

***Expose on glaring bias
against Hindus:
Georgetown University's Bridge Initiative***

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Executive Summary

1. Academic integrity and ethical scholarship under question:

Bridge Initiative at Georgetown University, in its purported efforts to combat Islamophobia, has been embroiled in a controversy for disseminating biased and inaccurate information on Hindu communities and organisations. This has raised significant concerns about the ethical responsibilities of academic institutions in maintaining integrity and objectivity in their research and publications.

2. Ecosystem of propagating falsehoods:

Persistent allegations against Hindus and Hindutva organisations especially in United States of America suggest the existence of an ecosystem within certain academic circles that may be conducive to dissemination of misinformation. This ecosystem potentially uses biased research outputs to further their ideas, especially when driving specific agendas rather than objective analysis.

3. Anti-semitic underpinnings and controversial funding:

Bridge Initiative's primary funding by figures like Alwaleed Bin Talal, who has faced corruption charges and detention in Saudi Arabia, adds a layer of suspicion to driving of false narratives through the university by a select few individuals. This connection, coupled with history of Talal and other supporters like Arsalan Iftikhar's anti-semitic leanings, raises questions about Islamo-fascism at play or influence of such associations on integrity and impartiality of its work, especially when it comes to Hindus.

4. Legal repercussions & academic scrutiny

Lawsuits filed against Bridge Initiative, particularly by Hindu American Foundation, underscore significant consequences of distributing prejudiced and agenda driven research. Such legal confrontations emphasise critical importance for academic institutions to rigorously maintain objectivity and impartiality in their research endeavours. This situation serves as a stark reminder of the responsibilities that come with scholarly work especially the duty to uphold the principles of accuracy and balance essential in preserving the integrity of academic research and preventing spread of false narratives.

5. Impact on inter-community Relations:

Bridge Initiative's activities have implications beyond academic circles, particularly its propagation of Hindu-phobia, could have serious repercussions, affecting inter-community relations and contributing to stigmatise and serve real world threats on Hindu communities possibly leading to hate crimes and persecution. This underscores the need for sensitive and scholarly approaches in dealing with issues relating to faith and having cultural significance which unfortunately the initiate has failed to produce.

6. Georgetown University's balancing act:

As a Jesuit institution, Georgetown University faces the challenge of aligning its Jesuit heritage with principles of modernity including diversity and inclusion. The controversy surrounding Bridge Initiative presents a test case for the university in balancing these sometimes conflicting ideals while maintaining its commitment to academic excellence and ethical scholarship.

7. Jesuit values & contemporary expectations:

Georgetown's historical context, marked by its involvement in slavery and subsequent efforts at reconciliation reflects broader challenge of reconciling traditional Jesuit values with contemporary social expectations. This includes navigating complex issues of race, religion, faith and academic freedom with scholarship and not bias.

8. Academic freedom & rigorous scholarship:

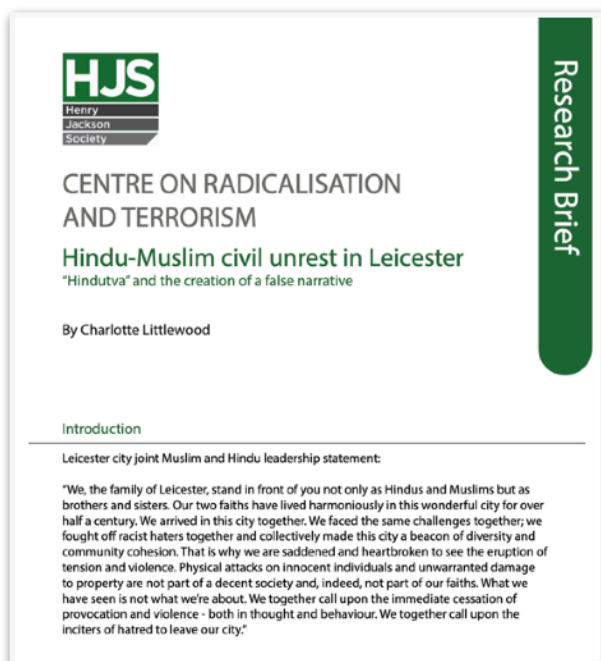
The university must navigate these challenges while upholding the principles of academic freedom and rigorous scholarship. This involves ensuring that research and advocacy work even on contentious subjects are conducted with the utmost respect for facts, objectivity and diverse perspectives of the global community.

