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Discrimination against Muslims in the United States

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Summary

The United States is a cultural melting pot of numerous unique religions. One religion that has gained increased attention in the United States over the years is Islam. This increased attention on members of the Islamic community is often negative. For this reason, it is increasingly important for American citizens to understand that the majority of faithful followers of Islam do not identity or approve of extremist groups that commit atrocious acts in the name of Islam. Hate and improper views of Muslims are being propagated by biased media depictions of Muslims, by the heightened fear and concern for safety from a repeated terrorist attack by extremist Muslim groups, and by improper opinions and public statements from elected public officials. The hate speech and violence directed towards Muslims has many adverse effects. For example, violence is a major byproduct of discrimination against Muslims that can lead to severe mental and physical problems, identity issues, and workplace issues. Some organizations such as the Islamic Network's Group and the Anti-Defamation League are striving to tackle issues related to discrimination against Muslims in America.

Key Terms

Hijab—The traditional covering of the hair and neck that is worn by Muslim women.[1] Wearing the hijab is one of many ways a woman declares her faith.[2]

TSA—TSA is an acronym for the Transportation Security Administration. The TSA is an agency of Homeland Security and was created to keep traveling Americans safe in response to the September 11 Terror Attacks.[3]

Patriot Act—Act enacted by US Congress following the September 11 Attacks to combat future terrorist attacks.[4] The purpose of the act is to identify and deter terrorist attacks domestically and internationally by enhancing the tools of law enforcement to investigate potential terrorist threats.[5]

Ramadan—An Islamic holiday commemorating the first revelations of the Qur'an, which Muhammad received from God in the year 610. Ramadan is celebrated during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar through fasting, prayer, and family gatherings.[6]

Discrimination—Making a distinction in thought or action in favor of or against an individual based on the group, class, or category to which that individual belongs rather than on individual merit.[7]

Jihad—Literal translation is "holy war." Consists of a Muslim's individual struggle to live according to Islamic teachings and the struggle to build and defend Islamic societies and teachings. The internal struggle to be faithful to Islamic teachings is regarded as the most applicable meaning of Jihad.[8]

Muslim—A follower of the religion of Islam.[9]

Islam—The religious faith of Muslims, which includes belief in Allah as the sole deity and in Muhammad as prophet.[10]

Hate crime—Any of various crimes (such as assault or defacement of property) when motivated by hostility to the victim as a member of a group (such as one based on color, creed, gender, or sexual orientation).[11]

Xenophobia—Fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign.[12]

Qur'an—The book composed of sacred writings accepted by Muslims as revelations made to Muhammad by Allah through the angel Gabriel.[13]

Stigma—Negative stereotypes and judgements that lead to discriminatory actions.[14]

**Mosque**—A building used for worship by Muslims.[15]

Context

There are an estimated 1.8 billion Muslims around the world.[16] Followers of Islam account for roughly 1 % of the US population, which translates to roughly 3.45 million people.[17] Some projections estimate that the Muslim population in the United States will

reach roughly 8 million and that Islam will be the second largest religion by membership in the United States by 2040.[18] The majority of Muslim immigrants are coming from Southern Asia, Iran, and other Arab countries, and are migrating to the United States for economic opportunities and democratic freedom.[19, 20] However, many Muslims face bigotry and oppression once they migrate to the United States. The ever-increasing presence of Muslim Americans in the United States has escalated tensions among people who are unaware of or antagonistic to Islamic teachings, amplifying discriminatory behaviors and actions towards Muslims by others.

Number of Muslims in the US continues to grow
Number of Muslims in the US (in millions)
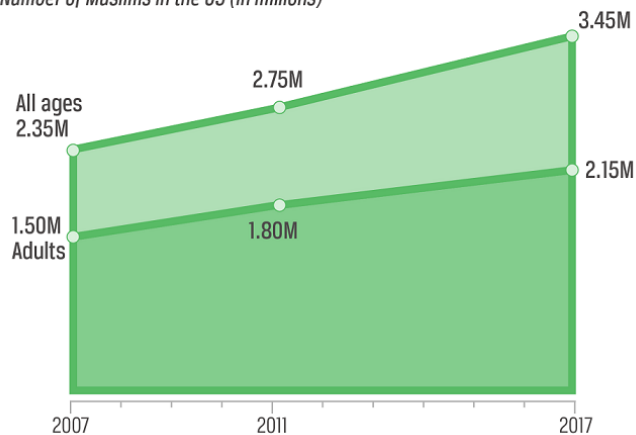
SOURCE: Besheer Mohamed, "New Estimates Show US Muslim Population Continues to Grow," Pew Research Center, January 3, 2018, https://www.pewresearch.org/-fact-tank/2018/01/03/new-estimates-show-u-s-muslim-population-continues-to-grow/.

