Gendered racializations
Producing subordinate immigrant subjects, discrimination, and oppressive feminist and queer politics

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Introduction

This chapter starts from the intersectional premise that race is always gendered and gender is always raced (Glenn 1999; Crenshaw 1990; Collins 2002; Choo and Ferree 2010; McCall 2005; Yuval-Davis 2006, see also Erel, this Handbook). From that vantage point, I first outline the process of gendered racialization and identify migration as a primary site in which that process takes place. Specifically, contemporary gendered racializations shape the understanding of large scale contemporary migrations into (western) Europe and North America. As people who moved to Europe and North America in the last fifty years have become permanent residents and citizens, these places have become home. However, immigrants’ membership is too often not recognized by those who claim the label “native” or who see membership in the nation-state they live in as a natural birthright rooted in a history of presence, even when that presence is settler-colonial (Shachar 2009; Thobani 2007; Yuval-Davis 2011). This continued failure of recognition is enacted, in part, through the gendered racialization of immigrants.

Yet, gendered racialization is not solely a process experienced by immigrant communities, all processes of racialization are gendered as the literature on for example African Americans in the United States shows. While immigrants become newly racialized in gendered ways when they move across borders, racialization is an ongoing process of the continuous reinforcement and rearticulation of supposed racial gendered difference. This chapter focuses more heavily on those labeled Muslims, as the contemporary immigrant group that most clearly illustrates gendered racialization, and starts by unpacking the mechanisms underlying the gendered racialization of those labeled immigrant and/or Muslim (see Spielhaus 2006 for an analysis of how immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East were reclassified from “guest worker” to “Muslim”). Where possible, however, the chapter brings in examples from other racialized peoples to show the continuous process of gendered racialization. In addition, the chapter highlights literature that queers these gendered racializations.

The chapter proceeds as follows: After outlining what gendered racialization entails, it focuses on the experiences of gendered racialization, honing in on sites in which gendered
racializations are made visible, including veil wearing, the securitization of borders and other public spaces, as well as educational achievement and labor market participation. The next section of this chapter draws on research that illustrates the link between gendered racialization and discrimination in these sites. Third, the chapter turns to work by scholars who have observed that both gender equality and LGBTQ rights have become tropes fostering gendered racialization of immigrant communities in contemporary European and North American contexts (Eid 2015; Keskinen 2018; Korteweg 2017; Verloo 2018; Yurdakul and Korteweg 2013). The literature illustrates how these tropes are used to simultaneously reinforce a distinction between those labeled immigrants and “native” populations, while downplaying continuous concerns regarding the limited achievement of gender equality and LGBTQ rights within immigrant-receiving nation-states. These gendered racializations have an effect as evidenced in the rise of contemporary populism and right-wing nationalism (Geva 2018), “homonationalism” (Puar 2013) and “femonationalism” (Farris 2017), and European “anti-gender” movements (Verloo 2018). Furthermore, this last section shows how these gendered racializations impact politics beyond the ultra-right, highlighting feminist and LGBTQ movements’ complicity in these processes (Jivraj and De Jong 2011; Keskinen 2018).

What is gendered racialization? Experiences of gendered racialization

Omi and Winant’s define racialization as “the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group” (2014, 111, italics in original). For the purposes of this chapter, I add that racialization should be understood as the process of attributing racial meaning to relationships, social practices, or groups that are already classified as racial. Furthermore, I argue, following Selod (2019), that the process of racialization is not solely rooted in an interpretation of (presumptions about) biology but extends to bodily comportment and embodiment as well as cultural and religious practices, as, for example, the racialization of Muslim hijab-wearing women shows (see also Korteweg and Yurdakul 2014; Parvez 2017; Scott 2009). Thus, while being mindful of Murji and Solomos (2005) warning that racialization is at times overused to the point of banality, I argue that the concept enables a focus on the process of categorization of difference that continues to be critical to understanding how inequalities are produced and structural violence is perpetrated against groups constituted through this process of racialization.

