



## Misrecognised as Muslim: the racialisation of Christians of Middle Eastern heritage in the UK

Alistair Hunter & Fiona McCallum Guiney

To cite this article: Alistair Hunter & Fiona McCallum Guiney (2023): Misrecognised as Muslim: the racialisation of Christians of Middle Eastern heritage in the UK, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, DOI: [10.1080/1369183X.2022.2157803](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2022.2157803)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2022.2157803>



© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 03 Jan 2023.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

# Misrecognised as Muslim: the racialisation of Christians of Middle Eastern heritage in the UK

Alistair Hunter \* and Fiona McCallum Guiney 

School of International Relations, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, UK

## ABSTRACT

Since the early 2000s in many countries of the Global North, Muslim religious identities have become racialised through the global ‘war on terror’, the ascendancy of right-wing populists, and localised but high-profile disturbances in disadvantaged urban areas. The racialisation of religion, which conflates concerns about the religious Other with race and ethnicity, has led to an environment where those from non-white ethnic backgrounds are mistakenly presumed to be Muslim. Drawing on theorisations of misrecognition by Taylor and Fraser, the present study contributes to the emergent literature on misrecognition as Muslim by exploring a novel case study, Middle Eastern Christians in the UK. Findings are based on qualitative research with Coptic, Iraqi and Assyrian Christian communities in London and central Scotland, involving 53 semi-structured interviews and six focus groups with members of the case study communities. We identify three main types of response by those who are misrecognised, namely education, resignation, and differentiation. Following Taylor, the education and differentiation responses are interpreted as forms of cultural defence, yet such responses also risk producing the ‘problem of reification’ theorised by Fraser, exerting pressure on members to conform to a unitary fixed view of the group.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 30 March 2022  
Accepted 8 December 2022

## KEYWORDS

Misrecognition; racialisation; Muslims; Middle Eastern Christians

## Introduction

In many countries of the Global North, the first two decades of the twenty-first century witnessed several inter-related developments – the global ‘war on terror’, the political ascendancy of right-wing populist and nationalist politicians, as well as more localised challenges to conviviality in the form of urban disturbances – which in combination problematised the presence of migrant communities. In all these instances, the presence of populations of Muslim migrant heritage was particularly contested. Several scholars have argued that religious ‘otherness’ in the case of Muslim (and Jewish) minorities goes hand in hand with a perceived cultural and racial ‘otherness’ (Meer 2013; Rana 2007; Husain 2017; Khabeer 2017). Topolski (2018, 59) identifies the term ‘race-religion constellation’ in relation to ‘the practice of classifying people into races according to categories we now

**CONTACT** Alistair Hunter  fm25@st-andrews.ac.uk

\*Current affiliation is the University of Glasgow.

© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group  
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

associate with the term “religion”<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the process of racialisation can be understood as one ‘where new racial meanings are ascribed to bodies, actions and interactions. These meanings are not only applied to skin tone, but other cultural factors such as language, clothing, and beliefs’ (Selod 2014, 79). This racialisation of religion which conflates concerns about the religious Other with race and ethnicity (Dunn, Klocker, and Salabay 2007; Selod 2014; Rana 2007; Husain 2017), has led to an environment where those from a non-white ethnic background are sometimes presumed to be Muslim, with the often negative labels that have been indiscriminately attached to this community.

The racialisation of Muslims has therefore impacted on non-Muslims who *appear to be* Muslim – through features such as skin colour, dress, hair, Arabic-sounding English accent, and given names – or who *appear to be followers* of Islam – through practices such as fasting, dietary habits, or requesting time off work to attend religious feasts. This misrecognition of non-Muslims as Muslim has been documented in a small body of literature, limited initially to the experiences of Sikhs in the US after 9/11 (Ahluwalia and Pelletiere 2010; Mahalingam 2012), but subsequently encompassing a more diverse range of contexts and racialised groups, including South Asians and other ethnic minorities in the UK (Hopkins et al. 2017), Hispanics in the US (Romero and Zarrugh 2018), and Christians of Middle Eastern origin in various Western countries (Bakker Kellogg 2021; Kayyali 2018; Sparre 2021; Lukasik 2021). Among other manifestations, these studies report that non-Muslims who are misrecognised as Muslims may suffer physical violence and fears for personal safety (Ahluwalia and Pelletiere 2010; Awan and Zempi 2020; Lukasik 2021); depression and anxiety (Awan and Zempi 2020; Mahalingam 2012); and unemployment or discrimination in the workplace (Awan and Zempi 2020; Kayyali 2018).

The present study aims to contribute to this emergent literature on misrecognition as Muslim by exploring a novel case study, namely Middle Eastern Christian communities in the UK. Our analysis yields some novel findings, including instances of being misrecognised as Muslim *by Muslims*, leading to a more nuanced understanding of the power relations at play in misrecognition contexts. Our paper is based on research conducted with Coptic, Iraqi and Assyrian Christian communities in London and central Scotland.<sup>2</sup> We start by introducing misrecognition as an analytical concept and then provide contextual background and outline our methodology. In our analysis, we present Middle Eastern Christians’ everyday experiences of misrecognition based upon inferences about physical appearance and misconceptions about the Middle East. We identify three main types of response by those who are misrecognised, namely education, resignation, and differentiation.

It is important at the outset to affirm that any form of anti-Muslim prejudice is repugnant, whether the addressees of such abuse are ‘correctly’ identified or not. As Mahalingam (2012) has noted, studies of racialised misrecognition can be problematic when they implicitly condone violence against the targets of such violence who are not misrecognised. Yet, as will be shown in what follows, it was rare for our respondents to express solidarity with Muslims despite the shared experiences of misrecognition which Christians and Muslims encounter.

### **Analytical framework**

Theoretical concern with struggles of recognition can be traced back to Hegel’s conceptualisation of subject formation, which was then taken forward in the 1990s in the work

of Charles Taylor (1994) on multiculturalism and Axel Honneth (1995) on inter-subjectivity. Of the latter two contributions, Taylor's essay is the more pertinent here given this article's focus. Taylor (1994, 26) identifies two historical developments, first apparent in eighteenth century Europe, which in combination rendered inevitable 'the modern pre-occupation with identity and recognition'. The first trend concerns the shift from a hierarchical society based on the unequal distribution of 'honour', to a modern democratic society based on a different currency, that of humanity's inherent dignity, conferred ostensibly on *all* citizens as the precondition for political rights. In practice, of course, equal recognition of dignity could not simply be wished into existence, leading to a politics of universalism which has manifested in various recognition struggles, including disability rights, gender equality, and anti-racist movements. If this first change – from hierarchical honour to equal dignity – has heralded a politics of universalism in the public sphere, the second change – the emergence of the ideal of 'authenticity' – has yielded a politics of difference (Taylor 1994). Not incidentally, the second trend arises in part from the first. With social identity no longer being defined by one's position in the hierarchy, people were free to cultivate their own 'authentic' ways of being, 'an *individualised* identity, one that is particular to me, and that I discover in myself' (Taylor 1994, 28, emphasis in the original) and through which subjects develop their self-worth and self-fulfilment and become true to themselves. It is through this quest for authenticity that recognition becomes important in the personal sphere, through expression of an inner voice.

