“COME BACK HERE BEFORE I RIP YOUR VEIL OFF!”

MUSLIM WOMEN’S EXPERIENCES OF ISLAMOPHOBIA AND HATE CRIMES IN MÅLMÖ

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Background: Veiled Muslim women are particularly vulnerable to hate crime victimization. This is both due to the visibility of the veil and to Islamophobic stereotypes. Islamophobic hate crimes target a central part of these women’s identity and have the potential to affect both actual and potential victims in a multitude of ways. However, research on this particular group is limited, especially in Sweden. 

Aim: The aim was to explore how Islamophobic hate crimes are experienced by veiled Muslim women in Malmö. Method: Eight veiled Muslim women were recruited through Muslim associations in Malmö and interviewed through focus group interviews and individual interviews. Three of the women wrote diaries about their experiences. The interview data was analysed through thematic analysis. Results: Four themes were identified in the analysis: a) Islamophobia is a part of veiled Muslim women’s everyday lives and is experienced both in public places and in formal settings, b) experiences of Islamophobia restrict the women’s lives, both through limiting their behaviours and through creating geographical boundaries in the city, c) awareness of Islamophobic hate crime against other Muslim women induces a feeling of “if it can happen to her, it can happen to me too”, finally, d) international and political issues increase Islamophobia toward these women. Discussion: Islamophobia permeates the lives of veiled Muslim women across a multitude of arenas. Due to fear of victimization, Islamophobia and hate crimes threaten Muslim women’s liberty in their day-to-day lives. Thus, there is a need for authorities across a variety of domains to be aware of these women’s vulnerable position in society and work towards providing the support veiled Muslim women need.

Keywords: Hate crimes, Islamophobia, message crimes, Muslim women, victimization.
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INTRODUCTION

In 2012, two veiled Muslim women, a mother and her daughter, were physically assaulted by a man in Malmö, Sweden (Orrenius, 2013, December 22). The man hit one of the women with a shoe against her head, face, and upper body multiple times. A witness heard the man yell “everything is the Muslims’ fault, f**king Muslims”. One of the women describes that one year after the attack, it still affects her everyday life, “because of my headscarf, I don’t see any other reason”. The offender was sentenced for the assault and it was regarded a hate crime by the Swedish Court of Appeal (Orrenius, 2014, September 17). However, that a reported hate crime ends up in a conviction which explicitly states that it is a hate crime is unusual (Djärv, Westerberg, & Frenzel, 2015; Körner, 2016; Tiby, 2006). In Sweden, hate crimes have been defined as criminal acts motivated by fear, hostility, or hate against the victim, based on for example religion or sexual orientation (Djärv et al., 2015).

Since the 9/11 attacks, Western Europe and the United States have been characterized by hardening attitudes toward Muslims (Garland, Spalek, & Chakraborti, 2006; Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010). In the U.S, the 9/11 attacks generated both sudden and enduring increases in Islamophobic hate crimes, with elevated numbers of hate crimes even eight years after the attack (Peek & Meyer Lueck, 2012). However, Islamophobia is not a new phenomenon but have deep roots in Western societies (Sáid, 2000). In Sweden, there is constant attention towards Islam with discussions on building of mosques and the wearing of religious attire, such as the veil1 (Bevelander & Otterbeck, 2012). In these contexts, Malmö is often in the spotlight due to its large Muslim population. Malmö is also the Swedish city with the largest proportion of Islamophobic hate crimes (Djärv et al., 2015).

Research shows that Muslim women are particularly exposed to Islamophobic hate crimes (Perry, 2014). As such, scholars have argued that there is a clear gendered dimension to Islamophobic victimization, but that this is generally overlooked2 (Allen, 2015). Veiled Muslim women are portrayed both as oppressed and as a threat to Western ideals and in this context there is room for Islamophobia to grow as a means of reacting to these ‘threats’ (Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). Thus, perceptions about veiled Muslim women have the potential to legitimize Islamophobic hate crimes towards these women. These stereotypes may also support intolerance towards this group and lead to tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims (Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014).

As a way to conquer hate crimes, a penalty enhancement rule was introduced in Sweden in 1994 (Brax, 2014). Many jurisdictions in Europe and other parts of the world have passed hate crime laws, which recognize hate crimes as more severe than ‘parallel’ crimes (Brax, 2016; Garland & Chakraborti, 2009). However, such

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1 The veil is a broad label for a variety of attires such as the hijab (headscarf), niqab (face veil), and fuller body garments such as the jilbab and burqa (Allen, 2015).
2 Both within the criminal justice system and the hate crime literature there is an assumption that hate crimes stems from one single motive. In the National Council for Crime Prevention’s statistics, hate crimes are registered according to the most salient motive. Yet, in reality hate crimes can have more than one motive, thus, this perspective may lead to an underestimation of certain motives. Further, Sweden does not include gender as a potential hate crime motive.
legislation is still missing in several countries (e.g. Haynes & Schweppe, 2016). Further, as pointed out earlier, few hate crimes lead to prosecution and the penalty enhancement rule is rarely applied. Thus, hate crime legislations can be considered symbolic rather than preventive. One argument for why hate crimes should be considered more severe than ‘ordinary’ crimes is because they inflict greater harm upon victims. Research shows that hate crimes have particularly negative consequences, both for the immediate victim but also for the targeted group (Brax, 2016; Iganski, 2001; Perry, 2015).

Despite Muslim women’s vulnerability to Islamophobic victimization, they remain an understudied group. Specifically, Swedish research to date is very limited on this particular victim group. This exacerbates these women’s marginalization from both academia and from the general society as their voices are seldom heard (Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). Therefore, the aim with this study is to contribute to increased knowledge about how veiled Muslim women in Malmö experience Islamophobic hate crimes and how such crimes affect their lives. The study has a victimological focus and is based on qualitative interviews.

BACKGROUND

It is very important to note that none of us is free of prejudices. Different people have different biases, and some people are more strongly biased than others. Most of us probably cannot imagine being so bigoted as to actually commit a crime against someone. However, these are differences in kind and degree only, and there is no magical boundary that separates me or you from the people who commit hate crimes (Gerstenfeld, 2013, p. 90).

What is a hate crime?
In the middle of the 1980’s there was an increase in crimes with xenophobic and racist connotations in Sweden. This led the government to declare that the criminal justice system should prioritize these crimes (Djärv et al., 2015). This is the background to the penalty enhancement rule (Penal Code, chapter 29, section 2, clause 7), which states that a harsher sentence shall be imposed “if the motive of the crime was to aggrieve a person, ethnic group, or another such group of individuals because of race, skin color, national or ethnic origin, religious belief, sexual orientation or other similar circumstances” (own translation). The penalty enhancement rule can be applied to any crime since it is the motive that determines whether a crime is a hate crime or not. The Swedish hate crime legislation also includes unlawful discrimination (Penal Code, chapter 16, section 9) and incitement to hatred (Penal Code, chapter 16, section 8).

Hate crimes have always existed, however, in earlier years the focus was on the criminal act and not on the motive of the crime (Djärv et al., 2015). Societies’ interest in the motive these crimes and the attempt to gather criminal expressions of intolerance under one concept led to that the term hate crime was introduced in the U.S and England during the 1980’s and 1990’s (Djärv et al., 2015). In Sweden, the concept of hate crime was first introduced by criminologist Eva Tiby (1999) in her dissertation on homophobic hate crimes. Since then, the focus on the victimization of sexual minorities has come to dominate Swedish hate crime research (e.g. Tiby, 2006).
Depending on how hate crimes are defined, different definitions will affect attempts to measure the scope of the problem and what policy responses that are considered appropriate (Garland & Chakraborti, 2009). To create universal definitions of any crime is difficult, and this may particularly be the case regarding hate crime, partially because hate is a subjective concept (Garland & Chakraborti, 2009; Hall, 2005). Because of this complexity, several definitions of hate crime have been proposed, for example by Petrosino:

(a) most victims are members of distinct racial or ethnic (cultural) minority groups …(b) most victims are decidedly less powerful politically and economically than the majority … and last, (c) victims represent a threat to the perpetrators’ quality of life (i.e. economic stability and/or physical safety). …

These common factors suggest the following base definition of hate crime: the victimization of minorities due to their racial or ethnic identity by members of the majority (Petrosino, as cited in Garland & Chakraborti, 2009, p. 4).

Garland and Chakraborti (2009) note that this definition points to power structures in society and to hate crime as a manifestation of oppression against a marginalized group. However, Garland and Chakraborti argue that Petrosino’s definition is limited since it only includes minority ethnic groups. This limitation was overcome by Sheffield:

Hate violence is motivated by social and political factors and is bolstered by belief systems which (attempt to) legitimate such violence … it reveals that the personal is political; that such violence is not a series of isolated incidents but rather the consequence of a political culture which allocates rights, privileges and prestige according to biological or social characteristics (Sheffield, as cited in Garland & Chakraborti, 2009, p. 5).