In addition, racialization needs to be understood from an intersectional perspective. Intersectionality in this context captures the co-constitutiveness of categories of difference, in which each dimension gives meaning to all others (Glenn 1999). In other words, rather than decoupling different dimensions of subjectivity and inequality, such as race, gender and sexuality, an intersectional vantage point argues that the meaning of these categories of differentiation are always created in the interaction between such categories. The resulting intersectional categorizations in turn generate hegemonic definitions of subjectivity, operate through institutional mechanisms, and structure complex inequalities (Glenn 1999; Yuval-Davis 2006; see also Erel, this volume). In particular, gender interacts critically with racialization, as a similarly interpreted biological marker. And, as with race, gender is socially constructed in reference to a presumed underlying biological difference and as with race the biological is overdrawn and often imputed from non-biological markers (Butler 2011; Meadow 2017; Phoenix 2017). In 1851, former slave Sojourner Truth famously asked a group of white women agitating for women’s liberation, “ain’t I a woman?” (see Erel, this volume). What we learned from her question was that gender is socially constructed in reference to race just as race is constructed in reference to
gender (with other differences including class, religion, physical ability, and so on, becoming salient at different moments in time; see Glenn 1999; Yuval-Davis 2006). In the contemporary period, ongoing racial classifications of, for example, African Americans or Blacks in Britain, are inflected by gender, as the construction of dangerous masculinity in racialization of street crime or gang violence shows (Murji and Solomos 2005, 3; Contreras 2009). As these examples suggest, it is imperative that we do not focus solely on the unmarked of the race-gender continuum and understand the workings of masculinity in reference to race, just as we should analyze the construction of whiteness in relation to gender.

The literature also shows that we need to queer the ways in which we understand the gendered racialized production of subjectivities. Reflections from Black feminist lesbians were critical to the initial articulations of intersectional theory: the Combahee River Collective’s statement, written by a collective of radical lesbian Black feminists and published in 1977, was one of the texts critical to Kimberle Crenshaw’s 1990 articulation of intersectionality (Crenshaw 1990; see also Erel, this volume). Nonetheless, Jin Haritaworn (2012), Fatima El-Tayeb (2012), Sarah Bracke (2012), and Jasbir Puar (2013) have all shown from different perspectives that in much work “Europeans are generally presumed to be homogeneously white, while racialized subjects are generally presumed to be uniformly straight and cis” (Bacchetta, El-Tayeb, and Haritaworn 2018, 150). Generally, hegemonic gendered racializations have produced understandings of sexuality and embodiment that render the lived experience of gendered racialized LGBTQs invisible in our scholarship and social policies, though potentially dangerously hypervisible in everyday life (see Amar 2011 on hypervisible Muslim masculinities). At the same time, a narrow interpretation of “gay liberation” has associated support for a white hegemonic gay/lesbian existence with the west’s progressive approach to human rights in ways that erases the complexities of queer life globally.

Studies of the experiences of Muslims in the global north make processes of gendered racialization visible. In her ethnographic study of the racialization of Muslims in the United States, Atiya Husain (2019) compares the experiences of 28 Black and white Muslims and finds that Blackness, whiteness and Muslimness are co-constructed. This means that whites, normally the unmarked racial category (Frankenberg 1993), become racialized when they are discernably Muslim. White Muslims experience a degree of denial of white privilege but, as Husain (2019) shows, some also deny their own whiteness, arguing that being Muslim cancels out being white, something not accepted by African Americans who point out that white privilege is still at play even when one is also Muslim (Husain 2019, 600). African American Muslims by contrast experience a complex interaction between being racialized Black versus Muslim, with the categories reinforcing each other in ways that produce different kinds of racializations depending on which racialized category is made salient in any given encounter.