Nonetheless, Taylor maintains that the cultivation of self-identity cannot develop fully formed in isolation, in monologue, but rather – following Hegel – is always dialogical, which is to say formed in the interaction with – and crucially via the recognition of – others (Thompson and Yar 2011). For Xie et al. (2021, 1177), 'Recognition relates to a person's sense of who they are, having that identity approved by others, and being treated in terms they recognise. It conveys care and respect'. The opposite of recognition occurs when 'people or society mirror back to [the recognisee] a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves' (Taylor 1994, 25). These negative depictions can produce real harms in misrecognised individuals, in some cases culminating in self-hatred through the internalisation of negative views of themselves (*ibid*). Moving from the individual to the public sphere, Taylor argues that what is at stake, socially and politically, in this cumulative misrecognition of identity is the continued survivance and defence of minority cultures in an increasingly multicultural world. In response, the politics of difference predicated on authenticity enunciates a demand for recognition of our capacity to develop distinct identities, as part of a broader reflex of cultural defence (Thompson and Yar 2011).

A second approach to problems of recognition has been developed by the feminist social theorist Nancy Fraser. For Fraser, the 'identity model' of recognition developed by Taylor and others is problematic, for two reasons. Firstly, the identity model 'treats misrecognition as a free-standing cultural harm' (Fraser 2000, 110), obscuring issues of resource inequality between groups and silencing questions about the just redistribution of such resources, in favour of identity politics. Secondly, insofar as the solution to misrecognition problems within the identitarian framing is for the group to affirm and valorise a self-generated group identity, Fraser argues that the identity model leads to the reification and over-simplification of group identities by putting moral pressure on

members to conform to a unitary fixed view of the group, intolerant of internal diversity (Fraser 2000). Against the identity model of recognition, Fraser (2000, 113) argues for 'treating recognition as a question of social status. From this perspective, what requires recognition is not group-specific identity but the status of individual group members as full partners in social interaction'. We will return to both Taylor's and Fraser's approaches to recognition in the Discussion.

The risk of misrecognition is more likely when the recogniser ascribes to dominant assumptions about 'seemingly incompatible identities', such as the combination of 'white British' and 'Muslim' (Amer 2020, 534) or gay religious men (Jaspal and Cinnirella 2014). A similar dynamic prevails in our study, with the combination of 'Middle Eastern' (an out-group) and 'Christian' (nominally an in-group) in Britain provoking bafflement among some of our respondents' interlocutors (McCallum 2019). The potential for harm, for Muslim and Christian alike, which is inherent in these 'reductive binaries equating Europe with Christianity and the Middle East with Islam' (Bakker Kellogg 2021, 620) calls us to better understand such dynamics of racialisation and misrecognition. We do this through a qualitative study of a 'minority within a minority' (Galal et al. 2016), namely Middle Eastern Christians in the UK.

## Material and methods

In the Muslim-majority Middle East, Christians are a 'minority' religious Other (Kymlicka and Pfostl 2014).<sup>3</sup> In Egypt, the population is over 90% Sunni Muslim and 5–6% Christian with over 90% of Christians being adherents of the Coptic Orthodox Church (McCallum 2010, 2). Iraq has a more religiously and ethnically diverse population with three main groups – Shia (55%), Sunni (20%) and Kurds (15–20%) (Machlis 2022, 46). Due to insecurity since the overthrow of the Baath regime in 2003, the number of Christians has dropped from 1.4 million in 1987 to estimates of 300,000–400,000, under 3% of the population (Monier 2020, 363). Christians belong to a range of denominations and include Assyrians who also identify as an ethnic group (Monier 2020; Donabed 2015). Christians' indigenous origins and contribution to Middle Eastern society is acknowledged but recognition of their presence is not the same as enjoying full equality and rights (McCallum 2010). Christians (as well as other religious and ethnic groups) have been subject to discrimination through legislation and societal practices as well as targets of violence during periods of unrest and conflict (McCallum 2010; Lukasik 2021; Monier 2020). This turbulent political and socio-economic environment combined with national and regional instability has led to increased emigration from the region (Hunter and McCallum Guiney 2020; Schmoller 2018). While this affects citizens of all backgrounds, there has been a significant decrease in the size of Christian communities in the region with estimates of around 12 million (Schmoller 2018, 13–14).

Middle Eastern Christians immigrating to Western states discover a different majority-minority structure. Migration particularly since World War Two has led to Muslims becoming the largest ethnic and non-Christian community in the West (Burchardt and Michalowski 2014). The UK 2011 census shows that Muslims make up 5% of the population in England and Wales, compared to 1.5% Hindu, 0.7% Sikh, 0.5% Jewish and 0.4% Buddhist. In Scotland, Muslims are just over 1% but account for 56% of the non-

Christian population.<sup>4</sup> The ethnic background of Middle Eastern Christians means that from the perspective of the majority population, they are categorised as an immigrant minority Other (McCallum 2019). The consequences of their 'invisibility' (Sparre 2021) means that they are likely to share similar experiences as Muslims.

The data discussed in this article is part of a project on Coptic Orthodox, Assyrian and Iraqi Christians entitled 'Defining and Identifying Middle Eastern Christians in Europe' conducted between 2013 and 2015.<sup>5</sup> The UK project fieldsites were Kirkcaldy (the location of the main Coptic Orthodox Church in Scotland) and London (home to several churches serving the three communities). There are around 20,000 Copts and 8–10,000 Iraqi (including Assyrian) Christians in the UK (Hunter and McCallum Guiney 2020).<sup>6</sup> Middle Eastern Christians are active in medical professions as well as engineering, architecture, teaching and business (McCallum 2019). Our respondents indicated that there were multiple motives for migrating to the UK including economic difficulties, political instability, conflict and discrimination or violence targeted towards them because of their religious identity. Skilled labour and student migrants from Egypt and Iraq started arriving from the 1950s onwards. Due to several conflicts in Iraq, there has also been a small number of refugees since the 1980s (Hunter and McCallum Guiney 2020).

