significantly negative ratings of campus commitment to diversity. Across all three models, women and nonbinary-gendered people reported significantly lower ratings of institutional commitment to diversity than men. In the following section, I draw on Muslim women and nonbinary students' counter-narratives to reveal how Muslims described institutional commitments to campus religious climates and why the positive relationship was statistically insignificant.

Photovoice Findings. The following section illuminates photovoice findings to reveal the relationship between religious respect and student perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity.

TABLE 3

Regression Analysis of Religious Students' Perceptions of Institutional Commitment to Diversity

Variable	Model 1: Baseline			Model 2: Accounting for Racial Respect			Model 3: Accounting for Religious Respect		
	B	SE	p	B	B	Sig	B	SE	p
Religion (ref. Christian)									
Nonreligious	−0.232	0.023	***	−0.232	0.021	***	−0.347	0.022	***
Jewish	−0.412	0.076	***	−0.197	0.068	**	0.124	0.074	
Muslim	−0.389	0.077	***	−0.025	0.07		0.003	0.073	
Sikh	−0.126	0.052	**	−0.115	0.045	*	−0.161	0.046	**
Buddhist/Taoist	0.046	0.096		0.034	0.083		−0.05	0.091	
Hindu	−0.346	0.136	*	−0.298	0.134	*	−0.397	0.129	*
Spiritual/other	−0.256	0.033	***	−0.189	0.03	***	−0.316	0.031	***
Race (ref. White)									
African/Black/Caribbean	−0.851	0.058	***	0.064	0.054		−0.708	0.063	***
Latinx	−0.083	0.033	**	0.242	0.03	***	−0.054	0.031	
South Asian	−0.187	0.069	***	−0.046	0.061		−0.078	0.065	
Southeast Asian	−0.35	0.044	***	−0.176	0.04	***	−0.274	0.042	***
East Asian	−0.399	0.032	***	−0.166	0.029	***	−0.294	0.031	***
Filipino/Pacific Islander	−0.359	0.049	***	−0.153	0.045	**	−0.294	0.047	***
Native American/Alaskan	−0.113	0.124		0.164	0.121		0.09	0.118	
Other race	−0.335	0.063	***	−0.106	0.058		−0.198	0.06	**
Gender (ref. Men)									
Women	−0.1	0.021	***	−0.096	0.019	***	−0.095	0.02	***
Nonbinary	−1.491	0.081	***	−1.184	0.09	***	−1.285	0.077	***
Level of income	0.042	0.024	*	−0.027	0.022		−0.014	0.023	
FirstGenCollege student	0.026	0.024		0.074	0.022	**	0.04	0.023	
1.5/second-generation immigrant	−0.106	0.024	***	−0.003	0.022		−0.098	0.023	***
International student	0.078	0.042	*	0.241	0.039	***	0.05	0.04	
Off-campus housing	−0.02	0.021		−0.022	0.019		−0.02	0.019	
Cumulative GPA	0.234	0.021	***	0.154	0.019	***	0.211	0.02	***
Transfer student	0.328	0.03	***	0.267	0.028	***	0.288	0.029	***
Year (ref. 1st year)									
2nd year	−0.228	0.038	***	−0.098	0.035	**	−0.171	0.036	***
3rd year	−0.506	0.039	***	−0.313	0.034	***	−0.403	0.037	***
4th year	−0.613	0.038	***	−0.403	0.034	***	−0.501	0.036	***
5th year+	−0.234	1.115		−0.045	.702		−0.288	1.058	
Major (ref. arts/humanities)									
Social sciences	0.067	0.033	**	0.071	0.03	*	0.078	0.031	**
STEM	0.115	0.032	***	0.082	0.029	**	0.102	0.03	**
Undeclared	−0.067	0.044		−0.078	0.04		−0.064	0.042	
Respect for race				0.726	0.009	***			
Respect for religion							0.581	0.010	***
Constant	5.034	0.095	***	1.667	.095	***	2.444	0.099	***
R^2	0.037			0.199			0.134		
M VIF score		1.6			1.6			1.6	

Note. N = 39,244.
*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$.
Source: UCUES 2016.