Husain (2019) does not explicitly theorize the gendered aspects of racialization, but in separating out experiences of women and men, she shows how African American women try to avoid being racialized Muslim by wearing their headcover in a style associated with being African American rather than Muslim. Similarly, wearing the hijab racializes white women (who are often converts), where the hijab confronts them with being seen as foreign (Husain 2019, 596). White women wearing a headscarf are talked to slowly, asked where they learned English, and presumed to be unfamiliar with expected “American” cultural interactional modalities (Husain 2019, 595). African American men experience that being Muslim can at times redirect attention away from Blackness (as in the example when an officer let an African American man go when he discovered that the man was Muslim). In general, Husain shows how in the US context, Muslim is racialized brown and foreign and that
this affects both African American and white Muslims differently as it intersects with the
gendered racialization of whiteness and Blackness to produce differently racialized identities
and experiences that are also distinctly gendered.

Where Husain (2019) speaks to the US context, research on the regulation of the head-
scarf shows how gendered racializations are nationally and locally specific. Work on France,
where the hijab as well as the niqab have been heavily politicized, shows how gendered
racializations of Muslim’s women’s expressions of religiosity and subjectivity inform highly
exclusionary laws that ban headscarf wearing in schools, and niqab wearing in any public
space (Bowen 2007; Laborde 2008; Laxer 2018; Parvez 2017; Scott 2009). Other European
countries regulate veiling less through the legal system but nonetheless attribute meaning to
the practice of veiling that suggests an absence of individual agency on the part of women
wearing it and a disregard for women’s ability to control their own bodily comportment as
they see fit (Elver 2011; Moors 2009; Rottmann and Ferree 2008; Sauer 2009). As a result,
headscarf wearing women are not interpreted as independent subjects but rather as objects of
a repressive practice perpetrated by violent men. In the process, Muslim women and men
confront the gendered racialization of religious practices.

These gendered racialized constructions also become visible in the experiences and inter-
pretations of Muslim converts. Esra Özyürek (2014) shows how German converts respond
to attempts to deny their belonging to the German nation by reinforcing the racialization of
“immigrant” Muslims. Özyürek (2014) analyzes the presence of Islam in Germany over the
past 100 years and shows how as conversion moved from a rare, elite endeavor, to one that
is more widespread but far less elite, it became more threatening to the German nation.
German converts to Islam manage the tensions that their chosen religion brings to the fore
by rejecting what they claim are the cultural trappings of a Turkish, North-African, or
Middle Eastern Islam for what they see as a true Islam, which they claim epitomizes Euro-
pean values. German converts to Islam thus end up reinforcing the current discourses of
racialization, but not of all Muslims but of those who converts see as failing to ground their
religiosity in European identity. Özyürek (2014) thus shows how anti-Muslim racism gets
constituted in the contemporary European context not only by non-Muslims but also by
Muslims. This process is gendered insofar as Muslim converts assert what they see as values
of gender equality usually not attributed to Islam.

Finally, a similar process occurs vis-à-vis queer Muslims in the global North. For
example, Jivraj and De Jong (2011) critically assess a Dutch policy to make LGBTQ iden-
tities “speakable” or discussable within Dutch Muslim communities. They show how this
fosters the creation of a dichotomy between a form of liberation based on speech rather than
action (I am gay, rather than I do gay), while also positioning Muslim communities as inher-
ently hostile to LGBTQ rights (Jivraj and De Jong 2011). Similarly, Bracke (2012) shows
how the strong impulse to rescue both Muslim women and Muslim gays from “their” cul-
ture structures presumably liberatory politics, particularly in the Netherlands but also in
Europe more generally, in ways that limit the articulation and recognition of a queer
Muslim subject and practice in everyday politics and society.

