

CHAPTER TWO

Muslim Immigrant Integration in Canada: Challenges and Possibilities

Anila Zainub

ABSTRACT

This chapter outlines the integration discourse on high skilled Muslim immigrants, their status in Canada, and the challenges they face as anti-Muslim sentiment continues to resurface, and political pressures mount in times of economic turmoil. Drawing on my work (Zainub, 2023) and previous scholarly literature, this chapter engages with both challenges and possibilities for Muslim immigrant settlement as they persevere to carve a safe place for themselves and their future generations in Canada.

KEYWORDS: Muslim, Immigrant, Integration, Canada

Muslims in global headlines

Contemporary global politics show that anti-Muslim sentiments are spreading rapidly, causing substantial damage to Muslim communities everywhere. Around the world anti-Muslim sentiments are visible and vocal. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi referred to Indian Muslims as ‘infiltrators’ in his election speech and has built a temple on the contested site of the demolished Babri Mosque. Far-right supporters have gained tremendous power during his rule, with hate crimes on the rise, as recently witnessed, when two Indian Muslim men were burned alive due to their religious identity (PBS NewsHour, 2024). Similar anti-Muslim sentiments have led to violence, widespread fear, and Islamophobia in Europe. In Southport, England, following the killing of three girls on July 29, 2024, police arrested a male teenager. Influencers and social media posts inaccurately claimed that he was an “Islamist migrant”, which fueled protests and violence against Muslims and migrants across the United Kingdom with mosque attacks, widespread vandalization, and looting. Those behind the violence call themselves “patriots” who are against immigration (Reuters, 2024). Recently in Germany, human rights group CLAIM reported that ninety mosques and Islamic institutions were attacked in 2023 (Marsh, 2024).

Meanwhile, a small town in Italy called Monfalcone banned its Bangladeshi Muslim residents from playing cricket inside the town. These residents who migrated as workers to build giant cruise-ships are integral to its industry. They are facing their far-right mayor Anna Maria-Cisint’s anti-immigration pro-Christian political agenda. She believes that these Bangladeshi Muslims have made no contributions to their city. But her stance is motivated by anti-Muslim sentiment as she not only banned cricket but also collective prayer saying that ‘their’ way of life is “incompatible with the life of native-born Italians” and that she is against the “Islamization of Europe” (Bettiza, 2024). Similar beliefs were expressed loudly by a United States representative Andy Ogles, posting on X that “Muslims don’t belong in American society. Pluralism is a lie...Muslims are unable to assimilate; they all have to go back” (Reuters, 2026).

These examples of recent incidents show that intolerance towards Muslims and such expressions of prejudice have become common across the world. At home in Canada, Kutty (2024) warns in a recent article that we are vulnerable to a fate similar to the UK riots. Kutty says that past and present governments have not paid sufficient attention to the deepening housing crisis, health care system, and other social and economic issues. He argues that such issues combined with a growing lack of support for immigration and a higher percentage of racialized immigrants, makes it likely that these ‘foreigners’ will be blamed for Canadian socio-economic troubles. These fears must also be contextualized parallel to the growth in hate crimes against Muslims since the recent conflict began in Palestine.

Muslim immigrant integration discourse

Scholarly research on integration in Europe, United States, and Canada is particularly focused upon Muslim migration to the West. Thus, Alba & Foner (2015) in their comparative study encompassing North America and Europe had argued that “religion is at the heart of concerns about immigrant integration in Western Europe, and the central issues have to do with Islam” (p. 35). This is combined with the anti-Muslim, neo-liberal socio-political stance on migration in these regions as global economic tides bring these Muslims from terrorized, war-stricken communities to Western shores. Controversies center upon their place in Western societies with issues around securitization, bans on hijabs and niqabs, Sharia law, and mosques etc. These topics of concern are then used to contextualize the debate on citizenship and nation building.

Canadian immigration has seen many changes over the years in terms of both the category and origin of immigrants. These changes have had a significant impact on not only the pattern of immigration but also on settlement policies. The current Muslim population began steadily increasing after 1991 (CLC, 2019, p. 20). More recently, Asia and the Middle East represent the main source countries in contrast to the United Kingdom and Europe from previous decades. Most Muslim immigrants reside in the multicultural, metropolitan hubs of Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. Muslim immigrants, much like other groups in recent cohorts, decide to settle in these areas due to employment opportunities and access to cultural and social resources. These areas showcase a visible and vibrant increase in minority populations. In general, Canadian Muslims are a young, racialized, diverse, and visible minority (NHS, 2011). A large number of these Muslims identify as immigrants to Canada (CLC, 2019, p. 20). Viewing these numbers within a political and historical context presents a more impactful picture of growth and diversity of the Muslim population but also the global human condition which drives much of this migration to the West. In addition, it also exposes Canadian immigration's historical and political past when it was based on racial and ethnic criteria of admission (Kelly & Trebilcock, 1998). Since the admission criteria has shifted to a points-based system, immigrants from Asia and the Middle East exceed those from Europe. Scholars also point to this policy change as an important cause for the growth of Muslim immigrants to Canada (Kazemipur, 2014).

