

## **Scottish Muslim Women and The Politics of National Belonging**

**Saher Ashiq Ali**

MSc in Migration Studies, University of Oxford, UK

### **Abstract**

Since the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the public discourse in Britain has contributed significantly to constructing Islam, and in extension Muslims, as ‘Others.’ In the aftermath of 9/11 and 7/7, this process of ‘otherization’ by the hegemonic institutions has further intensified. Particularly considering that these tragedies had vehemently challenged the state sovereignty, they have engendered a feeling of anxiety at all levels of the society to jealously guard the national boundaries. Subsequently, the public discourse has increasingly resorted to sharpening the boundaries of the national group. Hence, by accentuating the ‘differences’ of Muslims and implying it as a ‘national identity threat’, the public discourse in Britain has excluded Muslims and Islam from the national membership. Consequently, such a socio-political landscape in the UK has engendered a response from a diverse range of communities falling within the Muslim umbrella to resist their exclusion from national belongingness. Using the theoretical framework of Pratsinakis (2018), this research has analysed the rhetoric that Scottish Muslim women have undertaken to achieve the recognition that they are also part of the national ingroup. With the help of the content analysis, the paper has found four rhetoric: identity claims, Muslim women empowerment, Muslim identity is not a threat to ontological security, and Muslim women commitment to civic responsibilities.

**Keywords:** Muslim immigrants, natives, national belongingness, otherization, resistance