The material presented in this paper comes from fifty-three semi-structured interviews with 'active' members of the case study communities as well as six focus groups.<sup>7</sup> Interviewees are anonymised and assigned a community according to self-identification. Coptic respondents were members of the Coptic Orthodox Church, the largest Christian denomination in Egypt and the diaspora (McCallum 2010). 'Assyrian' relates to adherents of the Assyrian Church of the East and the Ancient Church of the East. 'Iraqi Christian' includes Chaldeans, Syriac Orthodox, Syriac Catholic, and Latin Catholics.<sup>8</sup> We recognise that the respective homeland situations and histories of migration vary between the three case study groups but for the purpose of this article, it is their shared identity and misrecognition experiences as Christians from the Middle East that are paramount. The generation term relates to their migration biography with '1st generation' referring to those born in the Middle East, '2nd generation' those born in the West (usually the UK) and '1.5 generation' those born in the Middle East but spending their formative years in the West (usually the UK). 'Youth' refers to those aged between 18 and 30, who are primarily 1.5 or 2nd generation. The interviews were conducted in English and fully transcribed and coded using the NVivo software package. The researchers were 'outsiders' in terms of being from the majority society (white British) but were also considered by some interviewees as being 'insiders' due to presumed shared religious faith as Christians. The research was granted ethical approval in 2013.<sup>9</sup>

The data used in this study comes from questions relating to the role of religion in an individual's life, interactions with British society, and relations with other migrant communities. A key focus of our discussions with interviewees concerned the circumstances in which religion featured as a topic of everyday conversation with people outside their religious community. Respondents frequently answered by saying that the prompt for such conversations was not their Christianity but the fact that due to outward appearances and Middle Eastern origins, they were misrecognised as being Muslim by their

interlocutors. Such misrecognition was a frequent experience for our interviewees, as we will now discuss.

## Results

### *Middle Eastern Christian experiences of misrecognition*

We explore two different modalities of misrecognition as a consequence of the racialisation of Muslims when being Muslim is associated with ‘brown skin, “Middle Eastern” looks, and particular national origins’ (Khabeer 2017, 104). The first focuses on unspoken interactions where identity is inferred through visual appearance. The second examines misconceptions based on knowledge that the individual has Middle Eastern origins. Regarding appearance, our findings resonate with those of Hopkins et al. (2017) who in their study on youth from ethnic backgrounds in Scotland reported that all their interviewees had experiences of misrecognition.

These experiences varied in their nature and intensity, but all were characterized by a racist reading of the phenotypical features of our participants – such as their skin colour, hair texture, and style – that problematically (and often incorrectly) associated them with specific countries of origin and with the Islamic faith. (Hopkins et al. 2017, 939)

In our study, respondents recounted that their outward characteristics and dress led people outside of their community to assume their religious identity as Muslim. For example:

People in the UK, *when they see us*, they think we are Muslims. (Coptic Orthodox male, 40s, 1st generation, emphasis added)

*My look is Arabic*, it’s very Arabic, yeah, it’s very, very Arabic and some people when they see me like this wearing this (priest robes), even English people they say, ‘are you Muslim?’ That’s the first question. ... I’m not surprised because, because, it’s the main, the main reason, main thing that don’t surprise me because my look is really Arabic, see this beard and this my skin and my shape, it’s really Arabic.<sup>10</sup> (Cleric, emphasis added)

Another community member went further, specifying particular physical features which in the eyes of outsiders marked him and his fellow worshippers as being perceived as Muslim. Relating to a barbecue which his church had organised for the local community to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church he worshipped at, this individual recounted:

When we spoke to some people [who attended the barbecue] they said, ‘Oh yeah, we know that place, and we see you guys going in and out, and obviously you look very Mediterranean – we always thought you were Muslims’ ... They see all these dark skinned, moustached males and their families that come in every Sunday, go into a building, disappear for a couple of hours, and then come back and go home. (Coptic Orthodox male, 30s, 1st generation)

In our respondents’ accounts of outsiders’ perceptions, churches are often mistaken for mosques. These accounts resonate with Atto’s findings on Assyrians/Syriacs in Europe as ‘their church is referred to as mosque, their Bible as the Koran and their fast as Ramadan’ (Atto 2011, 251; see also Bakker Kellogg 2021). A cleric recounted explaining about the church and community to a repairman who had presumed the building was a mosque.

And then he entered in the church, and he sees the icon and he says ‘yes, it’s a very nice mosque’ [interviewee laughs]. (Cleric)

Religious symbols such as icons and crosses, and dress, were also highlighted as objects of misrecognition. While donning such symbols of faith can be interpreted as attempts to ‘perform’ a religious identity (Amer 2020; Kayyali 2018), our respondents discussed how the wearing of a cross tended to cause confusion in initially non-verbal interactions as people struggled to associate the cross as a symbol of Christianity with their racialised assumptions about the religious identity of the wearer (see also Bakker Kellogg 2021). For example:

Sometimes I’ll be wearing a cross and they’ll be like are you not a Muslim or something? (Assyrian female, youth, 1.5 generation)

This apparent contradiction seems heightened when addressed to clerics who often have long black robes and full beards. One respondent claimed that:

the people, when they see the priest, wearing the black, they think we are Shi’ites. They see the cross, like that [pointing to his chest]. It doesn’t matter, because his looks look like a Shi’ite Muslim, with the beard. (Coptic Orthodox male, 60s, 1st generation)

This failure in using religious emblems to signpost and perform one’s religious identity resonates with research on Middle Eastern Christian diasporas in other countries such as Syriac Christians in the Netherlands (Bakker Kellogg 2021) and Maronites in Australia (Hyndman-Rizik 2008). According to Hyndman-Rizik, ‘Although they claim that their Christianity diffuses anti-Lebanese racism and that wearing symbols of their Christianity assists in this, many are experiencing racism on a daily basis’ (2008, 43). This quote also highlights that misrecognition based on appearance can lead to hostile encounters, including Islamophobia. In their study on Sikh men in 9/11 United States, Ahluwalia and Pelletiere argue that anti-Muslim sentiment ‘has been generalized to all those who “appear” Muslim and Arab’, leading to verbal and physical attacks (2010, 303). Similarly, Lukasik describes several incidents of verbal and physical abuse of Copts in the United States due to misrecognition as Muslims (2021). While few of our respondents reported verbal abuse and none mentioned physical attacks, the anti-Muslim political context causes concern and fear amongst the wider community that they could experience Islamophobia. As one cleric stated:

We look Middle Eastern, so we are misunderstood to be Muslim sometimes and in the wake of September 11 and July 7, that was a very dangerous place to be. (Cleric)

Clerical attire can lead to them being singled out for misrecognition as Muslims (see also Lukasik 2021, 7). A cleric referred to the reception which he and guests from the Middle East were subjected to during study visits which he organises in a major UK city twice a year. Touring the city, he and his Middle Eastern Christian visitors were more than once victims of Islamophobic abuse by passers-by in the street:

the whole street is full of drunk people and drunkards outside. So, they used to come and scream in my face and say ‘Allahu Akbar!’ [chuckles] *yaani*, believing that I am a Muslim. (Cleric)

Another priest, again referring to abuse in the street from youths, remarked:

Some of the youth they say, ‘why are you here?’, shouting and that, it is not many times you are mistaken but sometimes. But mistaken not only as Muslims but as Jews, rabbis ... Definitely when sometimes when they feel that, this is younger generation, especially youth, I’m wearing, I’m growing my beard and some having this hate now against you know terrorism and all those things. (Cleric)

Our findings show that in everyday unspoken interactions, the racialisation of religion can result in Middle Eastern Christians being misrecognised as Muslims, through misinterpretation of outward characteristics and dress.

