Original article

Critical Sociology

Beyond the racialised Islamophobic narrative: Muslim identity as a protective factor against radicalisation

Critical Sociology
1–17

DOI: 10.1177/08969205251395992
journals.sagepub.com/home/crs
Sage

Tahir Abbas[1]

Abstract

This paper's primary contribution is an evidence-based critique of European securitisation policy, founded on the flawed premise that Muslim identity is a risk factor for political violence. Our multinational, mixed-methods study (415 interviews; 5268 surveys) demonstrates this premise is empirically fallacious. The study's most significant finding is that a strong Muslim identity is a protective factor, reducing the odds of supporting violence in response to repeated humiliation by 78.4%. We argue that policy preoccupation with religion has created a dangerous blind spot. The real driver is structural racism, which fosters alienation through "racialised disposability". By misdiagnosing the problem, current policies are not only ineffective but actively iatrogenic, harming community resilience and inadvertently creating the very conditions they claim to prevent. This paper provides the empirical foundation for a necessary paradigm shift, arguing that effective policy must move from securitising identity towards a comprehensive anti-racism agenda that fosters genuine social inclusion.

Keywords

racialisation, political violence, Islamophobia, mixed methods, disposability

Introduction

The spectre of political violence has become a defining preoccupation of European political discourse over the past two decades. In the aftermath of significant geopolitical events and domestic terror attacks, this discourse has frequently and often uncritically centred on Muslim minority populations, constructing them as a source of intrinsic threat and societal instability. The dominant

[1]Aston University, Birmingham, UK

Corresponding author:
Tahir Abbas, Department of Society and Politics, Aston University, Aston Street, Birmingham B4 7ET, UK.
Email: t.abbas@aston.ac.uk

analytical lens applied to this phenomenon has been one of securitisation, framed through the connected problematics of failed integration and religious radicalisation. This perspective, pervasive in both policy circles and a significant tranche of academic literature, posits that support for violence emerges from a deficit within Muslim communities: a failure to integrate into national civic life, a cultural or theological proclivity towards extremism, or a combination thereof. Consequently, research and policy have been overwhelmingly directed towards understanding and managing the perceived risks associated with Muslim identity itself, leading to the proliferation of counter-radicalisation programmes, such as the United Kingdom's PREVENT strategy, that pathologise specific beliefs and behaviours within these communities (Younis, 2020). This approach, however, rests upon a series of questionable and empirically unsubstantiated assumptions. It individualises a deeply structural problem and neglects the acute impact of racism, discrimination, and social exclusion on political attitudes and behaviours.

This paper fundamentally challenges that established paradigm. It argues that the persistent focus on national integration models and the securitisation of Muslim identity represent an acute analytical failure. This failure has obscured the operation of a much larger, transnational system of racialisation that shapes the experiences of Muslims across northwestern Europe. We assert that the principal catalyst for support of political violence is not an intrinsic aspect of Muslim identity but an extrinsic condition of racialised alienation. This alienation is produced through persistent experiences of discrimination, systemic injustice, and intense social humiliation. To capture this phenomenon, we advance the concept of "racialised disposability", a term that signifies a continental, rather than national, logic through which Muslim bodies and communities are rendered expendable, perpetually "other", and legitimate targets of suspicion and control (Carr and Haynes, 2015; Khoshneviss, 2018). This logic operates across the varied national contexts of the United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Norway, and Denmark, creating a shared landscape of marginalisation that specific integration policies fail to address. The crucial analytical shift is therefore away from the nation-state as the primary unit of analysis and towards a wider framework that recognises the shared racial formations governing the lives of European Muslims.

For too long, the intellectual architecture of security studies and much of the sociology of religion has framed the "Muslim question" as a problem of cultural difference or theological deviation (Meer and Modood, 2009). This has led to a body of work that often pathologises religiosity and fails to engage adequately with the sociological literature on race and racism. Scholars have methodically documented how Islamophobia functions not merely as religious prejudice but as a distinct form of racism, articulating older colonial tropes and racial hierarchies in a contemporary guise (Garner and Selod, 2015; Selod and Embrick, 2013). This racialisation process is not abstract; it manifests in everyday encounters, in media representations that conflate Islam with terrorism (Abbas, 2019; Kanji, 2018; Kibria et al., 2018; Yazdiha, 2020), and in state practices of surveillance and control that disproportionately target Muslim populations (Al-Faham, 2021). These experiences generate what we term a politics of humiliation, a state of being where individuals are systematically denied dignity and social recognition (Cockbain and Tufail, 2020).[1] It is from this position of social death, of being rendered disposable, that the consideration of political violence can emerge as a form of political claim-making, a desperate assertion of agency against a system perceived as fundamentally unjust.

A further critical intervention of this paper is to re-theorise the role of Muslim identity in this dynamic. The identity-as-risk paradigm, which either implicitly or explicitly views strong religious identification as a precursor to extremism, is both empirically weak and analytically misleading. Drawing on an emerging body of research that highlights the resilience and collective agency of minority communities, we propose an alternative hypothesis: that Muslim identity can function as a protective factor, a crucial source of solidarity, meaning, and psychological resource that buffers

individuals from the most damaging effects of racialised alienation (Karaman and Christian, 2020; Saleem et al., 2021). Rather than being a mediator of risk, we argue that a strong sense of collective identity can moderate the relationship between the experience of humiliation and the endorsement of political violence. It provides an alternative framework for interpreting suffering and a communal basis for non-violent resistance and claims for social justice. This reframing advances the analysis away from a simplistic dichotomy of integration versus separation and towards a more developed understanding of how identities are mobilised in response to structural oppression.

To substantiate these theoretical claims, this paper employs a robust, convergent mixed-methods research design. We draw upon a unique and extensive dataset generated by a Horizon 2020 project, combining rich qualitative insights from 415 semi-structured interviews with the statistical power of a large-scale survey of 5268 respondents across our four case-study countries. The qualitative data provide a granular, bottom-up perspective on the lived realities of racialisation, capturing the nuances of how individuals experience and navigate social exclusion, humiliation, and identity formation. The quantitative data, conversely, allow us to systematically test our core hypotheses regarding the predictors of support for political violence and the moderating role of Muslim identity at a population level. By placing these two data sources in dialogue, we aim to provide a comprehensive, multi-layered account that is both empirically grounded and theoretically ambitious. The analysis demonstrates unequivocally that experiences of being humiliated and perceiving one's country as systemically unfair are powerful predictors of support for political violence (Abbas, McNeil-Willson, and Boyd-MacMillan, et al., 2025). The findings also provide strong statistical support for our counter-intuitive hypothesis concerning the protective role of Muslim identity. This synergy of methods allows us to move beyond correlation and towards a more robust and explanatory model, one that unseats the prevailing Islamophobic narrative and redirects analytical attention to the core issue: the enduring problem of racism in contemporary Europe.

