

Journal of Public Policy Practitioners (JPPP)

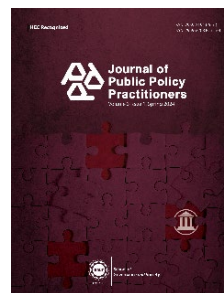
Volume 3 Issue 2, Fall 2024

ISSN(P): 2959-2194, ISSN(E): 2959-2208

Homepage: <https://journals.umt.edu.pk/index.php/jppp>



Article QR



Title: Exploring Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Racism in Canada and the USA: A Comprehensive Scoping Review

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jppp.32.03>

History: Received: October 11, 2024, Revised: December 12, 2024, Accepted: December 20, 2024, Published: December 30, 2024

Citation: Durrani, Z., Mohammed, A., Ilyas, A. R., Sadia, S. R., Jamal, A., Bakali, N., & Zaidi, M. (2024). Exploring Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism in Canada and the USA: A comprehensive scoping review. *Journal of Public Policy Practitioners*, 3(2), 52–82. <https://doi.org/10.32350/jppp.32.03>

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Conflict of Interest: Author(s) declared no conflict of interest



UMT

A publication of

School of Governance and Society

University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

Exploring Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Racism in Canada and the USA: A Comprehensive Scoping Review

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Abstract

Hate crimes, driven by bias against race, religion or identity, have increasingly targeted Muslims in Canada and the United States. However, despite growing literature, research remains fragmented, often focusing on specific contexts such as racial bias, media influence or political rhetoric. This scoping review synthesizes the existing literature on Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism in Canada and the United States, focusing on its prevalence, characteristics and contributing factors, aiming to inform policies and strategies to combat their impacts. Using Arksey and O'Malley's methodological framework and PRISMA-ScR guidelines, two online databases were searched for articles published in English from 1995 to 2023. The search identified 31 articles to be included in the research. The analysis highlighted four major themes in the literature: politically-driven anti-Muslim hate, media-driven anti-Muslim hate, gendered hate crimes against Muslims, and online hate crimes against Muslims. The findings illustrate how certain politically charged rhetoric and policies (e.g., Canada's Bill 21) normalize hostility toward Muslims and intensify public prejudice. Media portrayals that frame Muslims as violent reinforce negative stereotypes, further fueling discrimination. Gender-based violence disproportionately affects visibly Muslim women, as attire like the hijab makes them identifiable targets in public spaces. Online hate crimes, facilitated by the anonymity of digital platforms, continue to grow in both

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frequency and impact. These findings indicate an urgent need for more inclusive public policy initiatives, targeted educational efforts, and ongoing research to address the various forms of anti-Muslim hate. Further research including diverse perspectives and non-English literature will contribute to a deeper understanding of the problem.

Keywords: Anti-Muslim hate, discrimination, Islamophobia, scoping review

Introduction

Hate crime is a "criminal offense against a person or property motivated in whole or in part by an offender's bias against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender or gender identity" (Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], [2016](#)). In recent years, hate crimes targeting Muslims have become more prevalent in Canada and the US, especially in the form of underreported microaggressions (Moreau, [2021](#)). Widespread access to the internet has made it convenient to commit hate crimes without accountability (e.g., cyberhate) (Müller & Schwarz, [2020](#)). therefore, facilitating hate-motivated actions physically as well as in online spaces can enable hate crimes and justify them for most offenders (Cramer et al., [2020](#)).

On September 11, 2001, a series of terrorist attacks in the US set off a global cascade of political and social reactions (Perry, [2013](#)). These reactions to the 9/11 attacks resulted in increased hostility and hatred against Muslims in the form of hate crimes. For instance, within a few weeks after 9/11, it was reported that the FBI had investigated 145 hate crimes against Muslims in the United States (Perry, [2013](#)). Additionally, data from a 2011 Gallup report showed that 52% of Americans and 48% of Canadians claimed that the West did not respect Muslim societies (Gallup, [2011](#)). Similarly, a Canadian-based public opinion poll conducted by Angus Reid in 2009 found that 68% of Quebecers and 46% of the rest of Canada held an unfavorable opinion of Islam (Geddes, [2013](#)). According to Statistics Canada, police-reported hate crimes against Muslims rose from 139 incidents in 2016 to 349 in 2017, an increase of 151% (Armstrong, [2019](#)). Taken together, the hate-based attacks against Muslims post-9/11 have significantly increased in both Canada and the US.

Interestingly, although statistics show that hate crimes are increasing, they do not highlight the ways in which these hate crimes manifest. For

instance, in Mississauga, Ontario, on March 19, 2022, a man was convicted of attacking a mosque with a hatchet and bear spray driven by his hatred for Muslims (Matza, [2023](#)). Another example involved a 66-year-old Muslim Saskatoon man who was nearly run over by a pickup truck which jumped the curb in hopes of hitting him as he walked home from his morning prayer (Olson, [2018](#)). In a more recent example, in the United States of America, a fitness center, owned by a martial artist and an influencer named Eddie Redzovic, was shot at through the window of the studio (Lewis, [2024](#)). Additionally, a 6-year-old Muslim boy and his mother were attacked by their landlord and the boy was stabbed to death in October 2023. This attack was facilitated by the fact that they were of Palestinian origins (Al Jazeera, [2023](#)). As such, these examples show the impact of these hate crimes and their ability to disrupt the cohesion and unity within a community. Therefore, understanding the extent and prevalence of hate crime in Canada and the USA is needed.