9. Religious & academic institutions:

The situation at Georgetown University and Bridge Initiative invites broader reflection on role of religious and academic institutions in contemporary society. It underscores importance of these institutions in fostering dialogue and understanding across different cultures and beliefs and the responsibility they bear in shaping societal narratives and perceptions.

Introduction

In a report dated November 24, 2023, titled 'Hindutva in Britain,' a collaborative effort between US based Bridge Initiative at Georgetown University and UK's Community Policy Forum – an entity claiming to protect Muslim interests in the UK – was published. The report aspired to falsely implicate Hindus and Hindu-centric organisations for anti-India, anti-Hindu unrest in Leicester, the UK. A narrative previously dismantled by several leading UK based independent think tanks including Henry Jackson Society² and US based National Contagion Research Institute (NCRI), a prominent cyber threat intelligence organisation.³



Henry Jackson Society report on "Hindutva" and creation of a false narrative.



National Contagion Research Institute (NCRI) on Leicester violence against Hindus.

Interestingly, the report is a component of a larger context that encompasses a series of publications by the Bridge Initiative. These publications, such as the controversial claim of an ongoing "Muslim Genocide" in India, have faced extensive criticism for their agenda-driven bias against the Hindu faith, heritage, and culture. The inaccurate portrayal of Hindu-centric organizations, especially within the American Hindu community in the United States, has triggered debates and legal

¹ Bridge Initiative Team, 'Hindutva in Britain' (*Bridge Initiative*, 24 November 2023) <<https://bridge.georgetown.edu/research/hindutva-in-britain/>> accessed 27 November 2023

² Lakhani R and others, 'Hindu-Muslim Civil Unrest in Leicester: "Hindutva" and the Creation of a False Narrative' (*Henry Jackson Society*, 5 June 2023) <<https://henryjacksonsociety.org/event/hindu-muslim-civil-unrest-in-leicester-the-impact-of-a-micro-community-cohesion-breakdown-falsely-attributed-to-organised-hindutva-extremism/>> accessed 27 November 2023

³ Sudhakar P, Mughal F and Goldenberg A, '11/16/22 - Cyber Social Swarming Precedes Real World Riots in Leicester: How Social Media Became a Weapon for Violence' (*Network Contagion Research Institute*, 16 November 2022) <<https://networkcontagion.us/reports/11-16-22-cyber-social-swarming-precedes-real-world-riots-in-leicester-how-social-media-became-a-weapon-for-violence/>> accessed 27 November 2023

consequences for the Bridge Institute. In 2021, Bridge Initiative published a flawed and malicious "Fact Sheet"⁴ concerning world's largest Hindu-centric people's movement the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) with headquarters in India⁵. In that factsheet, Bridge Initiative falsely implicated several American Hindu organisations including Hindu American Foundation calling them as

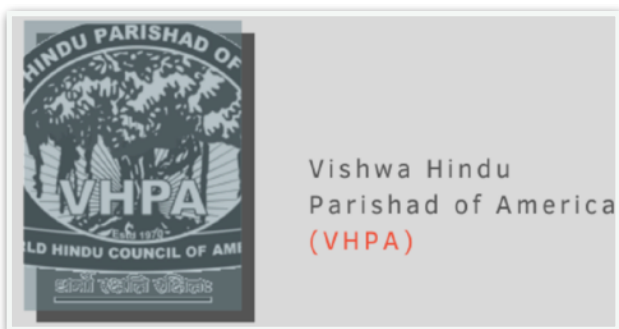


Factsheet on RSS published by the Bridge Initiative on May 18, 2021 on its website <https://bridge.georgetown.edu/>

promoters of Islamophobia. HAF strongly refuted the allegations made in the purported Fact Sheet. HAF contested the information presented, arguing that it contained factual errors and false insinuations. Asserting that the document defamed their organization by wrongly accusing them of Islamophobia, HAF filed a lawsuit against the Bridge Initiative.⁶ Legal charges against Bridge



Factsheet on CoHNA published by the Bridge Initiative on July 27, 2023 on its website <https://bridge.georgetown.edu/>