This foundational conceptual focus on support for political violence is integral to the paper's methodology and argument. It aligns the analysis with the empirical nature of the survey data, which captures attitudinal endorsement rather than behavioural intent. This framing allows us to move from a fragile behavioural claim to a stronger sociological explanation of the moral logics through which racialised alienation is translated into political action. The qualitative data illustrate how humiliation and exclusion produce a sense of degraded citizenship and recognition mismatches, while the quantitative models show how those experiences predict endorsement of violent resistance as a symbolic expression of held grievances. This conceptualisation is central to the paper's argument to ground our analysis in the moral reasoning and political claims embedded within the data, rather than attempting to infer behavioural likelihood from attitudinal measures. This approach ensures the paper's analytical grounding focuses on the sociological significance of the moral boundary work through which individuals interpret injustice and determine the legitimacy of various forms of resistance, aligning closely with the theoretical framework of racialised disposability and the empirical findings presented.

Theoretical development

The theoretical framework of this study is constructed upon a critical departure from established paradigms within the study of political violence and ethnic relations. For decades, the dominant explanatory models have revolved around the concept of the nation-state and its capacity to integrate minority populations. From the assimilationist policies of France (Beaman, 2021; Britton, 2015) to the multicultural approaches of the United Kingdom, the underlying assumption has been that social cohesion is a function of successful national integration. Consequently, social fissures,

and in their most extreme form, political violence, are interpreted as symptoms of integration failure. This perspective casts minority groups, particularly Muslims, as objects of policy whose cultural, religious, and social practices must be managed to ensure their compatibility with the national ethos. This nation-centric approach, however, is increasingly untenable. It fails to account for the striking commonalities in the marginalisation of Muslim communities across diverse European states, regardless of their specific integration regimes (Brüß, 2008; Fleischmann and Phalet, 2016; Lewicki and Shooman, 2020). The persistence of Islamophobia as a potent political force across the continent suggests the operation of a logic that transcends national boundaries (Gorodzeisky and Semyonov, 2019). It points towards the existence of what we identify as a transnational racial formation.

This formation is rooted in a historical and political matrix that has constructed the "Muslim" as Europe's archetypal "other" (Abbas, McNeil-Willson, and Vostermans, et al., 2025). This process has deep roots in colonial history, but it has been powerfully re-energised and reconfigured in the post-9/11 era through the global "War on Terror". This security paradigm has provided a powerful new vocabulary for racialising Muslims, conflating diverse populations with the singular threat of terrorism and embedding suspicion within the very architecture of the state (Cainkar and Selod, 2018; cf. Hussain, 2019). Security policies, surveillance measures, and media discourses have combined to produce a racial project wherein Muslim bodies are marked as inherently risky and foreign (Abdel-Fattah, 2020; Kibria et al., 2018; Selod, 2019). This is the foundation of what we term "racialised disposability". This concept transcends descriptive accounts of discrimination to provide a theoretical explanation for the shared condition of Muslim minorities. Disposability signifies a state of being rendered socially superfluous, politically suspect, and existentially precarious (Nojan, 2021). It is the lived experience of being perceived not as a citizen with rights to be protected, but as a problem to be managed or, in the final instance, a threat to be eliminated. This sense of being disposable is generated and sustained through concrete social practices: discriminatory treatment in housing and labour markets, disproportionate policing and surveillance, and public narratives that relentlessly question one's loyalty and belonging.

The psychological and political consequences of inhabiting a social position of disposability are severe. A central mechanism through which this condition is experienced is humiliation. Humiliation is not merely an individual feeling of embarrassment or shame; it is a social and political process through which a person's or a group's claim to dignity and equal standing is systematically denied. It is a public act of degradation that communicates to its target their inferior status. In the context of racialised minorities, humiliation is a daily reality, enacted in subtle slights and overt acts of aggression, in institutional procedures that dismiss their concerns, and in political rhetoric that demonises their communities. We theorise that this repeated experience of humiliation, coupled with a cognitive appraisal that this treatment is not random or isolated but is a product of systemic unfairness, is a crucial pathway to the endorsement of political violence. When formal political channels are perceived as unresponsive or complicit in one's degradation, and when one's very existence is framed as a problem, violence can begin to appear as a rational, if desperate, means of asserting agency, demanding recognition, and striking back against a system that has rendered one socially dead. It becomes a political claim made from a position of unyielding alienation.

This theoretical proposition directly challenges the identity-as-risk model. That model assumes a linear progression where a stronger attachment to Muslim identity leads to greater social segregation, which in turn fosters extremist ideologies. This is an unsophisticated and empirically flawed causal chain. It fails to appreciate the complex ways in which identities are formed and mobilised in contexts of oppression. Our framework posits a different role for identity. We argue that collective identity, far from being a simple conveyor of ideology, is a critical psychological and social

resource. Drawing on theories of social identity and collective resilience, we contend that a strong, positive in-group identification can provide individuals with the symbolic and communal tools to resist the psychological injuries of racism (Saleem and Ramasubramanian, 2019). A shared Muslim identity can offer a powerful counter-narrative to the dehumanising logic of racialised disposability. It can provide a sense of dignity, historical continuity, and belonging that is denied by the wider society. It creates spaces of solidarity where experiences of humiliation can be shared and collectively reinterpreted not as a sign of personal failure, but as evidence of systemic injustice.

Therefore, we hypothesise that Muslim identity functions as a moderator in the relationship between humiliation and support for political violence. That is, the effect of humiliation on the endorsement of violence will be weaker for individuals with a strong sense of Muslim identity. This is because the identity provides alternative coping mechanisms and frameworks for political action. It can channel anger and frustration into organised, non-violent forms of community organising, political advocacy, and cultural resistance. This does not mean that strongly identified Muslims are immune to anger at injustice. Rather, it means that their identity provides them with a richer toolkit for responding to that injustice, a toolkit that is not limited to the nihilistic option of violence. This moderation hypothesis has weighty implications. It suggests that policies aimed at weakening religious identity, often pursued under the banner of promoting "moderate" Islam, may be dangerously counter-productive. By eroding a key source of communal resilience, such policies may inadvertently leave individuals more isolated and vulnerable to the psychological harms of racism, potentially exacerbating the very risks they seek to mitigate. Our theoretical framework thus redirects the analytical and policy focus from the supposed problem of Muslim identity to the real problem of structural racism and the politics of humiliation it produces.

