The Landscape of Hate Crime Scholarship in Canada

Dr. Barbara Perry

Sara Blair

Maria Cashore

Ontario Tech University

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CENTRE ON
HATE
BIAS AND
EXTREMISM

ontariotechu.ca/chbe

Canada has long prided itself as a multicultural nation yet rising rates of hate crime stand in stark contrast to this national vision (Chen & Wu, 2021). With a near tripling in police-reported hate crime from 2014 to 2023, data suggest that Canada's cultural and racial diversity is not embraced by all (Statistics Canada, 2024). Consequently, this review traces the historical and present-day mechanisms that have, and continue to, embed racism and bias into Canada's social fabric. It will critically analyze how these systemic forces, ingrained in policies and practices, have perpetuated intolerance towards marginalized communities and created environments that normalize inequality and sanction hate. This review will draw upon a limited body of relevant Canadian-based research literature to illustrate the increasingly volatile state of hate crime in Canada, which saw a record high of 4,777 police-reported occurrences in 2023 (Statistics Canada, 2024). Ultimately, this review underscores the pressing need to attend to hate crime in Canada via a commitment to robust scholarship and the development of evidence-based resources, supports, and services to combat and prevent hate and support the complex needs of victim-survivors.

Scope/Definitions

I was asked to focus on literature related to hate, with a particular emphasis on "racialized disparities focusing on Indigenous, Black, People of Colour (IBPOC) and disaggregated so as to be clear about the particular challenges between and within these communities, e.g., disaggregating racialized groups as Black, South Asian, Asian, West Asian, Arab, etc." Given the frequent elision between race/ethnicity and religion, we also explored antisemitic and anti-Muslim hate. What we provide in this report is a sketch of the themes that emerged from the scant hate crime literature in Canada. While each community experiences hate crime differently, there are nonetheless some common contexts, dynamics and impacts that emerge from the scholarship.

As expected, this literature review presented something of a challenge given the dearth of Canadian scholarship on hate crime. As we began to craft narratives on the experiences of diverse racialized communities, we seemed to be opening each section with reference to the fact that there was relatively little literature in the space. In 2022, Perry (2022) published the third edition of a text entitled *Diversity, Crime and Justice in Canada*, wherein she again asked authors to comment on both criminalization and victimization. However, nearly every author focusing on racialized communities admitted that the literature on hate crime, specifically, was absent. It is disturbing, for example, that two of the communities that are consistently subject to the most frequent targeting – Black and Jewish communities - have been especially neglected. But so too are the experiences of South Asians and Arabs largely unexplored. However, to some extent, the latter two communities find some mention in the much more common scholarship on anti-Muslim hate crime. With respect to Indigenous hate crime victimization, there are no extant studies of the problem in Canada, although the literature on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls often touches on the intersection of misogyny and anti-Indigenous sentiment and action.

Defining/Reporting/Recording

We have largely restricted our attention to hate crime specifically. Moreover, it is also important to situate the analysis with respect to how "hate" itself is understood and defined. There is a popular tendency to assume that when we are referring to hate – hate crime and hate speech, specifically – that we are dealing with emotions. While hate is a strong sentiment, it is a

relatively "safe" one that does not imply rigidly structured patterns of oppression. It does not require us to admit that bias-motivated violence is constituted of and by difference; that it is about race and racism; sex and sexism and heterosexism, for example (Perry, 2005, p. 124). The reduction of the hatred that affects so many communities to personal emotions "obscures the following realities: that the perpetrator's bias is socially reinforced and not simply personal; that the perpetrator's acts are not uncommon and often are rational" (Wang, 1999: 818). Such accounts pathologize the individual rather than recognizing the extent to which their actions or their narratives are informed by broader social norms. Racial hostility, for example, "makes sense" in a culture that privileges Whiteness. The hatred to which we refer is assumed to be irrational, "ab-normal and un-usual" (Goldberg, 1990: 19). This "encourages a view of racism and violence as the result of the presence of pathological individuals, rather than as embedded in institutional practices and offending communities" (Ray and Smith, 2001: 221). Pathology implies deviance, irrationality, sickness. There is something "comforting" about this, as it allows us to distance ourselves from the violence and its motivations. From this perspective, it is not a reflection of "us" but a reflection of a sick mind.

The forms of hate we are exploring here derive from the adoption of culturally normative patterns of advantage and disadvantage, superiority and inferiority. Hate both reflects and reinforces social hierarchies and broader systems of oppression. Hate crime and hate speech are not simply grounded in a mental state; nor are they the outcome of extreme hostility or pathology. Rather, hatred is more often foreseeable, and rational, at least from within the worldview of the perpetrator. Racial harassment of a Black family moving into a predominantly White neighborhood derives not only from racial animosity, but also from public perceptions about the expected impact of "those people" on property values, for instance. Violence emerging in these contexts, then, is not "about" hate, but is "about" the assertion of one's own identity and belongingness over and above others—in short, about power. It reflects much more than the perpetrator's state of mind. In fact, it reflects the taken for granted, popular notions of identity and hierarchy (Perry, 2005, p. 125). Hate incidents are "nested in a web of everyday practices that seek to marginalize and disempower [affected] communities - especially increasingly vocal and active communities" (Perry & Robyn, 2005, p. 593). They are embedded in the structural and cultural context within which groups interact.

Hate crime is much more than the act of mean-spirited bigots. It is embedded in the structural and cultural context within which groups interact. It must be understood as a socially situated, dynamic process, involving context and actors, structure and agency. Consequently, I offer the following definition of hate crime. It involves acts of violence and intimidation, usually directed toward already stigmatized and marginalized groups. As such, it is a mechanism of power, intended to reaffirm the precarious hierarchies that characterize a given social order. It simultaneously recreates the supposed dominance of the perpetrator's group, and the subordination of the victim's group. Bias motivated violence is directed not only at the individual victim, but also toward his or her community. It is a mechanism to intimidate a group of people who are identified as the 'other,' and often as a threat.

In contrast, legal definitions of what constitutes hate crime speak not so much to the intent of such victimization, but the act itself. The Canadian Criminal Code recognizes the promotion of genocide (S.318); public incitement of hatred (319.1); wilful promotion of hatred (S.319.2) when directed against specified "identifiable groups;" and bias motivated mischief targeting a place of worship (S.430.4.1). Unusually, the Section 318 and 319 provisions are

subject to provincial Attorney General consent before charges can be laid. The bar for obtaining such consent has proven to be set very high, with the result that few cases reach the courts (see below). Distinct from these provisions is S.718.2, a sentencing enhancement statute, which allows for higher sentences where there is "evidence that the offence was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression, or on any other similar factor." There is no discrete hate crime provision which identifies bias motivated offences as in and of themselves criminal offences. I include the legal definitions because it is these constructs that shape the policing of hate crime and thus the "official" recording of it.

Given the legislative limitations surrounding hate crime in Canada, it is perhaps not surprising that there are also significant challenges to measuring the extent and distribution of hate crime in Canada. Wang and Moreau (2022) shone some light on this matter, highlighting the discrepancy between self-reported hate crime victimization revealed in the General Crime Survey and police-reported data for 2019. The GSS recorded approximately 223,000 crimes identified by respondents as hate motivated, 22% (48,000) of which were reported to police. However, in the same year, the total number of police-reported hate crimes – the "official" number – was 1,946. Without uniform and accurate data on hate crime, "we are left with a limited understanding of the distribution and dynamics of hate crime in Canada. Consequently, it is virtually impossible to develop a unified approach to the problem" (Perry and Samuels-Wortley, 2021: 70).