However, Sheffield’s definition receives critique from Perry (2001) who argues that it fails to consider the impacts that hate crime has on the victim, offender, and on the broader community. In her frequently cited definition of hate crime, Perry aims to include these aspects:

Acts of violence and intimidation, usually directed toward already stigmatized and marginalized groups. As such, it is a mechanism of power and oppression, intended to reaffirm the precarious hierarchies that characterize a given social order. It attempts to re-create simultaneously the threatened (real or imagined) hegemony of the perpetrator’s group and the ‘appropriate’ subordinate identity of the victim’s group (p. 10).

Garland and Chakraborti (2009) argue that Perry’s (2001) definition is superior to other ones in numerous respects. Perry emphasizes the victim’s group identity, rather than the individual identity. Hate crimes are not only directed toward the individual but towards the whole community to which the victim belongs (Perry, 2001). In light of this, hate crimes have been described as “message crimes” a message of terror is communicated to the group that the victim belongs to (Iganski, 2001; Perry & Alvi, 2011). Hate crimes tell certain groups that they are
not welcome and remind them that they are potential targets. Therefore, they extend to not only affect the direct victim but to have consequences for the whole targeted group (Garland & Chakraborti, 2009).

Perry’s definition has had “an indelible imprint upon contemporary hate crime discourse” (Chakraborti & Garland, 2012, p. 501). However, Chakraborti and Garland criticize the way Perry’s framework has been interpreted within the literature. They argue that its focus has been too narrow, and that hate crimes are not always a means for suppressing the ‘other’. Hate crimes are unquestionably linked to structural and cultural processes that make minorities vulnerable to oppression. Yet, for some offenders hate crimes will be driven by more banal motives, such as boredom, convenience, or being unfamiliar with ‘difference’ (Chakraborti & Garland, 2012). Although the term vulnerability is increasingly used by media, politicians, and within research to describe crime victims, the meaning of this concept is not always clear (Chakraborti & Garland, 2012). According to Green (2007), to be vulnerable often refers to the risk of being victimized, but also to the harm caused by the victimization. Thus, the most vulnerable are those that are most likely to be victimized and least capable to cope with the caused harm.

Islamophobia and Islamophobic hate crimes

International events such as the 9/11 attacks and the London bombings in 2005 have “prompted a well-documented backlash against some minorities on the basis of their faith, and correspondingly there is now much greater recognition given to religiously, and not just racially motivated, offending” (Garland & Chakraborti, 2009, p. 2). As argued by Githens-Mazer and Lambert (2010), the responses to 9/11, such as the war on terror, has played a major part in forming public perceptions of Muslims in Europe as potential enemies. In the U.S, Peek and Meyer Lueck (2012) found that the number of Islamophobic hate crimes in the year following the 9/11 attacks was 14 times as many as in the previous year. More recently, the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris increased the prevalence and severity of Islamophobic hate crimes in Great Britain (Awan & Zempi, 2015). Thus, international research repeatedly shows that Islamophobic hate crimes are tend to rise in the wake of dramatic events. This has also been reported in Sweden. Borell and Gerdner (2010) found that Muslim congregations in Sweden experienced more opposition, both legal and criminalized, from their communities after international events such as the terror attacks in London and Madrid.

However, prejudices toward Islam and Muslims is not a new phenomenon but have deep, historical roots in the U.S as well as in Canada, Australia and in Europe (Perry, 2014; Said, 2000; Taras, 2012). Said introduced the term “orientalism” in his book, first published in 1978, to describe the West’s distorted generalizations about Islam. According to Said, Western scholars have divided the world into two parts, where the East is seen as inferior to the West and has contributed to the definition of the West by being its opposite. While the West was seen as rational, developed, humane, and superior, the East was deviant, underdeveloped, and inferior. Orientalism provided a justification for European colonialism, where the East needed to be rescued by the West (Said, 2000).

During the 1980’s, Muslims were not seen as a distinguishable group in Western Europe, but were rather perceived as ‘immigrants’ (Borell, 2012). However, this came to change at the end of the decade following events such as the Salman Rushdie affair and the debate surrounding France’s initiative to ban veils in public
schools (Borell, 2015; Grillo & Shah, 2013). These events and the following media coverage contributed to growing negative perceptions of Muslims in Europe (Bleich, 2009; Field, 2007). As such, Straubac and Listhaug (2008) found that, using European data from 1999 to 2000, negative attitudes towards Muslims were higher than towards any other group of immigrants in 13 of 18 European countries, including Sweden. Islamophobic attitudes are generally understood as a combination of viewing Islam as a security threat and as a symbolic threat to Western culture (Borell, 2012; Fekete, 2009; Wike & Grim, 2010). Thus, Muslims threaten both Western security as potential terrorists, and Western civilization, democracy and equality. Therefore, Borell (2015) argues that Muslims in the West are still viewed as an inferior and homogenous group, impossible to co-exist with.

Islamophobic attitudes may be manifested through discrimination towards Muslims. Muslim communities in Europe experience enduring discrimination that affects their life opportunities, for example for employment (FRA, 2009). Many young Muslims experience social exclusion and discrimination, which may spawn alienation and hopelessness among them (FRA, 2009). Discrimination towards Muslims have also been reported in Sweden. Abrashi, Sander, and Larsson (2016) report that this is evident in all parts of society, such as legal, political, and school systems. Further, Muslims are also subjected to hate crimes. Official figures on Islamophobic hate crimes in Sweden have been recorded by the National Council for Crime Prevention since 2006. In 2014, 490 Islamophobic hate crimes were reported to the police, out of a total of 6 270 hate crimes (Djärv et al., 2015). Djärv et al. (p. 80) define Islamophobia as “fear, hostility, or hatred against Islam and Muslims, which activates a reaction against Islam, Muslim property, its institutions or individual(s) who are, or are perceived to be, Muslims or representatives of Muslims or Islam” (own translation). The number of reported Islamophobic hate crimes remained stable between 2006 and 2011. However, since then there has been an increasing trend, which was marked by a sharp increase (50%) between 2013 and 2014. It is unclear whether this reflects an actual increase in Islamophobic hate crimes, if it is due to that more people report these crimes, or that the police are more attentive to hate crime motives.

However, most hate crimes are never reported to the police. In 2014, 67% of self-reported anti-religious hate crimes in Sweden had not been police reported (Djärv et al., 2015). This is corroborated by international research, which shows that hate crimes are rarely reported to the police (FRA, 2009). There are several explanations to this low inclination to report (Djärv et al., 2015). For example, the victim may not view what happened as a hate crime or as serious enough to report, and the victim may feel like reporting the incident will not lead to anything. Also, the victim may be afraid of being subjected to secondary victimization by the criminal justice system. Thus, victims may fear that they will not be treated well, for example by not being believed in or by getting disregarded by the police.

Moreover, out of the hate crimes that were police reported in 2014, few were person-based cleared\(^3\); 5% of all hate crimes and 1% of Islamophobic hate crimes (Djärv et al., 2015). This may be due to that hate crimes are generally crimes that are difficult to link to an offender, such as verbal abuse in public by an unknown

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\(^3\) Person-based clearances are processed offences for which a suspect has been prosecuted through the commencement of a prosecution, the issuance of a summary imposition of a fine, or through abstention from prosecution.
The handling of hate crimes later on in the criminal justice system in Sweden is an unexplored topic. However, a study by Tiby (2006) showed that the penalty enhancement rule is rarely applied in cases of hate crime. In a recent report on prosecutors’ work with hate crimes, Körner (2016) found that out of 214 randomly selected hate crime cases, 60 cases were prosecuted and 30 of these ended up in a conviction. In three of these verdicts, the hate crime motive was explicitly stated as enhancing the penalty. In 20 verdicts the use of the penalty enhancement rule was not explicitly stated. This makes it difficult to know to what degree the rule had any effect on the sentencing. As such, Sweden has received criticism for “insufficient legal action in cases of documented hate crime” (United Nations Association of Sweden, 2014, p. 4).

Djärv et al. (2015) found that the most common types of Islamophobic hate crimes are harassment/unlawful threat (40%) and incitement to hatred (31%). The reported hate crimes were most often committed in public places or on the internet and by an unknown offender. This picture is corroborated by international research on hate crimes which has found that they are typically less serious types of crimes, often committed in public places or online (Allen & Nielsen, 2002; Copsey, Dack, Littler & Feldman, 2013; Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010; Iganski, 2008). Similar results have also been found in qualitative studies on veiled Muslim women: the most common type of victimization was verbal abuse in public places (Allen, 2015; Listerborn; 2010; Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). As such, Zempi and Chakraborti argue that it is important to view Islamophobic victimization as a continuum rather than as one-off incidents. Victimization can take many forms and may not always be recognized as Islamophobic if it is not viewed in a broader perspective of the targeted abuse that veiled Muslim women experience in their everyday lives (Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). For example, many of the women experienced more ‘invisible’ and non-criminal forms of Islamophobia such as being stared at or ignored in shops. Such non-criminal acts are generally called hate incidents within the hate crime literature.

