What it means to be a Muslim youth in Canada: a scoping review of empirical studies

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Abstract

Purpose – Our thematic analysis of the academic literature on Canadian Muslim Youth aims to identify and describe the factors which contribute to the construction of identity among Muslim youth in Canada and make some research and policy recommendations to address this issue. In this review, we responded to the following questions: What is the current research evidence for Canadian Muslim Youth identity construction? What are the major themes included in the identified publications?

Design/methodology/approach – What does it mean to be a Muslim youth in Canada and how do Canadian Muslim youth negotiate and construct their identities in a globally polarized world? Using Arksey and O'Malley's framework (2005), a scoping review of empirical studies published between 2000 and 2021 was conducted to explore the diverse contexts that intersect in the creation of Canadian Muslim youth identity.

Findings – A thematic analysis of the literature identified five key themes: religiosity, racism and discrimination, parental influence, citizenship and gender that intersect in multiple ways to contribute to the construction of diverse and complex Muslim youth identities. The scoping review highlights a gap in community-based research and the need for a broader range of theoretical perspectives on Muslim youth identity construction, as well as culturally appropriate policies and social work practice models for positive youth development.

Originality/value – In contemporary Canadian culture, Muslim youth must negotiate and create their own exclusive identity, which justifies the context of what it means to be Canadian and Muslim at the same time. As highlighted in the literature, a number of tensions within the Canadian policy, between the policy and the Muslim tradition and within the Muslim community itself pose challenges in the identity development among Muslim youth. Therefore, It is critical for social work practitioners, researchers and policymakers to consider above mentioned socio-political and religious dimensions while designing, implementing and evaluating youth programs for Muslim communities.

Keywords Muslim youth, Canada, Identity, Racism, Religiosity, Scoping review, Islam, Muslims, Islamophobia

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The Muslim population of Canada is over one million people (3.2% of the national population), with a growth rate that has almost doubled the population in each of the past three decades. Canadian Muslims are the youngest population in Canada, with a median age of 28.9 years (National Household Survey, 2011). Representing diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, 86% of Canadian Muslims live in the larger metropolitan areas of Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary and Ottawa. The tragic incidents of September 11, 2001 and its aftermath set the context for ongoing Islamophobic provocations in the west. Growing anti-Muslim trends, specifically in some parts of the EU but in Canada and the United States as well, have deeply impacted

Muslim's sense of belonging in western nations. Further, global conflicts and interpretative struggles within the context of Islam continue to exacerbate the external and internal conditions in which immigrant Muslims and Muslim youth in particular are forced to negotiate their relationship with themselves, the Muslim community and the broader Canadian society. Like any other youth population, Canadian Muslim Youth (CMY) is a complex social category which is diverse in terms of their responses to social and political conditions and economic changes around the globe. Depending on contexts, CMY may be resisting, accommodating and/or negotiating with and within local and global conditions.

According to a survey conducted by the Environics Institute (2016), an overwhelming majority of Muslims (83%) reported to be "very proud" Canadians. The survey showed Muslims integrating rapidly into the broader Canadian society and a significant majority (94%) indicated a "strong" or "very strong" sense of belonging to Canada. Despite the affirming results from the Environics study, CMY faces a number of challenges as they seek to develop meaningful and stable identities. Tensions between traditional values and beliefs and the Canadian social context may leave Muslim youth feeling unsupported and misunderstood, with the consequent feelings of disconnection that may lead to rejection of conventional social norms and institutions. These tensions are heightened in the contexts of rigid religious interpretations, gender roles and relations, parenting practices, global conflicts, Islamophobic and anti-Islamic racism and multiple identity-based issues and concerns.

Despite growing public interest in understanding the challenges and issues experienced by Muslim youth, identity construction amongst Muslims living in Canada has received relatively limited attention in the literature. Several studies have targeted particular issues such as education and schooling (Ghaffar-Kucher, 2015; Zine, 2001), political engagement (Bullock and Nesbitt-Larking, 2013) and the effectiveness of multiculturalism (Nagra and Peng, 2013; Ramji, 2008). Others address youth identity only tangentially to primary research interests (Zine, 2006). A number of studies explore radicalization and extremism among Muslim youth, which can complicate the daily struggles for a majority of this population (Mythen, 2012; Wibisono et al., 2019).

Responding to this gap in the literature, our research team conducted a scoping review of the peer-reviewed literature within the last 21 years (2000–2021) to identify and underscore the thematic focus given to CMY identity. Our scoping review provided an opportunity to assess the interdisciplinary settings in which CMY has been studied through recent academic scholarship. There is an emerging literature base (Aslam, 2011; Nagra and Peng, 2013; Ryan, 2014) that explores the distinct constructs related to CMY, which require further comprehensive analysis to better articulate the wider social, political, economic and religious contexts in which issues and challenges of Muslim youth identity may be understood. Our thematic analysis of the academic literature on CMY aims to identify and describe the factors which contribute to the construction of identity among Muslim youth in Canada and make some recommendations to address this issue. In this review, we responded to the following questions:

(1) What is the current research evidence for Canadian Muslim Youth identity construction?