The GSS data clearly indicate that there is considerable under-reporting by those targeted with hate crimes. There are an array of reasons for this, among them fear of retaliation by the perpetrator, language barriers, fear of being "outed" as, for example, gay or undocumented (Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime (OFOVC), 2024; Mosaic Institute, 2022; Erentzen and Schuller, 2020). However, one of the most problematic reasons is distrust or fear of authorities (Erentzen and Schuller, 2020). This comes as no surprise given the long-standing animosity that has characterized the relationship between law enforcement and racialized and Indigenous communities (Samuels-Wortley, 2024; Cao and Wu, 2017). In light of the deeply ingrained history of conflictual relationships between law enforcement and affected communities, there is reason to be cynical about the ability and willingness of officers to police hate crime (Maynard, 2020). The machinery of law enforcement is responsible for the enforcement of the formal and informal social order, which is shaped by what are often discriminatory laws. It is no accident that the earliest formalized police bodies in North America were constituted as slave patrols, with the legitimate authority to seek and apprehend escaped slaves as a means of maintaining their servitude (Sandler, 2017; Robinson, 2017). In Canada, law enforcement played a similar role in "managing" Indigenous communities (Maynard, 2020; Ayala & Carrington, 2016). Thus, it fell to these earliest patrols in the US and Canada to closely and forcefully guard the subordinate place of racialized communities. Even now, racialized, as well as religious, gender and sexual minorities continue to be disproportionately and disparately subject to the attention of the police.

Ironically, while racialized communities may be disproportionately surveilled by police, this does not necessarily result in heightened protection. Many people of colour perceive their communities to be underserved and unprotected (McNeilly, 2018; Weitzer, 2017: Perry, 2010, 2006). The surveillance to which they are subject is for the purposes of responding to these communities as offenders, rather than as victims (Bakali and Perry, 2025). Their communities

are deemed worthy of regulation, but in the interests of state and hegemonically defined rules of order, not in the interests of the residents per se. This is a factor that has been sadly neglected in the literature on policing race generally. Yet it is typical enough to leave marginalized communities vulnerable to an array of violations and indignities. Cumulatively, these patterns result in trends whereby racialized and Indigenous victims of hate crime are less likely than their White counterparts to report victimization to police (Erentzen and Schuller, 2020; Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, 2024).

Moreover, even where hate crime is reported to police, there is some doubt as to whether it will ultimately become recorded by police. In Canada, police are not required to record hate crime statistics; nor are most trained well enough to recognise it when they see it (Perry and Wortley, 2021; Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, 2024). Bryan (2022) observes that while officers are typically able to identify hate crimes when they are "extreme, deliberate and intentional," they are much less likely to recognize less extreme occurrences, or the ways in which "racism and anti-Blackness are woven into the everyday experiences and encounters of Black and racialized communities."

In Canada, the under-reporting of hate crimes can be attributed to the skepticism Muslim, Black and Indigenous persons, in particular, have for policing bodies. In the criminal justice system, there is a history of exploitation and discrimination of these vulnerable peoples, making it hard to trust those in authority (Erentzen and Schuller, 2020). "Minority groups are consequently torn between their fear of the police because of historic abuse and their desire for police protection from criminal elements that are disproportionately present in their communities" (Ben-Porat, 2008: 8; Howell, Perry and Vile, 2004). This rhetoric is demonstrated by Bryan (2022), who details that those subject to anti-Black hate, when reported to the police, are seldom perceived as real victims (Bryan, 2022). More specifically, members of this population are not afforded police protection objectively, but rather are subject to an evaluation of their personal behaviour and any past police encounters to inform the situation at large, thus dictating their status as a victim (Bryan, 2022). Bryan (2022) attributes this to a history of racism embedded within the institution of policing, noting that in cases without stereotypical, "legitimate" victim(s), the police response varies. In other words, police protection is not compulsory, but rather subjectively informed by systemic racism, which leaves affected communities to "see themselves as outside the boundaries of citizenship and its attendant rights", inclusive of the protections afforded by law enforcement (Perry, 2015: 1648). The ongoing crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls is indicative of this ongoing neglect for the lives of First Nation peoples that is central to the settler colonial project. There is a clear overrepresentation of missing Indigenous women and girls who, while only representing two percent of the total population, account for 16 percent of missing women and girls. In fact, to describe the women and girls as missing is inaccurate.

The reality is that these women and girls are kidnapped, taken, or otherwise held against their will—a situation far more sinister than the word ''missing'' might imply. The more appropriate term would be ''disappeared'' because it represents the conscious act of others involved (usually men) in taking them from their friends, families, support networks, communities, and Nations (Palmater, 201: 255).

The perceived lack of concern for the safety of Indigenous women and girls on the part of law enforcement and criminal justice officials is indicative of the value of their lives as a result of racism and misogyny. The systematic and legitimate quality of this violence is evident in the

complicity of law enforcement, which has minimized the scope of the problem and attempted to lay blame on victims and their communities (Palmater, 2016). This form of violence faced by Indigenous women and girls reflects that lack of concern driven by the elimination logic of settler colonialism. Where the targeting of communities is not acknowledged, it is also then not rendered visible in available data.

To date, there is no scholarship that exclusively examines the reporting patterns of Black or Indigenous hate crime victim-survivors in Canada. However, given that victim-survivors are overwhelmingly members of marginalized communities, research more generally has indicated that these populations tend to experience greater levels of systemic injustice, discrimination, and legal cynicism, which is believed to affect levels of hate crime reporting (Erentzen and Schuller, 2020). In reference to Black Canadians, two decades of research have illustrated that this population has been, and continues to be, subject to stop and search practices by the police at a higher rate than any other racialized group (Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA), 2021). This finding holds true even when elements that could lead to increased levels of police contact, such as living in a high-crime community, criminal history, social class, gender, and age are removed (CCLA, 2021). Research has also revealed that members of the Black community are not only killed but also face serious injury during police encounters at a higher rate than any other racialized population (CCLA, 2021).

Parallel challenges face Indigenous communities in Canada, who have also long experienced both under- and over-policing. The "colonial project" continues to be supported by police killings of Indigenous peoples, police violence against women and girls, and excessive force exercised against Indigenous protestors. Concurrently, on the other side of the equation, police inaction – or under-policing – facilitates broader forms of violence against Indigenous people (Perry, 2023). Police have been and continue to be not just complicit but actively engaged in historical and contemporary strategies of colonialism, from clearing the way for western expansionism, to enforcing "pass" and reserve systems, to seizing Indigenous children and relocating them to residential schools that could "kill the Indian in the child." This is not simply an historical artifact, but a practice that continues today, and that is often enacted through police violence as a means of containment. Sherene Razack (2020: 17) concurs, asserting that

> Settler colonialism is an ongoing project that preserves intact its colonial, spatial and legal structures. Dispossession continues apace with extraction as the engine that drives the racial project of accumulation. We can expect, then, that both the ghost of slavery and the ghost of settler colonialism animate institutions such as prisons and policing.

Consequently, police and the power they exert are experienced as colonial apparati.

Police violence continues to be an integral strategy in the reaffirmation of the line between "us" and "them." Like profiling—but more forcefully—police use of violence is a means of keeping racial minorities "in their place." It is thus a territorial defence of cultural "space." It is a means to reassert the marginality of the other who dares to transgress. Like hate crime perpetrated by civilians, the racialized violence exercised by police is an exercise of power intended to enforce a particular and exclusionary social order. The infamous Starlight Tours are among the most evident examples of police violence. This refers to the practice in which Indigenous people are loaded into police cruisers, driven to remote areas and left to find their way back to the city – often without their coats, sometimes without shoes, and generally in sub-zero temperatures. Perhaps the most highly publicized case was that of Neil Stonechild in 1990.