Factsheet on VHPA published by the Bridge Initiative on May 25, 2023 on its website <https://bridge.georgetown.edu/>

Initiative highlighted significant issues related to research accuracy and duty of academic institutions especially traditionally-established ones like Georgetown University, in publication of such materials. Bridge Initiative faced ongoing criticism for lack of academic rigour and displaying institutional bias. This notwithstanding, it continued to publish what it terms 'factsheets', without addressing the serious concerns raised about their scholarship and merit. These documents often labeled as factsheets on global Hindu-centric organizations have been highlighted for blurring distinctions between Islamo-phobia and Islamo-fascism⁷.

⁴ 'Factsheet: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)' (*Bridge Initiative*, 2 August 2023) <<https://bridge.georgetown.edu/research/factsheet-rashtriya-swayamsevak-sangh-rss/>> accessed 1 December 2023

⁵ Rao GVA, 'RSS Is Strong since Its Worldview Resonates with All' (*The Asian Age*, 20 October 2019) <<https://www.asianage.com/india/all-india/211019/rss-is-strong-since-its-worldview-resonates-with-all.html>> accessed 1 December 2023

⁶ 'McDermott M, 'HAF Responds to Bridge Initiative Accusations of Islamophobia' (*HAF responds to Bridge Initiative accusations of Islamophobia*, 27 April 2022) <<https://www.hinduamerican.org/press/bridge-initiative-georgetown-response-letter>> accessed 1 December 2023

⁷ Islamofascism refers to the dangerous combination of Islamic fundamentalism and fascist tendencies

If it aimed at addressing 'Islamophobia' as manifested in its publications and factsheets, they have been scrutinised for perpetuating negative stereotypes or biases against Hindus and organizations aligned with Hindu interests. This critique posits that in the course of tackling Islamophobia, the Initiative's efforts may inadvertently or deliberately obscure the distinction between valid critique and the propagation of Hinduphobia. Such a scenario could contribute to a biased and prejudiced narrative against Hindu communities affecting perception and treatment of their cultural and faith based practices.

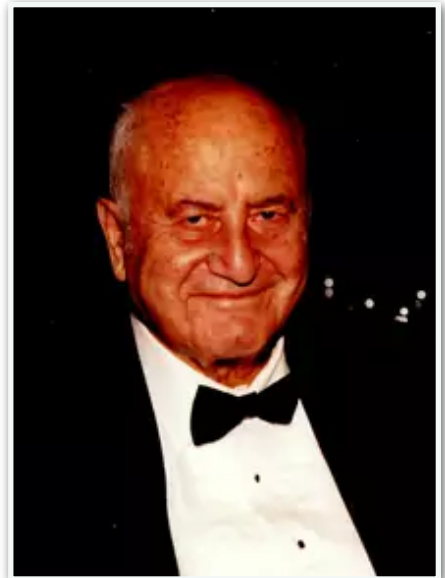
Bridge Initiative



Hasib Sabbagh, together with Georgetown University President Leo O'Donovan, Dean of the School of Foreign Service Peter Krogh, and Founding Director Dr. John L. Esposito, signing the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding charter in 1993.

In 1993, a partnership was established between Fondation pour 'Entente entre Chretiens et Musulmans in Geneva and Georgetown University, the longstanding catholic and Jesuit higher education institution in United States. This collaboration culminated in creation of a centre focused on enhancing mutual comprehension between Muslim world and West and facilitating dialogue between Islamic and Christian faiths.⁸

The individual responsible for both financial and physical establishment of Center for Muslim - Christian Understanding was Hasib Sabbagh, a Palestinian contractor and philanthropist. A Christian raised in 1920s and 1930s near Tiberias, amidst Muslim and Jewish communities in the era of British Mandatory Palestine. He obtained an engineering degree from American University of Beirut. Subsequently, he established a construction firm which, over subsequent fifty years, was responsible for constructing highways, residential buildings, ports, medical facilities, and bridges in Middle Eastern nations.⁹ Additionally, Sabbagh was a member of the Palestine National Council and generously contributed to Carter Center, an organization established by former US President Jimmy Carter in 1982.¹⁰



Palestinian contractor and philanthropist Hasib Sabbagh, the man behind centre for muslim- Christian understanding in 1993

Initially, known as Center for Muslim - Christian Understanding, it was later renamed the Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim - Christian Understanding (ACMCU) in 2006. The centre's primary

⁸ ESPOSITO, JOHN L. "The Prince Alwaleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding." *Islamic Studies*, vol. 45, no. 1, 2006, pp. 121–28. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20839004>. Accessed 30 Nov. 2023.