(2) What are the major themes included in the identified publications?

Methodology
Search strategy
A librarian with experience in developing search strategies for scoping and systematic reviews developed search strategies for five different databases: Canadian Business and Current Affairs (CBCA), the Education Research Information Clearinghouse (ERIC), The Index Islamicus, SocIndex and Scopus. These resources were selected based on their

Canadian coverage (CBCA), their coverage of the Muslim community (Index Islamicus) and their coverage of the education and social sciences literature (ERIC and SocIndex). Scopus was searched as a broad interdisciplinary database, to discover literature that may not be indexed in more discipline-specific databases.

Search concepts were generated with input from the content experts. Keywords and database specific controlled vocabulary searches were developed based on the following concepts:

(1) Muslims.

(2) Identity (including the concepts of citizenship, belonging, sexual and gender identities).

(3) Youth/young adults aged 19–30.

(4) Canadian (includes names of all provinces and territories, as well as Canada's five largest cities).

The search was limited to literature published in English, with date limits of 2,000 or later to focus on contemporary CMY identity. The SocIndex search strategy can be found in Appendix. This search was translated to the appropriate syntax in the other databases.

Inclusion/exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
• Population aged 18–30 • Canadian citizens or residents • Studies published in English	• Children <18; adults >30 • Non-Canadian Muslim communities • Studies published in French • Empirical studies older than 2000

Data extraction and analysis
This scoping review was conducted using Arksey and O'Malley's framework (2005). One team member conducted the data extraction of the included studies and two additional members verified the data extraction tables for accuracy. Table 1 displays the data items that were extracted from the studies. We extracted demographic information about the studies that included title of the study, author(s) information, year and journal of publication. Specifics of the studies including the information on participants, research questions, methods used, key findings and limitations of the study were also extracted. All team members were involved in thematic analysis across the identified studies, with two members proposing the initial categories, which were refined through several consensus-building meetings and collaborative writing phases.

Results
Study flow
A total of 165 studies were identified through the search and imported for screening. After the removal of 50 duplicate records, 115 studies were screened for titles and abstracts, out of which 39 studies were selected. This was followed by a second stage full text review of the selected studies by two team members. 16 studies which met all the inclusion criteria were

Table 1.
Study characteristics

#	Authors	Year of publication	Title	Journal name	Participants	Research questions	Methods	Key findings	Limitations as noted by the author(s)
							Details reported		
1	Bullock, Katherine; Nesbitt-Larking, Paul	2013	Becoming "Holistically Indigenous": Young Muslims and Political Participation in Canada	Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs	Young Canadian Muslims ($n = 20$)	To study young citizens' concepts of political participation; conceptions of the self as a political actor; formal, informal and civic political involvement; and the relationship between their religious and Canadian identities	Thematic analysis using qualitative semi-structured interviews	A negative impact of public discourse about Muslim experiences of racism is discussed. The authors also mention an overwhelming commitment to Canada and political engagement among young Muslims. High level of civic engagement among Muslim youth is revealed through the study interviews	None
2	Collet, Bruce A	2007	Islam, national identity and public secondary education: perspectives from the Somali diaspora in Toronto, Canada	Race, Ethnicity and Education	Young Somali adults ($n = 33$)	To examine resistance among traditional Muslim groups to Toronto school policies. To explore school experiences of Somali immigrants	Inductive method of thematic analysis	Identity construction among Somali youth is discussed. The Somalis interviewed for this study entered the Toronto schools with strong identifications as Muslims and closely associated their religious affiliations with a Somali national identity. Process of complex dynamic identity formation along with challenges of negotiation and renegotiation of identities among Somali Muslim youth are mentioned. Recommendations for the Toronto school practices regarding particular forums where national identity plays an important role are also highlighted by the authors	Limitations of conducting the research as an 'outsider' (i.e. non-Somali) are mentioned. The methodology with interviewing students about their schooling after they have graduated might have increased the possibility of 'selective memory' on the part of the interviewees

(continued)