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FIGURE 3 *The Only Lecture I've Had From a Muslim in a Lecture Hall With Other Muslims—Must Be MSA West! (Wasma)*

Fighting for an Institutional Commitment to Religious Respect. Muslim students described institutional commitment to campus religious climates as institutional resources that would address their basic religious needs, such as access to prayer spaces, halal meat, Muslim staff, and representative curriculum. Muslim students explained how the lack of institutional resources made it more difficult for the campus to recruit and sustain diverse religious representation.

Challenging the Supposed Secular-Neutrality

A key predictor of student retention and success is a sense of belonging (Hurtado et al., 2012). In Figure 3, a photo-narrative titled, "The Only Lecture I've Had From a Muslim in a Lecture Hall With Other Muslims—Must Be MSA West!" Wasma provides insight into how she finds her religious belonging outside of campus through community organized events. Wasma, a White and Pakistani junior, shared:

> I've never had any lectures with Muslim professors. . . . Being on a predominantly White and non-Muslim campus is already difficult to feel belonging and any kind of comfort. In most of my classes, there are not any visible Muslims.

Without visible Muslims as staff, faculty, and students, Wasma argued that the "dominant American culture wants us to believe that Islam and everyday learning and life are incompatible." Wasma's narrative suggests anti-Muslim racism compounds the "already difficult" belonging in a predominantly White campus environment that makes her uncomfortable. The

FIGURE 4 *Even on Our Darkest Nights (Mina)*

compositional diversity of students, faculty, curriculum and institutional space shaped her belonging. She related the lack of Muslim visibility as an institutional problem and challenged the hegemonic force of US culture and campus liberalism that portrayed Islam and Muslim students as incompatible with institutions of higher education.

Fighting for Space

One of the ways institutional racism operates is by limiting the agency of those who come from non-White Christian backgrounds, requiring them to spend their time fighting for essential resources (Ray, 2019). Mina, an Afghan student and sophomore, shared how Muslim students' constantly struggled to access basic religious needs on campus. When gathered for prayer, Mina exclaimed, "I would pray all the time if we had a space!" By limiting institutional access to basic needs for religious-minority students, the campus upheld Christian and secular privilege (Bowman & Smedley, 2013) by reinforcing Muslim nonnormativity or "otherness" in higher education spaces (Ali, 2014) that require Muslim students to fight for resources in addition to pursuing academics. In a picture of a group of Muslim students sitting around a table on their laptops in a dark library lobby (see Figure 4), Mina shared:

> The Muslim Student Association has been fighting for 20 years to establish a meditation space on campus that Muslim students can use for prayer. This photo depicts Muslim students staying up all night at the library, writing a resolution to voice our needs to the administration and the greater campus community.

A resolution is a way to enact change through the student government on behalf of undergraduate students on campus in the context of administrative failure. The Muslim students who authored this excerpt called into question the university's upholding of "neutral" secularism in addition to purported commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion for

FIGURE 5 *Taste of Home (Afifa)*

spiritual and religious groups. According to Muslim students in this project, the campus "started taking Muslim students' needs seriously only after President Trump was elected" (Mina), and anti-Muslim racism became a national agenda through the 2017 Muslim ban (Executive Office of the President, 2017). Countering their depictions as passive victims, these Muslim students took it upon themselves to motivate institutional change to obtain a prayer space. They also countered the assumption that anti-Muslim racism arrived with the Muslim ban by pointing to how long (i.e., "20 years") students had been fighting for this basic religious need.

Access to Basic Needs

Students attributed the lack of religious respect to difficulties accessing halal food on and off campus everyday and during religious holidays. Gizem, a Latinx Muslim student and junior, wrote, "It would be more welcoming for Muslim students and their parents to know that students can have access to a kitchen, if needed, during Ramadan." Afifa, a sophomore and Palestinian Muslim student, connected the lack of sacred space and food with a larger structural issue on campus—the lack of a cultural resource center for students with invisible racial identities. Afifa shared the following (see Figure 5):

Without an established "South West Asian North African (SWANA)" organization, SWANA students often have to find different ways to congregate. Often, after Students for Justice in Palestine meetings, several of the club members would come together and listen to SWANA music, eat SWANA food, and reminisce about a culture made very inaccessible . . . not only is it nearly impossible to find halal meat, but it is also often extremely hard to find the right foodstuffs to cook SWANA food with.