An understanding of the core beliefs and teachings of the Muslim religion is essential in order to provide an objective awareness of Islam and reduce bias among those outside of the faith. Islam is a monotheistic religion that believes in and worships Allah (Arabic for God), who is the same holy deity of Christianity and Judaism.[21] Furthermore, Muslims believe in the same prophets of the two other Abrahamic religions previously mentioned, such as Noah, Abraham, and Jesus. Muslims view Muhammad as the final and most pivotal of all prophets.[22] The words of Allah through the angel Gabriel to the prophet Muhammad make up the words of Islamic teachings and scripture comprised within the Qur'an.[23] Muslims also believe in carrying out altruistic and pious acts, such as regular prayer, giving to those in need, fasting, faith in God and Muhammad, and a pilgrimage to the holiest of Muslim sites in Saudi Arabia called Mecca.[24]

Discrimination against Muslims is an issue worldwide and is often the result

of misleading information about what Muslims believe. A recent poll found that countries throughout Europe hold unfavorable views of Muslims. For example, 72% of Hungarians, 65% of Grecians, 35% of Dutch, and 28% of those in the United Kingdom that were polled had unfavorable views of Muslims.[25] In the United States specifically, at least 49% of Americans think that some US Muslims are anti-American.[26] Eleven % of Americans polled believed that US Muslims have a "great deal of support" for extremism.[27] This idea of extremism is often publicly tied to the concept of jihad, which many people mistakenly connect solely with violent, militaristic action against others. In reality, the concept of jihad refers to a Muslim's personal struggle to be faithful to the teachings of Islam and build up and defend Islamic society and precepts.[28] The internal struggle to follow Islamic teachings is the aspect of jihad that scholars explain is most important to Muslims and is practiced most frequently by the overwhelming majority of Muslims.[29] Examples of

practicing internal jihad include learning the Qur'an by heart, overcoming greed or malic, cleaning the mosque, and taking part in Muslim community activities.[30] According to the Qur'an, the militaristic form of Jihad is only acceptable under strict circumstances such as defending one's self, protecting Islamic people and teachings from oppression, and protecting the right to live the Muslim faith.[31]

Prejudice against Muslims in the US is multifaceted and can include both discriminatory beliefs and actions. Discrimination is the maltreatment of another person based on one or many defining characteristics such as race, gender, religious beliefs, national origin, and physical characteristics.[32] Discrimination against Muslims can be inflicted by individuals who express inaccurate stereotypes and stigmas. For instance, Muslim American Shawna Ayoub Ainslie's experience highlights discrimination between individuals.[33] Ainslie stopped attending her community mosque when someone burned it down and in one instance

was asked by her neighbor to pick out which parts of a misleading chain mail attacking Muslim beliefs were true or not.[34]

Source: "Kaaba," Encyclopaedia Britannica, last updated August 15, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Kaaba-shrine-Mecca-Saudi-Arabia.

Additionally, discrimination can be promoted or perpetuated through the institution of certain national policies and laws. One example of these policies is national security profiling typically conducted by the FBI, which maps a certain demographic of people, such as Muslims, as being a threat to society based on general stereotypes relating to their religion, race, and nations of origin.[35, 36] Following the 2015 Paris Attacks, US Congress passed a law that enforced a stricter visa waiver program for dual nationals from certain Middle Eastern Countries.[37] Creating

legislation and policies that generalize all Muslims as a threat to society allows individuals and the greater public to justify discrimination against Muslims.

Discrimination can take place in different settings and among different demographics. For example, 55% of American-Muslim students in primary or secondary education faced some form of discrimination because of their Islamic beliefs.[38] The most common form of discrimination they reported was verbal assaults. A 2014 study found that 29% of Muslim students wearing religious hijabs or scarves had them pulled or offensively grabbed by their peers.[39] High levels of workplace discrimination against Muslims have taken place as well. In 2009, American-Muslims filed 25% of workplace discrimination claims despite accounting for only 2% of the total US workforce.[40] Gender seems to also play a role in levels of discrimination against Muslims. Muslim women are more likely to be targets of discrimination than Muslim men because of their easily recognized religious headscarves and dresses.[41] In

2006, 154 of discriminatory acts against US Muslim women were related to their wearing a hijab.[42] Lastly, many Muslims face discrimination when attempting to buy or rent their homes. Around 16% of Muslims have faced some form of housing discrimination in comparison to 4% of non-Muslims.[43]

Discrimination against Muslims can lead to more serious and sometimes violent physical actions against them, which are defined as hate crimes. Hate crime statistics are limited in telling us how much overall discrimination exists against a particular group, since more people are likely to commit some other form of discrimination before committing a hate crime. However, hate crime statistics can still provide some insights on the severity of the discrimination against a certain group. The total number of assaults against Muslims increased sharply after the September 11 terror attacks, with 93 total assaults in 2001.[44] However, from 2002 to 2014 the number of assaults were somewhat steady until 2016, when 127 assaults were reported against Muslims.[45] This spike in hate

crimes indicates a rise in anti-Muslim sentiment and discrimination in recent years.