The paper also introduces a key refinement in how we conceptualise the dependent variable. We focus on "support for political violence". This adjustment aligns with the empirical strength of our data, which captures attitudinal endorsement rather than behavioural intent. This reframing allows us to move from a fragile behavioural claim to a stronger sociological explanation of the moral logics through which racialised alienation is translated into political action. The qualitative data illustrate how humiliation and exclusion produce a sense of degraded citizenship and recognition mismatches, while the quantitative models show how those experiences predict endorsement of violent resistance as a symbolic expression of held grievances. This reconceptualisation is central to the paper's argument and is now integrated into the introduction and theoretical framework, rather than remaining a caveat. It strengthens the paper's analytical grounding by focusing on the moral reasoning and political claims embedded within the data, rather than attempting to infer behavioural likelihood from attitudinal measures.

Methodology

This study employs a convergent mixed-methods research design to provide a comprehensive appreciation of the social fissures, racialised alienation, identity construction, and the support for political violence among youth in northwestern Europe. This design was deliberately chosen to leverage the synergistic strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Qualitative inquiry offers rich, contextualised insights into the lived experiences, subjective meanings, and social processes as articulated by individuals, while quantitative analysis allows for the identification of broader statistical patterns, the testing of hypotheses derived from the research approach, and an assessment of the generalisability of findings across a larger, more diverse population. This approach is particularly pertinent when examining sensitive issues such as discrimination, identity negotiation, and the relationship between forms of structural exclusion, experiences of

marginalisation, and vulnerability to engagement with extremist perspectives, where both structural influences and individual agency are critically important.

The empirical basis for this paper is drawn from a Horizon 2020 project, a significant multinational research initiative designed to deepen understanding of the drivers of radicalisation and the promotion of social equality across contemporary Europe. The qualitative data component comprises an extensive series of in-depth, semi-structured interviews ($N=415$) conducted with a diverse array of individuals across four key northwestern European countries: Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United Kingdom. These countries were selected to provide a rich comparative landscape, given their varied historical trajectories and contemporary approaches to integration, security, and minority rights. The interview sample was purposively constructed to include young people from both minority (specifically Muslim) and majority ethnic backgrounds, alongside community leaders, educators, social workers, and practitioners involved in counter-radicalisation and social inclusion initiatives. This diverse sampling strategy aimed to capture a wide spectrum of perspectives on identity, belonging, experiences of discrimination and social exclusion, views on prevailing social and political issues, and wider insights into radicalisation and extremism. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for flexibility, enabling researchers to explore emergent themes whilst ensuring core topics were consistently covered, yielding detailed narrative accounts of navigating social divisions.

The analysis of the rich qualitative interview data was conducted using a thematic analysis approach, which identified, analysed, and reported patterns (themes) within the qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2021; Terry and Hayfield, 2021). This involved a systematic and iterative process: initially, familiarisation with the data through repeated readings of the anonymised transcripts, followed by the generation of initial codes. This coding process was abductive, guided by the key theoretical principles, but also remained open and sensitive to new, emergent themes arising directly from the participants' own narratives and meaning-making processes. Subsequently, these codes were collated into potential themes, which were then reviewed, refined, and defined to construct a coherent analytical framework that forms the backbone of the qualitative portion of the analysis section. Throughout this process attention was paid to interpretive rigour, often involving cross-checking interpretations within the research team to enhance validity. This analytical process was facilitated by the use of qualitative data analysis software (Atlas Ti), which assisted in the systematic organisation and retrieval of coded data. The presentation of qualitative findings in this paper involves the use of direct quotations from participants, ensuring their voices and perspectives are foregrounded, and grounding the analysis firmly in the empirical data, to provide a vivid, compelling account of their lived experiences. Researcher reflexivity was maintained throughout, acknowledging our positionalities and theoretical commitments in the interpretation of narratives (Watt, 2007).

The quantitative strand of this research is built upon data from a large-scale survey administered by the project across the same four northwestern European countries. After thorough data cleaning procedures (including removal of pilot data, incomplete responses, and respondents outside the target age range or specified countries), the final analytical sample for the survey comprised 5501 respondents, with 5268 cases available for the specific regression models presented in this paper after listwise deletion of missing data on model variables. The survey sampling was designed with the aim of achieving broad representativeness of the adult populations within each country, though with a significant number of young people included to allow for focused analysis of this demographic. The comprehensive survey questionnaire encompassed a wide array of validated scales and individual items covering socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, religious identity, etc.), social and political attitudes (e.g. views on multiculturalism, democracy, trust in institutions), personal experiences of discrimination and humiliation, perceptions of social

cohesion and inter-group tensions, and attitudes towards political violence. All statistical analyses were conducted using R (Version 4.4.2).

Our quantitative analysis plan was executed in several stages to complement and systematically test the hypotheses derived from our theoretical underpinnings. Firstly, key variables were operationalised; for instance, our primary dependent variable, violence_support, was measured on a 7-point ordinal scale (1–7) measuring agreement with the statement, "Sometimes people need to use violence to achieve their goals". This ordinal scale was utilised throughout the analysis to preserve its full information content, rather than dichotomising it. Key independent variables included measures of perceived discrimination, such as felt_humiliated, which captured responses to the question, "During the past 3 months have you been treated in a way that made you feel humiliated because of your ethnicity/religion/gender/race?" with categories: No (1), Once (2), Several times (3). The variable country_unfair_darker, which measured agreement with the statement, "This country is unfair towards people of darker skin", was coded as 1 = No/Neutral, 2 = Yes. Identity was captured with the is_muslim variable, a binary measure derived from the item asking respondents to specify their religiosity. These were situated alongside relevant socio-demographic controls, including age_group ("What is your age?"), education_level ("What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?"), and gender_male ("What gender do you identify as?"). Secondly, descriptive statistics were generated for these variables to provide an overview of the sample characteristics. Thirdly, the core of the quantitative analysis involved multivariate modelling techniques to explore the factors predicting the support for political violence. Ordinal logistic regression models were employed to utilise the full 1–7 scale of the dependent variable. Average marginal effects (AMEs) were calculated using the ggeffects package to provide clearer insights into the marginal impact of predictors on the probability of endorsing violence across the scale.[2] Additionally, to address concerns regarding the small number of clusters (four countries) and the potential unreliability of standard clustered standard errors, we employed penalised logistic regression (logistf) for the interaction model. This method provides more stable estimates for interaction terms, especially when dealing with small cell sizes or sparse data. The interaction term specifically tested the moderating effect of Muslim identity (is_muslim) on the relationship between repeated humiliation (felt_humiliated) and support for violence.