⁹ Vincent-Barwood A, 'Saudi Aramco World: Georgetown's Bridge of Faith' (*Georgetown's Bridge of Faith*, June 1998) <<https://archive.aramcoworld.com/issue/199803/georgetown.s.bridge.of.faith.htm>> accessed 30 November 2023

¹⁰ News B, 'Hasib Sabbagh, Co-Founder of Middle East Builder, Is Dead at 90' (*The New York Times*, 16 January 2010) <<https://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/16/business/16sabbagh.html>> accessed 30 November 2023

objective was to build stronger connections and encourage mutual understanding among these diverse religious and cultural communities. It had a dual mission: to improve relations between Muslim world & West and to enhance understanding of Muslims in the Western context.¹¹

Bridge Initiative associated with Georgetown University has been repeatedly spreading misinformation and biases particularly in relation to Hindutva organizations and Hindu faith. In April 2021, Bridge Initiative was implicated in a situation where Al Jazeera published stories accusing Hindu American Foundation (HAF) and other Hindu American groups of misappropriating Covid - 19 relief funds. These claims were reported as patently false. In response, HAF filed a defamation suit against individuals making these false claims and against Rutgers - Newark professor Audrey Truschke that amplified made up claims with false intent. Bridge Initiative released a "Fact Sheet" nearly simultaneously with these articles accusing HAF of ties to Hindu nationalism and erroneously implying Islamophobia, which HAF contested as having clear factual errors and false insinuations. Moreover, Bridge Initiative has previously targeted American public officials and Islamic reformers in its "Fact Sheets," accusing them of complicity in Islamophobia. This pattern of targeting has been consistent in many of their publications.¹²

On May 25, 2023, release of a deeply flawed and misleading factsheet by Bridge Initiative at Georgetown University targeting Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA) sparked widespread criticism, with assertions labelling it as a repeat offender of Hindu-phobia and peddler of Anti-Hindu sentiment. Recent scrutiny has shed light on the institute's consistent bias against Hindus, specifically American Hindus residing in United States. Although Bridge Initiative claims to primarily address anti-Muslim sentiment and combat Islamo-phobia, it has increasingly been accused of blurring the line between Islamo-phobia and Islamo-fascism. Islamo-fascism refers to dangerous combination of Islamic fundamentalism and fascist tendencies and disturbingly enough, Bridge Initiative appears to appropriate and propagate this notion.

In 2022, the initiative came up with an erroneous proposition that a "Muslims Genocide" in India was underway. In May 2021, it released a poorly researched flawed factsheet on RSS, the world's largest voluntary movement in India. Such concerns have prompted serious questions regarding the institute's approach, potential biases and adverse impact it may have on promoting understanding and dialogue among diverse communities within and beyond the United States of America.

¹¹ n8

¹² n6

Equally troubling are the institute's practices of selectively profiling and categorising individuals, organisations, and entities, accusing them of supposed anti-Islam and subsequently anti-Muslim conduct. Particularly disconcerting is the initiative's persistent production of heavily opinionated content masked as meticulously researched "factsheets," which frequently cite media opinion articles, repackaging and perpetuating the very same opinions and commentaries through mainstream news channels as if they were derived from scholarship or credible research. Disturbingly, its activities involve selectively profiling and categorising individuals, organisations, and entities accusing them of alleged anti-Islam and subsequently anti-muslim behaviour. Particularly concerning is the institute's consistent production of heavily opinionated content labeled as originally researched "factsheets" that are grounded in poor scholarship, often citing opinion pieces from supporters embedded within media entities to further disseminate of biased commentaries through mainstream news outlets.