Contributing Factors

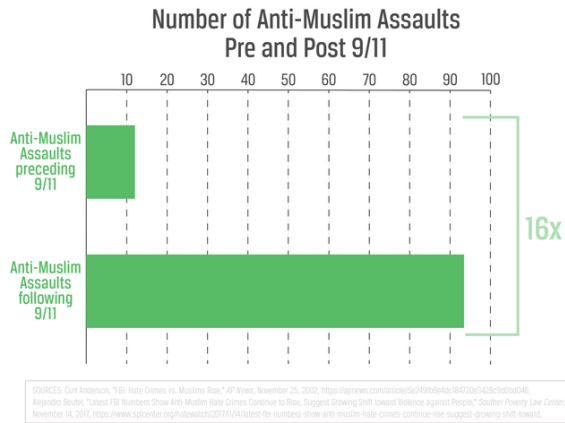## *September 11 Terrorist Attacks*

Discrimination against and fear of Muslims has been a lingering issue in the United States for many decades, but the September 11 attacks were a massive catalyst for increased fear and backlash against Muslim Americans.[46] The September 11 terror attacks were the crashing of two passenger planes into the World Trade Centers and one passenger plane into the Pentagon by al-Qaeda, an Islamist extremist group based outside the US.[47] The September 11 attacks were the worst terrorist attacks on American soil in US history in terms of the number of lives lost. These attacks took the lives of nearly 3000 Americans, about 400 of which were first responders, and were the result of al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin

Laden's official declaration of war on the US in 1996.[48] However, mainstream Islam, as explained in the Context section of this paper, does not espouse such extreme actions.

The September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centers caused an aftermath of American discomfort and discrimination against Muslims. Following the attack, the American public began to embrace negative stereotypes about Muslims as a whole.[49] For example, a poll given in 2003 following the September 11 attacks found that 34% of responders believed that mainstream Islam encouraged violence against non-Muslims.[50] In other words, many post-September 11 Americans began to view radical Islam and mainstream Islam as the same in regards to how they promote violence against non-Muslims. However, as described in Context, the majority of Muslims and mainstream Islam does not condone violence against non-Muslims.

Though discrimination against Muslims was present long before the September 11 terror attacks, it is likely that the attacks exacerbated the issue and contributed to the surge in hate crimes against Muslims following the events. According to an FBI report, the number of hate crimes against Muslims was multiplied by 16 from 2000 to 2001 following the attacks on the World Trade Center.[51] Preceding the September 11 terror attacks in 2000, there were 12 victims of anti-Muslim assaults; following September 11 in 2001, reports of anti-Muslim assaults increased to 93.[52] However, many of these sources most likely understate the amount of hate crimes against Muslims following September 11. This discrepancy could be because victims of hate crimes are less likely to report hate crimes because of mistrust of government programs policies, language and cultural impediments, immigration status, or a general lack of knowledge about criminal justice systems in the US.[53] According to the Department of Justice, these statistics may be 25 to 40 times higher than what is actually shown due to this underreporting.[54]

**Number of Anti-Muslim Assaults
Pre and Post 9/11**

SOURCES: Curt Anderson, "FBI: Hate Crimes vs. Muslims Rise," AP News, November 25, 2002, https://apnews.com/article/5a249fb6e4dc984726e2d9c9d0bd046. Alejandro Beutel, "Latest FBI Numbers Show Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes Continue to Rise, Suggest Growing Shift toward Violence against People," Southern Poverty Law Center, November 14, 2017, https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2017/11/14/latest-fbi-numbers-show-anti-muslim-hate-crimes-continue-rise-suggest-growing-shift-toward.

Following the September 11 attacks, multiple government programs and initiatives, such as the Transportation Security Administration, the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration Customs Enforcement, and the Patriot Act, were created with the intent to keep all citizens safe. However, these agencies and laws have at times been used to target and discriminate against innocent Muslims. For example, the passing of the Patriot Act led to the arresting of 738 Muslims between September 2001 and August 2002 because of added security measures.[55] Not one of the 738 Muslims that were detained by law enforcement were linked to any form of terrorism.[56] These actions prompted the American Civil Liberties Union to file a lawsuit against TSA for racial profiling in airports during screenings.[57] The lawsuit centered around the uncovering of thousands of TSA documents that showed a strong attention on screening people that were Muslim, Arab, or Latino.[58] The ACLU lawsuit against the TSA also uncovered that a behavioral-detection officer within the TSA referred to Muslims as "towel heads."[59] These examples highlight the racial and religious stereotypes used by government officials in various federal programs to discriminate against Muslims and how the September 11 terrorist attacks may have exacerbated this discrimination.