Gendered racialization: discrimination and the production of
complex inequalities

To discriminate can mean to discern difference, in and of itself not necessarily a negative
process. However, gendered racializations turn the discernment of difference into hierarchy
and various forms of exclusionary violence that can be grouped under the header
discrimination.” Farris and de Jong (2014, 1507) usefully define discrimination as the “subordination and exclusion that are experienced by individuals on the basis of certain characteristics they either possess, or with which they are associated.” Pager and Shepherd (2008), in their discussion of racial discrimination, argue that discrimination can result from differential treatment based on arbitrary distinction as well as from differential impact of actions that do not have “any explicit racial content but that have the consequence of producing or reinforcing racial disadvantage” (2008, 182). In short, an analysis of discrimination focuses “on behavior” (Pager and Shepherd 2008, 182). In what follows, I look at literature, which suggests that gendered racializations inform a number of discriminatory practices. The literature on education, labor market outcomes, and surveillance all clearly show the discriminatory impact that processes of gendered racialization can have.

Farris and de Jong (2014) advance the concept of intersectional discrimination. They argue that discrimination is an intersectional construct, where they define intersectionality as “a specific interplay between different ‘axes’ that cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts” (Farris and de Jong 2014, 1507). They argue that intersectional discrimination occurs on three dimensions: structural, institutional and discursive (this in line with much intersectional theorizing, see Choo and Ferree 2010; Yuval-Davis 2006). In the language deployed in this chapter, each of these dimensions of intersectional discrimination is also always a site of gendered racialization – systemic gendered raced formations that are also inflected by class and religion, bureaucratic organizations that operationalize these formations, and discursive forms of gendered racialization or the stereotyped intersectional representation of subject positions.

Farris and de Jong (2014) turn to six European countries to show how gendered racializations result in immigrant girls performing better in school than immigrant boys but worse than non-immigrant girls. They argue that this outcome is the result of gendered familial expectations and gendered societal expectations that position girls as the cultural bearers of social success. At the same time, this relative educational success does not translate into labor market success as institutional discrimination on racialized gendered lines is widespread across Europe. Farris and de Jong pay particular attention to headscarf wearing girls, coming to the conclusion that the penalty for wearing the headscarf is both real and high (Farris and de Jong 2014, 1517–18). This penalty affects both first and second-generation young women.

Research that adds sexuality as an intersectional difference in the analysis of occupational discrimination shows that such gendered racialized impacts are structural elements of workplace bureaucracies. For example, white and Asian women who present as gender-fluid or identify as LGBTQ fare better in the California tech industry than women perceived as normatively heterosexual but in ways that ultimately reinforce male dominance in the field (Alfrey and Twine 2017). The positive impact of non-normative feminine gender representation does not extend to racially non-dominant women, including queer Black women, in the industry. They are not seen as offering the same skills or capacities as their numerically more common white or Asian counterparts.

Gendered racializations also affect LGBTQ refugees, who as research shows have to demonstrate their identity as gay, lesbian, or bisexual rather than providing support for the fact that they faced persecution if they are to be granted asylum (Rehaag 2017). Focusing on the Canadian case, Rehaag (2017) shows that refugee determinations hearings tend to affirm gendered understandings of queerness based on western stereotypes. Dhoest (2018), in his analysis of gay Muslim men’s refugee claims, presents a similar finding for Belgium, which he describes as a country generally seen as open to refugee claims based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Here, too, gay men have to adopt a “coming out” gay narrative to make their claim stick. As Dhoest (2018) also points out, this does not allow for alternate
understandings and experiences of queerness. Thus accessing rights of refugees depends on enactments of LGBTQ identity that do not necessarily reflect the sense of subjectivity queer refugees bring to their encounter with state agents involved in refugee status determination.