Principal Financier of Bridge Initiative, Alwaleed Bin Talal



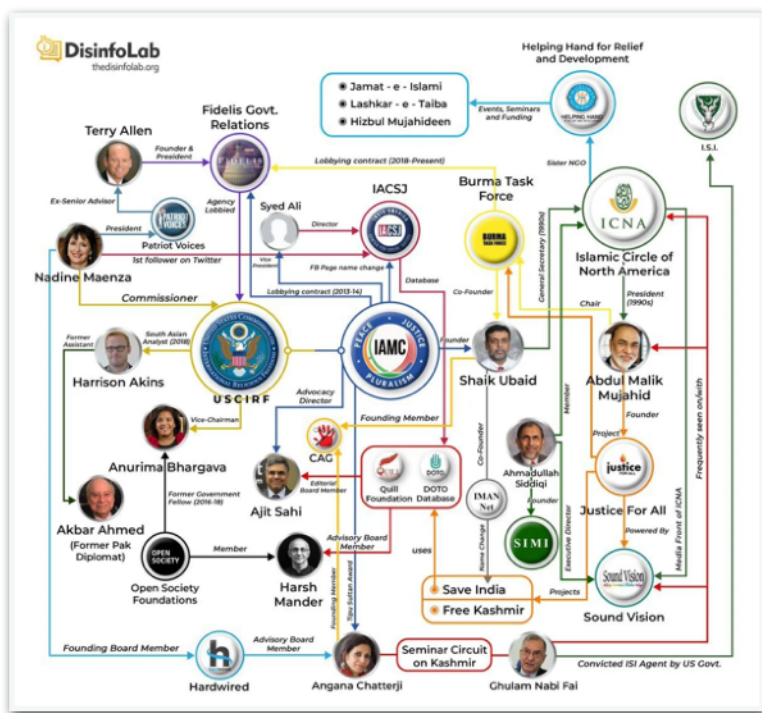
Furthermore, the initiative's association with well-known Islamist apologists, like its founding director John Esposito¹³ and Arsalan Iftikhar¹⁴, and seed funders like corruption-accused and anti-Semitic Saudi businessman Alwaleed Bin Talal, raises further concerns about its potential role in suppressing diverse perspectives on Islam, politics, and society and scream serious doubts on the intrinsic objectives of the initiative itself. These troubling connections and financial support contribute to a perceived lack of impartiality and raise questions about the institute's true motivations and agenda. These factors heighten apprehensions regarding the institute's objectivity and its ability to uphold its mission of promoting understanding and dialogue and cast serious doubts on the intrinsic objective of the initiative itself. In light of these factors, there is a growing

skepticism about the Bridge Initiative's commitment to unbiased research, fair representation, and

¹³ Caschetta, A.J. (2023) *Georgetown's John Esposito, part 1: A terrorist's best friend, Georgetown's John Esposito, Part 1: A Terrorist's Best Friend*. Available at: <https://www.meforum.org/campus-watch/64607/georgetown-john-esposito-part-1-a-terrorist-best> (Accessed: 04 December 2023).

¹⁴ Stelter, Brian, and Kludt, Tom. "MSNBC shuns guest who made racially charged remark about Jindal." *CNNMoney*, 20 January 2015, 2:20 PM ET. <https://money.cnn.com/2015/01/20/media/msnbc-arsalan-iftikhar-bobby-jindal/index.html> (Accessed: 04 December 2023).

the pursuit of genuine understanding. The institute's actions and affiliations contribute to an environment of doubt, making it difficult to discern whether its primary goal is indeed fostering dialogue or advancing a particular ideological agenda. This lack of transparency and the presence of potential biases within the institute raise legitimate concerns about its ability to effectively promote understanding and engage in unbiased discourse on the complex issues surrounding Islam, politics, and society.



DisinfoLab (2023) *USCIRF: An organization of particular concern*. Available at: <https://thedisinfoLab.org/uscirf-an-organization-of-particular-concern/> (Accessed: 04 December 2023).

Another aspect involves broader narrative in media and politics. A report highlighted that Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC) and other organizations attempted to label India as a "Country of Particular Concern" due to unqualified allegations of "ongoing persecution of minorities."¹⁵ This effort was criticised, with some signatories to the petition being described as hypocritical. The IAMC has been linked with extremist and US proscribed terrorist organizations with its members making derogatory

comments about Hindu leaders.¹⁶ This series of events and reports indicates a complex and controversial landscape where misinformation, bias, and defamation are intertwined with geopolitical narratives and the portrayal of religious communities.¹⁷ The Bridge Initiative's role in this landscape, particularly its publications and targeting of specific groups and individuals, raises significant questions about its research methods, the accuracy of its information, and the potential for perpetuating biases under the guise of academic research.

