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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to unpack UK equality politics in the educational sphere and explore how it relates to four ideologies of religious governance: secularism, multiculturalism, interculturalism and intersectionalism. More specifically it examines how these ideologies support principles of reproduction, understood as knowledge transmission, and recognition, understood as respect for difference. Findings suggest that principles of religious reproduction and recognition permeate all educational policy debates and are upheld by all stakeholders. Disagreements hinge on how to reconcile religious diversity with large-scale intergroup contact, advocated by interculturalists, and with the interests of female or LGBTQ students, foregrounded by intersectionalists. Whereas multiculturalists find themselves at the forefront of attempts to achieve equality in the curriculum, intersectionalists have been especially active in debates around accommodation and the funding of religious schools, and interculturalists have vocally opposed these schools' capacity to select students and teachers in ways that exacerbate religious and ethnic segregation.