A second modality of misrecognition relates to encounters where the geographical origins of the individual (i.e. the Middle East generally or a specific country) are made known. Here, our findings resonate with other studies which note a reductionist discourse equating the Middle East with Islam (Khabeer 2017; Dunn, Klocker, and Salabay 2007). According to Atto (2011, 251),

a common occurrence in all European countries has been that Assyrians/Syriacs are assumed to be or identified as Muslims, a misconception perhaps attributable to the common idea in western countries that people in the Middle East are all adherents of Islam.

This inaccurate understanding of the demographics of the Middle East was a common theme amongst our respondents as is shown by the below examples:

when I say I’m from Egypt, ‘oh so are you a Muslim?’, no I’m Christian. You know so it’s always this, people think because I’m Egyptian, I have to be Muslim because 90% of the population are Muslim. (Coptic Orthodox female, 50s, 1st generation)

lots of people, when I’ve said my parents are Iraqi, lots of people have assumed that I’m Muslim. (Iraqi Christian male, youth, 2nd generation)

One recurring theme was ‘the Muslim priest’ response. One cleric describes his usual experience of encountering people in the street who address him as ‘Father’ and ask where he is from.

‘I am from [Middle Eastern country]’, and the next question it is ‘are you a Muslim priest?’. This is, you know, this reflects the total ignorance of people here. (Cleric)

Similarly, the daughter of a cleric recounted:

so, people think I’m Muslim even though I used to tell them we go to church. [...] or if they ask what my dad does ‘he’s a priest’; ‘oh so are you a Muslim?’. (Coptic Orthodox female, youth, 1.5 generation)

Additionally, Assyrian respondents encountered misperceptions relating to both their religious and national identity, connecting them to Syria. For example:

The first thing they go ‘oh you’re from Syria?’ and you go ‘A, Ah letter A’. (Assyrian female, 40s, 1st generation)

you say to someone ‘Assyrian’; ‘are you Syrian?’; ‘No I’m not Syrian’ – ‘oh there is a lot of killing in your country’, ‘no that’s not my country I’m Assyrian, I’m Christian, I’m not Arab, I’m not Muslim’. (Assyrian male, 50s, 1st generation)

This failure to understand the indigenous presence of Christians in the Middle East also leads to assumptions that Middle Eastern Christians must be recent converts to

Christianity. As Hopkins et al. argue, this type of misrecognition questions the authenticity of an individual's religion (2017, 939). In the examples given below, our respondents stress the Middle East as the birthplace of Christianity when encountering questions regarding conversion. Kayyali (2018) notes similar encounters experienced by Arab Christians in the US, who – to rebut doubts about their Christian authenticity – would sometimes deploy the term ‘ancient Christian’ to describe themselves. Describing a conversation, one recounts being asked:

‘When did you become a Christian?’ I said I think if you examine my DNA, I think I will be related to Jesus. (Iraqi Christian female, 70s, 1st generation)

Another interviewee discussed her initial experience with UK immigration officials.

When I came here, they asked me when did you become Christian? I said from beginning, from Jesus. (Iraqi Christian female, 40s, 1st generation)

Misrecognition as being Muslim was also experienced by our respondents from interactions with Muslims. This is a novel finding which has not emerged in previous research. It is noteworthy empirically, but also theoretically, insofar as it complicates perspectives on the power dynamic within misrecognition studies, which is often assumed to be between the recogniser (white/majority) and the recognisee (the racial ‘other’/minority) (Hopkins et al. 2017; Hyndman-Rizik 2008). Given the tendency of our interviewees to practise in the medical profession, several acknowledged that Muslim patients and colleagues assumed that they shared the same faith, especially when they have a name common to both Muslims and Christians. For example:

So, they assume that because I'm from Egypt, automatically I'm Muslim. I see quite a few Arab patients and almost all of them know that I'm or think that I'm Muslim because of my name. (Coptic Orthodox male, 40s, 1st generation)

Everyday encounters in shops also lead to Muslims inferring a shared faith. One interviewee discussed visiting a kebab shop where the employees asked where he was from.

I'm Egyptian, from Egypt, and then ‘salaam alaykum’ and, and they'll go, you know, um they'll call me brother and that often means that, you know, they kind of associated me as Muslim. (Coptic Orthodox male, youth, 2nd generation)

It is evident from the above examples that the racialisation of Muslims has led to misrecognition being a frequent and persistent feature of Middle Eastern Christians' lives in the UK. Misrecognition is experienced by all respondents regardless of gender, age or migration generation. While in some scenarios, the positionalities of the recogniser (white/majority) and recognisee (racialised ‘other’/minority) indicate an uncomplicated power relationship where the recogniser holds the power in legitimising an individual's identity (Hopkins et al. 2017, 937), in other situations of misrecognition where both the recogniser and recognisee are subject to racialisation, the issue is less clear-cut, as will be discussed further in the concluding section. Having highlighted a range of experiences of misrecognition, we now explore three types of responses to these encounters – education, resignation, and differentiation. Following Taylor (1994), we view the education and differentiation responses as strategies of cultural defence, which potentially assumes an outsized importance for Middle Eastern

Christian migrant groups in a context where their communities face existential threats in Middle Eastern homelands. The resignation response, by contrast, is a manifestation of the harms of misrecognition, with some respondents internalising a distorted self-image.

### *Middle Eastern Christian responses to misrecognition*

The first response of Middle Eastern Christians identifies the problem as a lack of knowledge on the part of their interlocutors, with attendant possibilities to educate and enlighten and thereby defend a particular identity and culture. For some of our respondents, misrecognition could lead to an opening to discuss the history and context of the Christian presence in the Middle East. For example:

because I'm Egyptian – 'do you know anything about Islam? And can you tell us about Islam?' And I say 'yes, I can tell you, but I'm not a Muslim'. 'Oh, why are you not a Muslim?' And then I say to them – I go into the history, and who am I really in terms of a real Copt, with descendants from the Pharaohs, not from the Arabs. (Coptic Orthodox male, 40s, 1st generation)

This was particularly true of some respondents (especially the more evangelical) who welcomed an opportunity to bring the teachings of Christ to non-believers. For example:

Well, the answer is usually 'oh I never knew there was Christians in Iraq' and I'm like 'hello'. And then I refer to the Old Testaments. (Iraqi Christian male, 30s, 1.5 generation)

Just the fact that I come from Egypt, which is one of the lands of the Bible, the conversation, you know, has to include something about God, and the Bible (chuckles). So – it's an attempt at least – I pray that God can use me, to talk about Him and Christianity. (Coptic Orthodox male, 30s, 1st generation)

Some respondents believed that once people knew that the individual and community were Middle Eastern Christians, their attitude towards them changed. This mirrors Sadjed's findings that her Iranian Jewish and Bahá'í respondents 'had experienced relief among German fellow citizens when they found out that they were not Muslim' (2017, 84). This was presumed to be due to pejorative generalisations about the behaviour and values of Muslims.