Five days after he was last seen wearing a heavy school jacket, the 17-year-old Saulteaux First Nations youth was found frozen to death in a field outside of Saskatoon SK. He was found in the snow, with only one shoe, no jacket and with abrasions on his face and arms. A decade later, another half dozen similar cases in the same province garnered attention, with hundreds of other incidents reported to First Nations organizations (Brass, 2004). The resultant uproar finally provoked an inquiry into Starlight tours, with little discernible effect on the practice, as evidenced by Elizabeth Comack's interviews with Indigenous youth in Winnipeg MB which indicated that it is an ongoing and widespread practice, presumably intended as an exercise of might and control by police. As Comack (2012: 17) puts it, it is "one of the strategies that police utilize to reproduce order in their dealings with troubled and troublesome people" who are, incidentally, Indigenous. Beyond this, however, Indigenous people are at an elevated risk of death at the hands of law enforcement. Indigenous people there are more than 10 times more likely to be killed by a police officer than a White person. Between 2017 and 2020, 25 Indigenous people were shot and killed by the federal RCMP alone (Morin, 2021).

Police violence itself signals the devaluing of Indigenous communities, as indicated by Razack's (2020:4) lament: "Ghosted while still alive, Indigenous lives not only count for less, but are not even counted." Deliberately withholding protection from victimization of racialized communities is among the most "destructive" manifestations of racial oppression and injustice. Moreover, under-policing itself enables public forms of violence targeting Indigenous people. Age-old racialized stereotypes of Indian identity are often used to blame the victim so as to deny the significance—or even the reality—of their victimization. Gerry McNeilly (2018: 9) observed in his study of racism among Thunder Bay Police in Ontario that even in the case of homicides officers appeared to turn to "generalized notions about how Indigenous people likely came to their deaths and acted, or refrained from acting, based on those biases." In short, Indigenous people are thought to be "less worthy victims," resulting in a corresponding lack of urgency in responding to their targeting.

Both forms of police (mis)treatment of racialized minority groups leave them vulnerable and devoid of the protections afforded White citizens. On the one hand, over-enforcement implies that the role of law enforcement vis a vis racialized communities is to contain them. On the other hand, under-policing deprives them of civil and legal protections, implying that police have abdicated responsibility for keeping them safe. People of colour may very well perceive themselves to be in need of protection from the police, rather than being able to rely on police to protect them. The consequence of these dual patterns is a community trust deficit. Indeed, data indicates that negative police encounters and/or viral cases of police misconduct increase levels of legal cynicism in Black communities (Erentzen and Schuller, 2020). This no doubt impacts the reporting patterns of Black hate crime victim-survivors. Given the complex and strained relationships that racialized communities have with the police, scholars believe that these factors may lead to a high rate of underreporting of anti-Black hate crime (Erentzen and Schuller, 2020).

These limitations aside, we can at least use the Statistics Canada data to discern broad trends. It is disturbing to note that we have seen more than a trebling of police reported hate crime from 1,409 in 2016 to 4,777 in 2023. Year over year, racially motivated hate crime (driven largely by anti-Black victimization) is most frequent, followed by religiously motivated incidences (antisemitic hate crime being most common). The distribution of racially and religiously motivated hate crimes are represented in Figures 1 and 2 respectively.

Figure 1. Racially motivated hate crime, 2016-2023
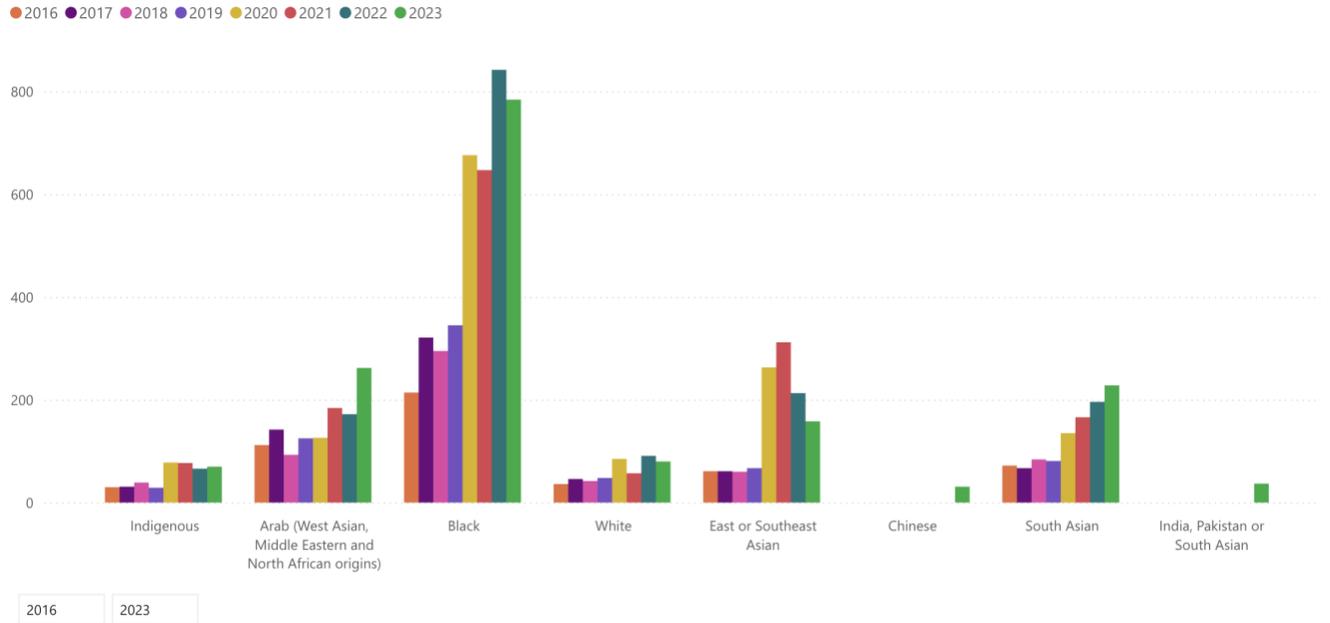
Statistics Canada (2025)

Figure 2 Religiously motivated hate crime, 2016-2023
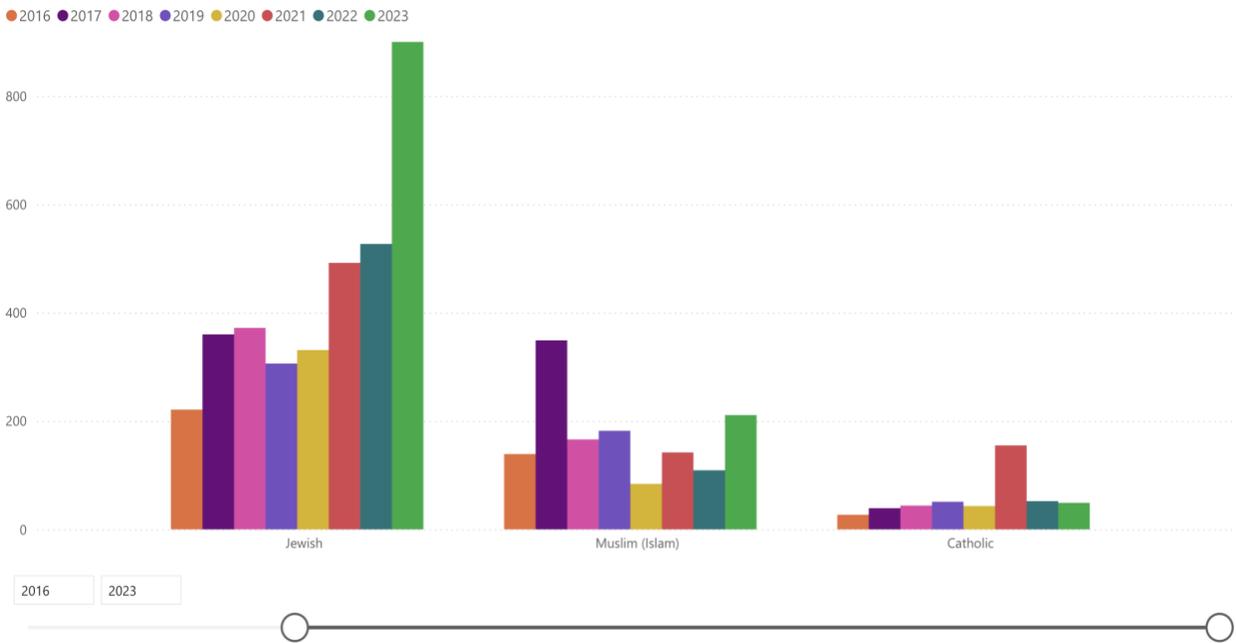
Statistics Canada (2025)