Current literature on hate crime is contextually diverse, and studies regarding the extent of hate crimes against Muslims are numerous. For instance, some studies look at the different aspects of hate crimes and build models that vary widely from other studies (Alimahomed, [2011](#); Cainkar, [2006](#); Erentzen, [2018](#)). One such example is Erentzen's paper ([2018](#)), where the positive correlation of being non-white and a victim of hostility has been analyzed, whereas other papers suggest that being Arab is predictive of an increased incidence of hate crimes (Cainkar, [2006](#)). Additionally, a paper by Alimahomed ([2011](#)) found that the US census labels Arabs as white, whereas Cainkar's ([2006](#)) paper elucidates that Arabs do not fall within the category of the behavior of whiteness. This scoping review provides a critical overview of the existing literature on anti-Muslim hate in Canada and the US. This study aims to explore and discuss what the existing literature reveals about the prevalence and extent of anti-Muslim hate in Canada and the United States, as well as its implications for policy and practice.

Methodology

The study used Arksey and O'Malley's five-stage framework (Arksey & O'Malley, [2005](#)). This process consisted of the following steps: 1) identifying the research question, 2) identifying relevant studies, 3) selecting studies, 4) charting the data and 5) reporting the results. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses

Extension for Scoping Reviews guidelines were followed to ensure a high and consistent quality of research reporting (Tricco et al., [2018](#)).

Identifying the Research Question

The study identified the following review question: “What does the existing literature reveal about the prevalence and extent of anti-Muslim hate in Canada and the United States?”

Identifying Relevant Studies

Three authors reviewed the literature on anti-Muslim racism and hate crimes. Each author identified and compiled a list of potential search terms from the preliminary reading. The search terms were used to find articles in two academic research databases (JSTOR and PsycINFO) and two academic search engines (Google Scholar and Microsoft Academic). The combinations of key terms that yielded the most relevant results in these databases were chosen as the final terms for this review. The following final terms were then used to search for relevant articles across the chosen databases and search engines: "anti-Muslim bigotry", "anti-Islamism", "anti-Muslimism", "anti-Muslim sentiments", "Islamophobia", "anti-Muslim hate crime", and "anti-Islamic reactions". Each author then refined their search strategy using appropriate search terms to collect all relevant articles from their chosen databases.

Selecting Studies

The inclusion criteria included articles related to anti-Muslim hate crimes, the impact on Muslims, and possible reasons for hate-induced attacks (Table 1). The study limited the literature that referred to the Canadian and American Muslim populations. Additionally, the literature had to be presented in English. The exclusion criteria consisted of articles not in English, about populations outside Canada and the US, and those that did not discuss anti-Muslim racism and Islamophobia (Table 1). Early in the selection process, the use of traditional databases such as JSTOR and PsycINFO was employed. With that the search to gray literature sources from academic search engines such as Google Scholar and Microsoft Academic was expanded.

In the first step, the authors screened the titles and abstracts based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. All the selected studies were then put through a full-text search in which the authors read the entire articles.

Table 1
Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for the Articles

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Articles focused on anti-Muslim hate crimes, impact on Muslims, and reasons for hate-induced attacks in Canada and USA	Articles not directly related to hate crime against Muslims
Articles in English	Articles not in English
Articles written after 1995	Articles written prior to 1995

Charting the Data

All selected articles were compiled into a table with the following column headings: author(s), year of publication, type of study, study objective, study population, major findings, and additional comments (Table 2). Finally, a percentage-based inter-rater reliability test was conducted to verify the presence of our selected themes in the finalized list of articles. This process required two authors to identify the themes in each paper. If both authors identified the same theme in each article, then a 100% agreement was reached, and a score of 1 was added. Four themes were identified: politically-driven hate crimes, media-driven hate crimes, gendered hate crimes, and online hate crimes. The included articles were qualitatively analyzed and summarized in this scoping review.

Results

Search Results

The review included 31 eligible scholarly articles and the findings from the academic literature are summarized in Table 2, including study type, methodology and limitations. Subsequently, the analysis of the articles within Table 2 also led to the identification of two major sub-themes under the main theme of 'hate crimes', which are 'cyberhate crimes' and 'offline hate crimes'.

Table 2
List of Relevant Literature

No.	Author(s)	Year	Objective	Sample	Type	Findings	Comments
1	Alimahomed-Wilson, S.	2017	Private violence directed towards Muslim Women in United States.	40	Qualitative Surveys	The paper found that Muslim women in the US are subjected to various forms of violence and discrimination in the workplace and in accessing healthcare services. Additionally, it also highlights the role of the media in perpetuating negative stereotypes of Muslim women.	The paper contained a small sample size and a lack of diversity among participants. It focused exclusively on the United States and used self-reporting questionnaires. Finally, the study only looked at the individual rather than structural factors.
2	Awan, I	2014	The article argues that online Islamophobia must be given the same level of attention as street-level Islamophobia.	500	Qualitative	The article highlights the derogatory abuse faced by Muslims online. Additionally, the article identifies the characteristics of the offenders as well as the offender's motivation in committing acts of cyber-Islamophobia.	Only looked at Twitter but does not look at other platforms that are contributing to hate crime.
3	Alimahomed, S.	2011	Negative racialization of Arab Americans and the effect on the identity of Muslim communities in Los Angeles.	60	Qualitative	Arab Muslims battle racism in primary and secondary schools. The US Census labels Arab Americans as 'white'. Arab Muslims have a challenging identity that is a result of the negation of whiteness and simultaneous mediation of non-white groups, i.e., a conflicting identity.	The article emphasizes systemic racism on Arab Americans, and how younger generations reject 'whiteness' as a factor that can shape identity.