Media Depictions of Muslims

American media sources are instrumental in propagating misleading information about Muslims, leading to increases in discrimination against Muslims in the United States. This increase occurs because media sources create and perpetuate negative stereotypes that are then presented to the public as accurate and factual, allowing the public to feel justified in

skepticism. One study found that during the last 25 years, Muslims were portrayed in a more negative manner than cancer and cocaine.[60] Television personnel like news reporters and network show hosts contribute significantly to the negative portrayal of Muslims. For example, Jeanine Pirro, a well-known reporter from a major news outlet, has made highly questionable statements about Muslims over the years. For instance, Pirro questioned whether Minnesota politician Ilhan Omar's wearing of a Muslim women. Wearing the hijab is one of many ways a woman declares her faith.">hijab was a sign of her lack of loyalty to the US Constitution.[61] Pirro has also stated that "we need to kill them [Muslims]."[62] Chris Cuomo, host of another news network, has stated that the Islamic world is exceptionally violent and accountable for the majority of current religious extremism.[63] Many news anchors have generalized all Muslims, extremists and not, into one group based on Islamic beliefs.

Muslims are most often generalized by media sources as security threats.[64,] [65] For instance, a meta-analysis of media representation of Muslims from 2000 to 2015 found that Muslims are often portrayed as being related to terrorist attacks.[66] Furthermore, strong evidence from scholars shows that a country's media sources tend to associate Muslims more strongly with terrorism after a major terrorist event.[67] When the terrorist attack is local in relation to the news source, the effect of increasingly associating Muslims to terrorism is even stronger.[68] Media portrayals of all Muslims as terrorists that present a security threat mislead viewers as to how the majority of Muslims actually lead their lives.

The media's coverage of events depends on a few factors. Media sources tend to cover events that involve violence and reinforce stereotypes and common beliefs held by the general public because this type of coverage draws in more viewers.[69] The non-Muslim American public sees Muslims as more violent than peaceful

and more untrustworthy than trustworthy.[70] These generally held views of Muslims lead to more coverage of events that specifically depict Muslims as violent or deceitful, possibly because networks want to maintain their ratings. This phenomenon can be seen in the data on media coverage of terrorist attacks; one study analyzing terrorist attacks from 2006 to 2015 found that terrorist attacks by followers of Islam received 357% more media coverage than terrorist attacks by other individuals.[71] For major news outlets, there was an estimated 758% increase in media portrayal of Muslim terrorist attacks compared to any other terrorist attack.[72] Although coverage for terrorist attacks perpetuated by Muslim individuals was high, only 12.5% of US domestic terrorist attacks between 2006 to 2015 were committed by Muslims.[73] Thus, the lifestyle of Muslim extremist groups or individuals are being overrepresented in relation to the average Muslim lifestyle in order to fuel stereotypes and misconceptions

that much of the American public has towards Muslims.

Terrorist attacks carried by followers of Islam received **357%** more general media coverage than terrorist attacks by other individuals.

On major news outlets, coverage increased by **758%** for Muslim terrorist attacks than any other terrorist attack.
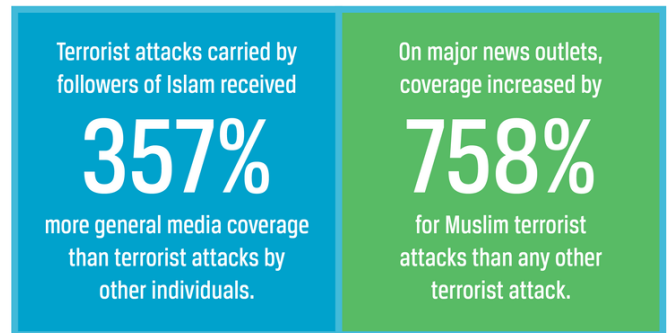
SOURCES: Erin Kearns, Allison Betus, and Anthony Lemieux, "Why Do Some Terrorist Attacks Receive More Media Attention than Others?" *Justice Quarterly* 36, no. 6 (2019): 985–1022, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07418825.2018.1524507. Hannah Ritchie et al., "Terrorism," Our World in Data, updated November 2019, ourworldindata.org/terrorism.

Researchers have also analyzed media depictions of Muslim women and how media depictions contribute to discrimination against Muslims. The hijab worn by Muslim women, for instance, has been portrayed in a more negative light by media sources following the September 11 attacks and has increasingly been a trigger of xenophobic feelings against Muslims.[74] Furthermore, Muslim women are often portrayed by the media as being subjugated to a patriarchal society.[75] This portrayal threatens the efforts of many non-Muslim women in higher income countries such as the United States to progress women's rights because of the supposed Muslim effort to reverse that progress.[76] Thus, Muslim women face

increased discrimination and are viewed as inhibitors of women's rights as the result of misleading media depictions.