¹⁵ Jha, Prashant. "US panel asks State Department to declare India 'country of particular concern'." Hindustan Times, 3 May 2023, 04:38 AM IST. [<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/us-commission-urges-india-be-categorised-as-country-of-particular-concern-for-religious-freedom-violations-101683053901304.html>]

¹⁶ Gupta, Manoj. "Anti-India Lobbying, Pak Terror Links: US Body on Int'l Religious Freedom's Relentless Efforts to Spoil India's Image." CNN-News 18, 25 April 2022. [<https://www.news18.com/news/world/anti-india-lobbying-pak-terror-links-us-body-on-intl-religious-freedom-relentless-efforts-to-spoil-indias-image-5049391.html>]

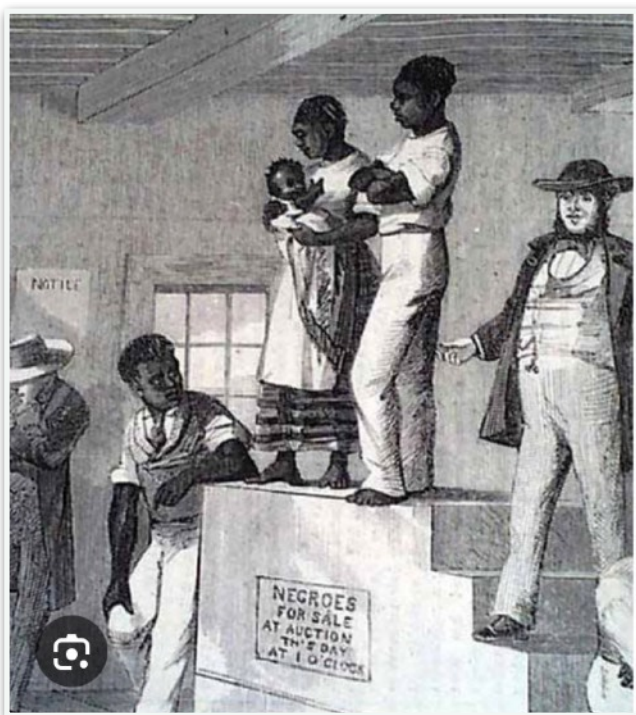
¹⁷ n6

Georgetown University

Founded in 1789, Georgetown University is the oldest Catholic and Jesuit institution in the United States and has a complex history reflecting broader societal attitudes, including those related to slavery and racial discrimination. Historically, Jesuit education, rooted in the 16th-century principles of St. Ignatius of Loyola, emphasised intellectual rigour, social justice, and ethical leadership as per Jesuit values and ideals. However, some aspects of traditional Jesuit thought, especially those formed in a very different historical context, often conflict with modern understandings of diversity, equality, human rights, and scientific knowledge. This includes teachings related to faith, race, social roles, gender, which have been the subject of significant critique and reevaluation within the broader Catholic community.

In its early years, Georgetown, like many Jesuit institutions of the 18th and 19th centuries, was involved in slavery and benefitted from slave labor. Notably, in 1838, the Maryland Jesuits sold 272 slaves to alleviate the university's finance.¹⁸ The historical records regarding the admission of

Native Americans to Georgetown during this period are limited. It is important to note that educational opportunities for Native Americans were scarce in the 18th and 19th centuries due to widespread discrimination, a practice not absent at Georgetown.¹⁹ Additionally, as a Catholic university in a predominantly Protestant country, Georgetown faced religious discrimination, especially in the 19th century, reflecting a common anti-Catholic sentiment in the United States. The university, like many others, was segregated for much of its history. Racial integration, particularly of African American students, began only in the 1950s, influenced by the Civil Rights Movement.²⁰



Depiction: Georgetown, a Jesuit institution, engaged in slavery and profited from slave labor.