UC adopted the term "SWANA" for its systemwide admissions applications in 2014, after pressure from a UC student coalition that organized to move away from colonial designations such as "Middle Eastern and North African" and their conflations with European Whites (Maghbouleh, 2017). Yet, at the time of this study, many individual UC campuses still conducted surveys in which they continued to aggregate student data to these categories (as was the case of the 2016 survey database made available for this study). Although Whiteness is privileged throughout the university, Muslim "White" students who are Middle Eastern and North African or SWANA experience "limits on their Whiteness" (Maghbouleh, 2017). Despite being racialized as "Brown" non-Americans by the US government and everyday Americans due to their racial and religious identities (Maghbouleh, 2017), their imposed Whiteness makes it difficult for them to seek institutional resources. Aside from data collection, the promise by UC president Yudolf in 2013 to address SWANA student needs has yet to reach all UC campuses (Turk et al., 2012; Maghbouleh, 2017).

Afifa's narrative demonstrates how racial and religious invisibility is related and makes it especially hard for students to obtain institutional resources on campus for religious or cultural needs. Their difficulty accessing campus resources was compounded by the lack of available resources off campus because the university was located in a predominantly White city with no Islamic center. It was common to hear students traveling 40–60 minutes to neighboring cities to find proper foodstuffs (i.e., halal meat and spices), and some resorted to becoming vegetarians. Having an institutional resource such as a cultural resource center could provide programming and communicate the needs of racially and marginalized religious students across campus.

Previous studies have examined how Muslims may be psychologically taxed due to the burden of representation (Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Sirin & Fine, 2008). The findings of this study suggest a lack of institutional resources compounds this burden. Anti-Muslim racism produces material and physical barriers by withholding basic needs and constraining Muslims' ability to feel safe and freely practice religion. Through their stories, Muslim students described how institutional commitments to religious respect were not enough to address their positive perceptions of campus climate. Instead, racial respect also emerged as an essential element of their experience because of racialized discrimination that affected their religious identities and racial and ethnic backgrounds.
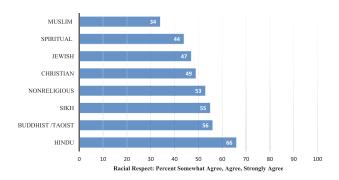
Religion	Percent
MUSLIM	34
SPIRITUAL	44
JEWISH	47
CHRISTIAN	49
NONRELIGIOUS	53
SIKH	55
BUDDHIST /TAOIST	56
HINDU	66

Racial Respect: Percent Somewhat Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree

FIGURE 6 *Proportion of Religious Students Who Agreed With the Statement: "Students of My Racial/Ethnic Background Are Respected on Campus"*

Part 2: Examining Campus Racial Climates

This section uses quantitative and qualitative data to answer the second research question and its subquestion describing Muslim students' perceptions of campus racial climates (e.g., racial respect) as a predictor of institutional commitment to diversity. I follow the survey results with Muslim students' photovoice counter-stories to illuminate why their ratings of institutional commitments to diversity were not positive and completely explained by race.

Survey Results. Survey results indicate that adding respect for race to predict religious students' perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity made identifying as Muslim an unreliable predictor of significantly negative campus climate perceptions, though coefficients remained negative.

Descriptive Statistics. The dependent variable perceptions of institutional commitment to campus diversity climate was positively correlated with respect for race (.427, $p < .0001$). Muslim students were also significantly more likely to rate racial campus climate lower than all other religious groups. In Figure 6, Muslim students were significantly less likely to agree that their racial/ethnic background was respected on campus (34%) compared to their spiritual (44%), Jewish (47%), and nonreligious peers (53%). Interestingly, although Jewish students rated religious climates lower, Muslims rated campus racial climates lower. This result was likely due to Jewish students making up a larger percentage of White students (81%) than Muslim students (44%). Research on campus racial climates suggests students of color rate campus climates lower than their White peers due to overt and covert racism (Harper & Hurtado, 2007).