**The veiled Muslim woman**

Overall, women are not particularly exposed to hate crimes. However, within the Muslim community, women are especially vulnerable to Islamophobic hate crimes (Perry, 2014). For example, Githens-Mazer and Lambert (2010) found that whereas men are more often victims of racist hate crimes, women are more exposed to Islamophobic hate crimes. That Muslim women are victims of Islamophobic victimization is not a new insight (e.g. Allen & Nielsen, 2002; Runnymede Trust, 1997). However, this gendered dimension of Islamophobic victimization is often overlooked in the literature (Chakraborti and Zempi, 2012; Perry, 2014). Zempi and Chakraborti (2014) describe that the roots of Islamophobia against women stem from colonialism. The veiled, Muslim woman was seen as something exotic, an erotic fantasy, but also as a symbol for gender oppression. The veiled woman was the opposite of the ideal Western women in terms of gender equality and during the 19th and 20th century the veil became key in the mission to civilize colonialized countries, and rescue the oppressed Muslim women.

Zempi and Chakraborti (2014) argue that the colonial way of viewing the veil is still apparent. Today, perceptions of the veil propose that it is a symbol of Islamist extremism, self-segregation, and as a sign of gender oppression (Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). These perceptions are overlapping, but endorse Islamophobia
in different ways. In the West, the veil is seen as oppressive and indicates a dehumanization of women that keeps them subordinated to men (Chakraborti & Zempi, 2012; Kapur, 2002). These ideas point out Muslim women as oppressed and Muslim men as oppressors, which demonize Islam and depicts it as inferior to Western societies (Perry, 2014; Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). This also creates a dichotomy between ‘us’ and ‘them’, where the West is characterized by gender equity and freedom, and Islam is seen as misogynist.

According to Chakraborti and Zempi (2012), these notions fail to study “the socio-political and cultural contexts from which specific gender-based practices arise” (p. 275). To separate the veil from these contexts portrays Islam as a deterministic part of Muslim women’s lives, which contributes to the stereotyping of Muslims. The voices of women who chose to veil are also missing from the discussion, and the veil as an autonomous expression of religion is ignored (Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). Without dismissing the fact that women in certain Muslim countries are forced to wear a veil, research shows that by veiling in a non-Muslim environment, Muslim women can demonstrate that the veil is chosen by them (Bowen, 2007; Grillo & Shah, 2013; Zempi, 2016). To not acknowledge that women can chose to veil represents Muslim women as passive victims, which is an incorrect representation of how many Muslim women view their lives (Kapur, 2002; Zempi, 2016; Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014).

The veil is also perceived as a symbol of Islamist terrorism and as a public safety threat because it may hinder identification (Grillo & Shah, 2013; Perry, 2014; Tissot, 2011; Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). Thus, the veil is not only seen as a sign of oppression but also as a sign of Islamic aggression. Due to this, veil bans have been a measure to warrant public safety. Countries such as France and Belgium have introduced bans for face-covering veils in public places (Grillo & Shah, 2013), and the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly have legitimized the bans because the veil is seen as threatening gender equality, public safety, and national cohesion (Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). However, Zempi and Chakraborti argue that veil bans are a violation towards human rights and that they undercut individual agency, privacy, and self-expression to the same extent as in countries where women are forced to wear it. Further, wearing the veil in public places is perceived as a sign of segregation since the veil is an obstacle to integration and promotes isolation of these women (Grillo & Shah, 2013). Therefore, veiled Muslim women must unveil to integrate into Western society. This idea of integration can only be accomplished through conformity, not through a multicultural integration where differences are allowed (Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014).

As noted by Chakraborti and Zempi (2012), the visibility of veiled Muslim women make them ‘easy’ targets for people who want to attack Islam. Allen and Nielson (2002, p. 35) argue that “the hijab seems to have become the primary visual identifier as a target for hatred”. Veiling in a non-Muslim society attracts attention, and the visibility of the veil may be seen as threatening for those who view Islam and Muslims as a threat. This visibility, coupled with stereotypes about Muslim women as passive or terrorists, mark them as particularly vulnerable to Islamophobic hate crimes and may legitimize Islamophobic attacks (Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). Further, as argued by Allen (2015), veiled Muslim women become essentialized through these stereotypes, and the veil makes the woman behind it invisible and dehumanized. The veil becomes a symbolic lens through which veiled Muslim women are viewed, and paradoxically, they become both
visible and invisible through the wearing of the veil. However, it is important to recognize that hate crimes can be the outcome of bias based on multiple lines, and not only on one distinct identity, which will be described in more detail below.

The harms of hate crime

One of the main arguments provided for why hate crimes should be considered more severe than parallel crime is that the harms are greater, both for the direct victim and for members of the targeted group (Brax, 2016; Iganski & Lagou, 2015). Thus, research shows that hate crime victims suffer greater consequences than victims of parallel crimes. Consequences reported in the literature include psychological harm, such as feelings of safety, anger, anxiety, perceived vulnerability, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and loss of trust in others (Herek, Cogan, & Gillis, 2002; Iganski & Lagou, 2015; McDevitt, Balboni, Garcia, & Gu, 2001; Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). Also, Funnell (2015) found that victims of racist hate crimes experienced behavioural consequences such as isolation and withdrawal. These consequences may also last longer for hate crime victims than for victims of parallel crimes (Herek et al., 2002; Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). Craig-Henderson and Sloan (2003) argue that hate crime victims experience greater harms because the crime is understood as an attack on their identity.

In their interviews with veiled Muslim women, Zempi and Chakraborti (2014) found that the informants experienced a multitude of consequences of Islamophobic victimization. Their experiences of Islamophobia in public led to low confidence and self-esteem, and made them feel like they did not belong. Also, many of the women experienced feelings of anxiety, vulnerability and insecurity. This was especially the case for women who had been repeatedly victimized, which created a fear of being in public places. Generally, most of the victimization experienced by the women was low-level and minor, and such incidents were described as common. The continuous threat of Islamophobic abuse may result in cumulative, negative consequences because these women constantly have to be on the alert (Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). That ongoing or systematic victimization can have harmful effects on victims have also been reported by others (Allen, 2015; Perry, 2008). In her research with Native Americans, Perry (2008) argues that even though a single event may not appear as particularly detrimental, persistent abuse can have dramatic consequences for victims.

In Zempi and Chakraborti’s (2014) study, the fear of future abuse made the veiled Muslim women scared to leave their homes and they became observant and cautious, especially regarding what places they chose to visit as some places were considered more ‘Muslim-friendly’. This restricted mobility has also been noted among Muslim women in Malmö. Listerborn (2010) found that the women were conscious about where they could and could not go, and this was closely related to where they perceived that it was accepted to veil. Thus, the perceived risk of future hate crime victimization may create boundaries across which these women are not welcome (Perry & Alvi, 2011).

However, as noted by Zempi and Chakraborti (2014) veiled Muslim women will all have their own personal experience of Islamophobic victimization. They found that in addition to wearing the veil, other perceived weaknesses such as age, disabilities, and language difficulties increased the risk of being victimized. Veiled Muslim women may be targeted because they are thought to be ‘easy’ targets, they are ‘different’, and perceived as vulnerable (Chakraborti & Garland, 2012;
Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). Therefore, these women may be “targeted because of how their Muslim identity intersects with other aspects of their self, and with other situational factors and context, to make them vulnerable in the eyes of their abusers” (Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014, p. 59).

Furthermore, and as already mentioned, hate crimes are considered to be message crimes. Hate crimes do not only affect the direct victim but send a message to the whole community that the victim belongs to (Brax, 2016; Iganski, 2001). Therefore, the damage inflicted by a hate crime goes above and beyond the harm it causes the individual since awareness of the risk for hate crime victimization may increase feelings of vulnerability and fear among members of the affected group (Perry, 2015). This is also, according to Perry (2015), the aim with hate crimes: to intimidate the whole targeted community.

The impact of hate crimes on the targeted group has been referred to as the in terrorem effect (Weinstein, 1992). Although this hypothesis is widely accepted, there has been little empirical inquiry of this. However, two qualitative studies investigating hate crimes as message crimes have been conducted by Perry and Alvi (2011) and Bell and Perry (2015). These studies found that vicarious victims experience the same kinds of emotional and behavioural consequences as immediate victims. Being aware of hate crimes in their community made the participants experience anger, shock, fear/vulnerability, inferiority, normativity, behavioural changes, and mobilization. As such, Perry and Alvi (2011, p. 69) state that ”hate crime has a profound and negative impact on affected communities. In particular, it appears to make members of these communities feel vulnerable and unsafe.”