No.	Author(s)	Year	Objective	Sample	Type	Findings	Comments
4	Considine, C.	2017	Explores the intersectionality of race and Islamophobia relating to the experiences of American Muslims and non-Muslims in the US.	Thematic coding 42 articles	Quantitative	The study found that Muslims are racialized in America and are segregated racially and culturally from the white population. The consequences of segregation result in the increased likelihood of hate crimes, discrimination, and profiling.	The methodology only focused on the relevant news media and may not have placed emphasis on news stories that were not widely reported.
5	Erentzen, C., Schuller, R. A., & Gardner, R. C.	2018	Explored the effect that victim behavior might have on observer reactions to Islamophobic hate crimes.	313	Qualitative	When the victim was portrayed as passive, the American South Asian Muslim victim attracted lower victim blame, higher perpetrator blame, and increased certainty of hate crime. As the victim's behavior became more aggressive, victim-blaming increased and perpetrator-blaming decreased, but only for the South Asian Muslim victim.	Used university students to assess the variables that may not be representative of the Canadian population. The questionnaire lacked validity in contrast to direct observation.
6	Cainkar, L.	2006	Arab-American Experience in the US.	102	Qualitative Surveys	Discrimination against Arab-Americans and Islamophobia against Arab-American Muslims has existed in the US, insinuated by non-Arab-Americans, based on the false belief that Arabs do not behave in accordance with 'whiteness'. Anti-Arab/Muslim prejudice, discrimination, and racism are correlated with racial subordination in the US.	Focus on anti-Arab sentiments and racially motivated hate crimes rather than analyzing hate against Muslims.

No.	Author(s)	Year	Objective	Sample	Type	Findings	Comments
7	Acim, R.	2019	An analysis on Islamophobia, racism, and the vilification of Muslims in the US.	5	Qualitative narrative research	Narratives from 5 newspapers indicated that Islamophobia and racism are rising in the US. Verbal and physical aggression are common in the US.	Argues that Islamophobia is on the rise in the US and Europe but fails to address possible solutions that can be employed by Muslims or political parties.
8	Krondorfe, B.	2015	Understanding the similarities between Islamophobia and anti-Semitism.	N/A	Qualitative research	The term Islamophobia is valuable in defining the hostility towards Muslims and Islam but lacks a level of accuracy. There are many similarities between anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.	The article mentions similarities and the importance of terminologies but does not discuss similarities in hate crimes against Jews and Muslims.
9	Sunar, L.	2017	History of Islamophobia in politics in the United States.	N/A	Qualitative research	Islamophobia in the United States has become a mainstream and common occurrence on an institutional level.	The article fails to highlight increasing hate crimes in other religious or cultural groups.
10	Woolley, S., Pakzad, R., & Monaco, N.	2019	Discussion of Islam in light of social media platforms.	188, 763	Qualitative Review	Many of the domains in the Gav dataset contain links to anti-Muslim hate discussions and hate groups. The second most used hashtag in the dataset was found to be #BanIslam.	The article does not discuss content censoring by the websites. Also it does not mention if anonymous websites have higher Islamophobic content compared to other platforms where identity is public.
11	Barkdull, C., Khaja, K., Queiro-Tajalli, I., Swart, A.,	2011	To explore the experiences of 34 Muslim individuals in four Western countries to gain a	34 Muslims in 4 Western countries (Australia,	Qualitative interviews	Argentina: participants didn't believe they were perceived differently after 9/11 or that they had personally suffered.	The sample was not very representative of the general population. There was a limited representation of people with low levels of



No.	Author(s)	Year	Objective	Sample	Type	Findings	Comments
	Cunningham, D., & Dennis, S.		better understanding of their experiences with prejudice and discrimination following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.	Argentina, Canada, US)		discrimination either pre/post 9/11 Australia, Canada, US: life before 9/11 had been less stressful and had no public scrutiny. Life after 9/11 included verbal harassment, rejection of non-Muslim friends, intense scrutiny, and discrimination related to employment.	education, low income, new immigrants, women, and youths. Interviews were not tape-recorded so some information was lost.
12	Wasim, K.	2018	To analyze comments from numerous online news sources on articles where the identified victim of violence was Muslim.	N/A	Thematic analysis	59% of the 191 total comments were Islamophobic. 20% of the comments were coded as supportive of Muslims, with the remainder of the comments falling in the miscellaneous category (bigotry, prejudice, minimization, racism, or general comments of hate). 82% of the comments were coded as negative, i.e., elicited feelings of anger, disappointment, fear, frustration, or sadness.	Possibility of researcher bias: thematic analysis includes subjectivity of the researcher/analyzer.
13	Logo, M., & Poudret, M.	2017	Examine the role of media reporting during San Bernardino and Orlando terrorist attacks and the anti-Muslim Trump rhetoric in creating an	Americans and American Media	Doctoral Dissertation	CNN and Fox News and the commentary of Donald Trump contribute to the growing Islamophobia, specifically Trump's rhetoric.	The article has a very narrow timeline (2015-16). Only analyzed two media platforms and two events. The article only observed the effects of Trump's rhetoric upon his supporters and not the public.