From 2020 onward, Statistics Canada data reveal consistent increases in police-reported hate crimes targeting race and ethnicity. Hate crimes targeting the Black community have risen 229% since 2014 (Statistics Canada, 2024). Although official data are yet to be released for 2024, in 2023 16.4% of all police-reported hate crimes targeted the Black community - who represent just 4.3% of Canada's population (Statistics Canada, 2024). This is not a new phenomenon as data illustrate that the Black community has experienced high levels of hate crime victimization relative to other populations since 2014. When examining year-to-year rates, a total of 238 police-reported hate crimes targeted the Black population in 2014 (Statistics Canada, 2024). This was followed by a slight decrease in 2015, with 224 reported occurrences, and again in 2016, with 214 reported occurrences (Statistics Canada, 2024). In 2017, rates began to rise with a total of 321 reported occurrences, which then fell to 295 in 2018. However, this figure rose again in 2019 with 295 reported occurrences and then proceeded to more than double in 2020, with 676 reported occurrences, which then fell in 2021 to 647 (Statistics Canada, 2024). In 2022, a second stark increase emerged, with 842 reported occurrences – the highest number recorded to date, followed by a slight decrease in 2023, to 784 reported occurrences (Statistics Canada, 2024).

Looking at data from Statistics Canada, between 2016 until 2020, hate crimes against the Indigenous population consistently represented around 2% of all hate-motivated crimes reported to the police (Armstrong, 2019; Gaudet, 2018; Moreau, 2020, 2021; Wang & Moreau, 2022). However, it is noteworthy that hate-motivated crimes against Indigenous individuals are more likely to be violent in nature, in comparison to their non-Indigenous counterparts (Moreau, 2020). Additionally, Indigenous females were more likely to be victims of hate-motivated crimes; this trend would continue to be reported until 2020 (Moreau, 2020, 2021; Wang & Moreau, 2022). In 2020, hate crimes against Indigenous individuals increased dramatically in Ontario in comparison to other provinces and territories (Wang & Moreau, 2022). Moreover, there was a noticeable increase in police-reported hate crimes against Indigenous individuals, rising to 3% whilst the Indigenous population amounted to 5% of the total Canadian population (Wang & Moreau, 2022). Such an increase could be attributed to backlash violence targeting the numerous social movements and protests during 2020, including those advocating for the protection of Indigenous lands, rights, and self-government.

Research indicates that anti-Asian sentiment surged in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic (Guo and Guo, 2021; Wang, Lei, Cao, Ye, Cheng, Cheng, Bolourchian, Bian, Han, & Sheng, 2022). While statistics illustrate steady rates of hate crime victimization targeting East and Southeast Asian populations from 2014 to 2019 (58.3 police-reported occurrences, on average per year), 2020 rates saw a significant spike with 263 reported occurrences, followed by a second increase in 2021 of 312 reported occurrences (Statistics Canada, 2024). A similar pattern arose among the South Asian population, who experienced a steady growth in rates of police-reported hate crime from 2014 to 2019 (from a low of 49 reported occurrences in 2014 to a high of 81 in 2019) (Statistics Canada, 2024). This was followed by annual increases 2020 (135) to 2023 (228) (Statistics Canada, 2024). However, for East and Southeast Asian populations, rates began to decrease after 2021 with 213 reported occurrences in 2022, and 158 reported occurrences in 2023 (Statistics Canada, 2024).

In 2019, a national increase in police-reported hate crimes targeting Arabs and West Asians was also reported, totalling 7% of all police-reported hate crimes and 15% of all police-reported hate crimes targeting race and ethnicity (Moreau, 2020). Some provinces have reported

especially high rates of police-reported hate crimes against these populations. For example, in 2016 and 2019, British Columbia saw an increase in police-reported hate crimes against South Asians, and Quebec reported an increase in police-reported hate crimes against Arabs and West Asians (Gaudet, 2018; Moreau, 2020).

Police-reported hate crimes targeting religion have demonstrated considerable variation since 2016, peaking at 884 reported incidents in 2021, with the Muslim population accounting for 71 of those incidences (Armstrong, 2019; Gaudet, 2018; Moreau, 2020, 2021; Wang & Moreau, 2022; Statistics Canada, 2023, 2024). Cities and provinces, such as Toronto, Montreal, and Quebec, have accounted for steep increases in police-reported hate crimes targeting religion, particularly against Muslims (Armstrong, 2019; Gaudet, 2018; Moreau, 2021). Similar to the Indigenous population, Muslim women are likely to be victims of such crimes (Armstrong, 2019; Gaudet, 2018; Moreau, 2020, 2021; Wang & Moreau, 2022). Between 2016 and 2020, police-reported crimes targeting the Muslim population were more likely to be non-violent (especially uttering threats) than violent (Armstrong, 2019; Gaudet, 2018; Moreau, 2020, 2021; Wang & Moreau, 2022). Police-reported hate crimes targeting Muslims have also occurred in the online landscape, with 16% of all incidents targeting Muslims in 2020 being online (Wang & Moreau, 2022).

Statistics Canada also presents a vacillating trend in Jewish hate crime victimization (Armstrong, 2019; Gaudet, 2018; Moreau, 2020, 2021; Wang & Moreau, 2022; Statistics Canada, 2023, 2024, 2025). The Jewish population has been the most frequently targeted population for religiously motivated hate crime since 2016 (Armstrong, 2019; Gaudet, 2018; Moreau, 2020, 2021; Statistics Canada, 2024, 2025). Generally, police-reported hate crimes targeting the Jewish population are more likely to be non-violent than violent, and often involve various forms of mischief (including vandalism and graffiti (Armstrong, 2019; Moreau, 2020, 2021; Wang & Moreau, 2022). Not surprisingly, then, perpetrators of antisemitic crime(s) are not known to their victims, and often can't be identified at all (Armstrong, 2019; Moreau, 2020, 2021; Wang & Moreau, 2022). The latest reports from Statistics Canada suggest the continued conflict taking place in the Middle East may have contributed to the dramatic uptick of 67% in 2022 (1,284 hate crimes reported) - a number which also represents a 45% increase from the previous peak in 2021 (886 hate crimes reported; Statistics Canada, 2025).

Intersectionality

Statistics Canada data have, until 2021, described hate crime victimization through the lens of only one motivating identity. While reporting now allows for (just) 2 motivating factors, it is too early to see this captured and analyzed in the annual reports. This is a major limitation of the data, and inhibits a nuanced understanding of the lived experiences of targeted individuals and communities. Critics have raised concern about this process, particularly because it can be seen to rank a victim-survivors' identities on a scale – selecting only the most "important" to be officially recorded. As such, this not only fails to capture the true nature of one's victimization but can oversimplify the complex and nuanced victim-survivor experience, thereby eroding trust in the criminal justice system (Erentzen and Schuller, 2020). Individuals are complex and multi-layered; they are not one-dimensional; they occupy multiple identity positions. Social demographics and/or markers constitute an individual's social makeup. However, the intersecting identities may complicate or privilege an individual and how they experience and navigate through society; it may also place them at different levels of risk for harassment, discrimination, violence, and hate due to their social makeup. For example, brown queer women

are likely to experience some form of discrimination based on their race and ethnicity in comparison to White queer women (Patel, 2019). Erentzen and Schuller's (2020) analysis of 2014 General Social Survey data actually found that a large proportion of those reporting that they had been victims of hate crime indicated that there were multiple motivations feeding into the offence. In that year, 48.64% of respondents in one study responded that they perceived their hate crime victimization to target two identities. Seventy-two percent indicated that the motives were race and religion, and (3%) reported that the motives were race, religion, and sexual orientation.