Integration of Muslim immigrants is considered a fundamental issue in both Europe and North America. This issue is linked to the socio-political as well as cultural and liberal democratic ideologies in Western democracies. Kazemipur (2014) has argued that “the rise of Muslim immigration as a socio-political issue during the opening decade of the twenty-first century is related to an emerging perception that the integration of Muslim immigrants into Western liberal democracies has been particularly problematic” (Kazemipur, 2014, p. 4). Scholars have argued that for these liberal democracies, Muslims represent a growing threat to the Western value system requiring policy changes (McCoy et al., 2016; Liebert et al. 2020). While global socio-political issues such as 9/11 have been noted to give rise to the anti-Muslim sentiment and bringing the focus on Muslim immigrant integration, it is also argued that refugee crises, terrorism, and the elimination of racial criteria for immigration have contributed to the global increase in Muslim migration.

The migration patterns of Muslims have resisted the global anti-Muslim sentiment which continues to sediment across liberal democratic institutions. For Kazemipur (2014) this anti-Muslim sentiment is predicated on a set of particular beliefs that Muslim immigrants resist integration consciously with the intention to dominate Western societies. Furthermore, he notes that these beliefs exist for Muslims of all backgrounds (p. 5). Though problematic at the very least, these beliefs tend to surface in political and social debates, placing the burden to integrate on the Muslim immigrant. Immigration debates frame Muslims in terms of securitization of migration and within the context of global events. For instance, events involving Muslim immigrants in the United States have a high likelihood of impacting Canadian stance on the treatment of Muslims. Immigration issues tend to headline election debates thereby impacting the overall attitudes towards Muslims. Research has shown that race, religion, and country of origin impacts the level of acceptance for immigration (Alarian & Neureiter, 2019).

Such debates and policies are influenced by what Kazemipur (2014) has explained through “Muslim exceptionalism”. He elaborates that the general discourse on Muslims in the West revolves around a perception that “the factors influencing Muslims’ attitudes and behaviours are

drastically different from those influencing those of people of other religious and cultural backgrounds, particularly those living in Western democracies. This results in the notion of

“Muslim exceptionalism” (2014, p. 29). This notion is rooted in a representation of Muslims as a homogenous population sharing an inherent inability for integration into Western societies (Zainub, 2023). These beliefs have permeated the policy making process and where citizenship policies could facilitate integration, instead stricter laws have been advocated and enforced. Citizenship is a precursor to efficient and streamlined integration into society. When politics withhold this right from immigrants it is likely linked to assimilationist adaptation policies. Canada has been recognized as a multicultural global model for its settlement and integration policies (Liebert et al., 2020; Solano and Huddleston, 2020). Although Canada’s policies on naturalization are understood as designed to integrate immigrants and migrants (Cabanas, 2019), it has also been argued that in practice these policies are exclusionary and assimilationist (Li, 2003). Based on Canada’s MIPEX (Migrant Policy Index) scores and scholarly research (Liebert et al. 2020, p. 203) there is a sense that Canadian Muslims are socio-economically better integrated than European Muslims Alba & Foner (2015), however, post 9/11 multiculturalism has been challenged globally. Parallel to these comparative analyses, Kazemipur (2014) argued that “Canada is used as evidence that multiculturalism works; Muslims are used as evidence that it does not. Given this, it is important to examine the experiences of Muslim immigrants in Canada” (p. 7). In the Canadian context then it is significant to emphasize not only the diversity of their origins, human capital, pre-migration conditions, and immigration policies but also their lived experiences to study the effect on integration outcomes.