I find sometimes how people look to me and how people treat me before and after, sometimes it is totally different. (Coptic Orthodox male, 40s, 1st generation)

One respondent explained that initial reactions to the establishment of a new church were hostile until the bishop visited neighbours to explain their background.

You could tell oh, some of them worried about the Muslims and the Middle East and terrorism people, terrorists living next door to us. So, he explained to them, we are Christians, and we all pray in the church, all what we do so-and-so. Now, they come and join us. (Coptic Orthodox male, 60s, 1st generation)

The above example demonstrates that the racialisation of Muslims and subsequent negative connotations of the group can lead to attitudes towards Middle Eastern Christians becoming more positive once Christian identity has been established. However, as the remainder of the article will show, this scenario of successfully changing people's

attitudes once religious identity was known was a rare example of education having a positive outcome. Informing Muslim interlocutors of their religious identity can also lead to a change in attitude towards Middle Eastern Christians. For example, when discussing his relationship with Muslim colleagues, one interviewee stated:

when they know that I am not Muslim they just, you know, just withdraw ... One of the first things that happens is that 'oh hi' – 'salaam alaykum ... there's *joma'a* prayers'<sup>11</sup> – 'Oh, I don't pray *joma'a* prayer' – 'ah, okay, yes, see you later' – 'bye'. (Coptic Orthodox male, 30s, 1st generation)

In this scenario, the interaction leads to resentment felt by our interviewee at the change in behaviour they experience due to claiming their religious identity, showing that assumptions as to 'who' a Muslim is i.e. skin colour, name and origins are not limited to the white majority (Khabeer 2017).

Narratives relating to educating the British public tend to put the onus on the misrecognised community to address this issue. Several respondents blamed the failure (or lack) of their own outreach activities for situations where churches had been present for several years but were still presumed to be mosques by the local population.

It is something that we are lacking, it is our fault that we did not go out to this very local area. (Coptic Orthodox male, 40s, 1st generation)

And if this happens in [location], I fault here the Copts. Do you know why? The people have been there all their lives, for years – you are new. It's the onus on you to go to the community and introduce yourself, give them an idea about your background. They will appreciate you. (Coptic Orthodox male, 60s, 1st generation)

These narratives echo the findings of Hopkins et al. in their study on Scottish youth where respondents blamed their misrecognition experiences on the failure of their community to engage in wider society so that their identities were understood (2017, 943). Interestingly, none of our youth interviewees discussed education as an option. Instead as our quotes above show, it was older first-generation migrants who not only advocated for educating the majority society but also blamed their community for lack of success. As Hopkins et al. argue, normalisation 'points to the worrying consequences of persistent misrecognition in that it can lead people to hold their own communities to account for the racist misrecognition they experience from others' (Hopkins et al. 2017, 944). Such self-blame is a further example of the harm of misrecognition, whereby negative images of the self are internalised (Taylor 1994).

The second response of resignation was shared by many respondents across the migrant generations. It is based on the premise that the ignorance of wider society means that if initial attempts to correct the misperception fail, it is pointless to reason any further. This sense of futility in explaining their identity is illustrated by one respondent who recounted an incident when a visiting Church of England bishop asked him if he was Muslim despite the individual worshipping regularly in a Church of England parish and his two sons serving as altar boys. His incredulous response sums up the exasperation experienced by many.

'Reverend I can't believe; would a Muslim come to a church and have his sons become readers in the church?' That shocked me. So, you can see, you can't go explaining to people where you are from and your heritage – you know, you can't. (Assyrian male, 50s, 1st generation)

Several respondents noted the time and energy they had invested in enlightening their interlocutors about Middle Eastern Christian religious identities, only for these efforts to be in vain. One woman recounted that after fully explaining her religious identity, the next question asked was ‘Does that mean that you fast Ramadan?’ (Coptic Orthodox female, 40s, 1st generation). Similarly:

And even if I am wearing the cross, and in the end ‘so why are you wearing a cross if you are a Muslim?’, after I had been speaking for an hour about [Christianity]! (Cleric)

Similar to our respondents, Atto’s Assyrian/Syriac interviewees ‘express their astonishment about how, even after several corrections, individuals still do not understand that they are Christians and not Muslims’ (Atto 2011, 251). Thus, the extent of ignorance of British society was raised by many respondents. First, there was a sense that few British people had much awareness of other countries or cultures. For example:

A very, very small minority of the, you know the British people are, you know, aware of, of, you know, the culture – not culture I would say, but other peoples like countries or where they come from. They’re not really knowledgeable in that sense. (Assyrian female, 40s, 1st generation)

It’s like you’re talking to someone who doesn’t really understand and if you try to make them understand, just because there’s no kind of background knowledge so you try and explain something that they’ve never even heard of in their life. (Coptic Orthodox female, youth, 1.5 generation)

Second, the lack of religious knowledge, specifically Christianity, was highlighted. There was a sense that people struggled beyond the two main denominations in the UK – Protestant and Catholic. As one interviewee claimed:

They’re not aware of even the fact that there’s more than just Protestants and Catholics. (Coptic Orthodox female, youth, 2nd generation)

Another respondent explained his attempts to describe his denomination.

And they would just come to the conclusion ‘so it’s like Catholic but a bit different’. And then you’d be like ok, whatever. That’s the only way they’ll understand I guess. (Iraqi Christian male, youth, 1.5 generation)

Consequently, this level of ignorance encountered by our respondents led many to resign themselves to incidents of misrecognition to avoid endless and tedious conversations. In these examples, the racialisation of religion proved an obstacle that could not be overcome to have their correct religious identity acknowledged. Here, misrecognition is harmful at the individual level in denying their identity and accepting a distorted view of themselves (Taylor 1994).