#	Authors	Year of publication	Title	Journal name	Participants	Research questions	Details reported		Limitations as noted by the author(s)
							Methods	Key findings	
3	Eid, Paul	2003	The Interplay between Ethnicity, Religion and Gender among Second-Generation Christian and Muslim Arabs in Montreal	Canadian Ethnic Studies	Second-generation Arabs from five different Montreal colleges filled out a questionnaire ($n = 250$) In-depth interviews with Arab students ($n = 16$)	To explore how religion operates as an "ethnic-like" identity marker, or group binder, among both Christian and Muslim college students of Arab origin in Montreal	Mixed methods (using survey and interviews)	Intersection of ethnic and religious identities is mentioned. Partial support of the suggested hypothesis of females more likely to oppose traditional gender roles as an ethno-religious identity marker is also revealed in the study findings	None
4	Hebert, Y.M., Murji, R.	2006	Collectivized identity among Shi'a Imami Isma'ili Muslims of Calgary: Implications for pluralism and policy	Espace-Populations-Sociétés	Part of the findings of a study on the contexts of identity formation of immigrant youth in Calgary. Interviews with the leaders and the parents of the Shi'an Imami Isma'ili community settled in Calgary, Alberta	To study the basis of collectivized identity and its interplay with other identity markers, within the context of Canadian multiculturalism and citizenship	Thematic analysis with Individual semi-directed interviews	A range of collective identity strategies at the communal, familial and individual levels in order to construct new social order and new identifications is discussed. More specifically, the authors have listed the strategies as: (a) the modification of images that others hold of the group; (b) sensitivity regarding the internalization of marginalizing labels; (c) semantic reversal of views of one's own culture and faith, thus turning negativity into positivity; and (d) conscious recomposition of social positioning	None

(continued)

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#	Authors	Year of publication	Title	Journal name	Participants	Research questions	Details reported		Limitations as noted by the author(s)
							Methods	Key findings	
5	Kapinga, Laura; van Hoven, Bettina	2020	"You cannot just be a Muslim in outer space": young people making sense of religion at local places in the city	Journal of Youth Studies	Twenty-four ($n = 24$) young Muslims (18–30) from a wide range of cultural backgrounds living in Metro Vancouver (Canada) 9 females and 15 males	To explore how young people make sense of religion through local places in the urban context while moving from youth to young adulthood	Narrative-based methodology using qualitative semi-structured interviews	Presents findings on young Muslims' identities by demonstrating the value of focussing on spatiotemporal complexities to understand how young Muslims' make sense of religion while moving from youth to young adulthood. According to the authors, the changing spatialities of lived religion and the impact of changing meaning of mosque over time relates to the increased salience of places shared with Muslim peers	Generalisation of findings Contextual variations in data
6	Karimi, A., Bucerius, S.M., Thompson, S	2018	Gender identity and integration: second-generation Somali immigrants navigating gender in Canada	Ethnic and Racial Studies	256 second-generation Somali-Canadians (ages 16 to 30)	To examine gender in relation to ethnic and national identities and the extent to which it may impact integration experiences of second-generation Muslim immigrants	Thematic analysis using semi-structured interviews	Findings demonstrate that Islam, among second-generation Somalis, plays an important role in terms of defining their moral systems and ethnic identity and does not go against their host country's social norms	None

(continued)

#	Authors	Year of publication	Title	Journal name	Participants	Research questions	Details reported		Limitations as noted by the author(s)
							Methods	Key findings	
7	Litchmore, Rashelle; Safdar, Saba	2015	Perceptions of Discrimination as a Marker of Integration Among Muslim-Canadians: The Role of Religiosity, Ethnic Identity and Gender	Journal of International Migration and Integration	Seventy-seven students (ages 18 to 29) who self-identified as Muslim were recruited in Southern Ontario, Canada 25 males and 52 females	To investigate perceptions of discrimination among Muslim-Canadians and to determine whether these perceptions were related to levels of religiosity, ethnic identity and gender	Descriptive statistics using Ethnic Identity and religiosity scales	A positive relationship between religiosity and perceptions of discrimination is mentioned whereas a negative relationship between ethnic identity and perceptions of discrimination are noted. Additionally, Muslim women perceived greater discrimination than Muslim men. The authors also mention some of the differences between the first- and second-generation Muslim-Canadians	The use of a combined sample of individuals of various ethnic backgrounds may have influenced the outcomes. Small sample size, more female participants might have influenced the findings as related to gender
8	Moosa-Mitha	2009	Social citizenship rights of Canadian Muslim youth: youth resiliencies and the claims for social inclusion	Arab Studies Quarterly	two hundred and fifty Canadian-Muslim youth, aged 18 to 24, participated in the study	To identify the life experiences of young Canadian men and women by exploring social issues that they experienced in daily life as well as identifying resiliencies that they brought to bear when navigating social issues	Qualitative approach Semi-structured focus groups	Social issues are mentioned under three themes from the analysis of narrative data of the focus groups: (1) Vision (2) Visibility (3) Voice	None
9	Nagra, Baljit	2011	"Our Faith Was Also Hijacked by Those People": Reclaiming Muslim Identity in Canada in a Post-9/11 Era	Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies	30 in-depth interviews with 14 Muslim men and 16 Muslim women between the ages of 18 and 30	To understand Muslim identity formation in the 9/11 era	Thematic analysis using qualitative interviews	Multiple factors that lead to reactive identity formation among Muslim youth are discussed. As revealed by the authors, Muslim identity formation among the study participants was highlighted by society through acts of discrimination and increased interest in Islam post-9/11	None

(continued)