Regression Analysis. Experiencing racial respect or a positive campus racial climate resulted in a significantly higher likelihood of positively rating institutional commitment to diversity (.726, $p < .0001$; see Table 3, model 2). When accounting for racial respect, most religious students still rated institutional commitment to diversity lower than Christians—except for Muslim students, whose negative rating was no longer significant (−.025). This finding suggested campus racial climate did not entirely account for Muslim students' positive perception of institutional commitment to diversity. While accounting for racial respect, Hindu students were most likely to rate institutional commitment to diversity lower than Christians (−.298, $p < .01$), followed by nonreligious students, Jewish students (−.197, $p < .0001$), and spiritual and Sikh students.

Shifting from the baseline model, where identifying as Muslim was a significant negative predictor of institutional commitment to diversity, the new model with racial respect no longer yielded Muslim identity as a reliable negative predictor of institutional commitment to diverse climates. Similarly, accounting for respect for race shifted African/Black/Caribbean students' ratings from significantly and strongly negative (−.845, $p < .001$) to nonsignificant (−.028). Accounting for respect for race significantly predicted positive ratings among Latinx students (.242, $p < .0001$); however, it still yielded significantly negative ratings from Southeast Asians, East Asians, and Pacific Islanders. Women and gender-queer (i.e., nonbinary) students rated campus diversity climate significantly lower than men.

Adding respect for race to predict students' perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity transformed both identifying as Black and Muslim as unreliable predictors of significantly negative campus climate perceptions, though both remained negative coefficients. This finding suggests isolated indicators of racial respect may have a role in explaining how Black and Muslim students come to determine institutional commitment to diversity but other factors may also shape the relationship. Furthermore, the finding was not surprising for Black students, given the legacy of anti-Blackness in higher education (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015). It confirmed the hypothesis for Muslim students that racial respect mattered in their experiences as a racialized religious group, given the change in the coefficient's magnitude (dropping from −.389 to −.025). Yet, accounting for racial respect was not enough to make Muslims rate campus diversity climates more positively than Christians. Table 4 results confirmed that respect for race explained 92% of why Muslim students rated institutional commitment to diversity lower than Christians.

This result also suggested that in the case of Muslims, religious and racial climates should not be studied as mutually exclusive because both explain campus diversity climates and shape students' perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity. Decoupling or separating racial and religious climates results in missed opportunities for addressing intersectional issues. To further understand how campus racial and religious climates both affected Muslim students' perceptions of campus diversity, I drew on emerging themes from Muslims' photovoice narratives.

FIGURE 7   *The Necessary Bridge We Need Between Black and Muslim Communities (Saliha)*

Photovoice Findings. In this section, I draw on qualitative data to show how Muslim students described an institutional commitment to diversity in relation to both racial and religious climates through their counter-stories. Muslim students' narratives challenged the separation of race and religion.

Racial Respect for Muslims: Navigating Intersectional Invisibilities. Students' religious identities together with their race, gender, and immigrant backgrounds shape their experiences on campus, which is why racial respect also explained Muslim students' perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity.

Racialized Religion and Hyper(in)visibility

Delving deeper into the ways multiple structures inhibit her agency as a Muslim woman of color, Saliha (see Figure 7), a Sudanese Black Muslim, shared the following:

> Throughout my experience on campus, I have often felt underrepresented as a Black Muslim. . . . Often, I felt torn because, in Muslim spaces, I was met with a lot of anti-Blackness and vice versa with Islamophobia in other areas. I often thought that I either needed to prove my Blackness in a space like [Black Student Union], for example or prove my Muslimness in a space like MSA [Muslim Student Association] because I am not "Arab" enough.

Black Muslim students experienced multiple layers of marginality in relation to the larger predominately White institutional context and the Muslim student groups that mainly comprised South Asian and Arab students. As feminist scholars have relayed, having multiple identities places one's consciousness and belonging in the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 2007)—neither here nor there and always hybrid in between (Hall, 1990).

Despite most campuses' efforts to admit diverse students, they rarely do more to establish students' belonging on campus or cater to their multiple marginalized experiences across race, religion, and gender (Anzaldúa, 2007; Hurtado & Carter, 1997). The university's failure to account for intersectionality in the student body and its overreliance on student organizations as spaces of belonging reinforced Muslim students' hyper(in)visibility as they experienced racial and religious oppression from its structures.