Canadian hate crime literature tends to focus on the intersections of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status (Ahmad, 2019; Patel, 2019; Perry & Ginsley, 2021; Sadika et al., 2020). Gender, in particular, appears to consistently emerge as a troubling factor with respect to racially motivated hate crimes. While Wang and Moreau (2022: 22) observe that hate crime victims are typically male, incidents targeting the Muslim and Indigenous populations were more likely to involve women victims. Forty-seven percent of all Muslim victims of hate crime were female, and 44% of Indigenous victims were female. They note that visibility by virtue of being covered partially accounts for Muslim women's vulnerability. They also emphasize the extent to which Indigenous women generally are over-represented as victims of violent crimes (see also Boyce 2016; Miladinovic and Mulligan 2015; Perreault 2015).

Ahmad (2019: 58) observes that Muslim women who are victims of Islamophobic gender-based violence perceive themselves to be targets of hate crime due to faulty assumptions from non-Muslims that Muslim women are passive, weak, and already oppressed, thus, making them easy targets of harassment, discrimination, violence, and hate (see also, Chakroun, 2024). Perry (2013) further argues that they may be constructed as racialized, exotic Others who do not fit the Western ideal of womanhood, but also feared and reviled on the same basis as all Muslims. The Islamophobic violence they experience is different in its dynamics and impacts than that perpetrated against Muslim men; yet their gendered violence is experienced in ways that are distinct from that experienced by differently raced women. They are vilified and violated as both *Muslim* women, and Muslim *women* (Perry, 2013). Chakroun (2024) illustrates the very common enactment of gendered Islamophobia by veil pulling, which she argues is a form of colonial violence grounded in Islamophobic discourses surrounding the supposed subjugation of veiled women.

Socioeconomic status can also influence the types of discrimination communities are subject to (Wang et al., 2022). For example, scholarship indicates that Asian individuals of low socioeconomic status were most likely to face harassment, verbal, and/or physical attacks while in contrast, those of higher socio-economic status were often subject to more indirect forms of discrimination – typically embedded in policies or practices (Leigh et al., 2022). In a study of Muslim experiences of hate crime, Mercier-Dalphond and Helly (2021) found that young men on the lower economic rungs were frequent victims of verbal harassment and violent threats, typically in their places of work - low paying jobs in retail spaces like gas stations or convenience stores. Moreover, participants noted that it was often the combination of their race, religion and immigration status that rendered them uniquely vulnerable due to fears of the impact of engaging the legal system on their status in Canada. Urbanik et al. (2024) draw attention to the unique risk of hate crime directed toward Indigenous unhoused people in urban settings. They conclude that it is impossible to disentangle racist from classist violence, wherein these

individuals are vulnerable due to their "spatial confinement and hypervisibility as Indigenous *and* PEH" (people experiencing homelessness) (Urbanik et al., 2024: 11; emphasis in original).

On a final note, the available hate crime literature addressing the intersectionality of hate crime victimization also attends to the microaggressions these individuals experience. Such microaggressions consist of insults, invalidations of sexuality, perpetuation of harmful racial and ethnic stereotypes, and sexual fetishization of race and ethnicity (Patel, 2019; Sadika et al., 2020). For example, Patel (2019) notes that some queer South Asian women experience invalidation of their intersecting identities (race and sexual orientation) as others question them if they are simply "experimenting" with lesbianism and if they are genuinely queer, suggesting that queer South Asian women cannot possibly be homosexual due to their race and ethnicity. Moreover, such questioning and the aforementioned microaggressions may lead some LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals to navigate and balance preserving their participation and place in their respective racial and ethnic backgrounds and cultures while attempting to make space for themselves in White hegemonic queer spaces (Patel, 2019), a troublesome balancing act of sorts. Additionally, Sadika et al. (2020) observes that the sexual fetishization of people of colour is dehumanizing and presents as a means of subordination.

Nested Oppressions

Thus far, we have alluded to the fact that hate crime is one among many forms of oppression that serve to limit the engagement and capacity of targeted individuals and communities. To put this in context, we rely on Iris Marion Young's (1990) operationalization of oppression which provides a very useful framework for contextualizing ethnoviolence. She articulates five inter-related "faces of oppression" by which we might characterize the experiences of minority groups: exploitation; marginalization; powerlessness; cultural imperialism; and violence. The first three of these mechanisms reflect the structural and institutional relationships which restrict opportunities for minority groups to express their capacities and to participate in the social world around them. It is the processes and imagery associated with cultural imperialism which supports these practices ideologically. Together, structural exclusions and cultural imaging leave minority members vulnerable to systemic and systematic violence.

The twinned spectres of White supremacy and settler colonialism are particularly strong preconditions for hate crime - they are at the heart of Canadian brands of cultural imperialism. The active construction of Whiteness exploits stereotypes to justify hatred, hostility and even violence. Racialized communities are painted with a broad brush that establishes stereotypical accounts as inherent traits that characterize particular communities as homogeneously objectionable. These images, typically negative in tone, demand that the racialized Other be feared, vilified, indeed hated on the basis of their differences. Acting on those representations "allows dominant group members to recreate Whiteness as superiority, while punishing the Other for their presumed traits and behaviours" (Perry & Poynting, 2006, p. 4). In their report on the history of racism in BC, Claxton et al. (2021: 5) provide a far-reaching account of what they aptly refer to as the "Pacific politics of White supremacy." Their catalogue includes:

- a particularly acute form of Indigenous dispossession amounting to genocide;
- everyday racism and policies that demolished and dispersed Black communities;
- voting laws disenfranchising Indigenous peoples and Asians in a manner that echoed the era of US slavery;

- anti-Asian immigration laws that allowed a White minority to become the majority;
- the attempted ethnic cleansing of Japanese Canadians from the province.

Closely related to White supremacy, White settler colonialism is rooted in negative images and stereotypes of Indigenous peoples. As Perry (2002: 233) writes, "Since first contact, Europeans and then Euro-Canadians after them have engaged in this negative imaging of Indigenous peoples, representing them as inferior. It is the long-lasting images of Indigenous people as "savages," as "backward," as "uncivilized," or as "unintelligent" that have facilitated the injustice and oppression they experience." For example, one 1860 newspaper account – from the *British Colonist* – decried the "threats" posed by Indigenous people to the purity of the community: "filling of our prisons and hospitals, the reduced price of property and the utter demoralisation that ever exists in their neighbourhood, are of themselves sufficient to cause their speedy removal" (as cited in Edmonds, 2010: 11). Contemporary parallels abound (Asey, 2021), including the myth of "Black-man-as-criminal" (Maynard, 2020) or "Muslim-man-as-terrorist" (Zine, 2022). Current efforts to deport non-citizens accused - not yet even convicted - of an offence feed into this perception of the threats posed by non-White immigrants, in particular (Toronto Star, 2025). Clearly, there is a long-lived tendency in Canada to imagine the Other as somehow threatening, either in cultural, economic and/or physical terms, or because they threaten the carefully crafted boundaries that separate "us" from "them." It is these threats and dangers that give rise to the fear, anxiety, even hatred of the named communities, that then manifests in official policy and practice, as well as public displays of hostility. These controlling narratives lay the foundation for the structural conditions that serve to preserve the very boundaries that motivate the intentional and often violent preservation of the hierarchies that shape the politics of difference in Canada, and that underlie systemic patterns of exploitation, marginalization and disempowerment among racialized communities.