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#	Authors	Year of publication	Title	Journal name	Participants	Research questions	Details reported		Limitations as noted by the author(s)
							Methods	Key findings	
10	Nagra, Baljit; Maurutto, Paula	2016	Crossing borders and managing racialized identities: Experiences of security and surveillance among young Canadian Muslims	Canadian Journal of Sociology	Young Canadian Muslims living in Vancouver and Toronto (n = 50) Our sample included 24 men and 26 women, aged 18–31	To study experiences of Canadian Muslims with the state surveillance practices To study the impact of these experiences on shaping identity formation and their understanding of citizenship	Thematic analysis using qualitative interviews	The study findings mention the unfair discrimination and instances of increased racism against Muslims in Canada Young Canadian Muslims who were interviewed as part of the study referred to the fear of being singled out, questioned and subjected to intrusive security measures such as strip-searches, detention, being placed on no-fly lists and being denigrated and humiliated by border staff	None
11	Nagra, B., Peng, I	2013	Has multiculturalism really failed? A Canadian Muslim perspective	Religions	50 young Muslims	To study young Canadian Muslims' lived experience of multiculturalism and its claim to create segregated communities and encourage terrorism	Thematic analysis using qualitative interviews	The study findings suggest that being Canadian and Muslim is not mutually exclusive and is also related to the "clash of civilisations" theory. Findings from the interviews also bring forward the inherent tensions and contradictions within multiculturalism	This study does not claim to represent all young Muslims in Canada. Since the study sample was not random, the generalization of results is not possible
12	Tiflati, Hicham	2017	Muslim Youth Between Quebecness and Canadianness: Religiosity, Identity, Citizenship and Belonging	Canadian Ethnic Studies	Young Canadian Muslims of North Africa+++ and Middle Eastern (MENA) descent (n = 11) Aged 18–22	To examine issues of belonging to Quebec and Canada among Quebecois Muslim youth	Narrative-based methodology using qualitative semi-structured interviews	The study findings discuss the appreciation of the national identity among young Muslims from Quebec. Generalised acceptance of Canadian culture among young Muslims by the force of democratic process is mentioned in the study	Small study sample thus, generalizability of the study results is not possible

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#	Authors	Year of publication	Title	Journal name	Participants	Research questions	Details reported		Limitations as noted by the author(s)
							Methods	Key findings	
13	Tremblay, S., Magnan, M.-O., Levasseur, C	2018	Religion and negotiation of the boundary between majority and minority in Québec: Discourses of young Muslims in Montréal CÉGEPS	Education Sciences	10 young Muslim students (age 18–20 years) 9 females and 1 male	To explore the discourses of "minorized" Muslim youth pertaining to their perceived boundaries with respect to the majority group, considering the power relations at play	Qualitative using storytelling	Study findings highlight the role of school-based experiences in shaping the identity formation among young Muslims. The authors also discuss the impact of religious discourse and religious practices in the family which contribute to the process of identity formation	Only one male participant included. Hence, the generalization of study results is not possible
14	Younis, T., Hassan, G	2019a	Second-generation Western Muslims: A qualitative analysis of multiple social identities	Transcultural Psychiatry	20 Western Muslim young adults born in Montreal, Berlin and Copenhagen within the age range of 18–25	To explore the process by which Western Muslim young adults develop the need to experience an "objective" religious identity	Thematic content analysis of semi-structured interviews	The findings reveal two major themes underlying second-generation identity development among young Muslims. These include: (a) the importance of personal development of social identities; and (b) the enmeshment of multiple social identities	Small exploratory study with under-representation of Muslim youth from diverse ethnicities. Less number of Shia Muslims in the study is mentioned by the authors
15	Younis, T., Hassan, G	2019b	"I know what a Muslim really is": how political context predisposes the perceived need for an objective Muslim identity	Journal of Contemporary Religion	20 Muslim young adults of diverse ethnicities and backgrounds from Montreal, Berlin and Copenhagen (aged 18–25)	To explore the identity narratives of second-generation Muslim young adults to consider the relevance of bicultural identity and acculturation theories commonly employed	Qualitative study with thematic analysis	Study findings highlight the role of parental influence on identity formation among Muslim youth. Two important elements underlying the process of religious identity objectification are mentioned: experience of anti-Muslim political discourse and exposure to religious diversity in the aftermath of deterritorialization	(1) Not all the participants' narratives explicitly articulated a perceived need for objectivity (2) individual characteristics of the participants, such as ethnicity, gender, race and migration history might have altered the objectification of study results

(continued)

Table 1.