Gendered Racism

Muslim women, in particular, have to navigate the additional burden of gendered racial and religious obstacles presented by their hypervisibility or invisibility as veiled or unveiled. Saliha's hyper(in)visibility as a Black Muslim on campus affected her ability to obtain resources because of instances of everyday racism that affected her racial and religious identities (see Figure 8). For example, she shared how her supervisor at her campus job failed to support her during the Islamic holy month, Ramadan, when Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset with no food or water. Saliha worked on campus through finals and end-of-the-year celebrations that coincided with Ramadan. As a "nonhijabi," most people do not perceive Saliha as Muslim because of stereotypes that all Muslims are Arab and US historical legacies of slavery that stripped enslaved Africans of their status as Muslims (Abdul-Khabeer, 2016; Chan-Malik, 2018).

Saliha expressed feeling uncomfortable requesting specific breaks during the workday to pray and break her fast because of implicit hostility from staff and their inability to see her needs as a Muslim. When ordering the catering for an event, she asked her supervisor if he could order her some soup separately since she would be fasting all day and could not eat when the food would be present. Unable to comprehend Saliha's fasting and her Muslimness, the supervisor ignored her request. As a non-hijabi Muslim woman, Saliha also had to navigate racial, religious, and gendered assumptions about what a Muslim woman should look like. Saliha stated the following, "It makes you feel like you're the deficient one when you ask for resources—like you are less than." As she navigated predominantly White spaces on campus as a woman of color, she felt the burden of continually asking the university to provide resources (Smith et al., 2011), revealing how anti-Blackness and anti-Muslim racism are gendered and manifest through institutional deficiencies that create uneven outcomes even within racialized religious groups.

While nonvisible Muslim women experience hyper-invisibility, hijab-wearing Muslim women experience hypervisibility. Negine, an Iranian student with fair complexion, did not always wear the hijab, but when she did one day, she realized how many "White people," she said, stared at her. Ironically, Iranians are also considered White by the US census, though their everyday experiences point to their racialization as non-White (Maghbouleh, 2017). She stated, "I

FIGURE 8 *How Does One Define Visibility and the Notion of "Muslimness"? (Saliha)*

FIGURE 9 *Lonely (Gizem)*

wish for people to know more about Muslims, and for people not to treat us differently than people that look like them." The way Muslims are treated and looked at with suspicion has nothing to do with religious beliefs but the ways that the religion has been racialized and gendered amid and prior to the "war on terror," to be associated with terrorism and caricatures of swarthy Brown men with beards and oppressed women with burqas (Grewal, 2013).

Anti-Muslim racism

Like Negine, Gizem, a Latinx, nonbinary Muslim convert who uses they/them pronouns, wore the hijab sometimes and shared their experiences of feeling unsafe in and outside of the classroom for being Muslim (see Figure 9). They shared the following:

When I go on buses, I witness people staring at me a lot, in very unfriendly ways, and avoiding me. Even when the bus is super full, and the seat next to me is open, they won't sit next to me. . . . I'm taking a politics class on war, and so it focuses on the War on Terror. I always fear anyone saying anything Islamophobic, and I fear how the rest of my classmates/professors would react . . . I feel like a lack of diversity training could lead [to] an unsafe situation for Muslim students.

Gizem's excerpt demonstrates the permanence of racism (Bell, 1992; DeCuir, & Dixson, 2004) in and outside of campus that students have to navigate. As intersectionality and CRT scholars have pointed out, racial inequality is often interwoven with other axes of domination and oppression at interpersonal and institutional levels (Collins, 2002). Instances of anti-Muslim aggression can particularly affect Muslim-visible women who wear the hijab. Gizem shared feeling unsafe as a result of their Muslim identity and visibility. Gizem is also a hijab-wearing, queer, nonbinary, and undocumented student of color, exacerbating the consequences and anxieties of feeling unsafe. Even if universities espouse religious inclusion, diversity training rarely translates into action addressing the racialized dimensions of religion that create unsafe environments for students with multiple marginalized identities (Walcott, 2018).