The third response to misrecognition seeks to differentiate their community from Muslims which, following Taylor (1994), we view as a further strategy of cultural defence. There were two approaches to differentiation. The first was voiced by second-generation respondents who were keen to stress that misrecognition as Muslim was problematic not in the sense that this represented a pejorative and stigmatised identity in majority discourse, but because their Christian identity was denied:

It's not that I don't like Muslims, oh you're calling me a bad word, it's not like that. I just really wish that you would know more about me because this means so much to me. (Coptic Orthodox female, youth, 2nd generation)

Yes, it is upsetting to be constantly confused for another religion. Not because that other religion is anything bad but because you can't express your identity very well and people just don't get it. (Coptic Orthodox female, youth, 2nd generation)

The second and more widespread approach amongst first-generation respondents was what Mahalingam (2012, 303) terms 'discriminating marginality ... where immigrants internalize their model minority status and distance themselves from other marginalized communities'. In our study, some respondents echoed right-wing narratives regarding the 'threat' posed by Islam to British values and culture in an attempt to differentiate themselves from Muslims.<sup>12</sup> This 'threat' narrative was not discussed so much in specific terms such as potential violent attacks, which is the narrative usually heard from public officials or the media, but a wider societal menace which has a long-term goal of fundamentally changing the nature of the British state. Interestingly, a distinction between Muslims in general and radical or extremist elements is rarely made by the interviewees drawn on for this paper. In these narratives as illustrated below, reference is made to sharia law and Islamisation of areas as an indication of the threat posed by Muslim migration.

It [radical Islam] is coming here – that's what we believe. It is going to affect everybody. There is already – 2 years ago there were 85 *sharia* laws in England.<sup>13</sup> (Coptic Orthodox male, 60s, 1st generation)

They go to Hyde Park, these Muslims, and they're telling us we are nonbelievers and all that sort of thing. (Assyrian male, 70s, 1st generation)

These themes resonate with the British political context which is marked by increasing street-level hostility to 'radical Islam' and alarmism over what is claimed to be the creeping Islamisation of Britain, as seen in marches and demonstrations against *sharia*. This eagerness amongst Middle Eastern Christians to highlight a shared concern with anti-immigrant (i.e. anti-Muslim) political campaigns can be linked to efforts to differentiate their community to both avoid misrecognition and the consequences of misrecognition as Muslim. In his study on Coptic and Syriac Orthodox Christians in Austria, Schmoller (2020, 203) argues that anti-Islamic expressions should be seen as an 'expression of experiences with Islamophobia, xenophobia and anti-religious forms of secularism in the host society that strongly connects issues of migrants with that of Islam, and/or of religion with social problems'. In some cases, our respondents went beyond expressing views and empathised with organisations deemed as right-wing extremists. For example, one interviewee discussed organisations such as the English Defence League and noted that due to their violent tendencies, it would be counter-productive for any Middle Eastern Christian organisation to have links with them as it would cost them support from the British political establishment. However,

We appreciate what they are doing and [what] they are feeling, they would like to support us ... But I am glad to see people like [them] – demonstrates against the Muslim Brotherhood. I am glad to see them doing that, but we can't participate in things together. (Coptic Orthodox male, 60s, 1st generation)

This correlates with Sparre's findings in Denmark where Middle Eastern Christians' efforts to co-operate with far-right organisations can be seen as damaging due to diverging from mainstream politics while failing to gain more visibility for the community and thus addressing misrecognition (Sparre 2021). Similar experiences have also occurred in the United States where Coptic lobby organisations have allied with the Christian Right and groups with strong Islamophobic rhetoric (Lukasik 2021). Differentiation is used as a strategy of cultural survival and defence (Taylor 1994) to address the challenges raised by being misrecognised as Muslim and for some first-generation respondents, this can take the form of 'discriminating marginality' (Mahalingam 2012, 303).

## Discussion

Our findings lend further support to the argument that certain religious identities have become racialised since the turn of the century (Husain 2017; Selod 2014; Dunn, Klocker, and Salabay 2007), and that such racialisation of religion can lead to misrecognition, especially for groups like Middle Eastern Christians who embody 'seemingly incompatible identities' (Amer 2020, 534). Our analysis adds to the small but growing body of work on non-Muslims who are misrecognised as Muslims, by presenting qualitative findings from research with a diverse population of Middle Eastern Christians in the UK, of various denominations and origin countries, both first generation migrants and their children raised in Britain.

In terms of experiences of misrecognition, we identified two main modalities: firstly, inferences based on appearance, and here we showed how clerics in particular were objects of misrecognition; secondly, misconceptions about the Middle East, and here we noted the conflation of the Middle East with Islam in instances of misrecognition, and attendant doubts about the authenticity of our respondents' Christian convictions, as other studies have shown (Hopkins et al. 2017; Kayyali 2018). One novel finding relates to instances when non-Muslims are misrecognised as Muslim *by Muslims*, a phenomenon not discussed in previous studies. Such instances of misrecognition complicate the majority/minority power dynamic which has typically been discussed in studies of misrecognition (Hopkins et al. 2017) and show the analytical value of including populations in research who may be described as a 'minority within a minority' (Galal et al. 2016). This empirical manifestation of misrecognition *by Muslims* bears out Martineau's (2012) contention that misrecognition can be a generalised phenomenon committed by all social actors and is not exclusively the domain of majority actors misrecognising minority group members.

Our identification of three types of response to misrecognition – education, resignation, and differentiation – accords with other research on non-Muslims who are mistaken for being Muslim. A common initial reaction to being misrecognised was to see such encounters as an opportunity for Middle Eastern Christians to educate people about their communities and origins (see also Ahluwalia and Pelletiere 2010; Hopkins et al. 2017; Kayyali 2018). When these educative efforts failed, which was often the case, some of our respondents became resigned to being misrecognised, and attempted to ignore the situation (see also Hopkins et al. 2017; Sparre 2021; Bakker Kellogg 2021). The resignation response shows the harm caused by misrecognition insofar as those who are misrecognised internalise a demeaning or confining identity (Taylor 1994), leading in some instances to self-blame

for not engaging actively enough with wider society so that their particular identities are understood. Others – especially older first-generation respondents – engaged in what we refer to as ‘differentiation’, when the misrecognised redouble their educative efforts by highlighting not only their ethnic and/or confessional identities, but also explicitly framing these in relation to an Islamic ‘other’ (see also Awan and Zempi 2020; Sparre 2021; Lukasik 2021). Following Taylor (1994), we interpret the education and differentiation responses as strategies of cultural survival and defence. Given the existential threats facing Christians in the Middle East, this cultural defence reflex potentially assumes an outsized importance for Middle Eastern Christians in the diaspora, and further comparative research to explore the relationship between cultural defence and homeland context for this and other diaspora groups would advance the literature on misrecognition.