The US media's portrayal of war and conflict between the United States and Middle Eastern countries has also increased discrimination against Muslims. For example, American media portrayals of the Gaza and Gulf Wars often focused on Muslims and Islam as being savage and in direct opposition to American beliefs.[77, 78] Although the wars were started over economic disagreements, US media during this time focused on religious and ideological differences and changed the American perception of the war from economics to bringing morality to Islam. Media sources' frequently inaccurate portrayal of Muslims can shape and uphold widely held views by the general public regarding Muslims that are incorrect and biased.
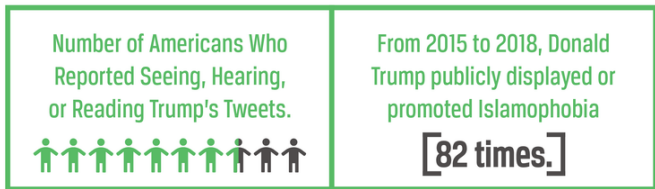
Opinions Stated by Public Officials

The comments of American elected officials regarding Muslims and Islam receive much attention and directly affect discrimination against Muslims. These misleading statements not only validate an individual's personal (and discriminatory) beliefs against Muslims but present these misleading statements as valid and acceptable positions for members of the political party represented by that official to adopt.

It is important to note that discriminatory speech against Muslims exists across the entire political spectrum, as noted below. However, President Trump's comments while in office gained much public attention for a few reasons. First, the popularity of social media in the twenty-first century allows information to be dispersed quickly. Second, the position of president of the United States carries with it the constant attention from American citizens. For these reasons, former President Trump's comments regarding Islam garnered more attention than other politicians past or present. For example, a Gallup poll found that nearly 76% of Americans saw, heard or read about Trump's

tweets while he was in office, indicating that his tweets may have a significant effect on a large portion of the American public.[79]

Number of Americans Who Reported Seeing, Hearing, or Reading Trump's Tweets.	From 2015 to 2018, Donald Trump publicly displayed or promoted Islamophobia
🧍🧍🧍🧍🧍🧍🧍🧍🧍🧍	[82 times.]

SOURCE: Frank Newport, "Deconstructing Trump's Use of Twitter," *Gallup*, May 16, 2018, https://news.gallup.com/poll/234509/deconstructing-trump-twitter.aspx. "86 Times Donald Trump Displayed or Promoted Islamophobia," *MPower Change*, Medium, April 19, 2018, https://medium.com/nlc/86-times-donald-trump-displayed-or-promoted-islamophobia-49e67584ac10.

The comments of politicians have an effect on discriminatory attitudes against Muslims by the general public. President George W. Bush's speech less than a week following the September 11 attacks centered around Islam being a religion of peace, which immediately led to a significant drop in hate crimes as compared to the levels seen immediately following the September 11 attacks.[80, 81] However, President Trump's comments following the San Bernardino attacks centered on the banning of Muslims from entering the country "until we can figure out what the hell is going on [with Muslims]."[82] President Trump's comments following the terror attacks in San Bernardino led to an increased surge in discrimination against

Muslims.[83] The five days following Trump's Muslim-ban speech saw 15 anti-Muslim hate crimes occur nationally.[84]

The comments by Donald Trump continued throughout his presidency and seem to be associated with increases in hate crimes and discrimination against followers of Islam in the United States. For example, in November 2015 President Trump stated that Muslim mosques may need to be put under surveillance because they are locations where hatred is being taught.[85] Furthermore, a few weeks later in November of 2015, President Trump stated that surveillance of some mosques was perhaps necessary because he watched thousands of American Muslims cheer as the World Trade Centers came down.[86] However, there is no validity to this claim.[87] Violence and hateful speech against South Asians, Muslims, Sikhs, Hindu, Middle Easterners and Arabs increased 45% in 2018, the year following Trump's official inauguration.[88] The majority of perpetrators targeted these

populations simply because victims could have been Muslim.[89]. Trump's tweets and statements are not solely responsible for this 45% increase, but his tweets and public statements are spreading more of this discriminatory rhetoric through high-traffic sources.[90]

Donald Trump is not the only politician to express discriminatory views of Muslims. One of Trump's national security advisors and former US Ambassador of the United Nations John Bolton created a nonprofit organization called Gatestone Institute, which publishes anti-Muslim information.[91] One article from this organization falsely reported that extreme instances of gang rape were being carried out by Muslims in the United Kingdom.[92] Additionally, an Oklahoma politician expressed interest in having his Muslim constituents fill out a survey before meeting with him in order to ensure that these constituents did not beat their wives.[93] Alabama state representative Mack Butler stated in a Facebook post, "Have you noticed that we keep hearing how Islam is a religion of peace as they blow people

up?"[94] Comments and information such as these that are disseminated to constituents or in news reports spread negative connotations and prejudices about Islam, leading to increased discrimination.