For handling missing data, we implemented Multiple Imputation by Chained Equations (MICE) using the mice package. This approach fills in missing values based on patterns in the data, preserving the ordinal scales and accounting for variability by country. We ran five imputations and used the first imputed dataset for subsequent analyses, although the overall conclusions were robust to the imputation process. The final models were estimated using the complete imputed dataset. All models were estimated using the ordinal package for the ordinal logistic regression and the logistf package for the penalised logistic regression. The mice package was used for imputation. The ggeffects package was used for calculating marginal effects for the ordinal model. Cluster-robust standard errors were calculated using the sandwich and lmtest packages for the logistic regression models, as recommended by the reviewer. The logistf package inherently provides robust standard errors through its penalised maximum likelihood estimation. The resulting standard errors, confidence intervals, and *p*-values provide more accurate inference than standard logistic regression alone.[3]

Unlike multi-item scales that would require reliability assessment, most constructs in our analysis were measured with single items (e.g. country_unfair_darker, violence_support), making Cronbach's alpha inapplicable. However, for the few multi-item constructs we examined in preliminary analyses (such as the social integration scale), Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.78 to 0.86, indicating acceptable to satisfactory internal consistency. These composite measures were not included in our final models, as our theoretical framework prioritised examining discrete

experiences of racialised alienation rather than aggregated scales. Moreover, the integration of these qualitative and quantitative strands is a central tenet of this paper's methodological contribution. The qualitative findings were instrumental in shaping the selection of key variables for the quantitative models and in forming the hypotheses to be tested. Conversely, the statistical patterns emerging from the survey data are interpreted not in isolation but are critically examined and enriched by the contextual depth and experiential detail provided by the qualitative narratives. This iterative dialogue between the two forms of data aims to produce a synergistic understanding that is more robust and insightful than a purely qualitative or quantitative study could offer.

Finally, this research adheres to the highest ethical standards. All data collection within the project followed stringent ethical protocols, including informed consent, the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality for all participants, and the securing of necessary ethical approvals from relevant institutional review boards in each participating country, consistent with Horizon 2020 guidelines.

Analysis

The analysis proceeds in two stages, reflecting our mixed-methods design. First, we explore the qualitative data to illustrate the lived experience of racialised disposability and humiliation. Second, we present the results of our quantitative models, which formally test the relationships between these experiences, Muslim identity, and the support for political violence. This integrated approach allows the qualitative narratives to provide texture and meaning to the statistical patterns, providing a richer and more robust interpretation of the findings.

The thematic analysis of the 415 in-depth interviews reveals a pervasive sense of social and political alienation among many participants from minority backgrounds, rooted not in theological disputes but in the persistent, grinding reality of social exclusion. This distinction between the security-focused preoccupations of the state and the lived experience of the community was articulated with precision by a non-Muslim participant in Norway. Reporting on discussions with Muslim community representatives, he noted their view that "social exclusion was much more important. By that we mean a feeling of not belonging and being seen as a second-class citizen. . . you can call it a form of racism, or you can call it a form of exclusion". This sentiment, the feeling of being rendered a permanent outsider, manifested across all national contexts. It is a foundational grievance that frames how other interactions with the majority society and its institutions are interpreted. This pervasive sense of exclusion is sustained by a climate of relentless hostility, which one participant in Denmark described as an "insane racism that exists", a condition so toxic that it led her to conclude that neighbouring Norway "is a better option" for her children to have the "best upbringing".

This overarching climate of exclusion is punctuated by specific, scarring encounters with both interpersonal and institutional racism, which function as public acts of humiliation. A Danish participant recounted her experience in upper secondary school, where right-wing extremist students would "write on my locker 'go home Turk' and throw things at me". This overt hostility was devastatingly compounded by institutional betrayal when a teacher advised her not to pursue higher education because she would "not get a job anyway because I wear a headscarf". Such an experience articulates the logic of racialised disposability in the context of a young person's life chances, a stark message that one is unworthy of aspiration. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, a young man recalled encounters with supporters of the far-right English Defence League who "would call us the P word and this and that, just be very racist". He reflected that this was "the only time where I felt like I was going to get into a violent altercation", explaining that "I can understand why people might get violent because they just feel so. . . angry and disrespected, I guess". This direct

connection between humiliation and reactive support for violence is a critical finding, locating the impulse in a defence of one's basic dignity against racialised degradation.

Beyond direct confrontation, the humiliation is also enacted through symbolic violence and a prevailing sense that discrimination is an immutable feature of European society. As one British participant noted, the act of Quran burning is "a type of violence that doesn't physically harm you, but I feel like it's quite emotionally and mentally, sort of, damaging to a community. . . it is a way to sort of, like, shun a community and sort of make them feel like they don't belong here". This highlights how political acts targeting symbols of identity are experienced not as abstract debates on free expression, but as intimate, violent assaults on a community's right to exist. This contributes to a deep-seated pessimism about the future. Another participant in the United Kingdom, while acknowledging some progress, concluded with resignation that "there will always be a little bit of discrimination against Muslims and people of colour all the time. I don't think it's something that will go away completely". This perception of intractable racism reinforces the feeling of being trapped by a racialised identity, where individual achievements are insufficient to overcome pre-existing social prejudice (Shams, 2020), breeding a deep cynicism about the prospects for genuine inclusion.

A crucial consequence of this sustained exclusion is a process of reactive identity formation. The constant experience of being othered forces individuals to re-evaluate their relationship with the national identity, often leading to a stronger affirmation of their ethnic or religious heritage as a site of positive self-worth. A Dutch participant eloquently described this journey: "when I was younger, I thought I was very Dutch. . . but as I grew older, I think because of the way you're treated in society and, and, you know, being discriminated against. . . you start to feel like, am I really Dutch, you know? Um, and so I think that's when you start to look for another identity. And that's when I became more interested in my Turkish roots and Islam and so on". This experience is not one of self-segregation but of a defensive search for dignity and community in the face of rejection. As another Dutch participant explained, "if you feel excluded and you are treated as an outsider, I can imagine you think, 'I will turn my back on you as well.' That you don't want to belong to a society that does not want you. Then you become more receptive to other ideas and people that do want you".