Table 1.

| # | Authors | Year of publication | Title | Journal name | Participants | Research questions | Details reported | | Limitations as noted by the author(s) |
							Methods	Key findings	
16	Zine, Jasmin	2001	Muslim Youth in Canadian Schools: Education and the Politics of Religious Identity	Anthropology and Education Quarterly	The sample includes current high school students, recent graduates and university students who were able to bring a mature flection upon their previous high school experiences	To study the schooling experiences of Muslim youth in Canada who are committed to maintaining an Islamic lifestyle despite the pressures of conformity to the dominant culture	Ethnography	This study demonstrates how Muslim students were able to negotiate and maintain their religious identities within secular public schools. The participants' narratives address the challenges of peer pressure, racism and Islamophobia. Their stories reveal how Muslim students are located at the nexus of social difference based on their race, gender and religious identity	None

selected for the final stage of data extraction and were included in this review. A detailed record of the flow of studies throughout the review is given in Figure 1 below. Data extraction from the 16 included studies was conducted using excel sheets. A detailed record of the extraction items is given in Table 1.

Study characteristics
Two team members conducted a thematic analysis of the concepts discussed in the literature. The team followed a comprehensive process of discussions and consensus building that led to the identification of five major themes. These included: religiosity, racism and discrimination, parental influence, citizenship and gender. All 16 studies identified the impact of religion and religiosity on the identity construction of CMY. The majority ($n = 10$) of studies included a focus on racism and discrimination, which involved some form of Islamophobia and marginalisation experienced by Muslims and CMY in western societies. Ten studies noted parental influences and the role of family and community in the process of identity formation of the Muslim youth. Citizenship was recognised as another area of focus in six studies. Six other studies mentioned the role of gender, which highlighted the concept of sex education and gendered roles within the Muslim religious context. In the subsequent sections, we will elaborate on the major themes recognised in the included studies.
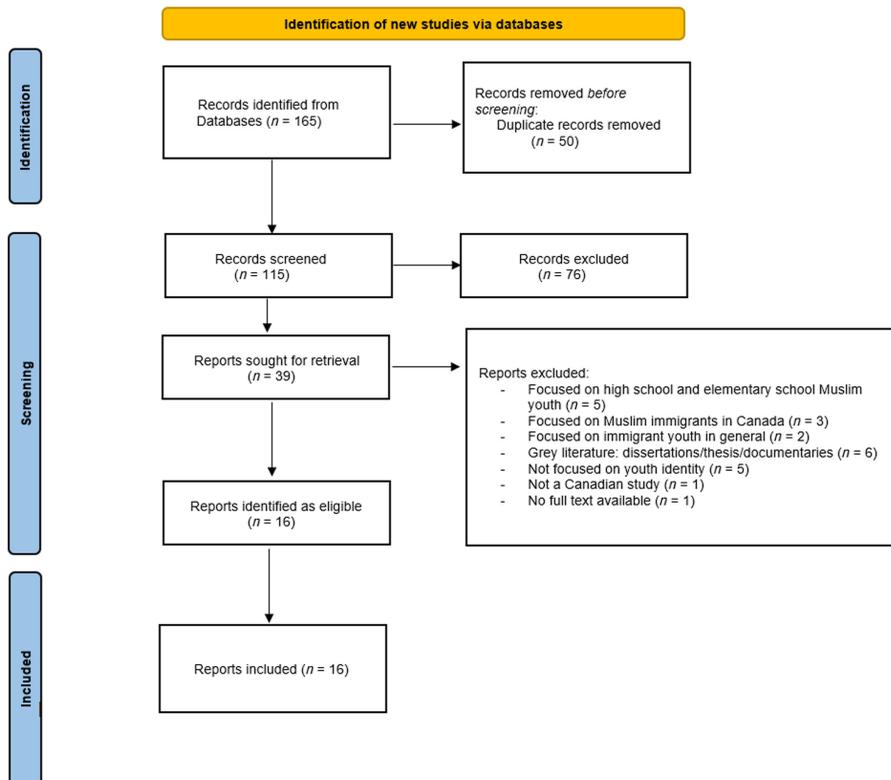

Figure 1.
PRISMA flow diagram

Major themes

Religiosity

The concept of Islam, a discerning Islamic identity and the representation of Islam in the western context were identified as the common area of interest discussed in all 16 studies. The majority of Muslim youth participants in these studies reported a strong connection with their religion (Collet, 2007; Eid, 2003; Kapinga and Van Hoven, 2020; Litchmore and Safdar, 2015; Nagra, 2011; Nagra and Maurutto, 2016; Tiflati, 2017). Furthermore, as noted in the literature, religiosity for Muslim youth in the west has an additional dimension where they are "adopting a 'de-cultured' understanding and practice of Islam whereby their religious identity is influenced by both traditional and modern sources" (Tiflati, 2017, p. 14). We noticed an overarching effect of religiosity among the Muslim youth to have ramifications on almost all aspects of their lives and thus establishing an important inter-linkage among all the other themes discussed. In the era of global conflict and the presence of *war on terror*, Muslims in the west seem to have undergone a series of transformational changes which have contributed to the genesis of a "reactionary" Islamic identity with dual expression of both over- and under-representation of Islam among the Muslims (Nagra, 2011; Nagra and Maurutto, 2016). An interesting intersection of religious expression with the emotional stress among young Muslim women has been reported by Tiflati (2017), where women wearing a hijab reported a sense of emotional obligation and satisfaction to behave according to Islamic morals and principles in society. Instances of aggravated racism and discrimination associated with religious expression such as wearing of traditional Muslim clothing and hijab have also been reported by researchers (Collet, 2007; Nagra and Peng, 2013; Tremblay *et al.*, 2018). Discussed at length in the subsequent thematic area, religious identification of young Muslims has been linked to increased incidents of racism and discrimination against them especially in the aftermath of 9/11 (Nagra, 2011).