No.	Author(s)	Year	Objective	Sample	Type	Findings	Comments
			environment that favors Islamophobia.				
14	Thörner, S., Schmidt, P., & Gosen, S.	2014	Examine the hypothesis that terrorist threat leads to prejudice and discrimination against Muslims.	Three Western countries which faced major terrorist attacks in the last decade (US, Spain, UK)	Poll Review	9/11 attacks led to an increase in anti-Muslim sentiment in all focus countries.	Monitored dependent variables in different time sets, so there wasn't a continuity to the data thus causality couldn't be proven, only theorized.
15	Everett Marko, D.	2019	Review of the impact of Trump's and other Islamophobic politicians' anti-Muslim sentiment and policies on Muslims.	Muslims in the US and Europe	Review	The anti-Muslim sentiments of Islamophobic politicians have a detrimental cultural and social impact on the lives of Muslims.	Limited in their scope and focuses solely on the federal administration.
16	Ghani, N.	2018	Review of Islamophobia in the US.	Muslims in the US	Review	Islamophobia has become visible and prevalent in American media and politics, which play a key role in exacerbating it.	Limited data regarding statistics as most agencies have only data that was voluntarily reported. Reporting of hate crimes depends on the perception of police by minorities, which isn't always positive and contributes to underreporting.
17	Magassa, M.	2019	Explore the experience of Muslim students and identify barriers relating to Islamophobia.	Muslim Students at the University of Victoria, Canada	Qualitative Interviews	The key conceptual finding was related to ambient Islamophobia.	Small sample size.



No.	Author(s)	Year	Objective	Sample	Type	Findings	Comments
18	Rabhi, A., & Ghennam, F.	2013	Examine the effect on the lives of Muslim immigrants post-9/11.	Muslims in the US	Doctoral Dissertation	The lives of Muslim Americans have become considerably more difficult post 9/11.	Methodology of the paper was unclear. No mention of interview type, participant backgrounds, or sample size.
19	Aoues, S., & Fillali, B.	2019	Analyze the impact on the lives of Muslims post 9/11 and 7/7 London bombings and how media and certain campaigns played a role.	British and American Muslims	Doctoral Dissertation	Although Islamophobia has ancient origins, the considerable rise in Islamophobia post-9/11 and 7/7 has greatly impacted Muslims in the US.	Methodology not well outlined. No interviews were conducted to get direct opinions of the impact on Muslims.
20	Walton, S.	2018	Examined an anti-Muslim hate group to see how they justify their hate and how much their sentiments resonate with the local community.	N/A	Case Study	Institutionalized Islamophobia has become a dangerous social problem embedded within post-9/11 ideologies within the US.	This author only examined a limited number of hate groups within the US instead of focusing worldwide or even a greater number within the US.
21	Bhattacharyya, S., Ashby, K. M., & Goodman, L. A.	2014	Use of counseling psychology to evaluate an intervention used to combat Islamophobia post-Boston Marathon Bombings.	Boston College Students	Qualitative	Counseling psychology can work at micro, meso, and macro levels to aid in social justice.	The study was limited to the Boston area. In addition, it focused only on interventions after the Boston Marathon bombings, whereas it could have observed other events and found more

No.	Author(s)	Year	Objective	Sample	Type	Findings	Comments
							interventions leading to a larger study.
22	Augustine, R. S., & Augustine, J. C.	2012	The role of xenophobia post-9/11 in contributing to anti-Muslim sentiments within the media.	Employees and executives of American media	Thesis-based	Those within the media environment thrive within xenophobic environments as it allows them to create an image of "us vs. them" when referring to Muslims, as this allows for greater profits through higher views.	The article fails to make a distinction between large corporations and actual media corporations terming both as "media" however both play very different roles in xenophobic situations.
23	Elsheikh, E., Sisemore, B., & Lee, R.	2017	Examine the role of the US government in promoting Islamophobia.	Muslims in the US	Report-Based	The impact of Trump's ban on Muslim countries resulted in the creation of multiple federal and statewide measures, such as anti-Sharia laws designed to single out Muslims, all of which were inspired by the ban.	Within the methodology, the author used very specific terms such as Sharia, foreign laws, or Islam; however, anti-Sharia bills are not limited to such keywords, and as such, the list must be more exhaustive.
24	Hanan, S.	2019	Examine the lives of Libyan women and their experiences with anti-Muslim racism.	Libyan women in the US	Phenomenological Study	The study concluded that Libyan women living in the US faced various challenges within the scope of micro and macro aggressions.	The article examines a very specific group of women; as such, the findings are not generalizable to a greater population.
25	Luqman, M.	2018	Analyze the relationship between Trump's hate speech campaign and the marginalization of minorities within the US.	Minority groups within the US	Comparative Analysis	Former President Donald Trump's anti-minority speeches and rhetoric directly correlated to an increase in xenophobic crimes against minorities and an increase in hate speech against minorities.	The article focuses only on Trump's hate speech but fails to note the impact of other high-ranking officials within the office and famous people outside of the office.