While varied, the array of forms of exploitation – resource, labour and sexual, *among others* – manifest in Canada nonetheless share fundamental assumptions about the relative worth and "belongingness" of those experiencing them. They both constitute and are constitutive of the controlling images associated with the processes of cultural imperialism noted previously. They take for granted that Indigenous peoples, people of colour, and im/migrants, for example, are largely useful only in very narrow contexts and in ways that benefit their superiors, however defined. For instance, as Asian immigrants have historically been exploited for their labour (i.e., the transcontinental railroad) and consistently subject to strict immigration control (i.e., the Chinese head tax of 1885, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1923, the Internment Act to persecute Japanese Canadians during World War 2) (Chen and Wu, 2021), Canada's current immigration laws continue to reproduce these exploitative and exclusionary frameworks (Chen and Wu, 2021). With respect to the temporary foreign migrant workers program, research indicates that this policy ensures that undesirable roles in Canada's labour market remain filled by migrant workers, which simultaneously reinforces White domination and racial control (Chen and Wu, 2021). As such, these practices sustain economic and political inequalities and legislate various forms of anti-Asian racism (Chen and Wu, 2021; Zhao, O'Connor, Lenz, & Fang, 2022).

Marginalization as a process of social isolation and economic deprivation is designed to subordinate categories of people in a society. The history of Canada is predicated on the systemic marginalization of Indigenous peoples in order to further the settler colonial project of nation building and the acquisition of White wealth. Anti-Asian, specifically Chinese and Japanese, prejudice and subsequent marginalization affirmed the White supremacist orientation of 19th and

20th century Canada. These historical precedents of marginalization set the structural context for contemporary bigotry and related isolation and economic marginalization. Labour market marginality, in particular, is intended to preserve the most highly regarded, and of course the most prosperous roles for White men. In other contexts, cultural defense underlies the practices by which communities are set outside the normative boundaries: Indigenous peoples are constrained within institutions of social control, whether these be residential schools or prisons; so too are Black people disproportionately contained in prisons and jails. Indigenous peoples are over-represented in the criminal justice system, representing 30% of adults and 43% of youth incarcerations (Department of Justice, 2019). In 2020/21, 9% of offenders under federal jurisdiction were Black, despite only representing about 4% of adults in Canada. The disparities are even more stark at the provincial level. For example, in Nova Scotia, Blacks make up just 3% of the adult population, but 11% of admissions to custody (Department of Justice Canada, 2022); for Indigenous people, who make up just 4% of the population, they represent 30% of provincial custody admissions nation-wide (Department of Justice, 2024). The apparent "need" to push communities to the fringes of society suggests that they have no rightful place in the mainstream, thereby reinforcing distrust, fear, and ultimately hatred directed toward them.

The relative powerlessness of historically marginalized people is evident in the history and current practices of political participation and decision-making. Historically, Indigenous and racialized peoples have been disenfranchised, which facilitated settler colonial genocidal practices as well as legal sanctions and restrictions. Although disenfranchisement is, for the most part, no longer legally sanctioned, there are still questions of representation that influence the political power of racialized peoples and women, especially women of colour (Seiferling et al., 2020). Contemporary decision-making processes continue settler colonial exclusion of Indigenous people and their rights to autonomy and territorial control as evidenced by recent repression of ecological protests by land defenders and their allies on unceded Indigenous land (Woodside, 2022; Crosby and Monaghan, 2016). Finally, the politics of respectability influence the ways in which urban communities define who is a "legitimate" member of the community based on gender, race, and expressions of sexuality (Ross & Sullivan, 2012). These dynamics indicate a continued ascription of power to White, middle-class, settler interests and the systematic disempowerment of Indigenous people, people of colour, 2SLGBTQI+ people, and women.

As noted at the outset of this section, powerlessness both supports and is supported by the other faces of structural and cultural oppression. Notions of racialized communities as "less than" – less logical, less intelligent, less trustworthy for example – justifies their exclusion from decision making in civil society. Their absence, then, from the machinery of power has meant that they have not historically been permitted to shape social discourses. It is only recently that long silenced communities have had a seat at the tables that define their well-being and safety. But this is not without consequences. It is often when they challenge these carefully prescribed limits on their autonomy that communities face hateful repercussions. When Indigenous Nations assert autonomy over traditional lands they come under fire from both citizens and the state (Crosby and Monaghan, 2016). We have also seen this play out when women or people of colour run for political office (Kuperberg, 2018; Bardall et al., 2020).

The structural violence manifest in these processes enables the more direct forms of discursive and physical violence to which targeted communities are subject. The racialized communities that are so frequently targeted by hate crime have each been shaped and constrained

by the structural and discursive patterns noted by Young. Targeted violence – hate crime - consists of both physical and emotional harm that a person may experience as a result of their oppression, but it is also a form of oppression in and of itself. As a form of oppression, violence is systematic and legitimate. It is systematic because "it is directed at any member of the group simply because he or she is a member of that group," and it is legitimate because "most people regard it as unsurprising and it usually goes unpunished" (Young, 1988, p. 287). That is to say that this type of violence is normalized in society because it reflects the dynamics of power that are embedded within it.

Trigger events

The contemporary patterns that continue to shape communities' risks of targeted violence have deep historical roots. And history also teaches us that specific incidents or trends can also give rise to a surge in targeted violence. The sort of hatred manifest in rising numbers of hate crime does not emerge in a vacuum. Rather, it arises within an enabling context. To assume that hate crime is an anomaly ignores the fact that it is simply one weapon within a broader cultural arsenal that bestows "permission to hate." As described above, it is nested within an array of other devices that stigmatize, marginalize, and demonize minority groups. Targeted violence finds its origins in political, rhetorical and cultural practices of exclusion. Where state policy and practice, for example, send the signal that particular groups are not welcome, this can inform public sentiment and violence. Political discourse reaffirms and legitimates the negative evaluations of difference that give rise to hostility, even hate crime. In North America, the campaigns and presidency of Donald Trump have highlighted the ways in which a national leader can shape this permission to hate. The outcome of the 2016 U.S. presidential election capped off a year in which the politics of hate went mainstream. Trump ran an explicitly racist, sexist and xenophobic campaign. Fashioning himself as a right-wing populist representing the interests of White male conservatives generally and White working class people in particular (Shihipar 2017; Taylor 2017), Trump's campaign constructed minorities, liberals, Muslims, professionals and immigrants as un-American "others" and unfairly blamed "those people" for a number of social problems. His campaign message resonated with White supremacists across the U.S., who hoped that an election victory would "make America great again" by reaffirming White power. Seemingly emboldened by normative hatred, racists, homophobes and other bigots – both in the US and Canada - began acting upon their hateful sentiments. It is no coincidence that Canada's hate crime data began to trend upwards in the first year of Donald Trump's presidency. His blatant embrace of far-right and populist themes stoked public angst and resentments at liberal "wokeness" and elite political structures, channeling White conservative anger toward racial, religious and cultural minorities. His narratives found resonance in Canada among pro-Trumpers.

A glimpse of Canada's daily media reports following the U.S. election revealed that many Canadians were also attracted to the hateful political rhetoric that had emerged south of its borders, a marquee that Trump's "successful" campaign was built on – Islamophobic, anti-immigration, and anti-LGBTQ sentiment, to name a few. To set the tempo of what was to come, disturbing graffiti was found in a Regina, Saskatchewan neighborhood the morning following the results of the U.S. presidential election: "niggers go to the U.S. and let Trump deal with you" (Sharpe, 2016). Similarly reported incidents and other forms of hatred emerged in Canada, immediately following the results of the U.S. election.