Racism and discrimination

Serious issues of discrimination, prejudice and Islamophobia have been reported to influence the identity construction among young Muslims in Canada (Bullock and Nesbitt-Larking, 2013; Collet, 2007; Kapinga and Van Hoven, 2020; Litchmore and Safdar, 2015; Moosa-Mitha, 2009; Nagra, 2011; Nagra and Maurutto, 2016; Nagra and Peng, 2013; Tremblay *et al.*, 2018; Zine, 2001). Incidents of unjust treatment such as wrongful arrests and targeted policing, along with increased surveillance and security at airports have been reported to promote feelings of fear and insecurity among CMY (Eid, 2003; Nagra, 2011; Nagra and Maurutto, 2016). Marginalisation, discrimination, alienation and exclusionary institutional policies for young Muslims were also reported in literature (Bullock and Nesbit-Larking, 2013; Collet, 2007; Eid, 2003). Further, increased incidents of racial discrimination and differentiation were reported after 9/11. Nagra (2011) focused exclusively on the process of identity construction of young Muslims in the post 9/11 era and discussed the concept of "reactive ethnicity" (p. 428), when people experiencing racism increase their identification with their ethnic group and "religious minority identity". This often results from some sort of systematic inequality, external labeling and *otherness* related to perceived or actual membership in ethnic or racial groups. Such forms of responses to identity labels have been reported as measures that enable youth from ethnic groups to cope with discrimination.

A number of studies report on the pervasive role of racism and discrimination in shaping the social and national identities among the Muslim youth in Canada (Litchmore and Safdar, 2015; Moosa-Mitha, 2009). Nagra and Maurutto (2016) found that Muslim women felt harassed by security personnel during their cross-border visits. Most of them showed deep concern that "for the West, the wearing of the hijab is perceived as a threat and used to legitimize increased surveillance and even hostility and harassment." (p. 176). Another

important aspect noted in the literature is the media portrayal of Islam and Muslims that has influenced Muslim identity in the post 9/11 era (Collet, 2007). Radicalisation, extremism and other forms of structural violence have been linked to Muslims and Islam in the western society in general. Particularly, the association and active membership of young Muslims with traditional Islamic groups and grassroots organisations has been portrayed to be associated with radicalization (Bullock and Nesbitt-Larking, 2013).

Parental influence
Much has been said on how parenting and in particular the thought processes, values and attitudes of parents influence identity formation among young Muslims. Primarily, Muslim parents are suggested to have a dominant impact on the religious understanding and religiosity of young Muslims. The religious orientation of Muslim youth by their parents and encouraged participation in religious activities in order to promote Islamic identity formation has been reported in the literature (Collet, 2007; Eid, 2003; Hebert and Murji, 2006; Kapinga and Van Hoven, 2020; Younis and Hassan, 2019a, b). A leaping contrast among the concepts of socialisation between the Muslim parents and their children, who are being brought up in the western society, is noted. Parental values and in particular parental definitions of a "good Muslim" enacted through participation in religious pursuits and a critique of sex education in schools do not fit into the western perceptions of young Muslims. These contested issues are reported as key sites of conflict within Muslim families (Collet, 2007; Tremblay *et al.*, 2018).

A few studies report an interesting contrast in terms of parental influence and religious identity formation among CMY. Where most of the studies report on parental encouragement of religious engagement among Muslim youth, some authors suggest parental pressure for youth to hold back from practicing their religion in the context of intensified discrimination from mainstream society in the post 9/11 era (Nagra, 2011; Nagra and Maurutto, 2016). Racism, discrimination and Islamophobia experienced by parents have been suggested to have a negative impact on the identity construction and integration of Muslim youth.

One of the studies suggested a significant dimension of parental involvement and influence among Muslim parents that contrasted with mainstream society (Collet, 2007). According to this study, Muslim parents were reported to show resistance to some educational policies and practices beyond sex education, not allowing their children to participate in several school activities, including swimming, dancing and music, for religious reasons. These parental assumptions and attitude towards the western concepts of living has been illustrated to influence identity construction among CMY.