¹⁸ The Catholic Church profited from slavery - 'the 272' explains how (2023) NPR. Available at: <https://www.npr.org/2023/06/13/1181767635/the-272-catholic-church-rachel-swans-slavery-georgetown> (Accessed: 04 December 2023).

¹⁹ O'Donnell, C. (2020) *Jesuits in the North American colonies and the United States: Faith, conflict, adaptation*. Leiden: Brill.

²⁰ *The Civil Rights Movement : the post war united states, 1945-1968 : U.S. history primary source timeline : classroom materials at the Library of Congress : library of Congress* (no date) *The Library of Congress*. Available at: <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/united-states-history-primary-source-timeline/post-war-united-states-1945-1968/civil-rights-movement/> (Accessed: 04 December 2023).



Georgetown Students Stage Sit-In Over Racism on Campus

In the contemporary scenario, since 2000, Georgetown University has experienced various incidents and challenges related to diversity, inclusion, and equity, reflecting the broader struggles in creating an inclusive and respectful environment. Georgetown, like many universities, has been part of the broader American conversation about affirmative action in college admissions. This includes debates and legal challenges around race-conscious admissions policies aimed at increasing diversity on campus. There have been concerns and discussions about the need for greater diversity in faculty hiring and promotion. This includes ensuring representation from underrepresented groups in academic positions and leadership roles. Throughout the 2000s and 2010s, Georgetown students engaged in various protests advocating for racial justice. These demonstrations often called for policy changes to address systemic racism, improve support for minority students, and enhance diversity on campus.

In 2007, a controversy arose around the Hoya Saxa Club, a Georgetown university student cheer leading group accused of hosting racially insensitive parties. This incident led to discussions about cultural sensitivity and respect on campus. In 2014, students staged a sit-in at Healy Hall as part of the "Know Your IX" campaign, demanding the university improve its policies on sexual assault and harassment. This action highlighted issues of campus safety and support for survivors of sexual violence.²¹

²¹ Ludden, J. (2014) *Student activists keep pressure on campus sexual assault*, WBUR. Available at: <https://www.wbur.org/npr/343352075/student-activists-keep-sexual-assault-issues-in-the-spotlight> (Accessed: 04 December 2023).

In 2020, Black Survivors Coalition staged a sit-in, advocating for better mental health resources for Black students and more action against sexual assault. The protest highlighted the need for culturally competent mental health services and stronger measures against campus sexual violence. With the national debate on affirmative action intensifying, Georgetown, like many universities, faced scrutiny over its race-conscious admissions policies. Discussions focused on balancing diversity with academic merit and the legal challenges to affirmative action.²²



Ilya Shapiro, who resigned from Georgetown Law amid a free speech dispute

Furthermore, in January-February 2022, Ilya Shapiro, a lecturer and executive director designate of the Georgetown Center for the Constitution, was suspended and investigated for tweets he posted regarding nomination of Ketanji Brown Jackson to Supreme Court. While he was not 'disciplined' due to not being a Georgetown employee at the time of the tweets, the incident raised questions about free expression and the university's harassment policies.²³

On April 29, 2022, a hate crime occurred on campus involving racist epithets and threats of violence shouted at a Black student. This incident was investigated by the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Affirmative Action (IDEAA) and the Georgetown University Police Department (GUPD). Although the investigation did not substantiate responsibility on any respondents, the university condemned the incident and committed to strengthening resources for responding to acts

²² Watson, S. (2020) *Black Survivors Coalition pushes the boundaries of student activism*, *The Georgetown Voice*. Available at: <https://georgetownvoice.com/2020/04/11/black-survivors-coalition-pushes-the-boundaries-of-student-activism/> (Accessed: 04 December 2023).