From this point, it is not surprising that hate crimes also have the potential to impact relations between communities and increase the distance between them (Perry, 2015). For example, members of the targeted communities may self-segregate to protect themselves from attacks (Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). Hate crime also challenges communities’ sense of belonging, and reinforces the outsider status of people who do not live up to certain societal norms, such as wearing a veil (Perry, 2015).

**Theoretical framework**

The attempts to theorize hate crimes have been described as limited (Hall, 2005). The most frequently used theory to explain hate crime is strain theory (see for example Merton, 1938). According to strain theory, hate offences would be committed in response to instability, such as job competition and economic insecurity, perceived to be caused by immigrants and ‘outsiders’. As such, hate crime is a means of responding to a perceived threat to achieving societal goals. However, this account of hate crime has been criticized by Perry (2001), who argue that hate crimes are frequently committed by people of power, and not just the deprived. As Hall (2005) highlights, some of the worst hate crimes have been perpetrated by people of who hold powerful positions in society. Thus, Perry and Alvi (2011) offered a theoretical framework of hate crime mapping on to Perry’s (2001) definition of hate crime as a mechanism for doing difference:

When we do difference, when we engage in the process of identity formation, we do so within the confines of structural and institutional norms. In so doing – to the extent that we conform to normative conceptions of identity – we reinforce the structural order (Perry & Alvi, 2011, p. 60).
However, people do not always act according to these principles, and it is in such contexts hate crimes can emerge as a response to these threats. Perry and Alvi (2011) argue that hate crimes offer a context where hate crime offenders can confirm their hegemonic identity and reprimand the victim for their identity. As such, hate crimes sustain the privilege of the dominant group and remind the ‘others’ of their place by reinforcing the boundaries between them. Chakraborti and Zempi (2012) argue that perceptions about Muslim men as brutal and Muslim women as subordinated engender Islamophobia as a mechanism for doing difference. Thus, the justification for hate crimes against veiled Muslim women is offered by depictions of Muslims as ‘others’ against which targeted attacks are directed. The veil turns into a symbol of ‘otherness’ and ‘difference’, and the veiled Muslim woman becomes the main symbol of Islam (Chakraborti & Zempi, 2012).

A different perspective through which hate crime can be explored has been proposed by Chakraborti and Garland (2012). They argue that hate crime should be understood through the concepts of vulnerability and difference as this allows for a more inclusive framework. Chakraborti and Garland argue that not all hate crime offenders are always prejudiced, but may express such prejudices as an outcome of a triggering incident. They note that Perry’s framework overlook the ‘ordinary’ nature of much hate crime, as it overestimates what might be a crime stemming from quite banal motives. Also, the broad labels of victims applied within the framework of ‘doing difference’ may fail to identify the diversity of hate crime victims. Generalizations about groups such as Muslims say little about their specific experiences or the context of their vulnerability to hate crimes. Chakraborti and Garland argue that explanations of hate crime should be more adjusted to the intersectional nature of identity. Hate crime can be the consequence of prejudice based on several separate but related lines, which is of importance to understand experiences of victimization. Zempi and Chakraborti (2014) argue that other perceived ‘weaknesses’ of veiled Muslim women, such as language difficulties, age, and ethnicity, increase vulnerability to hate crime victimization.

Applying a vulnerability-based approach to hate crime victimization recognizes the risk that certain groups face based on multiple factors such as hate, prejudice, unfamiliarity or merely convenience (Chakraborti & Garland, 2012). The concept of vulnerability captures the way in which many hate crime offenders perceive the victim; weak and defense-less. Further, it is not a person’s identity per se that make them vulnerable to hate crimes. Instead, they may be victimized because of how one aspect of their identity intersects with other aspects, and with situational and contextual factors. The risk of being victimized is increased by other factors than the person’s main identity, such as social class and routine activities (Chakraborti & Garland, 2012). Moreover, difference is key to many hate crimes. Even though being ‘different’ does not inevitably mean that someone will be targeted, it may mean that those in vulnerable situations have an increased risk of being the victim of a hate crime. As such, a person’s vulnerability may be intensified through social circumstances, norms and responses to ‘difference’.

The concepts of vulnerability and difference proposed by Chakraborti and Garland (2012) was tied into Zempi and Chakraborti’s (2014) framework to explain the vulnerability of veiled Muslim women. Their framework suggests that several conditions must be met for Islamophobic victimization to occur. The victim and the offender have to meet in time and place, and the victim have to be perceived as an ‘easy’ target and as ‘deserving’ of the attack in the eyes of the perpetrator.
As such, the offender can feel that they can get away with the attack and that it is justified. Although the veil is the prime motivator from the victim’s perspective, it is probable that the veil in itself does not inevitably make Muslim women vulnerable to hate crimes. Rather, it is how the Muslim identity intersects with other parts of these women’s identities, and how this intersects with situational factors which make them vulnerable. In light of this, veiled Muslim women may not only be targeted because of their group belonging, but because they are seen as ‘easy’ targets due to that they are perceived as ‘different’ and vulnerable. Moreover, as has been highlighted previously, media reports of international events related to Islam and Muslims may also increase Islamophobia against these women. This may particularly be the case in places where there are few Muslims, and being in these areas can also increase their feelings of vulnerability.

The relevance of the present study

Veiled Muslim women are a particularly vulnerable group in several aspects. As Muslims, they are vulnerable to hate crime victimization, and because of their visibility and stereotypes about Muslim women, they are specifically vulnerable (Perry, 2014). Since veiled Muslim women are targeted due to their identity, they are not able to think that what happened to them could have happened to anyone (Chakraborti & Zempi, 2012). Rather, these women have to view this as an attack on their identity as Muslims. Islamophobic hate crimes target a central part of these women’s identity, which affects the direct victim in multiple ways (Chakraborti & Zempi, 2012). To be victimized due to one’s identity infers that it might happen again. Because of this, Islamophobic hate crimes may also have a wider impact on the targeted community. Research on how hate crimes affect the victim’s wider community is limited, however, the research that has been conducted has given support for the claim that hate crimes are message crimes (Perry & Alvi, 2011).

There has been some international empirical investigation on the topic of hate crime victimization of veiled Muslim women (Allen, 2015; Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). However, this field of research is limited in Sweden. But, Sweden is not at all protected from prejudices about Muslims or Islamophobic hate crimes. Therefore, it is of importance to gain more knowledge about this particularly vulnerable group and give voice to their experiences. As noted by Chakraborti and Zempi (2012), future research should focus on voicing the lived experiences of Muslim women. Further, the scarce research on the message of hate crimes has been proposed to call for more research within this area (Perry & Alvi, 2011). Due to the fact that this is claimed to be one of the main differences between ‘ordinary’ crimes and hate crimes, it is of importance to explore the impact that hate crimes may have on those other than the immediate victim. This study aims to combine these two under-researched fields and explore Muslim women’s experiences of hate crimes in their community.

Aim and research questions

The aim with this study was to explore how Islamophobic hate crimes are experienced by veiled Muslim women in Malmö. The aim was answered through the following research questions:

1) What are these women’s experiences of Islamophobic hate crimes?
2) How do these women experience that they are affected by Islamophobic hate crimes?
3) How do these women experience that Islamophobic hate crimes affect their community?

METHOD

It is almost inevitable in the present climate of our fractured world that sensitive researchers will have to engage with the vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised groups as it is likely that these population groups will be confronted with more and more problems to their health and well-being (Liamputtong, 2007, p. 1-2).

A feminist framework for studying vulnerable groups

The concept of vulnerable groups includes individuals who are subjected to discrimination or intolerance, such as ethnic minorities (Nyamathi, 1998). A concept related to vulnerable groups is sensitive research (Liamputtong, 2007). Such research encompasses topics that are normally kept private and discussing these may result in discomfort. The current study involved both contact with a vulnerable group and the sensitive research topic of hate crime victimization. As sensitive research has the potential to negatively affect participants, conducting such research requires sensitivity (Liamputtong, 2007). This means that the methods being used have to be considered in order to not harm participants. This is important within all research, but is crucial when studying people who are already in a marginalized position.

In the current study, a qualitative approach was utilized in order to capture Muslim women’s everyday experiences of Islamophobic hate crimes. Because qualitative methods are flexible and open-ended, they are usually recommended for understanding the subjective and personal experiences of vulnerable research participants (Liamputtong, 2007). Furthermore, Zempi and Chakraborti (2014) have argued that quantitative methods are not sensitive enough to capture the dynamic nature of Islamophobic victimization.