Consequences

Health Risks

Physical Health

The different forms of discrimination against Muslims in the United States have adverse health effects for Muslims. Stigmatizing a certain person, such as a Muslim, can lead to increases in stress for the Muslim individual, which can lead to issues such as hypertension. Additionally, individuals who endure chronic stress due to stigmatization are at increased risk for diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular disease.[95] In fact, one study found that discrimination can lead to coronary artery calcification—an untreatable buildup of the body's coronary arteries which can increase the risk of heart attack.[96, 97] Other physical effects of discrimination are mothers having low-

birth weight infants, which can lead to infant mortality, and visceral fat.[98] Visceral fat is a form of fat that is near various vital internal organs as well as in the arteries.[99] Visceral fat can lead to severe medical conditions, such as heart attacks and heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, breast cancer, and Alzheimer's disease.[100] Low birth weight in babies can lead to a baby's difficulty maintaining its internal temperature, breathing problems, gastrointestinal problems, and low risk of survival.[101] Stigmatizing can cause severe health complications for individuals and families.

Physical harm is another possible side effect of discrimination against Muslims that can lead to minor or serious health complications. FK, an American Muslim woman, was attacked in a drug store by another woman, who verbally claimed not one Muslim could be trusted.[102] FK was slammed to the ground and choked by her headscarf by the other women. FK took off her headscarf to avoid choking only to be dragged through the store by her hair.[103] In one Pew Research poll, roughly 6% of Muslims reported having been physically threatened or attacked within the past year as a result of religious discrimination.[104] High levels of physical assaults resulting from religious discrimination cause many Muslims to feel unsafe. For example, since September 11, roughly 82% of Muslims responding to a survey felt unsafe or extremely unsafe in the United States.[105] Discrimination against Muslims can escalate to physical assaults and cause physical harm and feelings of unsafety for Muslims.

Another health risk that can lead to worsening health issues for Muslims is the possibility that healthcare workers discriminate against and provide less quality healthcare for Muslim patients. Generally, many minority groups felt that their physicians were not willing

to examine them and put in the time to properly listen to their situation.[106] In one study, 227 Muslims were asked the types of discriminatory behaviors they experienced in health care settings.[107] Ninety-one reported being excluded or ignored, 72 reported others having issues with their Islamic dress, 60 reported offensive verbal remarks, and 6 reported physical assaults.[108] In some cases it was found that because some Muslim women wore hijabs to a healthcare visit, they were patronized as women that were subjugated to their abusive husband's control and unable to speak English, which resulted in their not receiving health care.[109] Current data lacks extensive discussion regarding Muslim American men receiving improper medical care. Discriminatory behaviors in the healthcare setting can affect the quality of healthcare for Muslims, which can lead to unaddressed or improperly addressed personal health conditions.
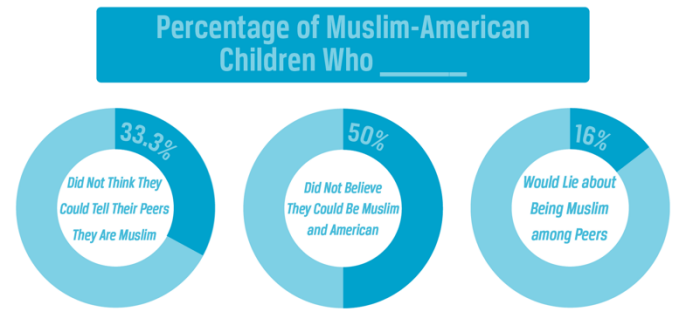
Mental Health

The effects of discrimination on mental and emotional health are just as substantial as the physical health effects. Discrimination against any group of people can lead to cognitive impairments, depression, psychological distress and anxiety.[110] Many children that are bullied and discriminated against often experience high levels of distress and difficulties with adjustments.[111, 112, 113]