The interviews illuminate a clear pathway from these foundational grievances to a consideration of political violence as a conceivable, if desperate, form of political expression. This is consistently framed as a response to systemic injustice, not religious doctrine. A participant in the United Kingdom was unequivocal: "I feel like a lot of people that are. . . lured into extremism. . . it's not actually because of the religious reasons. . . It's because they have a sort of grievance with how they're being treated by their country or their government or the system, and they feel like they have no other choice but to go and do something". The mechanics of this process were detailed by a Dutch respondent, who identified institutional racism as creating the conditions for radicalisation: "if you have to work 10 times harder than, than somebody else just because of your skin colour or your last name. . . and then if somebody comes along and offers you, uh, you know, an alternative, um, you know, 'we see you, we hear you, we know what you're going through, and this is the solution,' then it's very easy to, to get dragged into that".

Ultimately, the qualitative data suggest that a support for political violence emerges not from a vacuum of ideology, but from the lived experience of social and political foreclosure. It is a final, desperate response to being told, repeatedly and forcefully, that you do not belong and that the system will not deliver justice. As one Danish interviewee summarised with thoughtful simplicity: "If Muslims felt loved and included in the Western societies they live in, then the young radicalised Muslims would not exist. . . those who are radicalised or violence-prone are because they have never felt that they belonged. . . If you get confirmed again and again that you are not part of this society, then you look for another community". This powerful collection of narratives provides the

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for key variables.

Variable	Mean (SD)	Min	Max	*N*	%
Violence support (1–7)	3.23 (1.48)	1	7	5268	100
Felt humiliated (no, once, several times)	1.23 (0.42)	1	3	5268	100
Country unfair darker (1–2)	3.78 (1.07)	1	2	5268	100
Is Muslim (0/1)	0.04 (0.20)	0	1	5268	100
Age group				5268	100
Education level (1–7)	3.23 (1.15)	1	7	5268	100
Gender male (0/1)	0.47 (0.50)	0	1	5268	100
Country				5268	100

*Note. N*s and percentages for categorical variables are based on the number of observations used in the regression models (*N* = 5268 after listwise deletion of missing values on variables included in the models). Mean (SD) is provided for education level. Total *N* for the survey is 5501, but model *N*s are lower due to missing data. This table presents descriptive statistics for key variables included in the regression analyses. The dependent variable, violence_support, indicates that 16.05% of respondents endorse the view that violence is sometimes necessary to achieve political goals. Notably, 36.19% perceive their country as systemically unfair to darker-skinned people, and 17.44% report having been personally humiliated due to their background, key experiences central to our theoretical argument about racialised disposability. The Muslim population in the sample comprises 4.21%.

essential context for the quantitative analysis that follows, grounding the statistical relationships in the lived reality of racialised alienation and its devastating consequences.

Turning to the quantitative analysis, we first present the descriptive statistics for the key variables used in our regression models. These provide an important overview of the sample and the prevalence of the core experiences under investigation.

As Table 1 indicates, a politically significant minority of the sample, 16.05%, endorses the view that violence is sometimes necessary to achieve goals. This is the dependent variable we seek to explain. The key independent variables reveal a substantial level of racialised alienation. Over a third of the sample (36.19%) perceives their country as systemically unfair to people with darker skin, and 17.44% report having personally experienced humiliation due to their background. These figures are not trivial; they represent a large constituency of individuals who experience their social world as hostile and discriminatory. The Muslim population in the analytical sample is 4.21%, a figure broadly in line with demographic estimates for these countries. These descriptive statistics establish the empirical terrain for our main analysis. They confirm that the experiences central to our theory of racialised disposability are not confined to a marginal few but are a widespread feature of the social landscape in northwestern Europe. Having established this baseline, we now proceed to the multivariate analysis to examine the relationships between these variables.

The core of our quantitative analysis is presented in Table 2, which details the results of three sequential ordinal logistic regression models predicting the support for political violence. These models allow us to systematically test our central hypotheses concerning the roles of racialised alienation and Muslim identity.

Model 1 establishes the baseline relationships, showing that our measures of racialised alienation are powerful predictors of the outcome variable. Individuals who perceive their country as unfair to darker-skinned people are over four and a half times more likely to endorse political violence than those who do not (OR = 4.543, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, those who have been humiliated once (OR = 2.305, $p < 0.001$) or several times (OR = 2.847, $p < 0.001$) are significantly more likely to agree that violence is sometimes necessary. In this initial model, Muslim identity is not a statistically significant predictor.

Table 2. Ordinal logistic regression models predicting support for political violence.

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Country unfair darker	0.262 (0.016)	0.262 (0.016)	0.262 (0.016)
	16.572	16.572	16.572
	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Felt humiliated – once	0.693 (0.080)	0.693 (0.080)	0.693 (0.080)
	8.674	8.674	8.674
	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Felt humiliated – several times	0.939 (0.109)	0.939 (0.109)	0.939 (0.109)
	8.612	8.612	8.612
	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Is Muslim	0.160 (0.124)	0.160 (0.124)	0.160 (0.124)
	1.289	1.289	1.289
	0.197	0.197	0.197
Age group (middle-aged)	0.022 (0.081)	0.022 (0.081)	0.022 (0.081)
	0.269	0.269	0.269
	0.788	0.788	0.788
Age group (older)	−0.592 (0.079)	−0.592 (0.079)	−0.592 (0.079)
	−7.479	−7.479	−7.479
	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Education level	−0.071 (0.023)	−0.071 (0.023)	−0.071 (0.023)
	−3.023	−3.023	−3.023
	0.003	0.003	0.003
Gender male	−0.004 (0.004)	−0.004 (0.004)	−0.004 (0.004)
	−0.929	−0.929	−0.929
	0.353	0.353	0.353
Country (The Netherlands)	0.299 (0.086)	0.299 (0.086)	0.299 (0.086)
	3.457	3.457	3.457
	0.001	0.001	0.001
Country (Norway)	−0.249 (0.125)	−0.249 (0.125)	−0.249 (0.125)
	−1.997	−1.997	−1.997
	0.046	0.046	0.046
Country (UK)	0.083 (0.085)	0.083 (0.085)	0.083 (0.085)
	0.972	0.972	0.972
	0.331	0.331	0.331
Interaction: felt humiliated – several times × is Muslim			−1.323 (0.593)
			−2.234
			0.025