No.	Author(s)	Year	Objective	Sample	Type	Findings	Comments
26	Reichenbach, S. C.	2019-2020	Examine the "Countering Violent Extremism" strategy implemented by the Obama administration and used by the Trump administration, and its effect on American Muslims.	Muslims in the US	Qualitative Analysis	The "Countering Violent Extremism" program was responsible for marginalizing American Muslims as well as being ineffective in preventing terrorism.	The article focuses mainly on discussing Somali Muslims and does not discuss other minority Muslim groups to the extent it discusses Somali Muslim groups.
27	Sorouri, F.	2017	Examine the lives of young Muslims and the effects discrimination has on their health, mental health, and lifestyle factors.	Muslims in the US	Case Study	The impact of discrimination has significant effects on the quality of life of a person due to changes in their mental health, physical health, and lifestyle factors. These effects heightened after 9/11.	The article is limited to young Muslims whereas the impacts can be felt by all age groups; hence, the article could have focused on more groups of Muslims.
28	Plunkett, A., & Reno, S.	2017	An overall comparison of modern-day Islamophobia and its similarities to the Holocaust.	N/A	Review	Although it is controversial to draw comparisons between the Holocaust and Islamophobia towards Muslims in the West, it is important to point out these comparisons to analyze similarities and prevent future genocide.	The article goes to great lengths to discuss Islamophobia however it hardly discusses specific Islamophobic examples, it would benefit greatly from more Islamophobic examples.
29	Abduljabe, M., & Kalin, I.	2019	This study contributes to the ongoing debate about anti-Muslim attitudes in the US by merging Social Identity theory, Contact	Muslims in the US	Qualitative	The findings of this research indicate that Social Identity Theory has weak explanatory power in explaining prejudice toward Muslims. Integrated Threats theory, however, has a strong influence on prejudice,	Since it is a cross-sectional study, political, and social environments have an influence on prejudice experienced. Thus, data is not generalizable, which is further limited by the poor

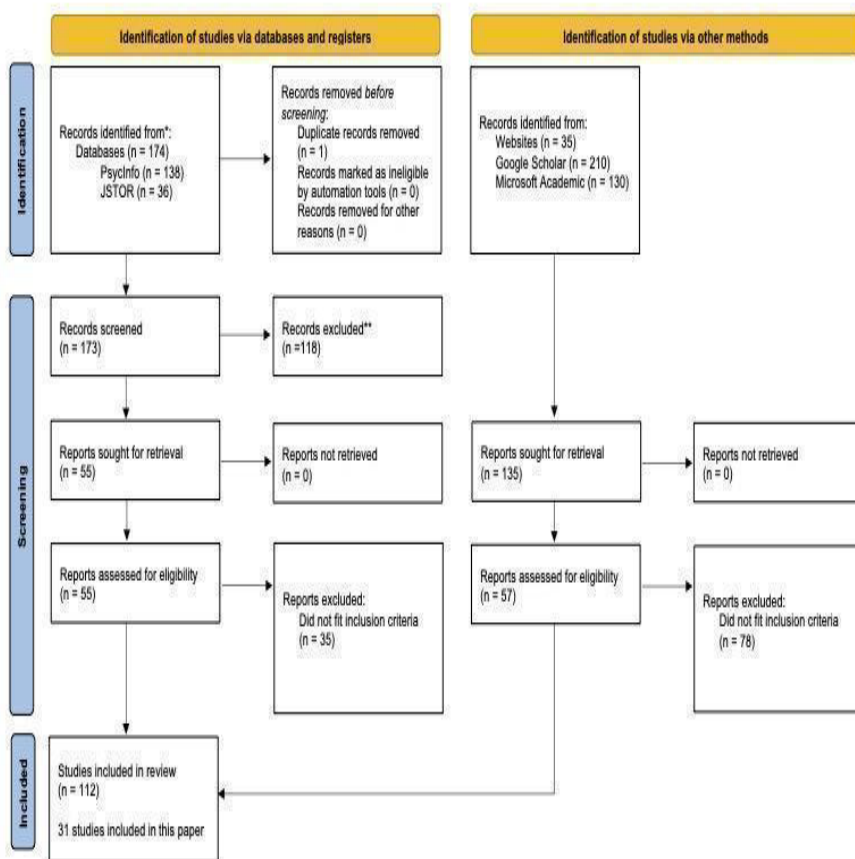
No.	Author(s)	Year	Objective	Sample	Type	Findings	Comments
			Hypothesis, and Integrated Threat theories.			and Contact Hypothesis seems to be the strongest predictor, exhibiting that contact with Muslims reduces the likelihood of prejudice towards them.	availability of longitudinal studies examining the prejudice Muslims experienced over time.
30	Ahmad, S. M.	2018	21 interviews of Muslim women survivors of Islamophobic violence in the GTA and analyzed these interviews to characterize the discourses that sanction Islamophobic violence; the different forms of Islamophobic violence and its impacts, including its relation to trauma; challenges for bystander intervention; and Muslim women's strength and agency.	21 Muslim women survivors of Islamophobic violence	Qualitative	Several participants employed faith-based methods of understanding and responding to Islamophobic violence.	The study accounts for a specific geographic area and may not be representative of the experiences of Muslims in suburban areas of Canada. The study is subjective and personal, especially the art component, and hence data is not generalizable. In addition, it only includes experiences of Muslim women and hence experiences of Muslim men who wear visible elements of their faith are unaccounted for.
31	Fearn, H.	2016	Explores the impacts of being exposed to hate material online, using social psychological theories of group	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people (LGBT) and Muslims	Doctoral Dissertation	Results indicate it is a common and frequent problem occurring over a range of Internet platforms and mediums and several negative emotional reactions and behavioral	Scales used were not accurately able to depict the impact of both offline and online hate as well as how they influence each other.



No.	Author(s)	Year	Objective	Sample	Type	Findings	Comments
			identity as a framework to explore victimization experiences when targeted directly or witnessing others from the same identity group being targeted, known as indirect victimization. Three papers examine these impacts with two commonly stigmatized groups: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people (LGBT) and Muslims.			intentions like those reported by Intergroup Emotions Theory after group identity challenges. Participants indicated that there is a level of resilience to being targeted as bad behavior is expected online but being exposed to hateful material causes many to take avoidance action, avoiding certain parts of the internet. Those viewing group-specific hate material felt angrier than when just viewing generally unpleasant material. The current research finds that being targeted online has similar negative impacts to offline hate crime, both to those who are targeted directly and those who are indirectly victimized.	The study does not provide detailed insights into the impacts of previous offline victimization incidents on current experiences, especially in the context of cyberhate.

