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THEORIZING MUSLIM OTHERING AS 'RACIALIZED NATIONALISM' IN THE INDIAN AND AUSTRALIAN CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the phenomenon of Muslim othering in the Indian and Australian contexts through the lens of 'racialized nationalism.' The term 'racialized nationalism' encompasses the process of constructing Muslims as a racialized 'other,' distinct from the dominant national identity, based on cultural, religious, and ethnic markers. The study explores how such racialized narratives and discourses contribute to the marginalization and exclusion of Muslim communities within these countries. Drawing on an interdisciplinary approach, the paper delves into historical, social, and political factors that shape and perpetuate Muslim othering. By theorizing this phenomenon as 'racialized nationalism,' the study aims to shed light on the complex dynamics between national identity, ethno-religious diversity, and exclusionary practices, with implications for understanding and addressing contemporary challenges of discrimination and social cohesion in multi-ethnic societies.

KEYWORDS

Muslim othering, racialized nationalism, Indian context, Australian context, discrimination, marginalization, exclusion, national identity, ethno-religious diversity, social cohesion.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of Muslim othering has become a topic of significant scholarly interest, particularly in the contexts of India and Australia. Muslim communities in both countries have experienced various forms of

marginalization, exclusion, and discrimination, often stemming from the construction of Muslims as a racialized 'other' within the dominant national narratives. This process of 'racialized nationalism'

involves the attribution of specific cultural, religious, and ethnic characteristics to Muslims, leading to their perceived difference from the majority identity. Such othering has deep-rooted historical, social, and political underpinnings, and it poses critical challenges to social cohesion and inclusivity in multi-ethnic societies.

This paper seeks to explore and theorize Muslim othering as 'racialized nationalism' in the Indian and Australian contexts. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach, the study aims to understand the complex dynamics between national identity, ethno-religious diversity, and exclusionary practices towards Muslims. Through an in-depth analysis of historical and contemporary factors, the paper endeavors to elucidate the processes through which Muslims are constructed as a racialized 'other' and how this contributes to their marginalization and social exclusion. By shedding light on the mechanisms of 'racialized nationalism,' the study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on discrimination, identity politics, and social cohesion in these multi-religious and multi-ethnic societies.

METHOD

To examine and theorize Muslim othering as 'racialized nationalism' in the Indian and Australian contexts, this study employs a mixed-method research approach.

Literature Review:

A comprehensive literature review is conducted to gather scholarly works, academic articles, books, reports, and policy documents related to Muslim othering, nationalism, and racialization in India and Australia. This review forms the theoretical foundation of the study and provides insights into existing frameworks and theoretical perspectives on the topic.

Case Studies:

The study includes case studies from both countries to analyze specific instances of Muslim othering and its linkages to national identity and exclusionary practices. These case studies provide valuable empirical evidence and illustrate the historical and contemporary manifestations of 'racialized nationalism' in the Indian and Australian contexts.

Interviews and Surveys:

Key stakeholders, including members of Muslim communities, policymakers, scholars, and representatives of civil society organizations, are interviewed to gain a nuanced understanding of their perspectives on Muslim othering and its implications. Additionally, surveys may be conducted to capture broader views and opinions within the general population.

Data Analysis:

Qualitative data collected from interviews and case studies are subjected to thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes related to 'racialized nationalism' and Muslim othering. Quantitative data from surveys, if applicable, are analyzed using appropriate statistical methods.

Ethical Considerations:

Ethical guidelines for research involving human participants are strictly adhered to, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity.

By combining these research methods, the study aims to provide a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of Muslim othering as 'racialized nationalism' in the Indian and Australian contexts. The findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics between

national identity, ethno-religious diversity, and exclusionary practices, paving the way for informed discussions and policy interventions aimed at fostering social cohesion and inclusivity in these diverse societies.

RESULTS

The examination of Muslim othering as 'racialized nationalism' in the Indian and Australian contexts revealed significant findings. Both countries have experienced instances where Muslims are constructed as a racialized 'other,' distinct from the dominant national identity. The process of 'racialized nationalism' involves attributing specific cultural, religious, and ethnic characteristics to Muslims, leading to their marginalization and exclusion. The study found that historical, social, and political factors play crucial roles in perpetuating Muslim othering, shaping the narratives and discourses that contribute to their stigmatization.

DISCUSSION

The results demonstrate that Muslim othering is a complex phenomenon deeply rooted in historical and contemporary contexts. In India, the construction of Muslims as a racialized 'other' has historical roots in colonial legacies, while in Australia, it is influenced by debates surrounding immigration and cultural identity. In both countries, narratives of 'racialized nationalism' create a dichotomy between the majority and minority communities, fostering division and social tensions. The study highlights that the dominant national identity is often constructed based on exclusionary practices, which perpetuate a sense of 'us versus them.'

Moreover, the analysis of case studies reveals the multifaceted manifestations of Muslim othering. In

India, Muslims have been subject to stereotyping as 'foreigners' and 'anti-national,' while in Australia, they face challenges related to multiculturalism and religious freedom. These cases illustrate the complexities of 'racialized nationalism' and its impact on the socio-political landscape of both countries.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study underscore the urgent need to address Muslim othering as 'racialized nationalism' in the Indian and Australian contexts. It is imperative to recognize that this phenomenon not only affects Muslims but also has broader implications for social cohesion, inclusivity, and national unity. The construction of Muslims as a racialized 'other' perpetuates divisions, inhibits integration, and undermines the principles of multiculturalism and diversity.

Furthermore, the study highlights that addressing 'racialized nationalism' requires comprehensive efforts from multiple stakeholders. Policymakers must develop inclusive policies that promote equal citizenship and protect the rights of all religious and ethnic communities. Civil society organizations, scholars, and media play critical roles in challenging stereotypes and promoting intercultural dialogue. Moreover, fostering mutual understanding and empathy among different communities is crucial in countering the divisive narratives of 'us versus them.'

CONCLUSION

The theorization of Muslim othering as 'racialized nationalism' in the Indian and Australian contexts sheds light on the intricate dynamics between national identity, ethno-religious diversity, and exclusionary practices. The findings emphasize the need for a paradigm shift in how societies approach issues of

cultural and religious difference. Rather than constructing Muslims as a racialized 'other,' it is essential to embrace the principles of pluralism, multiculturalism, and social harmony.

By recognizing the harmful consequences of 'racialized nationalism,' both India and Australia can take affirmative steps towards creating more inclusive and cohesive societies. Promoting diversity, tolerance, and respect for individual rights and cultural differences can pave the way for a shared national identity that celebrates the contributions of all communities. This study urges stakeholders to come together in the pursuit of a more inclusive and equitable future, free from the shackles of 'racialized nationalism' and its detrimental effects on social cohesion.

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