Scholars focusing on the workings of intersectionality have often observed the role that invisibilization plays in producing discriminatory outcomes. Bassel and Emjeulu (2017) cite extensive research demonstrating the racialization of poverty and labor market attainment (pp. 190–91), with minority populations in both France and Britain having poverty rates double those of non-minorities. However, the ways in which statistics are collected juxtapose ethnicity/race and gender and thus fail to highlight the intersectional effects of these two categories of difference. The failure to analyze such intersections is also evident in Dutch programs to further the labor market integration of ethnic minority women (Korteweg and Triadafilopoulos 2013; Roggeband and Verloo 2008). These programs treat all racialized women on the template of Muslim women without paying attention to the fact that in the Dutch case, women from the Caribbean and Surinam participate on par with or exceed the labor market participation of white Dutch women (Korteweg and Triadafilopoulos 2013; Roggeband and Verloo 2007). Similarly, Bassel and Emjeulu (2017) observe, in their research on austerity, that much other work treats 2008 as a break point. However, for Black and minority ethnic women the 2008 moment is just one in what Bassel and Emjeulu call “routinised crises” (2017).

These institutional and structural discriminatory effects are also reflected in everyday informal interaction. For example, there has been an uptick in the harassment of headscarf wearing women in France after the implementation of the niqab and burqa-ban (Korteweg and Yurdakul 2014). Similarly, the 2018 Interim Report of the British organization Tell MAMA, which measures anti-Muslim attacks, reported a sharp rise in street-level anti-Muslim attacks, with those identified as women more likely to be the victim than those seen as men (https://tellmamauk.org/gendered-anti-muslim-hatred-and-islamophobia-street-based-aggression-in-cases-reported-to-tell-mama-is-alarming/).

Gendered racialization also interacts with particular constructions of masculinity. Stereotypes of violence attributed to racialized men (or those seen as men) have a negative impact on their capacity to participate in the labor market and increase their risk of incarceration. Border securitization is one site in which racialized masculinity becomes particularly salient. Research on securitization of the border shows how gendered racializations impact movement and creates new and reinforces old inequalities of mobility, particularly for those understood to be Muslim (Selod 2019). Yet, control of borders is not only aimed at masculinized Muslim bodies – hijab-wearing women are subjected to intensified scrutiny as well.

Gendered racialized practices of border securitization also affect those trying to cross borders to settle elsewhere. Gina Marie Longo (2018) shows how women and men marrying foreign nationals navigate a US immigration system that continuously focuses on the genuineness of the relationship in ways that generate gendered barriers to entry for racialized persons. The same process occurs in Canada (Bhuyan, Korteweg, and Baqi 2018). Ironically, Canadian evidence suggests that greater scrutiny is placed on couples who do not conform to a normatively white heterosexual hierarchies, for example, couples in which women are more highly educated or higher earners than the foreign men they are trying to marry. Similarly, research on the regulation of marriage migration in Canada shows that couples seen as non-normative in their country of origin face greater scrutiny of immigration officials (Satzewich 2015). Longo (2018) shows that those engaged in marriage across borders reinforce white heterosexual normativity as they provide advice to others trying to navigate the US immigration system.
Politics and social movements: enacting and countering gendered racialization

Gendered racializations often work through the trope of “gender equality”. As I have written elsewhere, gender equality functions as an empty signifier, notoriously difficult to define yet easily deployed to accuse others of not achieving it (Korteweg 2017). This idea of the malleability of gender equality is also reflected in various empirical studies. For example, Rothing and Bendsen (2011) in a study of Norwegian high school textbooks argue that gender equality and support for gay rights is used to mark Norwegianness. Furthermore, a profession of adherence to gender equality and gay rights is positioned as a prerequisite of symbolic belonging to the Norwegian nation (Rothing and Bendsen 2011). Discussing the hijab, Eid (2015) observes how “the hijab has increasingly come to be regarded in the West as an unambiguous symbol of female oppression. Such an orientalist framework rests upon a feminist rhetoric using gender equality as a vehicle for the racialization of Muslims” (2015, 1902; see also Razack 2007; Korteweg and Yurdakul 2014). Eid further argues that a simultaneous movement of Muslim clerics to position the hijab as a rejection of the west and a form of “religious nationalism” renders the hijab so laden with symbolism as to make it difficult for Muslim women produce their own “social meanings” (Eid 2015, 1903). However, the young Muslim women he interviewed were quite capable of engaging reflexively with the dominant gender roles into which they were socialized (Eid 2015, 1913). Eid concludes that we need to reject “the misconceived notion that racialized minorities are solely motivated by culture whereas free choice is confined to Western people” (Eid 2015, 1913; see also Volpp 2000).