Previous literature and statistics show that Muslim Canadians, as a diverse heterogeneous group, are a racialized minority facing barriers to socio-economic integration in Canadian society (Zainub, 2023). Research on integration generally focuses on the human capital deficit model comparing immigrant integration outcomes with their Canadian born counterparts. However, in the case of Muslim Canadians, Kazemipur (2014) observes that human capital theory is insufficient to explain their below average outcomes. I have argued elsewhere (Zainub, 2025) that the impact of race and religion must be acknowledged to fully understand the inequities faced by Canadian Muslims as they engage with their settlement process. Previously Reitz et al. (2022) have also found in their comparative study of Canada and France, that race and religion along with human capital indicators are pertinent for critical inquiry of integration outcomes for Muslims and other religious and ethnic minorities.

Understanding the role of race and religion is significant since it ties to the building blocks of nation building. These debates, as noted above in the anti-Muslim incidents around the world, shape the political and cultural narratives on ethnic and ‘immigrant’ groups. Not only are Muslim immigrants compared to the native-born Canadians in terms of their integration outcomes but also in relation to their claim to being ‘Canadian’. Though inclusion/exclusion criteria for immigration have changed from racial to human capital, however, race and religion play a central role on who is and isn’t a real ‘Canadian’ (Thobani, 2000). Thobani (2007) argued that foundational to the multicultural discourse are these ‘immigrants’ who are presented as ‘others’ in the national imaginary whereas ‘White’ bodies are ‘exalted subjects’. The multicultural discourse deconstructs the identity of these racialized bodies and labels them ‘immigrants’ which, as the above cited global incidents show, consequently reproduce racial hierarchies and power relations. Thus, addressing the plight of Canadian Muslims, Ziadeh (2017) argues that,

Arabs and Muslims have come to understand that “integration debates” reduce their communities into extremists and moderates, and that the main role of a citizen in such a circumstance is to prove at all times that s/he belongs to the latter. (2017, p. 19)

How do we reconcile these conflicts within such a discourse which not only seeks to curtail but also re-construct Muslim identity? As ‘others’, Muslim immigrants find themselves struggling to reconcile their new identity and also to create a stable future in Canada. This discourse also seeks to regulate and implement immigration policies yet according to Kymlicka & Banting (2010) Canadians are not entirely aware of “how this complex field of multiculturalism policies operates” or how it pertains to “the adoption of a new multiculturalism curriculum in the local public schools, or to the appearance of a new multilingual “ethnic” channel on cable TV” (2010, p. 51). Thus, the polls which point to the disapproval for immigrants and Muslims point to deeper issues within the fabric of the nation. This discourse takes on different perspectives on Muslims and their place in Western societies and results in varying degrees of violence towards them as witnessed in the Quebec Mosque attack (Zine, 2021) and the incidents mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Though a multicultural discourse can sometimes prove beneficial for bringing in skilled workers, it doesn’t hold its sway when these workers become citizens. Instead of becoming Canadians, they become the ‘others’ who came to work and then stayed. Thus, as Kymlicka & Banting (2010), point out,

These ethnic groups are sometimes called immigrant groups, to emphasise that they are neither indigenous nor colonisers, but were admitted under Canada’s immigration policy. However, the term is potentially misleading, since many of the group’s members may be second, third or fourth generation. (p. 48)

Within the scholarship on integration, it is important to identify groups with the correct terms, however, it is rarely the case when it comes to socio-political debates and national discourses. Research shows that in Canada the growth of anti-Muslim sentiment is connected to preconceived conception of the likelihood of Muslims to be terrorists and for not sharing similar value system with Canadians (Donnelly, 2021, p. 170). The real consequences are felt in the socio-economic domains by Canadian Muslims; hence, a global tide of anti-Muslim sentiments has rapidly contributed to their lower socio-economic gains compared to other groups and affected the implementation of multiculturalism. Furthermore, my research has shown that for Canadian Muslims race and religious identity represent significant markers of discrimination within the Canadian labour market and society (Zainub, 2023).

Challenges in the Canadian Economy

Canadian immigration is propelled by the need for skilled workers for an advanced knowledge economy. Integration research is mainly based upon the human capital model and focuses on economic returns as one among many indicators of successful integration. Low economic outcomes in comparison to their Canadian counterparts indicate that immigrants need to improve their human capital (education, skills, experience etc.). However, as mentioned earlier, scholars (Kazemipur, 2014) have pointed out that lower integration is not necessarily a result of a lack in human capital and that “racial minorities and immigrants are unlikely to reach financial parity with their White or Canadian-born comparators in their working lives” (Lightman & Gingrich, 2018, p. 399). Critical research also shows that even though Muslims in Canada are