Figure 1

Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) Diagram for the Current Study (Page et al., 2021)



From: Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, et al. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ* 2021;372:n71. doi: 10.1136/bmj.n71.

Media-Driven Anti-Muslim Hate

Media plays a critical role in shaping the opinions of the public. Media is capable of demonizing visible attire that serves as a trigger for those who carry malevolent intentions against Muslims (Alimahomed-Wilson, 2017; Acim, 2019). Likewise, media consistently frames Muslims as violent and barbaric, which leads to individuals carrying out attacks against the Muslim population. An important example in the literature is 9/11, where the

media's framing of Muslims as terrorists led to an increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes (Alimahomed-Wilson, [2017](#); Considine, [2017](#)). As such, the media's negative portrayal of Muslims results in increased hostility against Muslims (Considine, [2017](#); Barkdull et al., [2011](#)). Moreover, when a terrorist attack occurs where the perpetrator is identified as Muslim, media tends to scrutinize the event more heavily in comparison to events where the perpetrator is not identified as Muslim. This causes the entire Muslim community to face the consequences via verbal and physical harassment (Ahlem, [2013](#); Aoues & Fillali, [2019](#); Considine, [2017](#)).

Politically Driven Anti-Muslim Hate

The rise of politically driven hate crimes against Muslims has affected the livelihood of Canadian and American Muslims. The instigation of offline hate crimes can also be influenced by individuals, ideologies and politicians. A plausible cause could be attributed to the perceptions of non-Muslim Canadians and Americans regarding Muslims. For example, the prevalent stereotypes that depict Muslims as violent and terrorists affect the viewpoint of others, which can lead to distrust among whites and non-whites (Erentzen et al., [2018](#); Magassa, [2019](#)). Additionally, these stereotypes translate to barriers preventing Muslims from acting according to their cultural and religious values; hence they cannot exercise political agency and often engage in self-censorship (Erentzen et al., [2018](#); Magassa, [2019](#)).

According to the literature, anti-Muslim viewpoints are promoted by leading political figures (Ghani, [2018](#); Marko, [2019](#); Poudret, [2017](#)). A prime example of this is the rise of Donald Trump on the political scene, where his rhetoric against Muslims has led to an increase in hate crimes that surpassed those perpetrated following the attacks on 9/11 (Marko, [2019](#)). Likewise, his comments against Muslims contributed to this negative perception, leading to the 'Muslim ban' being enacted as federal policy (Poudret, [2017](#)). Moreover, it is also important to note that Trump's rhetoric contributed to hate crimes internationally, not just within Canada and the US. Trump's rhetoric had repercussions worldwide, where Muslims faced the consequences of his speech, such as in Spain and Germany (Ghani, [2018](#); Marko, [2019](#)).

Political rhetoric can influence certain groups of people to carry out attacks against Muslim populations in Canada and the US. Anti-Muslim

hate groups have expressed increased hatred toward Muslims living in the US with a rhetoric that sheds a negative light on American Muslims: one example includes the Kansas City based extremist group called The Crusaders, who planned to bomb a residential housing complex for Somali-Muslim immigrants (Abduljaber & Kalin, [2019](#); Ghani, [2018](#)). These hate groups are emboldened by political rhetoric that promotes violence against Muslims—some instigate violence as a form of "thrill-seeking", while others feel it is their responsibility to "protect" their neighborhood from "foreigners" (Ghani, [2018](#), p. 4).

Gendered Hate Crimes Against Muslims

In a recent survey of Muslims across Canada, it was found that 48% of Muslim women wear a hijab and 3% of them wear the niqab (Environics Institute, 2016). The hijab (headscarf) and niqab (veil that covers the face) are visible symbols associated with Islam that are easily identifiable in public, allowing an assailant to single out those wearing such symbols from a crowd (Ahmad, [2018](#)). As such, Muslim women are more likely to experience public violence and face double the rate of hate crimes compared to Muslim men (Alimahomed-Wilson, [2017](#)). It has been found that the media heavily scrutinizes the Islamic dress code as oppressive for women (Acim, [2019](#); Ghani, [2018](#); Magassa, [2019](#)). Additionally, the media describes Muslim women as 'victims of male violence' or 'hypersexual, mysterious women' (Alimahomed-Wilson, [2017](#)).

Violence and discrimination because of one's attire is not limited to the streets but can also occur in public and private institutions where Muslim women are constantly marginalized and bullied by their white peers and can face loss of employment (Ahmad, [2018](#); Magassa, [2019](#)). Consequently, many Muslim women opt out of wearing hijab because they fear their families might be victims of hate crimes (Magassa, [2019](#); Ahmad, [2018](#)). In this rising Islamophobic environment, the Canadian province of Quebec passed Bill 21 into law in 2019, a controversial and discriminatory bill that prohibits citizens from wearing religious garb or symbols that serve as markers of visible religiosity. This law bans Muslims, Sikhs, Jews and Christians from wearing hijabs, turbans, kippahs and crucifixes respectively, and includes public sector workers considered 'authority figures' (i.e., police officers, public school teachers, judges, prison guards, etc.) (Sahi, [2019](#)). Although this bill affects many people from different

religions, in practice, Muslim women with their visible hijabs or niqabs are disproportionately affected.