Research on so-called honor killing forcefully brings home the impact of the portrayal of Muslims as disregarding gender equality to the point of murder (Abu-Lughod 2011; Razack 2007; Yurdakul and Korteweg 2013). This research shows how this use of gender equality activates the trope of cultural backwardness (Razack 2007). The resulting gendered racializations make it more difficult to address gendered violence in Muslim communities (Korteweg 2014). As this work suggests, the issue of gender equality is particularly salient in the gendered racialization of Muslim immigrants in Europe and North America. It is also reflected in research on MENA countries that addresses support for gender equality, research which is clearly motivated by the political debates around the presumed incompatibility between Islam and gender equality in the global north (see for example Glas, Spiering, and Scheepers 2018).

As a growing number of scholars have pointed out, the call for gender equality, and a concomitant emphasis on support for LGBTQ rights, has informed increasingly exclusionary politics of gendered racialization. Verloo (2018) shows how right-wing political parties in the Netherlands uses the gender equality and LGBTQ rights tropes to promote racist anti-immigrant politics. Analyzing both party statements and political positions, Verloo (2018) clearly demonstrates that for Geert Wilders’ Party for Freedom (PVV), which was the second largest party in the Dutch elections of 2017, and also for newer ultraright-wing party, Forum for Democracy, led by Thierry Baudet, which entered parliament with two seats that same year, gender equality and LGBTQ rights are Dutch achievements under threat by “Islamization”. In this narrative, gender equality is already achieved by “native” Dutch. Thus, these parties’ positions reflect a complete absence of support for furthering gender or queer rights unless the proposal at hand is framed as a way to safeguard those presumably achieved rights from Muslims or Islam. Yet, neither Netherlands, nor any other European nation, has achieved gender equality or full support for LGBTQ rights. Such appeals thus have a dual function: they make addressing continuing issues around gender and gender equality in the general population appear unnecessary, while facilitating the exclusion...
of racialized others. Farris (2017), in her work on femonationalism, drives this point home forcefully, as does Puar’s earlier work on homonationalism (Puar 2007).

This literature also show how processes of gendered racialization are not confined to the ultra- or anti-immigrant right. Rather the notion that gender equality and queer rights are an achievement of the west that can and should be spread to the rest is present across the political spectrum (see Keskinen 2018; Laxer and Korteweg 2018). This also affects the assessment of gendered racialized persons’ capacity to be politically active. Basel and Emejulu (2017) highlight how gendered racializations structure what counts as activism:

voting, being a political party or trade union activist, taking part in demonstrations and standing for election are usually what counts as legitimate political action. Because minority women are underrepresented in these traditional political spaces it appears as if minority women are absent from politics, or worse, operate largely as apolitical agents.

It is only when we redefine ‘what counts’ as politics and political behaviour that the diverse ways in which minority women undertake political action becomes visible (189)