In Ottawa, the week immediately after his first election victory, visible minority communities were the targets of several hate-inspired incidents: two synagogues, a Jewish prayer house, a mosque, and a church with a Black minister were vandalized with spray-painted racial slurs, swastikas, and White supremacy symbols (Pfeffer, 2017). Other Canadian cities experienced a similar uptick in targeted hatred against visible minorities. On November 14th, for example, Toronto residents woke up to find racist posters scattered across city neighborhoods. The hateful propaganda, titled "Hey, white person," encouraged readers to join the alt-right movement and subscribe to a list of "pro-European" websites (McGillivray, 2016). That same morning, residents in a predominantly Chinese community in Richmond, British Columbia, were shocked to find racist pamphlets in their mailboxes. The flyers stated: "STEP ASIDE, WHITEY! THE CHINESE ARE TAKING OVER" (Chin, 2016). Sources also reported racist graffiti in a neighborhood in Regina, Saskatchewan, wherein alarming messages were scattered across an alleyway, a resident's garage, and a local playground. Some of the messages included "KKK is great" and "fuck niggers" (Martin, 2016). In Toronto that same week, a passer-by stopped in his tracks when he discovered a swastika spray-painted on the windshield of a car in a parking lot (Pelley, 2016).

The global pandemic associated with COVID escalated the disinformation spewed by Donald Trump and other global leaders which discursively linked Asian populations to COVID-19. By relying on racist and inflammatory rhetoric (i.e., referring to COVID-19 as the "the kung flu"), Trump was able to frame COVID-19 as a threat that emerged outside of the Western world, for which 'foreigners' (i.e., members of the Asian community) were to blame (Chen and Wu, 2021). Indeed, Trump's position as a global leader not only legitimized these narratives, but justified the perpetration of violence against members of the Asian population throughout North America through this process of Othering (Leigh et al., 2022). Long after the height of COVID, Trump has continued his assault on marginalized communities since his second election in 2023. Immediately after his inauguration in January 2024, he began to issue a number of highly damaging executive orders and an array of other policy initiatives with the intention and the effect of further weakening the viability of EDI supports for disadvantaged communities. While there can be little doubt that these measures will find some fans in Canada, there is as yet no scholarly activity addressing the trends here.

While research has illustrated that racist rhetoric emitted at the systemic level can incite racism amongst citizens at the individual level, this exemplifies one of many factors tied to the increased rates of anti-Asian hate crime in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic (Chen and Wu, 2021; Guo and Guo, 2021; Leigh et al., 2022; Man, Wong, Leung, 2024). Indeed, the global pandemic associated with COVID provided impetus for heightened xenophobia, directed in particular toward Asian and Jewish communities. An Ontario study exploring varied manifestations of hate found that East Asians felt that media and public discourse heightened anti-Asian hostility and related hateful incidents through such mechanisms as scapegoating, mocking Asians, and outright hate speech (Mosaic Institute, 2023). Not surprisingly, then, research also indicates that anti-Asian sentiment surged in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic (Guo and Guo, 2021; Wang, Lei, Cao, Ye, Cheng, Cheng, Bolourchian, Bian, Han, & Sheng, 2022). While statistics illustrate steady rates of hate crime victimization targeting East and Southeast Asian populations from 2014 to 2019 (58.3 police-reported occurrences, on average per year, respectively), 2020 rates saw a significant spike with 263 reported occurrences, followed by a second increase in 2021 of 312 reported occurrences (Statistics Canada, 2024). This is very much in line with the historical tendency to scapegoat Asian communities during

periods of national instability, particularly public health crises (Man, Wong & Leung, 2024; Chen and Wu, 2022)). Most notably, during SARS in 2003 and H1N1 in 2009, Asian Canadians were vilified as the source of these illnesses and were thus framed as diseased foreigners (Guo and Guo, 2021). While this same narrative arose during the COVID-19 pandemic, with Canada's Asian population being scapegoated as the source of and/or carriers of this disease, this trope has historically and continues to, reinforce a racial hierarchy within Canada that labels those of Asian descent as a perpetual threat to the Western world (i.e., 'Yellow Peril') (Fang, Lee, Chain, Al-Raes, Nuesca, 2024; Man, Wong & Leung, 2024).

Currently, we are still in the midst of the Gaza War, a continuation of the longstanding Israel-Palestine conflict. The Gaza War followed the Hamas terrorist attacks that took place on October 7th, 2023, in southern Israel, including the contested Gaza Strip, which resulted in 1,200 deaths and 250 hostages taken (BBC, 2025; Rubin & Morris, 2023). The subsequent conflict has fomented division and hatred in the Canadian context, with a noted rise in both antisemitic and Islamophobic hate crimes. While Statistics Canada has documented such a rise (see Statistics Canada, 2025), relevant academic literature is only just beginning to emerge.

Prior to the October 7th attacks, antisemitism and Islamophobia were already ongoing problems across Canada. Consider, for example, the 2021 Afzaal family murder in London, Ontario, the 2017 Quebec City mosque shooting, and the vandalized synagogue in Montréal (Dubinski, 2024; The Canadian Press, 2021; Zine, 2021). However, post-7 October onwards, Statistics Canada (2025) recorded a drastic increase in police-reported hate crimes by religion for 2023, with Jewish and Muslim populations being the most targeted. Such hate crimes were more likely to occur in urban areas rather than rural communities, as reported by Statistics Canada (2025). Toronto Police Chief Myron Demkiw addressed the dramatic rise of police-reported hate crimes in the city, just five months after the October 7th attacks, noting that 54% of all hate crimes had targeted the city's Jewish community and individuals (CBC News, 2024). The persistence of Islamophobia has also drawn renewed attention post-October 7th, with the House of Commons (2024) citing the Hamas attack, as well as the September 11th terrorist attack, the rise of white supremacy in Canada, and media perpetuation of anti-Muslim sentiments, as the primary underlying causes for the rise of Islamophobia in Canada.

Existing literature ties social identity to the enactment of hate crimes and victimization of hate crimes. Considering the Israel-Palestine conflict and the geographic spillover of violence from that conflict, Christensen and Enlund (2024) note that hate crimes, motivated by religion in this case, are seen as retaliatory with the hate crime perpetrator holding a shared social identity and/or membership with a victimized population. This observation aligns with Stein, Perry, and Levit (2024), who found antisemitic incidents to be more common when one's Jewish identity is readily visible, leading some Jewish individuals to choose not to disclose their Jewish identity at all or selectively choose when to do so. A reluctance to embrace and/or display their identity is also often seen amongst Muslim individuals, Mercier-Dalphond and Helly (2021) found Muslim youth in Edmonton, Alberta, distancing themselves from their Islamic identity for fear of becoming targeted.

In the initial aftermath of the October 7th attacks, many protests took place on university campuses, particularly in Ontario and Quebec, led by university students to show support for Palestinians in the war-affected Gaza and stand in solidarity for the end of Israeli occupation in Palestine. Protests, and later, encampments, occurred at various Canadian university campuses, such as University of Toronto, Ontario Tech University, McGill University, and Université du

Quebec à Montréal, with student protestors calling on the universities to divest from companies and/or institutions that support and/or profit from the Israeli occupation in Gaza and/or the Israeli military (Harris, 2024; Kelly, 2024; Oved, 2024; Rukavina & Morris, 2024). What can be seen is the negotiation and balance of ensuring safety for all while maintaining freedom of expression.

Despite the clear intentions of the protests, university officials and community members have referred to protests as hate speech and antisemitic (Riga; 2024; The Canadian Press, 2024), and as a refusal to view Israelis and Israeli Jews as victims in the longstanding conflict. In contrast, some scholars view the use of "antisemitic" as a means of silencing peaceful protest against human rights violations, suppressing Palestine support and freedom from Israeli occupation, and as a political tactic to allow the use of police force to dismantle, suppress, and end protests (Hussain, 2024; Wasi, 2025).