²³ Hartocollis, A. (2022) *A Conservative quits Georgetown's law school amid free speech fight*, *The New York Times*. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/06/us/georgetown-ilya-shapiro.html> (Accessed: 04 December 2023).

of bias. Intriguingly, a petition signed by students, faculty, and university affiliates called for ending legacy admissions, a practice they argue impacts diversity and inclusion on campus. The petition gained nearly 900 signatures and was influenced by concerns over the U.S. Supreme Court ban on race-conscious admissions.²⁴

In 2023, an activist group of Traditionalist Catholic inspiration called Traditional, Family, Property (TFP), protested outside Georgetown University's gates following a visit by Fr. James Martin, S.J., a known advocate for LGBTQ+ rights in Catholic Church. This led to a counter-protest by Georgetown students. The university had to reaffirm its commitment to being an inclusive campus that welcomes people of all identities and does not tolerate discrimination or harassment.²⁵

The ongoing struggles and challenges faced by Georgetown University, particularly in addressing incidents of bias and fostering an inclusive environment, are intricately tied to its efforts to align its Jesuit heritage with the demands of a modern, diverse educational landscape. This endeavour involves reconciling traditional Jesuit teachings, some of which may be perceived as regressive or outdated, with contemporary values of respect for diverse faiths, ideas, and people. The Bridge Initiative's activities at Georgetown University, particularly concerning rising Hinduphobia and poor scholarship, significantly challenge the university's efforts to balance its Jesuit heritage with a commitment to diverse ideas, faiths, and academic integrity. Georgetown which brands itself as an institution which fosters respect and dialogue among various religious and cultural groups, emphasizing social justice, ethical scholarship, and rigorous academic inquiry. However, the Bridge Initiative's repeated promotion of Hinduphobia through its publications, appears to diverge from these foundational values. This deviation not only questions the Initiative's alignment with the university's ethos but also raises concerns about the quality of its scholarship, especially when it is perceived as biased or lacking in academic rigour.

Furthermore, these observation stand in stark contrast to the Jesuit tradition of intellectual openness and respect for all faiths, a tradition that Georgetown University strives to uphold in a complex, multicultural academic environment. The university's ongoing struggle to balance its historical Jesuit ethos with the pluralistic demands of modern academia is further complicated by these claims against the Bridge Initiative. It highlights the intricate task of maintaining academic freedom while

²⁴ Board, T.E. (2023) *Editorial: Georgetown, protect lahannah.*, *The Hoya*. Available at: <https://thehoya.com/georgetown-protect-lahannah> (Accessed: 04 December 2023).

²⁵ Jamil, A. (2023) *Georgetown University students protest alt-right group*, *The Hoya*. Available at: <https://thehoya.com/georgetown-university-students-protest-alt-right-group/> (Accessed: 04 December 2023).

ensuring that research and advocacy work do not perpetuate prejudice or misinformation against any group, including Hindus. The university's response to the controversy surrounding the Bridge Initiative will be crucial. It will indicate how seriously Georgetown takes its commitment to displayed values of ethical reflection, social justice, and high scholarly standards in the face of challenges within its community. Addressing these allegations effectively will require not only a reaffirmation of the university's dedication to diverse perspectives and faiths but also a rigorous examination of the Bridge Initiative's adherence to the principles of unbiased research and respectful interfaith engagement.

Concluding Observations

The case in context surrounding Bridge Initiative at Georgetown University, particularly its propagation of biased and inaccurate information against Hindu communities and organizations, raises profound concerns about ethical responsibilities of academic institutions.

This situation highlights the need for maintaining integrity and objectivity in academic research and publications. The persistent allegations and the funding by figures like Alwaleed Bin Talal, coupled with the anti-semitic underpinnings of some supporters, add layers of complexity and suspicion. These elements suggest an ecosystem within certain academic circles that may be conducive to the dissemination of misinformation, especially when driven by specific agendas. The legal actions taken against the Bridge Initiative, such as the lawsuit filed by the Hindu American Foundation, emphasise serious consequences of distributing prejudiced and agenda-driven research. This scenario serves as a stark reminder of the critical importance of objectivity and impartiality in scholarly work.

It underscores duty of academic entities to uphold principles of accuracy and balance, which are essential in preserving the integrity of academic research and preventing the spread of false narratives. In conclusion, the Bridge Initiative's activities and the controversy it has sparked at Georgetown University call for a reevaluating role of academic and religious institutions in modern society. They underscore the importance of these institutions in fostering dialogue and understanding across different cultures and beliefs, while maintaining a commitment to rigorous scholarship and ethical principles. This situation presents a crucial opportunity for Georgetown University to align its Jesuit heritage with contemporary expectations of diversity and inclusion, ensuring that its scholarly endeavours reflect a balanced and respectful approach to all faiths and communities.

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