Children's voice and autonomous learners in 'alternative' Islamic faith-schools – Contradictions and Possibilities
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This workshop aims to generate understanding about holistic educational principles that are leading some Muslims towards 'alternative education' practices. In particular, it explores *halaqah*, a traditional Islamic oral pedagogy dating back to the Prophet Muhammad, which has been adapted, in order to contribute to developing Muslim children's identity and sense of selfhood in 21st century Britain. *Halaqah* is daily practice in two independent British Muslim faith-schools that have an 'alternative' ethos. It aims to develop the agency and hybrid identities of Muslim children through providing a safe space to cumulatively explore challenging issues of double-consciousness within an Islamic paradigm. A small-scale qualitative study explored the views of children (aged 10-11 years) and young people (aged 15-19 years) from these schools on their traditional Islamic beliefs and their contemporary lives, on personal autonomy and being Muslim, and whether *halaqah* has helped them develop their own voice and navigate their identity as Muslims living in a secular society. This workshop will explore emergent themes related to autonomy in family settings, in Islamic education, in secular schools; it will also explore themes related to independent and critical thinking, navigating authority and peer-pressure, and choosing to be Muslim in a secular society.

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