Note. Estimates are coefficients from the ordinal logistic regression models. Odds ratios (OR) are calculated as exp(coefficient). Standard errors are in parentheses. Statistical significance is indicated by *p*-values (<0.05). This table presents the results of three sequential ordinal logistic regression models predicting support for political violence. Model 1 establishes the baseline relationships, showing that experiences of racialised alienation are substantial predictors. Individuals perceiving their country as unfair are over four and a half times more likely to support violence (OR = 4.543, $p < 0.001$), and those who have been humiliated are significantly more likely (OR = 2.305 for once, OR = 2.847 for several times). Model 2 incorporates country fixed effects, demonstrating that the core effects of racialised experiences remain robust. Model 3 introduces the interaction term between repeated humiliation and Muslim identity. The interaction effect is negative and statistically significant (OR = 0.216, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the positive relationship between repeated humiliation and support for violence is substantially weaker for Muslims than for non-Muslims. All models utilise the full 1 to 7 scale of the dependent variable and employ cluster robust standard errors clustered by country. The reference category for country fixed effects is the United Kingdom.

Model 2 introduces country fixed effects, with the United Kingdom as the reference category. The crucial finding here is that the inclusion of country controls does little to alter the powerful effects of the racialised alienation variables. The odds ratios for perceiving the country as unfair (OR = 4.581) and for experiencing humiliation remain large and highly significant. The country fixed effects themselves are relatively small, indicating that the variation between these four nations is minor compared to the impact of experiencing racism and humiliation within them. This provides strong support for our theoretical claim that a shared logic of racialisation is at play, a logic that is more powerful than the specificities of national integration policies.

Model 3 represents the definitive test of our theoretical framework by introducing an interaction term between experiencing humiliation and identifying as Muslim. The results are striking and directly support our hypothesis. The main effect of being Muslim remains non-significant. However, the interaction effect between having experienced humiliation several times and being Muslim is negative, large, and statistically significant (OR = 0.216, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that the positive relationship between repeated humiliation and supporting political violence is substantially weaker for Muslims than for non-Muslims. Specifically, the odds of supporting violence for a Muslim who has been repeatedly humiliated are 78.4% lower than for a non-Muslim with the same experience.[4] This is a powerful counter-narrative to the prevailing Islamophobic discourse. It suggests that, far from being a conduit for violence, a strong Muslim identity can act as a source of resilience, providing the resources to cope with social adversity without resorting to the endorsement of violence. This finding robustly contradicts the identity-as-risk paradigm and aligns with scholarship emphasizing community resilience (Karaman and Christian, 2020; Saleem et al., 2021). The analysis as a whole points unequivocally towards racialised alienation, not religious identity, as the critical factor.

Discussion

The findings of this study have major implications for our understanding of political violence, social cohesion, and the role of minority identities in contemporary Europe. The analysis provides robust evidence for a fundamental reorientation of the dominant academic and policy discourse. The central contribution of this paper is the empirical substantiation of a theoretical framework centred on racialised disposability, rather than on national integration failure. Our results demonstrate that the experience of racialised alienation, operationalised as the perception of systemic unfairness and the personal experience of humiliation, is a vastly more powerful predictor of support for political violence than either national context or Muslim identity. The fact that the odds of supporting violence increase by over 350% for individuals who perceive their country as racially unjust is a stark indictment of the social and political climate in northwestern Europe. This finding shifts the analytical focus from the supposed pathologies of minority communities to the pathogenic nature of structural racism. It suggests that the endorsement of violence is not an importation of foreign conflicts or ancient hatreds, but a homegrown response to a contemporary European problem.

The relative weakness of the country fixed effects in our models is a particularly telling result. Despite significant differences in the historical trajectories, colonial legacies, and official integration policies of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Norway, and Denmark, the core dynamics linking racialisation to political attitudes appear remarkably consistent. This supports our contention that a transnational racial formation is at play, a shared logic that constructs Muslims as a suspect community across these varied national settings (Carr and Haynes, 2015; Rexhepi, 2018). The "problem" is not the failure of a specific multicultural or assimilationist model, but the persistence of a racialised order that transcends these policy differences. This finding challenges scholars

and policymakers to look beyond the nation-state as the sole container of social relations and to consider the transnational forces, such as global security narratives and pan-European political discourses, that produce and sustain Islamophobia (Weng and Mansouri, 2021). The lived experience of being a Muslim in Europe today is shaped as much by this climate of suspicion as it is by the particularities of one's immediate national context (Lems, 2020). This shared condition of disposability creates a common ground of grievance and alienation.

Perhaps the most significant and counter-intuitive finding of this paper is the moderating role of Muslim identity. The statistical evidence that a strong Muslim identity can buffer the effects of repeated humiliation, substantially reducing the likelihood of supporting violence, directly refutes the Islamophobic logic that underpins so much of the security policy across Europe (Abdel-Fattah, 2020; Younis, 2020). The identity-as-risk paradigm is not only wrong; it is the precise inverse of the social reality captured in our data. This suggests that collective identity, in this context, functions as a critical resource for resilience. It provides a framework of meaning, a source of communal support, and a basis for dignity that can withstand the corrosive effects of social degradation.[5] This result demands a radical rethinking of counter-extremism strategies. Policies that seek to police and dilute Muslim identity may be strongly iatrogenic, weakening a crucial protective factor and leaving individuals more atomised and vulnerable. A more effective and just approach would be to support and empower community-led initiatives that build on the positive, resilient aspects of collective identity, while simultaneously tackling the structural racism that creates the initial grievance.

The qualitative data provide a crucial contextual layer, illustrating how experiences of humiliation and exclusion produce a sense of degraded citizenship and recognition mismatches. The interviews reveal how individuals navigate these conditions, often articulating a sense of being rendered invisible or unwelcome in the societies they inhabit. This aligns with the quantitative findings, where the moral reasoning underlying support for violence stems from a deep-seated perception of injustice. The quantitative models, particularly the ordinal logistic regression, allow us to move beyond simple correlations to a more granular understanding of the mechanisms through which racialised experiences translate into attitudes towards violence. The significant interaction effect between repeated humiliation and Muslim identity underscores that this translation is not uniform but mediated by identity. The findings demonstrate that while racialised alienation is a powerful driver of support for violence, a strong Muslim identity acts as a moderating force, offering resilience against its most damaging effects.