Citizenship
Citizenship and a sense of belonging to the countries of origin, while residing in western countries, have been found to have an imperative influence on the identity development among the young Muslims. CMY participation in faith-based communities has been reported to risk their acceptance and inclusion into mainstream society and their sense of belonging to Canada. According to Moosa-Mitha (2009), "young people are regarded with even greater suspicion due to their supposedly natural inclination to irrationality expressed through emotive attachments to their faith" (p. 136). Muslim youth often struggle with the contrasting and conflicting Muslim identities in their native nations (which are mostly Muslim predominated) and their countries of residence in the western world, including Canada. Experiences of racism and discrimination among CMY also reveal some of the inherent tensions and contradictions within the Canadian multicultural and pluralist citizenship framework (Nagra and Peng, 2013). Underscored in the identified studies was that normative views of participation in faith-based communities compounded by surging Islamophobia in Canada significantly impact the identity formation of CMY, with the potential to diminish

their sense of belongingness and citizenship in Canada (Bullock and Nesbitt-Larking, 2013; Hebert and Murji, 2006; Karimi *et al.*, 2018; Moosa-Mitha, 2009; Nagra and Peng, 2013; Tiflati, 2017). However, the resilience of CMY is highlighted in a study by Bullock and Nesbitt-Larking (2013), suggesting that despite their connection with Canada, CMY are "able to separate a sense of being misunderstood from their own sense of identity and commitment to Canada" (p. 201).

The differentiation of identities within the context of Canadian multiculturalism is proposed to contribute to the perplexity of the process of identity construction among the Muslim youth (Nagra and Peng, 2013; Tiflati, 2017). However, another concerning aspect of identity construction among CMY suggested in the literature pertains to the integration of young Muslims into Canadian society and the western society in general. A negative perception and lack of understanding of Islam and Muslims within larger Canadian society impact this integration, positing the adherence to Islamic beliefs as "un-Canadian", promoting an insecure or fractured identity among CMY and a fragile citizenship in Canada (Bullock and Nesbitt-Larking, 2013; Nagra and Peng, 2013).

Gender

The role and position of women in the Canadian Muslim community is also seen as a contributing factor in shaping the identity of young Muslims (Collet, 2007; Eid, 2003; Karimi *et al.*, 2018; Litchmore and Safdar, 2015; Nagra, 2011; Zine, 2001). According to some studies, young Muslim women with increased religious expression such as wearing a Hijab, were unconventional targets of increased discrimination (Litchmore and Safdar, 2015; Nagra, 2011).

This gendered convention of considering Muslim women as *soft targets* for racism has resulted in distinctive identity construction amongst young Muslim women, including what has been termed a "reactive identity" (p. 431) which is predominantly a demonstration of a stronger religious identity (Nagra, 2011). According to the female CMY participants in a study, wearing a hijab is considered as a political tool to form 'identity of resistance' among CMY (Nagra, 2011).

An interesting concept related to the negotiating identities for Canadian Muslim women has been discussed by Eid (2003). Findings from this study purport that Muslim women are challenged "to balance two compelling social influences: they are still considered by the community as bearers and keepers of the tradition and culture, while at the same time being expected by the host society (Canada) to engage in new and more liberal Western-based cultural models" (p. 53).

Discussion

Muslim youth living in different parts of the world are an integral part of the global community, but the conflicting world events (such as 9/11) and regional tensions in the Muslim majority countries have distinguished them from the rest of the global generation. Moreover, perceptions of Islam and Muslims in the west, alongside the experiences of marginality and racism, have substantiated the complexities of identity formation of the Muslim youth (Ahmad, 2017; Ahmed, 2021). The present review brings forward a robust discussion around the concepts of identity construction of CMY by focussing on the findings from the recent academic literature.

Overall, the trend in the study of Muslim youth around the globe demonstrates growing interest among scholars and researchers in exploring the dimensions and details of this topic. Besides, the subject remains under-researched and further rigorous studies are required to understand its underlying complexity. Beyond security and terrorism studies, a wide range

of research arenas, including familial, social, cultural and economic existence of Muslim youth still remain unexplored. Muslim youth is diverse in its ethno-linguistic origins as well as in terms of issues, concerns, challenges and cultural and socio-economic dynamics.

Our scoping review revealed religiosity as an overarching theme that defines the life journey for majority of Muslim youth. As reflected in the shared experiences of Muslim youth in a number of studies reviewed, the life of Muslim youth in Canada is complex. The concept of CMY identity is dynamic and evolves over time and is highly influenced by their religion. We found that religiosity stands out as an important cross-cutting factor across all themes discussed in this review. CMY identity are broadly informed and influenced by a global understanding of Islam through social, political and economic factors. Both diverse religious interpretation and relationship of youth to their religion is noted to constantly evolve in different socio-political and geographic contexts.

Studies of Muslim youth in the Canadian context with a specific focus on emergent issues like citizenship, gender and parental influence have been highlighted in the literature. The difference of opinion between generations and cultures among the Muslim parents and their children has been widely discussed (Litchmore and Safdar, 2015; Tremblay *et al.*, 2018). Studies persistently demonstrated a continuous struggle of Muslim youth in finding a good balance between their family, religion and cultural values and norms of the larger Canadian society. These tensions have often been hypothesised in literature to influence the identity and overall personality development of young Muslims.