In light of the above, the overall approach in the current study was a feminist framework. A feminist methodology aims to give voice to women and minority groups’ personal, everyday experiences (Liamputtong, 2007). Feminist research does not differ from other research in its methods, but rather in its worldview: it questions the androcentric bias and the hierarchical, deductive approach to knowledge within conventional research (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2012). Feminism is a diverse scholarly movement, but generally “includes the aspiration to live and act in ways that embody feminist thought and promote justice and the well-being of all women” (Devault & Gross, 2012, p. 207). Thus, the purpose of feminist research is to capture experiences of women and other marginalized groups, and legitimate their voices as a source of knowledge (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2012). As veiled Muslim women is a vulnerable and neglected group, both within academia and the general society, to give voice to their experiences was specifically important in this study.

A feminist methodology should be adopted throughout the research process in order to empower participants by providing a respectful research environment (Campbell & Wasco, 2000; Liamputtong, 2007). This may be accomplished
through the involvement of participants in the research process. In this study, this was done through letting the participants decide how they preferred to be interviewed. Further, feminist research strives towards a non-hierarchal relationship between the participants and the researcher. As such, how the researcher’s status as an outsider studying a minority group could implicate the research was reflected over throughout the project. In this study, the feminist framework was adopted while planning and conducting the study: from the recruitment of participants, data collection methods, research procedures, and ethical considerations.

To explore veiled Muslim women’s experiences of Islamophobic victimization, eight women were interviewed through individual or focus group interviews. Three of the women also wrote diaries about their everyday experiences of Islamophobia. All of these data collection methods put the women’s views at the centre stage and gave voice to their personal views and experiences. Specifically, the use of the diary method allowed the women to write about issues they themselves considered to be important.

Recruitment and participants
The aim with the sampling was to recruit women who could provide rich information within the topic under study, co called purposive sampling (Patton, 2002). That this study was set in Malmö was beneficial for the recruitment since Malmö has a large Muslim population. As there is no official data on religious views in Sweden it is hard to know an exact figure. However, the population with a Muslim background in Malmö have been estimated to around 50 000. Nearly 10 000 of these are members of a Muslim association, which is about 3% of Malmö’s total population (Lagervall & Stenberg, 2016).

When conducting research on a minority group, the recruitment process has been described as difficult (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Liamputtong, 2007). This difficulty may depend on the group’s perceptions of outsider researchers (Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). In this study, participants were accessed through representatives from three associations directed at young Muslims in Malmö. Accessing research participants through trusted members of a group, so called “informal gatekeepers”, has been shown to be a successful strategy (Liamputtong, 2007; Moore & Miller, 1999). However, there are also problems with accessing participants in this way. For example, gatekeepers may deny access if they do not see the benefits of the research to participants (Emmel, Hughes, Greenhalgh, & Sales, 2007).

Furthermore, accessing through associations have been described as suitable when recruiting minority participants (Bonevski et al., 2014; Liamputtong, 2007). Yet, Garland et al. (2006) have argued that this might not be optimal since there is a risk of over-reliance on the views of community leaders. Instead, Garland et al. recommend gaining grass root access to minority groups. The risk of only accessing community leaders was not imminent in this study since the associations in question are small and directed at younger Muslims. They can therefore be considered as grass-root level.

All representatives of the contacted associations expressed willingness to participate and helped with the recruitment. The inclusion criteria for participation were that the informants were female, lived in or around Malmö, identified as Muslims, wore some sort of Muslim veil (daily or sometimes), were above 18 years of age, and spoke Swedish or English. These narrow inclusion criteria made recruiting
through Muslim associations appropriate. Further, one participant did not live in Malmö but was there every day due to her occupation. As such she was still considered eligible for inclusion.

In total, eight women were recruited to take part in a focus group or individual interview. All of the women wore the hijab on a daily basis and were between 18 and 27 years of age. Their occupations were university students, secondary school students, and employees. Two of the women were on parental leave at the time of the interview. In terms of their national background, three of the women described it as Balkan and five described it as Middle Eastern.

Data collection and materials

Three different data collection methods were applied in this study: focus group interviews, individual interviews, and written diaries. This was considered appropriate as these methods have different strengths and weaknesses, which will be described below.

Focus groups and individual interviews

To involve the women in the research process, participants were offered to choose between individual or focus group interviews. Five women chose to be interviewed individually, and three chose to be interviewed as a group. All of the interviews were held between the 16th of February and the 3rd of March, 2016. They lasted between 56 minutes and 1 hour and 33 minutes and the median time was 1 hour and 3 minutes.

Focus groups are often used for researching vulnerable groups and for sensitive research topics, and have been used in previous studies on hate crime victimization (Perry & Alvi, 2011; Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). Wilkinson (1999) argues that focus groups shift the balance of power and control away from the researcher, towards the research participants. As such, focus groups avoid issues of exploitive power relationships, and have therefore been utilized within feminist research and research on minorities (Liamputtong, 2007; Wilkinson, 1999). Further, focus groups provide an environment in which participants can express their views among people who share similar experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Liamputtong, 2007). Due to this, issues with misrepresentation of participants experiences is considered to be less prominent with focus groups than individual interviews, therefore this was considered a suitable data collection method.

When conducting focus groups, a number of issues needs to be considered regarding the group composition. The focus group participants were homogenous as they consisted of young, veiled Muslim women in Malmö. This is practice in focus group research as people are thought to be more comfortable to talk openly among people from similar backgrounds (Liamputtong, 2011). A homogenous group is also suitable when the goal is to gain knowledge about the experiences of a certain issue (Liamputtong, 2011). Moreover, given the sensitive topic of this study, the focus group consisted of women who already knew each other. Peek and Fothergill (2009) note that one of the aspects that contributed to the success of the data collection in Peek’s (2003) research with Muslim American students post-9/11, was that the focus groups consisted of friends and acquaintances. A final issue to consider concerns the size of the group. The focus group in the current study consisted of three participants. Several researchers have recommended such
small groups to be appropriate, especially when participants are personally involved in the topic and the goal is to gather rich discussions (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Morgan, 1998; Peek & Foothergill, 2009).

Despite the benefits of using focus groups, this data collection method has been argued to be less suitable when asking in detail about participants’ personal experiences (Liamputtong, 2007). By virtue of this, individual interviews are often used when researching sensitive, personal, topics (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Liamputtong, 2007). As the interviews would concern the informants’ personal experiences, it was considered appropriate to conduct individual interviews since this could contribute to participants being more willing to share personal information.

The same interview guide was used for both the focus groups and the individual interviews (see Appendix A). Within focus group research, the aim with the guide is to cover a range of questions that participants should discuss. Questions should prompt a discussion between participants, rather than making them reply to the moderator (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In individual interviewing, the interview is more of a conversation between the informant and the interviewer (Braun & Clarke, 2013). As such, the author of this study was more active and adhered more to the guide during the individual interviews.

The interview guide was built on previous research about hate crimes against veiled Muslim women (Allen, 2015; Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). Moreover, since there is little research on hate crimes as message crimes, it was considered appropriate to consult a researcher within this field. The author e-mailed Barbara Perry (Professor at the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, University of Ontario Institute of Technology) and received the focus group guide she has used in her research. The questions that suited the aim with the current study were included in the interview guide (question 2, 17, 18, and 19). As recommended by Braun and Clarke (2013), the interview guide started with less sensitive opening questions to get the interviewees warmed up. The interview guide was organized into different topics: personal experiences of hate crimes, impacts of such incidents, general experiences of belonging to a targeted group, and views on how hate crimes affect the society. The guide ended with closing questions to allow for unaddressed topics to be brought up and to learn how the interview had been experienced by the informants.

**Written diaries**

A third type of data collection method was also applied in the study: written diaries. Diaries were considered specifically useful in the current study since previous research shows that veiled Muslim women’s experiences are characterized by ‘everyday’ Islamophobia (Allen, 2015; Listerborn, 2010; Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). Diaries are generally used to catch such everyday experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Liamputtong, 2007). Thus, the diaries were aimed to work as a help for the informants to remember Islamophobic incidents better and to get insight into their day-to-day lives. After all interviews, the participants were asked if they wanted to participate in writing diaries and the aim with the diaries was explained. All of the women consented to this.

The diaries were researcher-directed, which means that they were produced for a specific research purpose (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The women were instructed to write down all types of Islamophobic incidents they experienced, when and where
it happened, why they perceived it as Islamophobic, and how the incident made them feel. Instructions were handed to the informants in written form (see Appendix B). Diaries have been used in a variety of research fields, mainly within quantitative research but increasingly in qualitative research. For example, Meth (2003) used diaries in her research on South African women’s experiences of crime and violence.