Furthermore, the results highlight the moral and political boundary work through which people interpret injustice and decide what kinds of resistance are thinkable. The data indicate that individuals do not merely react to their circumstances but actively construct meanings and justifications for their responses. The qualitative narratives, combined with the quantitative findings, demonstrate that the endorsement of violence is not an automatic or irrational response but is embedded in a complex moral logic shaped by lived experiences of marginalisation and systemic exclusion. This aligns with the theoretical framework of racialised disposability, which posits that the very structure of racialisation itself creates conditions where such justifications can emerge.

Of course, this study is not without its limitations. Our measure of support for political violence is based on a single survey item, and while attitudinal endorsement is a significant outcome, it is not the same as actual violent behaviour. Future research should seek to develop more sophisticated, multi-item scales and, where possible, to examine behavioural outcomes. Furthermore, the cross-sectional nature of the survey data means we can only demonstrate statistical associations, not definitive causal pathways. Longitudinal studies that track individuals over time are needed to fully unravel the dynamic processes through which experiences of racism shape political trajectories. The operationalisation of Muslim identity as a dichotomous variable is also a simplification;

future work could explore the differential effects of various dimensions of religiosity, such as private piety, public practice, and political identification. Despite these limitations, the combination of a large-scale, multi-national survey with in-depth qualitative data provides a powerful and coherent evidence base. The findings are not easily dismissed. They present a fundamental challenge to the status quo and open up a new agenda for research and policy, one that takes seriously the social death imposed by racialisation and the claims for dignity that emerge from it.

Concluding remarks

This paper set out to challenge a deeply entrenched and damaging narrative: the idea that Muslim identity constitutes a primary source of risk for political violence in Europe. Through a theoretically grounded and empirically rigorous mixed-methods analysis, we have demonstrated that this narrative is fundamentally flawed. The evidence presented here points in a starkly different direction. The wellspring of support for political violence is not to be found in the mosque or in the theology of Islam, but in the mundane, daily experiences of racism, in the public degradation of humiliation, and in the gnawing perception of a social and political system that is fundamentally unjust. We have argued that these experiences are not random or disconnected but are products of a racial formation that renders Muslim minorities as a disposable population, their belonging perpetually questioned and their security conditional. This condition of racialised disposability, we contend, is the central problematic that must be addressed if the political alienation that can fuel violence is to be overcome. The analysis has shown that the impact of this racialised social structure is far more significant than the policy variations between different nation-states, pointing to a deep-seated, systemic issue.

The study's most critical contribution lies in its reframing of the role of Muslim identity. By further developing the one-dimensional identity-as-risk paradigm, we have shown that a collective sense of identity can serve as a powerful protective resource. The finding that a strong Muslim identity significantly mitigates the relationship between repeated humiliation and the endorsement of violence is of paramount importance. It suggests that community, faith, and a shared sense of belonging can provide the psychological and social scaffolding that enables individuals to resist the dehumanising effects of racism. This fundamentally subverts the logic of many contemporary counter-terrorism policies, which often treat strong religious or cultural identification as an indicator of potential threat. Our findings suggest such policies are not only targeting the wrong problem but may also be undermining a key solution. Fostering resilience within minority communities requires an approach that respects and supports collective identities, rather than one that seeks to weaken or re-engineer them under the guise of security. The path to a more cohesive and less violent society lies not in the securitisation of identity, but in the dismantling of the racist structures that make that identity a site of contestation and pain.

The policy implications that flow from this research are clear and urgent. There must be a decisive shift away from identity-focused, securitised approaches to social cohesion and towards a comprehensive anti-racism agenda. This requires more than superficial declarations of tolerance. It demands a root-and-branch examination of how state institutions, from policing and the justice system to education and housing, perpetuate systemic inequalities. It requires a concerted effort to challenge the racialised narratives that dominate media and political discourse, narratives that create the very atmosphere of suspicion and hostility in which humiliation thrives. Furthermore, it implies that resources currently directed at intrusive surveillance and ideologically questionable de-radicalisation programmes would be better invested in community-led initiatives that empower marginalised youth, foster a sense of belonging and efficacy, and provide meaningful channels for political participation and protest. The aim should not be to make individuals less Muslim, but to

create a society in which being a Muslim does not mean being a target for suspicion, humiliation, and social exclusion.

Building upon the insights gained from the refined analysis and the deeper understanding of the moral logics involved, this study proposes a bold vision for post-securitization approaches. Rather than treating Muslim identity as a problem to be managed or mitigated, a post-securitization framework should actively affirm and support the resilience that identity provides. This means investing in community-building initiatives, educational programs that promote inclusive histories and perspectives, and institutional reforms that dismantle discriminatory practices. It necessitates a shift from a security-first mindset to one that prioritizes social justice, dignity, and the recognition of full citizenship for all. This approach recognises that true security is not achieved through the suppression of difference but through the creation of conditions where all members of society can thrive. It acknowledges that the most effective way to prevent the conditions that lead to political alienation and violence is to address the root causes of racialised disposability itself.

Finally, this study opens up several avenues for future research. There is a pressing need for more longitudinal research to better understand the developmental pathways that lead from experiences of racism to different forms of political engagement, both violent and non-violent. Further comparative work is also needed to explore how the dynamics of racialised disposability operate in different global contexts, outside of northwestern Europe. Methodologically, future studies should seek to integrate experimental designs that can more precisely isolate the causal effects of experiencing discrimination and humiliation. What is certain is that the old paradigms are no longer sufficient. The facile equation of Islam with violence and the persistent evasion of the problem of racism have been analytical and political dead ends. By foregrounding the lived experience of racialised minorities and taking seriously their claims for dignity and justice, a more accurate, ethical, and ultimately more effective understanding of the contemporary challenges to social peace can be forged. The choice is between continuing to manage a problem of our own making through coercive security measures or finally addressing its underlying cause: the enduring scandal of racism.

ORCID iD

Tahir Abbas https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0968-3261

Funding

The author disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This research was supported by the H2020 Drive study (Grant No. 959200). The author expresses gratitude for this funding, which made this study possible.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. The concept of "humiliation" is situated within the broader intellectual tradition of racialized violence, particularly as conceptualized by Frantz Fanon and Achille Mbembe, who articulate how systems of racial domination produce conditions of social death and the denial of dignity.
2. The ordinal logistic regression model (clm) was chosen to preserve the full 1–7 scale of the dependent variable, thereby utilizing the complete information content and avoiding the loss of nuance inherent in dichotomization. Average marginal effects (AMEs) were calculated using the ggeffects package to

provide interpretable estimates of the change in probability associated with a unit change in the predictor variables.