Online Hate Crimes Against Muslims

Cyberhate crime plays a prominent role in promoting hate crimes. For instance, between 2018 and 2019, an increase in cyberhate crimes was reported from 5.1% to 6.2%. Between 2010 and 2019, 572 cyberhate crimes within Canada were reported. Muslim hate crimes accounted for 17% of the total reported online hate crimes (Moreau, [2021](#)). The most significant cybercrime was found to be uttering threats, which accounted for 37%. Religious and ethnic groups made up 57% of the victims of cyber hate crimes, whereas immigrants made up 14% of the victims (Moreau, [2021](#)). The most common words used to describe Muslims were "Muslim paedos" (i.e., paedophiles) and "Muslim terrorists" (Awan, [2014](#)). In a study conducted by Wasim ([2018](#)) that analyzed the responses of online commenters on various news articles in which the victims were Muslims, it was found that 59% of the comments were Islamophobic, and 21% of them fell within a miscellaneous category such as bigotry, prejudice, minimization, racism or general comments of hate. Upon further inspection, out of the 191 comments in total, 82% of the comments were especially considered harmful because they elicited feelings of anger, disappointment, fear, frustration or sadness. From the full data set analyzed by Wasim ([2018](#)), only 20% of the comments were considered remotely supportive towards Muslims (Wasim, [2018](#)).

The online world is a prevalent platform for hate crimes against Muslims (Wasim, [2018](#)). It has been observed that individuals who identify as Muslim online bear the brunt of hate, where most of the comments they receive are identified as Islamophobic (Ahmad, [2018](#); Wasim, [2018](#)). The use of Islamophobic language is not limited to prejudice or mischief but can extend to death threats, resulting in safety concerns (Ahmad, [2018](#); Moreau, [2021](#)). For example, online hate increased after a terrorist attack where the assailant was identified as Muslim. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter were used to dehumanize Muslims, along with the increased discriminatory media reporting, which facilitated the instigation of such a rise of Islamophobic hate crimes (Awan, [2014](#); Bhattacharyya et al., [2014](#)). Additionally, gender-targeted hate crimes on online platforms are widespread—Muslim men tend to be frequently targeted online, with written and verbal abuse being the most common forms (Fearn, [2017](#)).

Muslim women are also regularly attacked with hate messages and violence-inducing comments (Ahmad, [2018](#)).

Muslims are continuously polarized and segregated online, with the media playing an intrinsic role. Any time an attack in Canada or the US is carried out by someone identified as Muslim, the media reports the action as terrorism, resulting in the instigation of hate crimes, thus influencing the perception of Muslims living in the country (Bhattacharyya et al., [2014](#)). Additionally, online hate sends a clear signal: Islamic values are incompatible with Canadian and American cultures and norms (Awan, [2014](#); Bhattacharyya et al., [2014](#); Walton, [2018](#)). For example, when promoting an anti-Islamophobia bill in 2017, the member of Parliament, Iqra Khalid received various online threats attacking her Islamic values, including insults to the hijab and Islamic prayer (Ahmad, [2018](#)). She was also attacked via emails where she received over 50,000 emails containing death threats and general hate towards Muslims, after proposing a motion to condemn Islamophobia (Ahmad, [2018](#)). Moreover, Kanji ([2020](#)) discovered that 46% of articles regarding the Edmonton van attack in September 2017, where a Muslim man killed an Alberta police officer and struck four pedestrians during the ensuing police chase, discussed some sort of political, religious, or ideological affiliation. However, when comparing this number with the Quebec Mosque shooting in January 2017, where a white gunman killed six worshipers and seriously injured five others, only 19% of the articles discussed similar ideologies as in the Edmonton van attack (Kanji, [2020](#)). In addition, a staggering 0.3% (or 1 out of 395) of articles discussed religion as an affiliation when discussing the Quebec mosque shooting (Kanji, [2020](#)). Although numerically, there are more articles discussing political, religious or ideological affiliation with regard to the Quebec mosque shooting, it is pertinent to mention that the Quebec mosque shooting was discussed in the media at a far higher rate overall than the Edmonton van attack (Kanji, [2020](#)). For this reason, the comparison made was relatively not exact. Overall, the expansion of the internet and the influence of the media have provided the ability to attack Islamic values online anonymously. The Western media's attack on Islamic values alienates Muslims and suggests that their values and traditions are unacceptable in their society (Awan, [2014](#); Bhattacharyya et al., [2014](#); Walton, [2018](#)). Finally, it is evident from these findings that media sources are more critical toward Muslim perpetrators of crimes, and media bias and

double standards exist when dealing with Muslim and non-Muslim assailants.

Discussion

Key Findings of the Review

The extent of hate crimes against Muslims can be seen across Muslims' public and private lives. The findings are consistent: Muslims experience a significant amount of hate and prejudice online, which spikes considerably after terrorist attacks and crimes where the perpetrators are Muslims. For instance, studies found that the proliferation of digital media has led to the growth of online hate speech, which has significantly impacted Muslims online (Al-Saggaf, [2019](#); Akram & Jhazbhay, [2017](#)). Likewise, the Islamophobic attacks on Muslims online have led to increased levels of anxiety, distress and depression (Fazaga, [2019](#); Senzai, [2013](#)).