The informants were asked to write diaries during approximately a week’s time. This was considered an appropriate time frame in order for the diaries to not be too time consuming (Braun & Clarke, 2013). However, several of the women did not think that a week was enough, particularly women who did not spend a lot of time away from home due to being on for example parental leave. In such cases, they were given more time to work on the diaries. In total, three of the women finished the diaries and emailed them to the author. These diaries differed in length, between half a page to three pages.

A final remark should be noted in regards to the data collection methods. A critique to asking questions directly about an issue is that one might ‘get what you ask for’ (Carlsson, 2012). In light of this, it is possible that the women would have overstated experiences of victimization, since this was what the researcher asked about. However, in this study this did not appear to be an issue as the women rather downplayed their victimization.

**Procedure**

The first step of the project was to contact the associations in question through their e-mail addresses or Facebook pages. In the messages, the overall aim and general information about the study was described, such as criteria for participation. When contact had been established with representatives and they had found women who wanted to be interviewed, the planning of the interviews began.

The interviews took place in different locations depending on what was suitable for the participants. It was important that the informants felt comfortable at the location and that it was easy for them to get there (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Liam-puttong, 2007). As such, the interviews took place at a mosque, at participants’ homes, at the associations’ premises, and in group rooms at Malmö University library. The university group rooms were suggested to all women as an alternative if they did not have any specific preferences on where to be interviewed.

First, the participants were welcomed and thanked for their participation. The aim of the project was described and the purpose of the interview/focus group was explained. Participants were handed the information letter (see Appendix C) and ethical considerations were also explained verbally. The participants filled out demographic forms (Appendix D), signed the consent forms (Appendix E), and basic rules were gone through. After this, the audio recorder was turned on.

After the focus group interview, participants were asked to contact the author for an individual interview if there was something they felt they had not been able to express during the focus group. However, none of the participants did so. The audio records were transcribed into written text as soon as possible after the interviews. The transcribed material was then de-identified and stored in a password protected folder on a computer. All interviews were listened to once again after the transcription to check for errors.
**Thematic analysis**
The method applied to analyze the interview material was thematic analysis, which is used for identifying patterns, themes, of meaning across a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2013). There are a number of choices to make before conducting a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this study, the analysis focused on the women’s experiences, experiential thematic analysis, rather than on how topics are constructed. Further, the approach was inductive, which means that the analysis was data-driven and not guided by theory. However, it is not possible to be completely free of theoretical and epistemological preconceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The idea of an entirely objective researcher has been rejected by for example Malterud (2012b) and it is not argued that a completely neutral interpretation of the data was done. Further, the approach was semantic: themes were identified within the explicit meaning of the data and not underlying, implicit meanings. Finally, the analysis focused on the whole data set rather than on one aspect of the data, which is suitable for topics that are under-researched.

The process of analysis was adopted from Braun and Clarke (2006) and include six stages. As described by Malterud (2012a), the qualitative data analysis must be structured in order for others to understand how it was conducted. The process of analysis starts when patterns of meaning are beginning to be noticed and ends with a written report of the content and meanings of the identified themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the first stage of the thematic analysis the key was to familiarize with the data, which included transcribing the recorded material. The transcription was orthographic, meaning that focus was on what was said during the interviews and not how it was said. After all the data had been transcribed, the whole data set was read through and an initial list of ideas was written down.

The second phase involved producing initial codes from the data. Codes identify a feature in the data that seems interesting to analyze and differ from the themes in that the latter are generally broader. The whole data set was gone through several times in order to identify aspects in the data that could form patterns. The data material was coded manually with highlighters, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006; 2013). This was time consuming as the whole data set consisted of approximately 110 pages. When the whole data set had been coded, the codes were collated to get an overview of how the data extracts matched each code. At this stage, certain revisions were done: some codes were combined into one code, data extracts were re-coded, and other codes were divided into two new codes.

The third phase of the analysis began when all the data had been initially coded and when a list had been compiled of all the codes. At this point, there was a broader focus on the themes rather than the codes. The main focus was on sorting the codes into potential themes and to consider how different codes may combine into a theme. A mind map was used as a help to represent how different codes could form into themes. At this stage, some codes were found to form a theme on their own, and other codes were combined into one main theme. At the end of this stage five main themes and two sub-themes had been identified.

During the fourth stage, the identified themes were refined. The data extracts were gone through to make sure that there was enough data to support each theme and sub-theme. This phase included two levels of refinement and reviewing. First, all data extracts for each theme were reviewed to consider if they formed a coherent pattern. When extracts did not fit into a theme properly, data extracts were either
moved under another theme or the theme was reworked. When the themes ade-
quately captured the coded data, the validity of themes in relation to the whole
data set was considered: the data set was reread to consider if the themes worked
in relation to the data. Also, data that was missed earlier was now coded. At the
end of this stage, four main themes and four sub-themes had been formed. These
were also the final identified themes.

The fifth stage of the analysis involved defining and refining the themes. It was
identified what each theme was about, and it was decided what part of the data
each theme captured. This was done by going back to the data extracts for each
theme and organizing them into a coherent account with an accompanying narra-
tive. It was important to consider both the story that each theme tells, and also
how this story fitted in to the broader story about the data, and in relation to the
research questions, to make sure that the themes were not too overlapping. During
the last stage, the final analysis and writing of the results was completed. This in-
volved telling the story of the data to convince the reader of the analysis’ validity.
Also, a mind-map was made in order for the reader to get an overview of how the
themes relate to each other.

**Ethical considerations**

General ethical guidelines recommended for qualitative research was applied in
this study. First, the project was approved by the Malmö University ethics council
on the 29th of January. As described previously, participants received verbal and
written information about the project before the interviews. The participants were
given all the important information about the study in order to make an informed
decision, such as the aim with the study, methods, how the collected data would
be handled and that participation was voluntary (Codex, 2014). The participants
signed consent forms and were informed about that they could withdraw from the
study at any time (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The right for participants to not be harmed by research is an important ethical con-
sideration (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This is central for all research, but is particu-
larly significant when researching vulnerable groups (Liamputtong, 2007). As the
interviews brought up topics that could evoke negative emotions, contact infor-
mation to victim support agencies were attached in the information letter. Partici-
pants’ names were replaced with pseudonyms in the transcribed materials and
sensitive information that could contribute to identification was replaced or re-
moved from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Information about the participants
was handled carefully, once the data was transcribed the audio files were deleted.

As this study was conducted on a minority group to which the researcher does not
belong, ethical considerations in relation to this had to be taken into account
throughout the project. Whether or not outsiders should conduct research on mi-
norities have been a debated issue among social scientists (e.g. Garland et al.,
2006). Generally, the critique against research conducted by outsiders focus
around that they cannot truly understand or represent the experiences of minorities
(Garland et al., 2006). This suggests that the researchers must belong to the group
under study in order to fully understand their experiences, particularly when doing
research on vulnerable groups, such as veiled Muslim women. For example
Spalek (2005; 2002), found herself overlooking important parts of black, Muslim
women’s stories of racial abuse due to her outsider status as white.
However, while some aspects of a researcher’s outsider status can lead to misrepresentation, other aspects can help to document the group’s experiences (Garland et al., 2006; Tinker & Armstrong, 2008). As noted by Zempi and Chakraborti (2014), Zempi’s outsider role was beneficial when interviewing veiled Muslim women. As Zempi was aware of her status as an outsider and limited knowledge of Islam, this consciousness was used as means to gain rich data from the participants. Zempi emphasized her outsider status as a non-Muslim in order to gather more detailed answers. Zempi and Chakraborti contend that this may have empowered the women, as they were put in a role as experts. It has also been argued that if a researcher is too close to the area under investigation, this can have implications for their objectivity (Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). While the researcher’s outsider status may limit their understanding of the material, it can also improve the analysis since the researcher has a certain distance from the topic (Tinker & Armstrong, 2008).

The researcher’s outsider or insider status has significance for the whole research process. Thus, it is important for researchers to reflect over their identities in relation to participants and how this might implicate the research (Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). However, being an outsider or an insider should not be seen as a binary, instead researchers should examine the opportunities that different positions can bring (Tinker & Armstrong, 2008; Zempi and Chakraborti, 2014). The binary divide between insiders and outsiders does not recognize our multiple positions in society. Although the author of this study differs from the informants in important ways, such as religion, there are similarities too. For example, both Spalek (2005) and Zempi and Chakraborti highlight that the female researchers relied on their gender to establish trust with the Muslim women in their studies.