Discrimination against Muslims in the United States causes many followers of Islam to struggle with their individual identity, resulting in mental health problems. One study has found that 69% of Muslims believe religion is a critical aspect of their lives.[114] However, a Muslim's religious identification is often the source of discrimination against them.[115] Spirituality is often an important coping mechanism and strength for individuals that are suffering— targeting someone based on religious differences can weaken and seriously harm religious identity.[116] The effects of discrimination particularly effect identity formation for young Muslims. Children often subconsciously internalize discrimination because they

do not have the cognitive abilities to question biased, negative thinking.[117] One study carried out among Muslim American children between the ages of 5 and 9 years of age found that 1 in 3 Muslim American children did not think they could tell their peers they were Muslim, and 50% of the children believed that they did not think it was possible to be both Muslim and American.[118] Roughly 16% of the children in the study would deny being Muslim and claimed instead that they were Americans.[119] This internalized discrimination at a young age affects how many Muslim children view their own identities and often leads to lingering identity issues in adulthood.[120] Identity issues can lead to anxiety and insecurity.[121] Identity crisis, a result of identity issues, can lead to depression and other problems.[122]

Percentage of Muslim-American Children Who _____

33.3% Did Not Think They Could Tell Their Peers They Are Muslim

50% Did Not Believe They Could Be Muslim and American

16% Would Lie about Being Muslim among Peers

SOURCE: Imam Suleiman, "Internalized Islamophobia: Exploring the Faith and Identity Crisis of American Muslim Youth," *Islamophobia Studies* Journal 4, no. 1 (Spring 2017): https://yaqeeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/internalizedislamophobia_ShOmar_Dec2016.pdf.

Disadvantages in the Workplace

Muslims often experience disadvantageous work-related situations that limit their ability to thrive in their chosen career fields. It is important to understand the levels and types of discrimination in work-related atmospheres in order to understand how it affects Muslims' ability to thrive in occupational ventures. Charges of religious discrimination in the workplace are filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), a federal agency that enforces workplace civil rights.[123, 124] These types of charges consist of issues such as harassment leading to a hostile work environment for an employee, inadequate accommodations for an employee's religious practices, and

religious discrimination related to the hiring and firing process.[125] Of the 3,811 religious workplace discrimination charges filed in 2012, 781 were connected to discrimination against Muslims.[126] The next closest religious group was Judaism, with 364 Jewish individuals filing complaints with the EEOC regarding religious workplace discrimination.[127] Unfortunately, these numbers may underrepresent how much workplace discrimination is taking place because many people fear reporting will damage their careers or are unaware of their rights.[128] Many Muslims are facing discrimination in the workplace, causing them employment struggles.

Discrimination in the workplace also manifests itself in the hiring process, where Muslims are at a disadvantage. In 2011, The EEOC filed a lawsuit against Abercrombie and Fitch for refusing to hire a Muslim woman because she was wearing a headscarf.[129] Nationally, Muslim job candidates receive a 13% lower callback rate in comparison to Christian job candidates.[130] In

Republican counties across the country, 22.58% of Christian job candidates received callbacks for interviews while only 6.25% of Muslim job candidates received callbacks.[131] In Democratic counties across the United States, Christian candidates callback rates are 11.61% and Muslim candidate callback rates are 11.74%. Lower callback rates for Muslims in certain areas of the United States means that Muslim individuals have less employment opportunities. Unfortunately, those who do receive callbacks may experience a much different interview experience than other applicants. For example, one study found that Muslims who wore recognizable religious attire were more likely to have shorter and more negative interview conversations than those who did not wear Islamic religious attire.[132] In fact, Muslim women whose attire makes them easily recognizable as followers of Islam have lower expectations of getting hired.[133] Muslim womens' lowered expectations of getting hired are a result of the above described work-related discrimination. Muslims face

difficulties in the hiring process as a result of discrimination, which limits their ability to find work and succeed professionally.

Muslim employees within organizations also face difficulties after being in an organization for an extended period of time. One such example is the legal case of Zayed v. Apple Computers. The employee was frequently asked in the workplace about suicide bombings and was frequently stared at by co-employees. Her performance declined, which led to her demotion and eventually termination.[134] Another similar example is in the EEOC v. Alamo Rent-A-Car court case. During Ramadan, an employee continued to wear her hijab despite remarks from her superior stating that she would be disciplined because the hijab did not follow the company's official dress policy. The employee was eventually terminated for refusing to remove her hijab.[135] Although these are anecdotes, we can assume that other Muslims have had experiences similar to these in different settings.

Practices

Regulating and Reframing Social Media

One of the main issues with anti-Muslim hate speech through social media is that many readers of the material believe that the material is legitimate and valid.[136] As a result, some individuals begin to accept this

false material, which creates a culture of hate and causes safety issues for these religious groups.[137] The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) is one of many organizations that is leading the charge against hate and discrimination through monitoring online hate speech, educating communities and schools on appreciating differences, and promoting fair treatment of discriminated groups through public attention and legal means.[138] ADL focuses strongly on combating anti-Semitism but is also striving to find ways to monitor all forms of hate speech. Much of the information in this section will relate to information being gathered to combat anti-Semitism, although it is safe to assume that similar methods will work in solving hate against Muslims since both forms of hate are based on religious beliefs.