This gendered racialized visibility/invisibility dynamic translates into feminist movement activity, where organizations apply an implicit or explicit rank ordering of the potential constituencies they represent and the possible issues they address. The literature shows that feminist movement organizations struggle with the multiplicity of “gender equality” in finding ways to counter gendered racializations but at times enact their own gendered racializations as work by Lépinard (2014), Luna (2016) and Rottmann and Ferree (2008) shows. This work addresses feminist organizing and focuses on the degree to which organizations engage deeply with intersectionality. In other words, these scholars ask to what extent women’s organizations are willing and able to take into account the impact of diverse forms of gendered racializations. This work identifies difficulties that feminist organizations continue to have in recognizing the differences between women as they make claims for the recognition of gendered inequalities. Eleonore Lépinard (2014) shows that French practices of denying racialization under the call of republican citizenship informs a repertoire of feminist organizing that puts the category of “women” over and above any specificities that attach to that category through gendered racialization. By contrast, in Canada, there is more room for the recognition of gendered racialization in a context where multiculturalism informs an understanding of recognition for different group rights (Lépinard 2014). Rottmann and Ferree (2008) show that German feminist organizations (run by non-immigrant German women) privilege gender over other differences with respect to both anti-discrimination law and the regulation of headscarf wearing. Feminists failed to see common interests between “women” and those marginalized in employment, education, and so forth on the basis of immigration status or religion as well as gender. As Rottmann and Ferree state, German feminist organizations were not willing to “define ‘women’s interests’ as also intersecting those of their wider ethnic and religious communities” and failed “to form a strategic alliance that did not privilege ‘Germanness’” (2008, 487). While German feminists seemed to have limited stamina for protecting German Muslim women’s labor rights, they were deeply engaged with the regulation of the headscarf in ways that suggested a desire to, paraphrasing Lila Abu-Lughod (2011) “save Muslim women from Muslim men.” Difficulties in feminist organizing around differences between women can extend to organizations led by racialized women. Zakiya Luna (2016) finds that an important, broad, national umbrella organization focusing on gender, race and reproductive health in the United States, nonetheless homogenizes gendered racialization under a “women of color” label that ultimately fails to recognize the specificities of
gendered racialization faced by different (groups of) women. Finally, similar processes occur around LGBTQ rights, with EU and North American organizations fostering a recognition of gendered racializations’ intersection with LGBTQ subjectivities and practices. However, these recognitions are limited when they reinforce particular understandings of pathways to and realizations of liberation that are patterned on US or European history.

Discussion and conclusion

This chapter has provided a non-exhaustive discussion of processes of gendered racialization with a particular focus on Muslim immigrants in the global north, who following Omi and Winant’s definition, experience “the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group” (2014, 111, italics in original). European countries witnessed how a group of immigrants, who as Spielhaus shows, were initially classified by country of origin, have increasingly been imagined through the label Muslim (Spielhaus 2006). This label, in turn, is attached to embodied practices, such as wearing a veil, a beard, or a skull cap. Furthermore, this label is also attached to purported religious values, beliefs and resulting practices that are seen as threats to established nation-states and a politics of (nominal) support for gender equality and LGBTQ rights. In this chapter, I argue that both the ways in which “Muslim” becomes the most salient identity marker for the group thus conceived and the ways in which that label is attached to threat and danger comes about through a process of gendered racialization. Furthermore, this process results in discriminatory practices that do both material and symbolic harm. At the same time, gendered racializations are not limited to Muslims in the global north. Rather, analyzing the positioning of those inhabiting that subject position can be a point for reconceptualizing the ways in which gendered racializations produce complex inequalities across multiple societies.

After illustrating how gendered racializations produce intersectional discrimination, the last part of the chapter turns to political action informed by gendered racializations. I hone in on the ways in which two particular tropes, that of a poorly defined “gender equality” as well as that of “LGBTQ rights,” become the vehicle for a particular type of gendered racialization. These tropes are not only taken up in ultra-right politics but across the political spectrum. I also look at how feminist organizations navigate gendered racializations in feminist work. The literature shows feminist movements continue to have difficulty with a genuine recognition of intersectionality that is captured by the concept of gendered racialization.

This chapter barely scratches the surface of work that could be done to analyze the construction and effects of gendered racialization. This chapter offers an overview of work that takes seriously the co-constitution of two categories that both navigate complex ideas about biology and embodiment. The chapter also makes a modest attempt to incorporate a large literature on the LGBTQ dimensions as part and parcel of contemporary gendered racializations. A critical absence in this chapter suggests the need to address the erasure of Indigeneity in the work on gendered racialization and take seriously the ways in which settler colonialism informs ongoing processes of gendered racialization (Glenn 2015; A Simpson 2014; L Simpson 2017).

References


Gendered racializations


