

SNP told to stop 'myth' Scotland has less racism

SCOTLAND has as big a problem with racism as the rest of the UK, according to a damning book which urges politicians to face up to the scale of the issue.

A higher proportion of the population are murdered for racist reasons than in other parts of the UK, say senior academics – while ethnic minorities are much less likely to secure top public sector jobs.

They claim it is a 'misleading fantasy' for pro-independence politicians to claim Scotland has less of a problem with racism and is 'culturally different' to England.

Senior ministers including Nicola Sturgeon have said – in the after-

'Misleading fantasy'

math of the EU referendum – that Scotland is an 'inclusive, welcoming, outward-looking country'.

But new book *No Problem Here: Understanding Racism in Scotland* suggests this is a 'myth'.

Neil Davidson, a sociology lecturer at Glasgow University and one of the editors of the book, said: 'Movements for devolution and independence have involved the idea Scotland is "culturally" different from England, and part of this involves the Scots being more "welcoming"... these are misleading fantasies.

'A better Scotland will only be built by confronting the evil of racism rather than pretending it does not exist.'

The book states that between 2000 and 2013, there were 1.8 murders per one million people with a

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known or suspected racial element in Scotland, compared with 1.3 in the rest of the UK.

Other research shows that white applicants for council jobs are almost three times more likely to be successful than ethnic minority candidates, while 7.1 per cent of all white applicants for posts in the wider public sector went on to be appointed, compared with 4.4 per cent of non-white applicants.

A chapter of the book by Maureen McBride and Minna Liinmaa, also editors of the book, said: 'In the post-Brexit context, the "no problem here" myth in Scotland has been given a new lease of life.'

Labour MSP Anas Sarwar, chairman of a cross-party group on tackling Islamophobia, said: 'We cannot hope to eradicate everyday sexism and homophobia, racism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, unless we acknowledge that it exists.'

'Our task is to make the unconscious bias conscious, so people can challenge themselves and then as a country we can aim to defeat prejudice in the long-term.'

Scottish Conservative equalities spokesman Annie Wells said: 'Scotland has just as many problems with racism as England does.'

'In a bid to boost its separation cause, the SNP likes to pretend this isn't the case. But that's a head-in-the-sand approach.'

The Scottish Government said: 'We are resolved to do everything it takes to ensure that Scotland is a place where there is zero tolerance of racism in any form.'

The book will be launched at Holyrood tomorrow.

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CRAIG BROWN IS AWAY