Women and gender inequities emerged as another significant theme in this review. The imbalance of patriarchal orders, religious conservatism, structures and hierarchies of inequalities have been reported to negatively impact the position of Muslim women in the society (Eid, 2003; Litchmore and Safdar, 2015). We found a gap in the literature to effectively address these gender equity issues through a culturally sensitive lens. We believe that culturally congruent research studies and community projects which are aimed to better understand the challenges of the CMY are highly needed. Social work practitioners and youth workers should consider this background discussion while dealing with issues, challenges and opportunities for Muslim women in the Canadian context. In recent work, Jamal (2018) has emphasized the conceptual transformation from notions of gender equality to gender justice. Whereas the prevailing global gender discourses are attuned to notions of equality with respect to women, gender justice is more culturally and socially rooted in the Muslim community settings (Jamal, 2018). Besides providing an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of identity formation of Muslim youth, this will also contribute in designing positive youth development strategies. Our review also brings forward the significant gap and lack of evidence-based research to explore the identity construction in the context of global conflicts and integration of Muslim youth in the Canadian society.

Although we conducted a thorough search for the relevant articles on CMY, we still believe that the exclusion of studies published in a language other than English may have missed some critical contexts of this topic. Given the large preponderance of Muslims in Quebec, the exclusion of French studies may have resulted in some missed information on this subject. In addition, the exclusion of grey literature would have missed some data from the government publications and resource materials from the Muslim community think tanks.

Conclusion
Youth has been identified as a period of struggling identities; where one is trying to balance the dependent aspects of childhood personality while transitioning to adulthood Significant challenges during this phase of life include an overt pressure to develop a sense of belonging and positioning within the society, while also focussing on preparation for the future. Muslim

youth are living in a complex and uncertain existence in Canada. The discomfort with Islam and Muslims is well-established in the western psyche through media and sociopolitical discourse. This process is further complicated in the case of the CMY, who struggle to establish their identities with the recent upsurge in islamophobia.

The findings of this scoping review highlight the significance of contextual factors when developing and implementing programmes and services for Muslim youth. The culturally sensitive, community-oriented transformative frameworks of social work research, teaching and practice could help in bridging the gaps between the ideologies of the community members and social work practitioners. Our review also suggests that using reductive and essentialist approaches will further reinforce exclusionary social and political practices and will also lead to misguided youth development policies. We found that despite various forms and intensities of religiosity, religion is considered an anchor that provides Muslim youth a sense of belonging and often an identity source to effectively respond to the negative discourses against Islam and Muslims in society.

In contemporary Canadian culture, Muslim youth must negotiate and create their own exclusive identity which justifies the context of what it means to be Canadian and Muslim at the same time. As highlighted in the literature, a number of tensions within the Canadian policy, between the policy and the Muslim tradition and within the Muslim community itself pose challenges in the identity development among Muslim youth. Therefore, It is critical for social work practitioners, researchers and policy makers to consider above mentioned sociopolitical and religious dimensions while designing, implementing and evaluating youth programs for Muslim communities.

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Further reading

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Appendix

EBSCOhost

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#	Query	Limiters/Expanders	Last Run Via	Results
S1	DE "Muslims" OR muslim*	Search modes - Find all my search terms	Interface - EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen - Advanced Search Database - SocINDEX with Full Text	19,195
S2	identit* OR belonging OR citizenship OR sexual* OR "sex* education" or LGBT* or queer or gay or lesbian or bisexual or transgender* or gender*	Search modes - Find all my search terms	Interface - EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen - Advanced Search Database - SocINDEX with Full Text	354,258
S3	((youth or young adult* or millennial* or "generation Y" or "Gen Y" or "generation Z" or "Gen Z or "second-generation" or student*) OR (young N3 Muslim*))	Search modes - Find all my search terms	Interface - EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen - Advanced Search Database - SocINDEX with Full Text	324,172
S4	TI (Canad* or "British Columbia" or Alberta or Saskatchewan or Manitoba or Ontario or Quebec or Newfoundland or "New Brunswick" or "Nova Scotia" or "Prince Edward Island" or Yukon or "Northwest Territories" or Nunavut or Toronto or Montreal or Vancouver or Calgary or Edmonton) OR AB (Canad* or "British Columbia" or Alberta or Saskatchewan or Manitoba or Ontario or Quebec or Newfoundland	Search modes - Find all my search terms	Interface - EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen - Advanced Search Database - SocINDEX with Full Text	55,941

| S5 | S1 AND S2 AND S3 AND S4 | Limiters - Date of Publication: 20000101-20211231
Search modes - Find all my search terms | Interface - EBSCOhost Research Databases
Search Screen - Advanced Search
Database - SocINDEX with Full Text | 44 |

or "New Brunswick" or "Nova Scotia" or "Prince Edward Island" or Yukon or "Northwest Territories" or Nunavut or Toronto or Montreal or Vancouver or Calgary or Edmonton)

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