However, educative and differentiating responses are potentially problematic, insofar as they reproduce the ‘problem of reification’ theorised by Fraser (2000), as discussed above. As Kayyali (2018, 2) notes in her US-based study, ‘terms such as “ancient Christian” and “Middle Eastern Christian” have become more popular in public discourse to denote intersecting religious and regional identity, yet these terms give the impression of a monolithic community’, whereas the confessional, ethnic, national, generational, and gendered reality is much more diverse. An alternative approach to the identity model’s reification problem would be to develop a pan-ethnic solidarity to mobilise against the underlying institutionalised value structures (Fraser 2000) which generate misrecognition of racialised Muslims and non-Muslims, such as terrorism prevention agencies, airport security practices and so on. Mahalingam (2012, 303) uses the term ‘empowering marginality’ to refer to situations where members of a marginalised group ‘strongly identify with other marginalised groups’ and support pan-ethnic movements to challenge white privilege. ‘Such efforts ... help the community members to cultivate critical intersectional awareness about their identities and the interdependent nature of our lives’. One example of such activism was documented in McDowell’s study of ‘taqwacores’ in the US – ‘brown kids’ of various ethnic and faith backgrounds who take inspiration from punk music to challenge their racialisation and misrecognition (McDowell 2017). However, judging by our research, such a pan-ethnic identification has yet to materialise among Middle Eastern Christians in the UK. Indeed, instances of Middle Eastern Christians being misrecognised as Muslim *by* Muslims may be a further barrier to developing the intersectional awareness necessary for pan-ethnic solidarity, as indicated in our respondents’ narratives of resentment and withdrawal in such circumstances. Furthermore, prior exemplars of such activism in the UK, such as South Asians mobilising as ‘black’ in British anti-racist movements of the 1970s and 1980s, proved to be short-lived (Peace 2015). As in Awan and Zempi’s (2020) study of non-Muslim victims of Islamophobic abuse, there was little evidence among our respondents of a more solidaristic disposition towards Muslims, which might foreground empathy with a similarly racialised group and the misrecognition which is their shared experience.

## Notes

1. Several scholars have argued that racialisation of religion is not a new phenomenon as race as a category was devised from the use of religion to categorise people in pre-modern Europe. See Husain (2017) and Rana (2007).

2. While homogeneity of the different Christian communities should not be overplayed, the data on this topic would indicate convergence regarding the key themes.
3. The term ‘minority’ is generally rejected by Christians in the Middle East as they perceive that it negates from their indigenous origins.
4. Office of National Statistics (2013) and Scottish Government (2014).
5. See <https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/dimecce/> for more information.
6. Due to the lack of official statistics for the size of the case study communities, figures given are estimates gathered from community representatives, especially churches.
7. ‘Active’ members were categorised as those who contributed to representing their community. These figures included clergy (bishops and priests), deacons, lay representatives, Sunday school teachers, church youth leaders, political activists, and representatives of cultural and charitable associations. While the interviews aimed to have diversity in terms of gender, age and migration generations, many in the above-mentioned positions tended to be middle-aged 1st generation males. To compensate for this, some of the focus groups were targeted at groups under-represented in interviews such as youth and women.
8. Due to the small numbers of Assyrians and Iraqi Christians in the UK, we have not provided denominational information to safeguard anonymity.
9. Ethical approval was granted by the School of International Relations Ethics Committee at the University of St Andrews under approval number IR10582.
10. Given the limited numbers of Middle Eastern Christian clergy in Britain, we have opted to omit personal attributes when quoting the testimony of priests.
11. Joma’a prayer is the congregational Friday noon prayer.
12. These narratives of ‘protective patriotism’ are discussed in Hunter and McCallum Guiney (2020).
13. This is in reference to sharia councils which exist in the UK on a voluntary basis for Muslim communities to use to resolve family matters, what would be determined as personal status issues in the Middle East but are not part of the court system or have any legal standing. For further information, see an e-petition to the UK government on this issue <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/48352>

## Acknowledgements

This article originates from a larger research project which received ethical approval from the School of International Relations, University of St Andrews, approval number IR10582. The authors would like to acknowledge the contribution of the DIMECCE team – Lise Paulsen Galal, Sara Lei Sparre and Marta Wozniak-Bobinska – in the research design and for commenting upon this paper. The authors would also like to thank Gurchathen Sanghera, Ineke van der Valk, Nasar Meer and participants at the 2014 ‘Comparative Approaches to the Study of Islamophobia’ conference held at the University of Salzburg, for their comments on an earlier version of this paper. Finally, the authors would like to thank the anonymous peer reviewers for their helpful comments.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Funding

This work was supported by the HERA Joint Research Programme ([www.heranet.info](http://www.heranet.info)) which is co-funded by AHRC, AKA, BMBF via PT-DLR, DASTI, ETAG, FCT, FNR, FNRS, FWF, FWO, HAZU, IRC, LMT, MHEST, NWO, NCN, RANN IS, RCN, VR and The European Community FP7 2007-2013, under the Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities programme under Grant 291827.

## ORCID

Alistair Hunter  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9282-8478>

Fiona McCallum Guiney  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9729-4794>

## References

- Ahluwalia, Munider, and Laura Pellettiere. 2010. "Sikh Men Post-9/11: Misidentification, Discrimination, and Coping." *Asian American Journal of Psychology* 1 (4): 303–314. doi:10.1037/a0022156
- Amer, Amena. 2020. "Between Recognition and Mis/Nonrecognition: Strategies of Negotiating and Performing Identities Among White Muslims in the United Kingdom." *Political Psychology* 41 (3): 533–548. doi:10.1111/pops.12637
- Atto, Naures. 2011. *Hostages in the Homeland, Orphans in the Diaspora: Identity Discourses Among the Assyrian/Syriac Elites in the European Diaspora*. Leiden: Leiden University Press.
- Awan, Imran, and Irene Zempi. 2020. "You All Look the Same: Non-Muslim Men Who Suffer Islamophobic Hate Crime in the Post-Brexit Era." *European Journal of Criminology* 17 (5): 585–602. doi:10.1177/1477370818812735
- Bakker Kellogg, Sarah. 2021. "A Racial-Religious Imagination: Syriac Christians, Iconic Bodies, and the Sensory Politics of Ethical Difference in the Netherlands." *Cultural Anthropology* 36 (4): 618–648. doi:10.14506/ca36.4.08
- Burchardt, Marian, and Ines Michalowski, eds. 2014. *After Integration: Islam, Conviviality and Contentious Politics in Europe*. Wiesbaden: Springer.
- Donabed, Sargon. 2015. *Reforging a Forgotten History: Iraq and the Assyrians in the Twentieth Century*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Dunn, Kevin, Natascha Klocker, and Tanya Salabay. 2007. "Contemporary Racism and Islamophobia in Australia: Racializing Religion." *Ethnicities* 7 (4): 564–589. doi:10.1177/1468796807084017
- Fraser, Nancy. 2000. "Rethinking Recognition." *New Left Review* 3: 107–120. <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii3/articles/nancy-fraser-rethinking-recognition>
- Galal, Lise, Alistair Hunter, Fiona McCallum, Sara Sparre, and Marta Wozniak-Bobinska. 2016. "Middle Eastern Christian Spaces in Europe: Multi-Sited and Super-Diverse." *Journal of Religion in Europe* 9 (1): 1–25. doi:10.1163/18748929-00901002
- Honneth, Axel. 1995. *The Struggle for Recognition*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hopkins, Peter, Katherine Botterill, Gurchathen Sanghera, and Rowena Arshad. 2017. "Encountering Misrecognition: Being Mistaken for Being Muslim." *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 107 (4): 934–948. doi:10.1080/24694452.2016.1270192
- Hunter, Alistair, and Fiona McCallum Guiney. 2020. "The Quest for Equal Citizenship: Middle Eastern Christian Narratives of Migration and Inclusion in the UK." *Mashreq and Mahjar: Journal of Middle East and North African Migration Studies* 8: 1. doi:10.24847/v8i12020.288
- Husain, Atiya. 2017. "Retrieving the Religion in Racialization: A Critical Review." *Sociology Compass* 11: e12507. doi:10.1111/soc4.12507
- Hyndman-Rizik, Nelia. 2008. "'Shrinking Worlds': Cronulla, Anti-Lebanese Racism and Return Visits in the Sydney Hadchiti Lebanese Community." *Anthropological Forum* 18 (1): 37–55. doi:10.1080/00664670701858968
- Jaspal, Rusi, and Marco Cinnirella. 2014. "Hyper-Affiliation to the Religious in-Group Among British Pakistani Muslim Gay Men." *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 24 (4): 265–277. doi:10.1002/casp.2163
- Kayyali, Randa. 2018. "Race, Religion and Identity: Arab Christians in the United States." *Culture and Religion* 19 (1): 1–19. doi:10.1080/14755610.2017.1402797
- Khabeer, Su'ad. 2017. "Citizens and Suspects: Race, Gender, and the Making of American Muslim Citizenship." *Transforming Anthropology* 25 (2): 103–119. doi:10.1111/traa.12098