The Anti-Defamation League targets hate speech and discrimination through its Online Hate Index (OHI). The OHI is a project run by multiple coders to create an artificial intelligence system that can recognize trends in hate speech online.[139] Coders with diverse backgrounds bring different experiences and perspectives, allowing different forms of hate speech to be coded and labeled in the OHI artificial intelligence system.[140]

Impact

The Anti-Defamation League has not published an impact report for the most recent year outlining how their programs are eliminating hate against Muslims and other groups. The ADL's 2017 impact report shows that the Online Hate Index accurately found hate speech 78 to 85% of the time.[141] Furthermore, there were 4.2 million anti-Semitic tweets found on twitter in 2017. However, it is unclear if all of these anti-Semitic tweets were found through the OHI artificial intelligence system.

Gaps

ADL has many great programs to measure and limit hate against religious and racial groups. However, there are a few gaps in the impact assessments of their programs. First, there seems to be no recent information showing impact for the

organization as a whole. Furthermore, the impact of the OCI artificial intelligence system is unclear since the index is still in its initial stages of development. The OCI artificial intelligence system does not seem to be identifying hate speech on various social media platforms at the moment. Even though OCI is able to identify and analyze hate speech, it is the final decision of social media platforms whether to eliminate hate speech from their platforms.

Contact Hypothesis

Many social scientists have proposed the idea of social contact alleviating the ill effects of discrimination and hate between groups. Social scientist Gordon Allport argues that equal status among members of the group, common goals shared among group members, intergroup cooperation, and legal support are necessary factors that lead to a healthy and mutually beneficial relationship between groups.[142]

The Islamic Networks Group (ING) is an organization that applies the contact hypothesis to promote a better

understanding of Muslims and reduce discrimination against Muslim A mericans. The ING carries out multiple trainings lead by practicing Muslims that inform citizens about Muslim culture and the religion of Islam.[143] For example, ING offers seminars for law enforcement agencies; these seminars debunk the myths about Islam and allow law enforcement to ask questions regarding Islamic beliefs.[144] The seminars also provide methods law enforcement can implement to combat Islamophobia and hate crimes against Muslims within their respective communities.[145] Similar seminars are conducted by ING in educational, healthcare, and in corporate settings.[146]

Islamic Networks Group also carries out a program that encourages Muslim American youth to learn how to properly engage with their friends and peers, including through service hours.[147, 148] Thus, the INGYouth Program is helping promote healthy dialogue between youth, which in turn can combat discrimination and give youth accurate views of those different from them.

Another crucial initiative being led out by the ING program to increase social contact between differing groups is the Interfaith Speakers Bureau.[149] This program is meant to increase literacy of religious beliefs between different religious groups.[150]

Impact

The only statistics available on the efforts of ING to combat discrimination against Muslims are outputs. In other words, ING is increasing efforts to combat anti-Muslim discrimination, but it is unclear if these efforts are impacting the lives of Muslims and/or decreasing discrimination against Muslims.

The number of seminars increased 450% from 2018 to 2019 and were held within different professional settings.[151] In other words, seminars in the law enforcement, corporate, and educational settings increased from reaching 245 professionals in 2018 to approximately 1100 professionals in 2019.

The INGYouth Program also increased the number of workshops among youth by 1500% from 2018 to 2019; these workshops teach youth how to engage with their peers regarding Muslim beliefs.[152] Their 15 workshops reached 1000 Muslim American youth in 2019 as compared to 60 Muslim Americans and 2 workshops in 2018.[153]

The Interfaith Speaker's Bureau has merged with 50 other interfaith organizations, thus growing its outputs in the Bay area region of California.[154] ING saw a 143% increase in these interfaith religious panels from 2018 to 2019.[155]

Gaps

ING seems to have carried out extensive work in helping increase contact and understanding between other groups and Muslims. However, it is unclear if increased contact between Muslims and other groups is actually leading to decreases in discrimination against Muslims. ING also seems to have most of its outcomes and outputs in California, specifically in the Bay area. Thus, ING is not involved in increasing understanding and social contact with Muslims in other areas of

the United States. Furthermore, one important aspect of the social contact hypothesis is that common goals are shared among members of two groups for there to be a beneficial social contact.[156] However, it seems that some of the educational panels ING carries out with law enforcement, businesses, and schools may not be providing a healthy form of social contact and may not be making a positive change. For example, these panels are being organized between members of ING and the heads of law enforcement, schools, and businesses. Thus, many of the rank and file members of these organizations may be compelled to attend these panels and may not attend with open-minded attitudes. Even if the ING teaches social contact, if those who attend do not care to live by and implement the goals that ING promotes, ING will make little progress in decreasing discrimination against Muslims.

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154. Ibid.

155. Ibid.

156. Ibid.