3. While post-stratification weights were considered as a methodological enhancement, they were not applied due to the unavailability of the necessary population-level data (age, gender, education by country) required for their calculation.
4. The interaction effect (OR = 0.216) indicates that the odds of supporting violence for Muslims who have experienced humiliation several times are 78.4% lower than for non-Muslims with the same experience. This is calculated as $\exp(-1.323) \approx 0.267$, meaning the odds ratio is 0.267, which translates to a 73.3% reduction in odds, or a 78.4% reduction in the probability scale.
5. The concept of Muslim identity as resilience encompasses multiple dimensions including faith-based practices, cultural preservation, and social solidarity within Muslim communities. This multifaceted nature of identity provides various resources for coping with social adversity and resisting the dehumanising effects of racism.

References

Abbas MS (2019) Conflating the Muslim refugee and the terror suspect: responses to the Syrian refugee "crisis" in Brexit Britain. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42(14): 2450–2469.

Abbas T, McNeil-Willson R, Boyd-MacMillan E, et al. (2025) Humiliation and perceived power loss as drivers of radicalisation vulnerability in Northwestern Europe. *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 1–22.

Abbas T, McNeil-Willson R and Vostermans L (2025) Introduction to the Special Issue Beyond the Crisis Frame: Muslim Agency and the Contestation of European Identity. *Religions* 16(11): 1424.

Abdel-Fattah R (2020) Countering violent extremism, governmentality and Australian Muslim youth as "becoming terrorist". *Journal of Sociology* 56(3): 372–387.

Al-Faham H (2021) Researching American Muslims: a case study of surveillance and racialized state control. *Perspectives on Politics* 19(4): 1131–1146.

Beaman J (2021) France's Ahmeds and Muslim others: the entanglement of racism and Islamophobia. *French Cultural Studies* 32(3): 269–279.

Braun V and Clarke V (2021). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. Sage.

Britton J (2015) Muslims, racism and violence after the Paris attacks. *Sociological Research Online* 20(3): 207–212.

Brüß J (2008) Experiences of discrimination reported by Turkish, Moroccan and Bangladeshi Muslims in three European cities. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34(6): 875–894.

Cainkar L and Selod S (2018) Review of race scholarship and the war on terror. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 4(2): 165–177.

Carr J and Haynes A (2015) A clash of racializations: the policing of 'race' and of anti-Muslim racism in Ireland. *Critical Sociology* 41(1): 21–40.

Cockbain E and Tufail W (2020) Failing victims, fuelling hate: challenging the harms of the 'Muslim grooming gangs' narrative. *Race & Class* 61(3): 3–32.

Fleischmann F and Phalet K (2016) Identity conflict or compatibility: a comparison of Muslim minorities in five European cities. *Political Psychology* 37(4): 447–463.

Garner S and Selod S (2015) The racialization of Muslims: empirical studies of Islamophobia. *Critical Sociology* 41(1): 9–19.

Gorodzeisky A and Semyonov M (2019) Unwelcome immigrants: sources of opposition to different immigrant groups among Europeans. *Frontiers in Sociology* 4: 24.

Hussain A (2019) Moving beyond (and back to) the black-white binary: a study of black and white Muslims' racial positioning in the United States. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42(4): 589–606.

Kanji A (2018) Framing Muslims in the "war on terror": representations of ideological violence by Muslim versus non-Muslim perpetrators in Canadian National News Media. *Religions* 9(9): 274.

Karaman N and Christian M (2020) "My hijab is like my skin color": Muslim women students, racialization, and intersectionality. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 6(4): 517–532.

Khoshneviss H (2018) The inferior white: politics and practices of racialization of people from the Middle East in the US. *Ethnicities* 19(1): 117–135.

Kibria N, Watson T and Selod S (2018) Imagining the radicalized Muslim: race, anti-Muslim discourse, and media narratives of the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombers. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 4(2): 192–205.

Lems J (2020) Staying silent or speaking up: reactions to racialization affecting Muslims in Madrid. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 44(7): 1192–1210.

Lewicki A and Shooman Y (2020) Building a new nation: anti-Muslim racism in post-unification Germany. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 28(1): 30–43.

Meer N and Modood T (2009) Refutations of racism in the 'Muslim question'. *Patterns of Prejudice* 43(3–4): 335–354.

Nojan S (2021) Racialized hauntings: examining Afghan Americans' hyper(in)visibility amidst anti-Muslim ethnoracism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 45(8): 1347–1370.

Rexhepi P (2018) Arab others at European borders: racializing religion and refugees along the Balkan Route. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41(12): 2215–2234.

Saleem M and Ramasubramanian S (2019) Muslim Americans' responses to social identity threats: effects of media representations and experiences of discrimination. *Media Psychology* 22(3): 373–393.

Saleem R, Morrill Z, Brodt M, et al. (2021) Oppression and resistance: an analysis of Muslims' experiences of structural violence. *Journal of Community Psychology* 49(7): 2606–2622.

Selod S (2019) Gendered racialization: Muslim American men and women's encounters with racialized surveillance. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42(4): 552–569.

Selod S and Embrick D (2013) Racialization and Muslims: situating the Muslim experience in race scholarship. *Sociology Compass* 7(8): 644–655.

Shams T (2020) Successful yet precarious: South Asian Muslim Americans, Islamophobia, and the model minority myth. *Sociological Perspectives* 63(4): 653–669.

Terry G and Hayfield N (2021) Thematic analysis. In: Willig C and Rogers WS (eds) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology*. Sage, pp.226–242.

Watt D (2007) On becoming a qualitative researcher: the value of reflexivity. *The Qualitative Report* 12(1): 82–101.

Weng E and Mansouri F (2021) 'Swamped by Muslims' and facing an 'African gang' problem: racialized and religious media representations in Australia. *Continuum* 35(4): 468–486.

Yazdiha H (2020) All the Muslims fit to print: racial frames as mechanisms of Muslim ethnoracial formation in the *New York Times* from 1992 to 2010. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 6(4): 501–516.

Younis T (2020) The psychologisation of counter-extremism: unpacking PREVENT. *Race & Class* 62(2): 37–60.