- Kymlicka, Will, and Eva Pfostl, eds. 2014. *Multiculturalism and Minority Rights in the Arab World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lukasik, Candace. 2021. "Economy of Blood: The Persecuted Church and the Racialization of American Copts." *American Anthropologist* 123 (3): 565–577. doi:10.1111/aman.13602
- Machlis, Elisheva. 2022. "Sunni participation in a Shi'i-led Iraq: Identity politics and the road to redefining the national ethos." *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 22 (1): 43–62. doi:10.1111/sena.12358
- Mahalingam, Ramaswami. 2012. "Misidentification, Misembodiment and the Paradox of Being a Model Minority." *Sikh Formations* 8 (3): 299–304. doi:10.1080/17448727.2012.752679
- Martineau, Wendy. 2012. "Misrecognition and Cross-Cultural Understanding: Shaping the Space for a 'Fusion of Horizons'." *Ethnicities* 12 (2): 161–177. doi:10.1177/1468796811431294
- McCallum, Fiona. 2010. *Christian Religious Leadership in the Middle East: The Political Role of the Patriarch*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press.
- McCallum, Fiona. 2019. "Shared Religion but Still a Marginalized Other: Middle Eastern Christians' Encounters with Political Secularism in the United Kingdom." *Journal of Church and State* 61 (2): 242–261. doi:10.1093/jcs/csy006
- McDowell, Amy. 2017. "This is for the Brown Kids! Racialization and the Formation of 'Muslim' Punk Rock." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 3 (2): 159–171. doi:10.1177/2332649216647747
- Meer, Nasar. 2013. "Racialization and Religion: Race, Culture and Difference in the Study of Antisemitism and Islamophobia." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36 (3): 385–398. doi:10.1080/01419870.2013.734392
- Monier, Elizabeth. 2020. "The Chaldean Patriarch and the Discourse of 'Inclusive Citizenship': Restructuring the Political Representation of Christians in Iraq Since 2003." *Religion, State and Society* 48 (5): 361–377. doi:10.1080/09637494.2020.1835293
- Office of National Statistics. 2013. "Full Story: What Does the Census Tell Us About Religion in 2011." <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/articles/fullstorywhatdoesthecensustellusaboutreligionin2011/2013-05-16#toc>.
- Peace, Tim. 2015. *European Social Movements and Muslim Activism: Another World But with Whom?* London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rana, Junaid. 2007. "The Story of Islamophobia." *Souls* 9 (2): 148–161. doi:10.1080/10999940701382607
- Romero, Luis A., and Amina Zarrugh. 2018. "Islamophobia and the Making of Latinos/as into Terrorist Threats." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41 (12): 2235–2254. doi:10.1080/01419870.2017.1349919
- Sadje, Ariane. 2017. "The Influence of Islamophobia on Ethnic and Religious Identification Among the Iranian Diaspora: Iranian Jews and Bahá'ís in Germany." In *Diasporas as Cultures of Co-Operation: Global and Local Perspectives*, edited by David Carment, and Ariane Sadje, 69–87. London: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Schmoller, Andreas. 2018. "Introduction." In *Middle Eastern Christians and Europe: Historical Legacies and Present Challenges*, edited by Andreas Schmoller, 9–22. Vienna: LIT Verlag.
- Schmoller, Andreas. 2020. "Anti-Islamic Narratives of Middle Eastern Diaspora Christians: An Interdisciplinary Analytical Framework." In *Eastern and Oriental Christianity in the Diaspora*, edited by Herman Teule, and Joseph Verheyden, 189–213. Leuven: Peeters.
- Scottish Government. 2014. "Analysis of Equality Results from the 2011 Census." <https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20170106092412/http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/10/8378/5>.
- Selod, Saher. 2014. "Citizenship Denied: The Racialization of Muslim American Men and Women Post-9/11." *Critical Sociology* 41 (1): 1–19. doi:10.1177/0896920513516022
- Sparre, Sara Lei. 2021. "(In) Visibility and the Muslim Other: Narratives of Flight and Religious Identity Among Iraqi Christians in Denmark." *Ethnicities* 21 (3): 589–610. doi:10.1177/1468796820949279
- Taylor, Charles. 1994. "The Politics of Recognition." In *Multiculturalism*, edited by Appiah Charles Taylor, Kwame Anthony, Jürgen Habermas, Stephen C. Rockefeller, Michael Walzer, and Susan Wolf, 25–74. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Thompson, Simon, and Majid Yar. 2011. "Introduction." In *The Politics of Misrecognition*, edited by Simon Thompson, and Majid Yar, 1–15. London: Routledge.
- Topolski, Anya. 2018. "The Race-Religion Constellation: A European Contribution to the Critical Philosophy of Race." *Critical Philosophy of Race* 6 (1): 58–81. doi:[10.5325/critphilrace.6.1.0058](https://doi.org/10.5325/critphilrace.6.1.0058)
- Xie, Yarong, Steve Kirkwood, Eric Laurier, and Sue Widdicombe. 2021. "Racism and Misrecognition." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 60 (4): 1177–1195. doi:[10.1111/bjso.12480](https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12480)