Discussion: Racial-Religious Decoupling and the Limits of Campus Commitments to Diversity

This study found Muslims rated institutional commitment to campus diversity lower than other religious groups. When comparing Muslims to Christians, I found respect for race and respect for religion almost entirely explained why Muslims rated institutional commitment to diversity lower. The qualitative photovoice data focused on drawing on Muslim students' stories to show how Muslims' perceptions of institutional commitment for racial and religious respect were related to (the lack of) material and discursive resources that recognized (a) their intersectionality, (b) the ways campus structures invisibilized their needs, and (c) their status as a racialized religious group. Specifically, the photovoice data revealed that religious respect explained institutional commitment to diversity because of the lack of resource allocation to meet religious minority students' basic needs (e.g., prayer space, halal food, anti-racist environments). Findings suggest Muslims' religious experiences cannot be separated from their racialized experiences as the racial exacerbates and informs how they experience their religion in relation to organizational and discursive structures.

Building on racialized decoupling, a tenet of racialized organizations (Ray, 2019), I identify racial-religious decoupling as the mechanism by which commitments to religious diversity, equity, and inclusion are separated from practice to maintain racialized and religious hierarchies while appearing neutral. Specifically, I argue that racial-religious decoupling perpetuates the belief that Muslims do not experience racism,

and supporting them would lead to a breach of supposed secular neutrality. This study also contributes to extending the understanding of how hegemonic Whiteness embedded in universities operates to homogenize communities of color while positioning those with non-Christian backgrounds as outsiders. Their outsider status becomes apparent when called on to justify their needs and resources for their communities. Thus, a key mechanism of racial-religious decoupling is this limitation of racialized religious groups' agency.

Furthermore, racial-religious decoupling is an extension of CRT to explain how an institutions' liberal status quo benefits dominant racial-religious groups (i.e., White Christians) when race and religion are considered distinct. This study offers a framework for studying campus religious climates through CRT to illuminate cultural and structural elements of racism while uplifting student counter-stories. Racial-religious decoupling offers a way to understand university administrators' delegitimization of Muslim experiences on campus and a path toward a more robust anti-racist agenda that accounts for racialized religion and focuses on allocating material resources to support students marginalized by it.

Conclusion

Universities have much work to do to adequately serve diverse student bodies, including creating positive anti-racist climates linked to material resources that mitigate institutions' racialized religious structures. Findings from this study show diversity training and religious inclusion are not adequate to address inequalities beyond individualized beliefs and racial-religious discrimination that becomes racially embedded and covert in the everyday operations of the university.

Anti-Muslim racism thrives on the institution's racial-religious decoupling because it separates the university's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion with its practices (Ray, 2019), under the guise of secularism. Incorporating an intersectional approach to university contexts could mean reframing the allocation of resources to serve multiple marginalized communities, especially when these institutions purport to be about diversity, equity (not equality), and inclusion. Furthermore, by its nature, racism and anti-Muslim racism are global projects that will not be solved through inclusion and representation. Instead, they are based on White supremacy and racial capitalism and require a more robust interrogation of anti-Blackness and imperialism if universities seek to counter it fully. In this way, addressing anti-Muslim racism can motivate a more holistic approach to anti-racist equity.

Future researchers should examine whether and how racial-religious decoupling operates in other institutions and organizations to perpetuate anti-Muslim racism with national samples and at nonresearch public universities such as private schools and community colleges. Studies should also focus on examining whether these hostile campus racial-religious climates affect outcomes beyond academic success and

retention. Scholarship on campus racial and religious climates would also benefit from better survey indicators that specify the context and actors that respect and disrespect students. Finally, scholars should consider assessing both discursive and material commitments to anti-racist efforts.

Open Practices

The data and analysis files for this article can be found at *http://doi. org/10.3886/E165861V1*.

Notes

1. The sample excluded individuals who failed to answer questions on campus climate with respect to race, religion, perceptions of institutional commitments, religious affiliation, gender, socioeconomic status, immigrant background, international student status, off-campus living, and time spent on spirituality.

2. Institutional Research Assessment and Policy did not report religious representativeness.

3. The exact number of Muslim students on this particular campus is unknown because the variable to disaggregate UC campuses was not shared to protect student identities.

4. I do not know when the Muslim Student Association/Alliance was founded at this campus—the exact timeline is unclear; however, records indicate that the organization was present as early as 2005.

5. For more information about the PAR project and analysis, see Nojan (2020).

6. Figures 2 and 3 and accompanying descriptives were previously reported in a research brief (Nojan, 2019).

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