highly educated and skilled compared to native-born Canadians, they continue to demonstrate lower earnings with higher unemployment and underemployment rates (CLC, 2019; Environics, 2016; Liebert et al. 2020; Zainub, 2023). Here, it is important to link this data with poverty statistics of racialized immigrants who “face high levels of poverty. In 2021, the poverty rate for racialized persons was 11% – almost double the rate of non-racialized persons (6%)” with recent immigrants living in “higher poverty rates than Canadian-born persons” (Canadian Poverty Institute, n.d.). As a racialized group with mostly South Asian and Arab origins, Muslims in Canada are more likely to have lower annual income in comparison to immigrants belonging to other religious communities (CLC, 2019). Post COVID-19, this situation has worsened for all immigrants especially Muslims (Hou et al., 2020, p.3-4; National Advisory Council on Poverty, 2021). This data and research point to a complicated lived experience for Muslim immigrants in Canada.

Muslim immigrant women face unique challenges in the social and economic life of Canadian society which distinguish them from Muslim immigrant men but also from other racialized immigrant women. Research shows that Canadian labour markets are structured around race and gender which give rise to and maintain precarity, poverty, and inequality (Block et al., 2019). Muslim immigrants, as a visible, racialized group continue to encounter these barriers throughout their settlement process. As highly skilled knowledge workers they continue to accumulate human capital trying to improve their chances. However, within the hierarchy of socio-economic organization these inequalities continue to reproduce. Systemic racial and gender discrimination in Canadian labour markets result in exclusionary socio-economic experiences of Muslim immigrant women (Lightman & Gingrich, 2018). Hence, for these highly educated and skilled immigrant women the persistence of socio-economic inequities are a function of the intersection of gender, race, and religion. Muslim women in Canada face a multitude of issues including low income, burden of unpaid care work, and are “least likely to have a workplace pension plan, disability insurance, supplemental medical or dental care, or worker’s compensation” (CLC, 2019, p. 23). These barriers can worsen the existing inequalities such as gendered household arrangements, resource sharing at home as well as prolong the risk of staying in high risk, precarious, low-quality work. Furthermore, its impact on health is significant since high skilled workers are not trained or qualified for low skilled laborious tasks (Premji & Shakya, 2017), a finding also corroborated in my research with high skilled Muslim immigrants (Zainub, 2023).

Canadian labour market continues to present new immigrant cohorts with a plethora of challenges and barriers despite higher levels of human capital (Banerjee & Verma, 2012; Gauthier, 2016). Among these barriers are the consistent demands for Canadian experience, language fluency, devaluation and non-recognition of foreign credentials, regulation and licensing requirements, discrimination, poor physical and emotional health (Banerjee & Phan, 2014; Frank & Hou, 2017; Gauthier, 2016; Kaushik & Drolet, 2018). Since economic outcomes take up a significant area within integration research, scholars continue to study the causes behind these challenges and barriers. It is understood that gender and race have a profound effect in the labour market combined with that of human capital such as non-recognition of credentials leading to earnings disadvantage, income variations, and gaps (Aydemir & Skuterud, 2005; Dean & Wilson, 2009; Kaushik & Walsh, 2018; Pendakur & Pendakur, 2002). For instance, scholars have been documenting the inability of these immigrants to find work in their own professions leading to occupational downgrading (Mickleborough, 2020; Moghissi et al., 2009) and not being able to re-

enter their prior professions (Banerjee & Phan, 2014). Similarly, high skilled Muslim immigrants have had to start over in other professions due to the tough regulatory and licensing requirements of their professions (Moghissi et al., 2009; Zainub, 2023).

Although race and gender have been understood as factors in the reproduction of economic inequalities, inadequate attention has been paid to the role of religious identity. The literature shows that Muslim immigrants continue to experience low economic gains in their integration process in comparison to their native-born counterparts (CLC, 2019; Kazemipur, 2014; Khattab et al, 2020; Picot & Lu, 2017; Zainub, 2023). Research also demonstrates Islamophobia in workplace discrimination, hiring, provincial policies, and the daily lived experiences of immigrant Muslims (Coletta, 2021; Khattab et al., 2020; National Assembly of Québec, 2019; Mushtaq, 2021; Zine, 2021). For immigrant Muslim women, as noted earlier, labour market integration presents even more crucial problems leading to high unemployment (Khattab et al., 2019). Significantly my work points to the prevalence of Islamophobia in the labour market leading to lower levels of economic participation for high skilled Muslims (Zainub, 2023).