Moreover, the media plays a crucial and harmful role in instigating anti-Muslim hate through biased reporting. There is significant scrutiny and stereotyping of Muslim perpetrators. For example, it was found that the media's framing of Muslims as violent and barbaric consistently harms Muslims and leads to increased hostility and hate crimes (Hourani, [2006](#); Manzoor & Ali, [2008](#)). As such, the messages sent to Muslims online and through the media portray a lack of acceptance toward diversity and Muslim values. Such messages result in the public's perception being further skewed by these anti-Muslim political rhetoric and policies (Gaddis, [2019](#)). Therefore, both the media and political rhetoric influence public perception on an individual basis and further contributing to the formation of large-scale hate groups that target Muslim populations. When taken together, these hate groups are emboldened by the political and media rhetoric of Muslims being a threat (Perliger, [2016](#)). For instance, the Perliger ([2016](#)) study found that political rhetoric has a significant impact on the prevalence of anti-Muslim hate crimes, and that it has the potential to incite and normalize hatred and violence against Muslims. The study also found that instances of anti-Muslim rhetoric by politicians and public figures are positively correlated with an increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes.

Another consistent finding throughout the literature was the ubiquity of gendered violence against Muslims. In public, Muslim women become visible and accessible targets for hate crimes. This was exemplified by Marsden ([2019](#)), who found that both Muslim men and women are targeted

for hate crimes but that the experiences of men and women are shaped differently according to their gender. Additionally, it was found that Muslim men are more frequently targeted in online experiences, while Muslim women face prejudice in both online and public settings, and are more visible and accessible targets for hate crimes in public (Marsden, [2019](#)). Moreover, Muslim women are often vulnerable to hate crimes as the hijab and niqab worn by many Muslim women is an identifiable symbol of their religion. This facet was most evident in Al-Hussaini and Abdulhadi's ([2012](#)) research, where they found that Muslim women who wear the hijab are often targeted for harassment and physical assault because the hijab represents a symbol of Islam, and as a result, Muslim women wearing hijab are often targeted by individuals who hold negative attitudes toward Islam. Nonetheless, the media is also complicit in promoting hate against Muslim women as the media heavily scrutinizes the Islamic dress as oppressive, which further contributes to the hate crimes experienced by Muslim women, both on the streets or in institutions such as their workplaces or schools (Marsden, [2019](#)). In response, this hatred and the fear of an attack impact the lives of Muslim women to the extent that many opt out of wearing their religious attire (Abdulhadi, [2011](#)).

Implications for Policy and Practice

Our scoping review underscores the critical need for policy initiatives that address the various forms of anti-Muslim hate, including politically-driven, media-driven, gendered and online hate crimes. To create a comprehensive policy framework, institutions and organizations should prioritize education and awareness programs - such as webinars and workshops - that aim to reduce unconscious bias and microaggressions. Additionally, it is imperative for policymakers to publicly recognize the reality of anti-Muslim hate and to actively condemn this hate through official statements and legislation. Workplaces and educational institutions must develop robust anti-discrimination policies that facilitate reporting mechanisms for incidents of anti-Muslim hate. Finally, the government should re-evaluate existing state policies, such as Bill 21, to assess their discriminatory implications and consider reforms that promote inclusivity and protect minority rights. By embedding these strategies into policy, we can create a more equitable environment that effectively counters hate and fosters social cohesion.

Limitations of the Existing Literature

The current findings should be considered in light of their limitations. The studies that explored online Islamophobic content only looked at one or two media platforms, which should not be considered representative of all the other platforms that contribute to online hate, especially websites where content can be published anonymously. In addition, the studies did not consider content censoring, which is often done by many of these platforms that could affect the overall outcomes and results.

Some studies include participants from one specific demographic rather than utilizing a diverse sample (e.g., different age groups, genders, and socioeconomic status). Due to this, the samples differed from the general population, which may reduce the generalizability of the results. Furthermore, a few studies analyzed events in a small window of time rather than a longer period, making it difficult to find general patterns or trends in the data.

The potential of research bias in the studies evaluating qualitative data and thematic analysis must be considered when assessing the results. It is important to note that the methodology of each study can significantly impact their findings. A poorly outlined methodology in a study has the potential to distort the data or leave findings open to the readers' interpretation. In addition, the studies that analyzed statistical data regarding hate crimes did not always consider the potential underreporting of hate crimes.

Few of the studies used terms interchangeably and failed to differentiate them accordingly. For example, one study used the term 'media' to denote both large and actual media corporations; both play very different roles in Islamophobia. While the findings of these studies are relevant, it is important to look at these findings while keeping the above-mentioned limitations in mind. In addition, this data can be used to direct and improve further research to ensure that such limitations are addressed.

Limitations of the Scoping Review and Future Research

While this scoping review attempted to be thorough by using a broad search criterion, it cannot be guaranteed that all relevant literature has been found; only four databases, two of which are considered gray literature, were searched using 11 search terms, so there is a possibility that utilizing additional databases and/or search terms would have yielded more

information. Additionally, this scoping review focused only on published studies and government documents, so any other sources that may have included relevant information were not reviewed. Thus, future research on this topic could be conducted using a wider variety of databases and multiple information sources (e.g., books and encyclopedias) to produce a more comprehensive review. Another limitation is that only journal publications written in English were included, which has excluded research published in other languages. Therefore, future research should focus on incorporating non-English articles to expand the current body of knowledge. Lastly, our scoping review focused only on studies of Canadian and US populations, which limited our ability to compare and measure results on a wider scale.

In conclusion, the findings of this scoping review show the increasing incidents of hate crimes against Muslims in Canada and the US and the factors that instigate and facilitate them. Hate crimes against Muslims are malevolently carried out online and offline, and are equally damaging to their livelihoods and wellbeing. The present study notes that further research is needed to better explain and broaden our understanding of the issues at hand.

Conflict of Interest

The author of the manuscript has no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

Data availability is not applicable as no new data is used.

Funding Details

No funding has been received for this research.

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