The author of this study was aware of the issues of an outsider researching a minority group. For example, the issue of exploiting participants’ negative life experiences in order to write a thesis was seen as potential problem. This is not something that is possible to overcome by a methodological design, although the feminist framework aimed to empower the participants. On the other side, the aim with using their experiences was to give voice to a group that is generally not heard. At the end of the interviews, participants were asked how they had experienced it and all of them had only positive feedback to give. This may not be surprising since the feedback was not given anonymously and it is probable that they were unwilling to express negative experiences directly to the person interviewing them. Yet, the majority of the women expressed that they were glad to see that someone from outside their community cared about the issues that they face. As such, it is possible that the author was seen as an ally by the women, rather than an exploiter. The question of whether or not an outsider should conduct research on a group to which they do not belong does not have one right answer. In the current study, the positives of gaining knowledge about, and highlighting the experiences of, a marginalized group were considered to outweigh the potential drawbacks.

RESULTS

The thematic analysis resulted in that four main themes were identified from the interview data: a) Islamophobia is a part of veiled Muslim women’s everyday life, both in public places and in more formal settings, b) awareness of Islamophobic
hate crimes induces a feeling of “if it can happen to her, it can happen to me too”,
c) Islamophobic hate crimes restrict these women’s lives, both through making them alter their behaviours and through creating geographical boundaries in Malmö, finally, d) international and political issues increase Islamophobia towards them.

Islamophobia – a part of everyday life
Islamophobic incidents were experienced to be a normal and common part of the informants’ day-to-day lives. This included both displays of Islamophobia in public places and discrimination and other types of negative treatment in more formal settings, for example schools.

The public sphere
All of the women had experienced Islamophobic incidents in public places by unknown people in Malmö. This was described as a common feature of their everyday lives. Every one of the informants had experienced, often multiple times, that people would mumble or yell abusive comments at them. Such verbal abuse often included name-calling and swear words, such as ‘fucking Muslim’ and ‘terrorist’. These comments could also indicate that they were not welcome in Sweden, such as ‘go back to where you came from!’ As such, it was often clear that the verbal abuse was directed at them because of their Muslim identity:

We were taking a walk one evening, me and my mum, and there was a drunk person who walked past us and started like swearing, like curse words erm and saying “you are terrorists, you are Muslims”, yeah like that. (Farida)

Erm yeah and then, it’s been a lot of you know people who yell comments it’s, like it’s normal, it’s really like when you go outside, you are just waiting for someone to say something, you know it will come erm and I have experienced that a lot. (Sara)

The informants described that Islamophobic incidents could happen anywhere in the public sphere. Places that were brought up as common for such abuse to occur were streets, squares, and buses. Physical abuse was less common than verbal abuse, but two of the women had experienced being pushed by unknown people in the street. These physical attacks were not viewed as particularly serious, and one of the informants described that she was lucky to have only been pushed. This illustrates the perceived ordinariness of Islamophobic attacks. Unless an offender caused physical harm, victimization was not viewed as a serious matter.

Further, all of the women described that they often experienced hostile stares in public. These more low-level incidents made the informants feel uncomfortable in public places, one woman described it as when it happens, she can feel the racism in society. Other more subtle forms of Islamophobia included experiences of not being treated well or ignored in public places, such as grocery stores. These more invisible incidents were especially understood as Islamophobic by the women who had started to wear the headscarf recently. They explained that there was a large difference in how they were being treated in public since they started to veil:
When you start to look different and practice your religion differently [...] then I’ve started to get stared at more and stuff and discrimination in different ways. (Elira)

Moreover, several of the women described that they had become used to Islamophobic incidents and that it did not affect them as much anymore. The informants stated that it would be impossible to get upset every time such incidents occur and, thus, had to ignore them. Hence, Islamophobia was perceived to be a part of life that one could not do anything about:

*I have been through it so many times that I have started, it’s always in the back of my mind but at the same time I feel like I can’t be bothered anymore, but it’s still there.* (Sara)

*I can’t be bothered to like for me I don’t care, you feel like that because if you would react on everything that happens [...] it’s not possible so eventually you just give up.* (Elira)

Although Islamophobic incidents and hate crimes were perceived as ordinary and normal, it made the women experience a range of negative emotions. Feelings brought up by the informants included discomfort, fear, anxiety, anger, disappointment in society, sadness, and like they were inferior to other people. For example, one informant described that verbal abuse made her scared because she feared that the perpetrator would become violent or use a weapon towards her.

Another common feature of these public displays of Islamophobia was that the offender would often get shocked if the women began to argue with or question their actions. This was interpreted as part of the stereotypes they face as Muslim women. People expect them to be passive and subordinated, and that they will not oppose Islamophobic abuse. Due to this, several of the informants said that they thought that they were perceived as easy targets from the offender’s perspective:

*Yeah because I'm sure that they are thinking that “she is oppressed at home by her father and her husband, she doesn’t dare to say anything so then I might as well tell her whatever I want to too.”* (Mona)

As such, the women were aware of how they were perceived by others. Another incident where these stereotypes were evident was described by another woman. An unknown man got so surprised from seeing her and her veiled friends driving a car that he wanted to take a picture of them:

*Sometimes it can be that you know people look at you like you’re some kind of alien, it’s weird if you do things like that, it’s weird that you drive a car for example.* (Maryam)

Such incidents were described as dehumanizing and several of the informants said that they felt that other people did not view them as actual persons with a voice of their own.

**Discrimination in formal settings**
The women’s experiences of Islamophobia were not limited to incidents by unknown people in public, but also stretched into more formal settings. The majority of the informants had experienced negative treatment or discrimination in schools,
at work places, and in health care settings. Several women had experiences of teachers bullying them because of the veil. Such incidents were described as especially hurtful since they were perpetrated by people they should be able to rely on:

One time in the classroom she says ‘is your hearing bad? Is it the headscarf that covers your hearing?’; and then another time [...] she yelled at me “come back here before I rip your veil off!” so that was like horrible, it was a different thing when the pupils, the pupils said stuff like that but a teacher, it was crazy. (Leyla)

And as I got older I started like then, then I was exposed to many, many discriminations and like erm it started in school for example I remember, I had several teachers who constantly, the whole, whole time would comment on my headscarf and would degrade me all the time because of the headscarf, and even when I like had reported him to the principal, then the principal wouldn’t do anything about it. (Sara)

Having an authority figure express Islamophobic sentiments was a particularly negative experience which instilled a sense of helplessness. When the school principals did not take such incidents seriously, this made the women feel like the teachers’ behaviours were justified and acceptable. As such, the informants who had experienced abuse by teachers described this as among the worst incidents of Islamophobia they had been exposed to.

Another experience described by all of the women concerned being met with prejudices that indicated that people view them as the stereotypic, passive veiled woman. All of the informants had experienced that others would become surprised over the fact that they know Swedish or have an education. For example, one woman, Hana, who was born in Sweden and had lived here her whole life, said that she often receives questions about where she is born when talking to her teachers. This questioning and ‘otherization’ could, again, make the women feel like they were inferior to others:

Or that someone becomes overly surprised because you study at the university, like erm like only because I’m wearing a headscarf I can’t study yeah it, it becomes obvious that they view us as inferior you know. (Leyla)

Other experiences from more formal settings included being excluded from the social context. Two informants described that when they began to wear the veil, their classmates had started to treat them differently: they stopped talking to them, hanging out with them, and started calling them names. Another woman described how she was ignored by a co-worker at her trainee job, which resulted in that she lost the joy of going to work due to the mistreatment she experienced:

Then there was a woman who really had something against me [...] I really noticed that she did not like me and it wasn’t like she knew me because I didn’t even get the chance to introduce myself, it was really like “I’m not talking to you.” (Elira)

This exclusion was also experienced by some of the women who were university students. Being excluded in this setting was described as mainly being due to the existing drinking culture among students:
It’s like you kind of, you get left out you get excluded yeah I brought up as a suggestion that we could do something else so that, so that everyone could come along but nobody cared. (Leyla)

Being excluded in a university setting may have negative effects on school achievements since much of the work requires friends in class that one can pair up with. One woman described that it was common among her veiled Muslim friends to not write their theses as they did not have anyone to write it with.