Scholars also view the employer demand for “Canadian experience” as a violation of the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s position which clearly states that “a strict requirement for “Canadian experience” is discriminatory on its face and can only be used in limited circumstances” (OHRC, n.d., para. 1). It is understood that a requirement for “Canadian experience” is a barrier for economic integration (Kaushik & Drolet, 2018) which not only shapes the migratory experience but also intersects with other barriers to integration such as discriminatory hiring practices and workplace discrimination (Sakamoto et al., 2010). An influential study by Oreopoulos (2011) investigated these hiring practices and found that resumes from applicants with foreign experience with names perceived to originate from China, India, or Pakistan received the lowest call-backs compared to those who had English names combined with Canadian education and experience. This discriminatory hiring practice based on the applicant’s name origin highlights crucial aspects of integration as it pertains to the Muslim immigrants. We see that human capital theory doesn’t suffice when it comes to understanding their issues, and that the onus is on them to integrate.

Elsewhere, my empirical research findings demonstrate that (Zainub, 2023) the scholarship on the socio-economic integration of Muslim immigrants must attend to the effect of religious identity, in addition to race and gender. This perspective has also been argued by Nazari (2024), whose literature review showed that high skilled Muslim women are stigmatized in the labour market due to their religious identity. Hence, the limited data on high skilled Muslim immigrants and especially on high skilled Muslim immigrant women in Canada shows that they are dealing with a multitude of disadvantages in their social and economic integration.

Barriers in Canadian society

Kutty’s (2024) article, warning Canadians of an impending social unrest much like the UK riots, emerges from the notion that Kazemipur (2014) refers to as “Muslim exceptionalism”. It underlines the problematic epistemological foundations which necessitate an enquiry into the status of Muslims in Canada and the power imbalances which complicate this status. These notions are central to the challenges facing the concept of integration in Western societies (Amir-Moazami, 2022). Bounded by the ideals of assimilation, the concept of integration deals with the presence of Muslims as an anomaly; it seeks to correct and reform it. The global wave of anti-Muslim hatred stems from these very notions albeit in each social setup they are practiced diversely. In the Canadian context, where integration is cushioned by the principles of multiculturalism and a

thriving skilled immigration system, the social integration of Muslim immigrants must be understood differently from that of Europe and the United States. As Triadafilos (2021) explains, Canadians' support for multiculturalism, while real, is also paradoxically marked by ambivalence and, at times, outright hostility to racialized and religious minorities, generally, and Muslims, in particular. (p.4)

Since the conflict in Gaza began, Canada has witnessed a rise in anti-Muslim hate crimes. NCCM (n.d.) The National Council of Canadian Muslims has reported that "Islamophobic incidents are on the rise. Anti-Palestinian harassment and racism is on the rise". The statistics reported through ethnic and racial identifiers provide a deeper understanding of hatred motivated by Islamophobia. Often South Asian and Arab populations become the target of hate crimes due to the perception that they belong to the Muslim community. The intersectional focus on race, gender, and religious identity is imperative to understand the drivers for these hate crimes since many of them go unreported. Research notes that Muslim women are more likely to be violently targeted for their hijab and head scarves than Muslim men which may include hijab pulling, yelling, spitting, sexual and physical assault (Zainub, 2023). These acts of violence and intimidation can deeply affect Muslim immigrant women who, as mentioned earlier, already face many unique barriers in the labour market. These barriers intersect with Islamophobia in their lived social experiences to further undermine the social integration process. With the memory of the 2017 Quebec City Mosque attack (Zine, 2021) and the killing of the Afzaal family (Mushtaq, 2021; Zine, 2021), Islamophobia has become a lived reality for all Muslims in Canada. It presents a challenge to the multicultural Canadian discourse. Hence, Canadian Labour Congress (2019) defines Islamophobia as:

Islamophobia must be broadened to encompass ... daily negative or denigrating interactions, exchanges and innuendos aimed at Muslims, to overt acts of exclusion, discrimination and hatred aimed at individual Muslims or followers of Islam in general, and on an institutional, systemic and societal level" including "a set of exclusionary practices targeting Muslims. (p. 11)

Media plays a central role in perpetuating negative images and stereotypes of Muslims as violent, oppressive, untrustworthy, and misogynists. It hypervisibilizes a heterogeneous population which like any other ethno-religious group is struggling to work and improve their lives. Through these tropes, mainstream and social media conditions the minds of the general population many of whom may not have interacted with any Muslims. It perpetuates inaccurate news like those that triggered the UK riots, and through a reproduction of particular ideologies results in socio-economic inequities for immigrant Muslims. I have argued in my previous work (Zainub, 2023) that:

Islamophobia has many dimensions that are connected to various aspects of sociopolitical and cultural discourses. Among these dimensions, the key areas of note are Canadians' lack of knowledge about Muslims and Islam, the rise of new vocabulary connecting terrorism and its features with Islam and Muslims such as Islamist migrant, radical Muslim, jihadist/m, islamist/m, Islamic fundamentalism etc.; the media's portrayals of Islam and Muslims; political alliances against Muslim majority countries; White nationalist politics; and military invasions and conflicts. These globally charged discourses generate the potential for aggression and fear towards Muslim communities at home. (p.68)

These features of the discourse and practice of Islamophobia alongside nation-state narratives further marginalizes immigrant Muslims and hinder the process of settlement in Canadian society. Furthermore, these aspects provide the impetus for governments to discipline, surveil, and securitize such communities aimed at systematically ‘integrating’ them. This creates a climate of fear and insecurity further impacting labour market and social participation rates. One example of such a policy is Quebec’s Bill 21 which bans hijab and other visible markers of religious identity in public sector (Zainub, 2024). Research studies on the impact of Bill 21 on Muslim women in Quebec show that they have to relocate outside Quebec for work, experience unemployment, face exposure to hate crimes and Islamophobia and fear for their safety (Di Matteo, 2024).

Consequently, such laws can only serve to further decimate any possibility of growth for Muslim immigrant women and other religious minorities. They have also made it easier for people to express prejudiced opinions about Muslims. Such policies serve to sway public opinion on divisive topics such as immigration. Post COVID-19, these systemic inequities and media’s hate-mongering rhetoric combined with fragile public opinion has created fault lines in Canada. Thus, I have argued elsewhere that the factors associated with social integration cannot be separated from those of economic integration (Zainub, 2023). Although Alba & Foner (2015) explain that Muslim immigrants are better in terms of their socio-economic status as compared to those in the UK and USA, keeping the above cited issues, we must forge an analysis which is contextually Canadian.

Possibilities and Implications

This chapter has endeavored to collate research literature which supports its central argument that Muslim immigrants in Canada face tremendous challenges and disadvantages which undermine their successful socio-economic integration. These barriers include non-recognition of their human capital, occupational downgrading, unemployment/underemployment, precarious work conditions, workplace discrimination, racism, and Islamphobia. Showcasing a progressive initiative, the government of Canada had a Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia, Ms. Elghawaby. And the government had put forth initiatives to combat some of these issues, most recently signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime (OFOVC), the Office of the Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia and the Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism. It articulates that Islamophobia is a lived reality for Muslims. It (Government of Canada, 2024) states, under these MOUs, each organization commits to working with the OFOVC, making referrals and sharing information and best practices, to support those negatively impacted by criminal justice policies, services, or programs under federal jurisdiction. The aim is also to improve access for victims of crime in Jewish and Muslim communities to existing federal programs and services. (Para. 4)

This is a necessary step due to an increase in hate crimes for both Muslim and Jewish communities. However, these initiatives must be practically implemented with the support of these communities. Hate crimes limit socio-economic participation for Muslims, especially women, and violence breed more challenges for the future. Although studies (McCoy et al., 2016; Zainub, 2023) show that Muslim immigrants show a positive sense of belonging to Canada, it is imperative that their issues are understood intersectionally with a focus on religion, gender, and race. These immigrant Muslims strive to create a safe space in Canada and build communities with other groups to improve their Canadian economic and social lives. They show a great sense of pride and

national belonging and continue to participate robustly in Canadian society. With Muslims being a significant part of the integration discourse, these findings should positively influence their presence in the nation building project.

With their extensive human capital, these immigrants deserve to prosper alongside other racialized groups. The gaps in income outcomes and discrimination at workplace, recruitment and retention must be investigated to understand the causes of inequities. More qualitative studies can bring a lived experience lens to expose these causes which create income gaps between racialized and non-racialized populations. We must also look at the effects of these inequities on second and third generations of Muslim immigrants. Integration discourse attends to these issues from a human capital-based framework which has failed to delineate the disproportionate marginalization of Muslim immigrants compared to their native-born counterparts as well as other racialized groups. Hence, studies must acknowledge the impact of religion alongside race and gender and work with decolonial/anti-colonial frameworks (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001; Mignolo, 2007) to understand the status of Muslims in Canada. These frameworks can foster a better understanding of the social and economic settlement processes shared through the lived experiences of Muslim immigrants with a focus on their agency and resistance.

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