Harms/Impacts

Hate crimes are qualitatively different in their impact relative to non-bias motivated acts of violence. They are directed toward the collective, and not simply the individual victim. Indeed, running through much of the hate crime literature - even through court decisions on hate crime - is the assumption that such offences are, for that same reason, qualitatively different in their effects, as compared to their non-bias motivated counterparts. Specifically, Weinstein (1992) identifies three potential levels of harm: "that racial violence causes injury to the victim above and beyond physical damage, that racial violence causes injury not only to the immediate victim but also to the victim's racial or ethnic group, and that racial violence has particularly pernicious ramifications for society as a whole." Iganski (2001: 629) takes this a little farther contending that there are, in fact, five distinct types of harm associated with hate crime: harm to the initial victim; harm to the victim's group; harm to the victim's group (outside the neighbourhood); harm to other targeted communities; and harm to societal norms and values. Perry has generated some scholarship around the community impacts of hate crime specifically (Perry and Alvi, 2011; Perry, 2015/2016).

At the level of individual harm, it is evident that hate crimes are more likely to involve excessive brutality relative to non-hate-based crimes (e.g., Erentzen and Schuller, 2020; McDevitt et al. 2001; Iganski and Lagou 2014). It is as if the perpetrator is attempting to erase the identity of the victim. In part because of the level of violence, but also because hate crimes are assaults on one's very essence, victims of hate crime also experience higher, more intense and longer lasting levels of psychological harm (e.g., anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, anger, thoughts about moving away from home, and suicidal ideation) in comparison to victims of similar crimes that are not hate-based (e.g., Erentzen and Schuller, 2020; McDevitt et al. 2001; Paterson et al. 2018).

Perry and Alvi's (2011; see also Perry, 2015) work with targeted communities, along with a more recent study by the OFOVC (2024) confirm Lim's (2009: 119) observation that, among vulnerable communities, the potential for hate crime "permeates the minds, is anticipated, and is carefully managed." Awareness of the violence affecting targeted communities instills fear and trepidation, such that it is deemed normative. As a result, it also affects mobility, engagement, and identity expression. Hate crime has a profound and negative impact on affected communities. The OFOVC (2024) closely observed the sentencing hearings for the perpetrator responsible for the murders of four members of the Afzaal family in London, ON in 2021, and identified 7 core responses expressed by members of the Muslim community:

- Emotional and psychological impact
- Survivor guilt
- Re-traumatized by the trial
- Fear and heightened anxiety
- Threat to freedom of religion and expression
- Sense of belonging
- Wide reaching

It is apparent that those who provided statements to the court were very much aware that this particularly brutal hate crime was an attack on their community as much as it was geared toward the Afzaal family. Another study in 2024, in which the Canadian Race Relations Foundation contracted Environics Institute for Survey Research to conduct a national survey on "race relations" in Canada, included a number of questions about exposure and reactions to hate crime. They identified 4 core themes with respect to impacts, some of which are distinct from those noted above:

- Experiences of hate change the ways people "move through the world and deal with other people (15%);
- Hate affects people emotionally (14%);
- Exposure to hate encouraged people to take positive actions (8%);
- Exposure to hate had negative physical and mental health effects (Environics/CRRF, 2024, 68).

While it is encouraging that some people see exposure to hate crime as a call to (positive) action, it is apparent that such experiences are much more likely to have profound detrimental effects on individuals and the communities of which they are a part. In particular, it appears to make members of these communities feel vulnerable and unsafe. That is, they seem to realize that wherever they are they "carry with them the reason for their own potential victimization" (Lim, 2009: 189). They are very much aware that hate crimes are attacks on their identity rather than random incidents geared toward a particular individual. Thus, it is evident that hate crimes are symbolic acts performed for specific audiences, paramount among them being the victim's reference community.

Going forward: Emerging Justice Strategies

Until very recently, Canada has not directed much in the way of attention or resources toward responding to hate crime. For instance, as noted above, the application of hate crime provisions appears to be relatively rare, both in terms of prosecuting hate propaganda offences, and in invoking the sentencing enhancement provision. However, with the uptick in hate crime showing no sign of slowing, the early 2020s ushered in an array of new non-government and government strategies to counter hate. Civil society organizations at the local and national level, however, are doing the heavy lifting of directly countering hate and supporting victims: Stop Hate AB, Canadian Council of Muslim Women, and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, for example. Reflecting the agility of communities to mobilize in the face of ongoing patterns of hate crime directed their way, COVID ushered in initiatives serving Asian communities such as Elimin8Hate, and Fight COVID Racism (Elimin8Hate 2022; Project 1907 2021; Fight COVID

Racism 2022). Large police services have created internal hate crime expertise, including dedicated hate crime units. Provincial and municipal governments have likewise integrated anti-racism strategies into their planning. At the federal level, we have seen the introduction of a number of targeted anti-racism and anti-hate frameworks.

The latest federal anti-racism strategy - *Changing Systems, Transforming Lives* - was introduced in 2024, promising an intersectional and community-centered approach to combatting racism and systemic discrimination nationwide. It is informed by four key aims:

- Promoting economic, social and cultural empowerment;

- Advancing racial equity in immigration, health, and housing systems;

- Driving justice, law enforcement, intelligence, and public safety systems reform;

- Using international engagement to inform advancement on racial equity and inclusion at home (Changing Systems, Transforming Lives: Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy 2024-2028, 2024).

In a related vein, *A Roadmap for Transformative Change: Canada's Black Justice Strategy*, also introduced in 2024, has some potential to counter the nested forms of oppression that enable hate-motivated actions. In particular, it features a pillar referred to as "social determinants of justice," there by focusing on the need to address "fundamental factors such as income, employment, stable housing, education, and health that shape an individual's life and may contribute to initial and/or subsequent contact with the justice system" (A Roadmap for Transformative Change: Canada's Black Justice Strategy, 2024). It also emphasizes legislative and police reforms intended to mitigate racial disproportionality in the justice system for accused, victims, witnesses and justice professionals.

The Indigenous Justice Strategy (2025) was created in consultation with members of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, Indigenous-led organizations, and provincial and territorial governments. This strategy seeks to meaningfully address the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples within Canada's criminal justice system and actively dismantle systemic discrimination. The plan outlines 26 action items, which prioritize self-determination and accountability, along with traditional methods of justice, wellness, and healing – which have long been ignored by the colonial state.

Finally, and most directly relevant to the patterns described in this paper, *Canada's Action Plan on Combatting Hate* (2024) represents an important effort to bolster prevention efforts and strengthen intergroup relations across the country. Supported by nearly $300 million in funding over the next six years, this strategy is guided by three main pillars:

- Empower communities to identify and prevent hate;

- Support victims and survivors, and protect communities;

- Build community trust.

We should be optimistic that this otherwise sobering rise in hate motivated activities will motivate not just political and civil society action, but also heightened scholarly attention and thus understanding of the dynamics of hate in Canada. This report has demonstrated the dearth of relevant scholarship in Canada. However, the *National Action Plan on Combatting Hate*, along with the other justice strategies noted above come with sizable funding envelopes, some of

which is dedicated to facilitating deeper research into the contexts, contours and consequences of hate. In addition, the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) has prioritized three "future challenges" that may well be relevant for funding hate studies: Gender-Based Violence, Shifting Dynamics of Privilege and Marginalization, and Evolving Narratives of Cultures and Histories. As an academic community, we can take advantage of this moment of political acknowledgement of the risk of hate crime to further a dedicated research agenda. In particular, we must find ways to raise the voices of scholars from targeted communities. The hate studies space in Canada continues to be dominated by White people who clearly create knowledge through a much different lens than BIPOC communities. Notably, in addition to the designated SSHRC future challenges the Council has also initiated research funding programs intended to support Indigenous and racialized students and scholars: the Indigenous Scholars Awards and Supplements Pilot Initiative, and the Race, Gender and Diversity Initiative. The Council's description of the latter is a fitting way to conclude this report:

> Leadership by people from underrepresented or disadvantaged groups in research projects about race, gender and diversity is important to help ensure the research is grounded in the complexities of the lived experiences and histories of diverse groups and individuals, and to inform more rigorous and relevant policy and program design.

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