Experiences of being mistreated or discriminated against by authority figures such as teachers, principals, and health care personnel instilled a sense of loss of trust in these establishments. This made the women feel like they had no one to turn to if they needed help, and could result in that they avoided to seek help for their problems because of previous negative experiences:

Teachers are my security, when something happens to me during recess I’m gonna go and tell my teacher, but now that my teacher has said something to me who can I tell then, then I don’t have any sense of security in school there is no one I can trust. (Nadia)

And then it really turns into like you don’t trust people anymore, you stop going to the doctor, you stop going to psychologists, you stop like where are you going to end up, where can you turn. (Sara)

As such, several of the informants said that they would not seek help from such establishments, but rather turn to friends or family for support. This loss of trust in authorities was also evident in the women’s view of reporting Islamophobic hate crimes to the police. Several informants described an unwillingness to do so because they knew, either from their own experiences or from others’, that reporting would not lead to anything. Some women were positive to reporting to the police by reason of highlighting the problem of Islamophobia in society, not because they thought that the police authority could help them. This is illustrated by the following extract from the focus group:

Nadia: That’s why it feels like is it even worth reporting, okay yeah you highlight that there is a problem but still you don’t get anything back from it, it feels like this it’s we that, it’s we that need to start, what’s the word

Farida: Like something big has to happen for the police to act on it and then they don’t act because, I don’t know

The point that something serious has to happen was expressed by several women and once again highlights the perceived ordinariness of their experiences. Several informants described that verbal abuse was so normalized that they did not see the point of reporting it to the police:

It’s almost embarrassing, because it’s so normalized, it’s so common like if I get called “fucking Muslim” am I gonna go and report that? What are they supposed to tell me, that’s what society looks like, so no I don’t know. (Maryam)
“If it can happen to her, it can happen to me too”

In the same vein as Islamophobia was described to be a normal part of these women’s lives, so was hearing about other women’s exposure to hate crimes. Every single one of the respondents stated that it was common for them to hear about other women being exposed to Islamophobic hate crimes. The majority of the participants spontaneously told stories about people they knew who had been physically attacked, for example by getting their headscarf ripped off.

*It spreads, because that friend I have knows someone and she has experienced that or her friend has or her aunt or her cousin will talk about it like “do you know what happened to them?” [...] or people share stuff on Facebook like “today I was in the city and I got beaten up.”* (Elira)

Due to the fact that the informants often heard about other women who had been victims of violent hate crimes, some of the interviewees said that it surprised them that they had not been more exposed to violent attacks themselves:

*I’m only waiting for it to happen actually, because I think it’s weird that is has happened to so many but not to me, like certain more brutal things like erm I don’t know there was one woman in Stockholm who got kicked in the stomach when she was pregnant.* (Maryam)

Even if the women had not been exposed to violent hate crimes themselves, it was expected to happen, and it was perceived to only be a matter of time before they would get attacked too. This anticipation of Islamophobic hate crimes stemmed from both accounts from friends and media reports of hate crimes. The awareness that there is a risk of being exposed to hate crimes led the women to experience fear of being victims themselves. One informant described that after a hate crime case which attracted a lot of attention in the media, she became more afraid of violent attacks and started to feel a heightened sense of discomfort in public places. Two other women describe how they are affected by hearing about hate crimes against Muslim women in the following quotations:

*Hmm, yeah you always have, you are always afraid, of course [...] I’m always afraid that there might be prejudiced people who will hit you on the back or, because you have heard stories about that.* (Hana)

*It’s like a signal for “Nadia watch out you have to be more cautious.”* (Nadia)

This demonstrates that Islamophobic hate crimes against veiled Muslim women affect the group to which the direct victim belongs. Hearing about hate crimes created a fear of future abuse among these women. The interviewees were aware that the reason they would or could be victimized was because of their identity as Muslim women. Since they understood this as the reason behind their vulnerability, several informants stated that if it can happen to other veiled, Muslim women, it can happen to them too:

*Mm like it can happen to me because it wasn’t anything personal towards her because she is like that [...] it’s not about who you are as a person, how you think, who you are but it’s only about “you wear a veil so that’s why I will*
start calling you names” so that’s why it might as well happen to me too.
(Nadia)

This instilled a sense of vulnerability among these women as they perceived that there was nothing they could do to prevent victimization. To take the veil off to prevent being victimized was not seen as an option by any of the women, due to their strong religious faith. However, several of the informants said that they knew other women who had chosen to do so in order to hide their Muslim identity. Further, some interviewees also stated that the awareness of Islamophobic hate crimes made parents of younger veiled, Muslim women and girls scared for their safety. Thus, it has the potential to affect their families too:

That’s also why our parents are so worried about us, so worried about us when we are out like aren’t on time or when we like don’t call all the time just like because things have happened, like before. (Farida)

As Islamophobic hate crimes attack an important part of these women’s identity, a few respondents also highlighted that, apart from making them scared of attacks, hearing about Islamophobic hate crimes made them feel sad and disheartened:

Of course is makes you sad and you, you like you start feeling dejected you know, every time you hear about it over and over again. (Sara)

Victimization restricts life
The fear of Islamophobic victimization limited all of the women’s lives in different ways. The informants described that they altered their behaviours and spent a lot of time thinking about how they could decrease the risk for victimization. Their lives were also limited through what places they perceived as safe or unsafe, which created geographical boundaries in the city.

Alteration and negotiation of behaviours
Due to the threat of hate crime victimization in these women’s day-to-day lives, the majority of the informants described that they felt a need to be prepared or in other ways get ready to be victimized:

There is always that feeling like, even when you’re out on the street, I’m always ready, always, and it’s straining, you can’t relax, and that’s really exhausting. (Sara)

This readiness could be manifested in different ways, for example through being more careful and observant towards other people. Due to this sense of having to prepare for victimization, two of the women were planning to arrange a self-defence class and one woman was contemplating carrying a weapon for protection:

Sometimes I think that I should carry something like that protects me some smaller weapon maybe, just so that if something happens I will be able to erm defend myself […] in case someone attacks me. (Leyla)

That the women were prepared to be victimized was also apparent in how they avoided certain activities in order to decrease the risk for Islamophobic abuse. Several of the women described that they took different precautions, such as taking the car instead of the bus or avoiding going into the city at certain times:
Before I could feel more free to like go into the city or do this or that even though it’s late or stuff but I don’t do that today to be honest because you feel like but what if someone attacks me, just like erm so you don’t do these, you avoid public transport and just ‘no I’ll take the car instead’ because it feels safe. (Elira)

Another woman who had to take the train to another city a few times every semester asked her partner to take time off from work to go with her on the five hour train ride, due to fear of being victimized:

Yeah like on the train you’re gonna go on a long trip all alone, yeah I don’t know who you are gonna bump into so it always feels safe to have company. (Mona)

Several of the informants described that they brought someone with them as a protective strategy in public places. One woman explicitly stated that Islamophobic incidents generally happened when she was alone. In particular, bringing a man with them was described as decreasing the risk for victimization. Further, having children increased the use of precautionary efforts. These women described that they had started to be more careful since they became parents as they were afraid that their children would either witness an attack or get hurt because of them.

The awareness of the risk of Islamophobic victimization was also manifested in the ways the women negotiated what was safe for them or not. Several of the informants described that they spent a lot of time thinking about how they could avoid victimization through altering their behaviours. This included both minor behavioural changes and larger life changes. For example, one woman was contemplating moving to another country where wearing the veil is more accepted:

I don’t want to live in this fear like why should I have to do that? [...] Then you start thinking about many things in life and then you think like “Am I doing the right thing and, is it gonna be like this and maybe I should move away from here.” (Elira)

For several of the informants, this negotiation circled around trying to behave in ways that would not upset other people. An example of this is that one woman, who was afraid of being perceived as a terrorist while riding the train, avoided certain movements in order to not attract too much attention:

If I’m sitting down and just gonna like scratch my neck so like, oh they will probably think that ‘she has something underneath that she, she’s gonna push something’ it’s like completely crazy but I don’t know, every little move you make. (Maryam)

Another woman described that since after she started to veil, other people would get upset with her for minor matters. This led her to think more about how she behaves in public places:

It feels like I have more demands on me than you might have, if we were taking a walk right now like then I’d have to think more about “okay there is no crosswalk here maybe I shouldn’t cross here because then I’ll make a bad
impression” […] so like you you, I might think and ruminate more than others. (Mona)

As such, the women were aware of the prejudices they face as Muslims and of the risk for victimization. Thus, the women managed this risk through negotiating their behaviours according to Islamophobic stereotypes and by developing protective strategies. It was important for them to disprove prejudices, for example through ‘good’ behaviour. This illustrates how these women’s lives have strict limits on what is considered accepted behaviour, and that this is closely related to Islamophobic stereotypes, such as the aggressive Islamist terrorist.

Geographical boundaries
Another way that the threat of Islamophobic victimization restricted the women’s lives was through creating geographical boundaries in the city. Malmö was generally considered to be a safe city for Muslims compared to other cities in Sweden because of Malmö’s multicultural population. However, even though Malmö was considered to be safer than other places, this did not mean that they always felt safe there either. Several of the women expressed that they were aware that there would always be people who would not accept them:

You feel like safe and unsafe at the same time […] like it’s both yeah I like it here because I have people I know here, because it’s a lot of Muslims, because we have activities and restaurants and all that but at the same time I don’t feel comfortable because there are others who hate it. (Farida)

Perceptions about Malmö as safe or unsafe was closely connected to where in the city they spent their time. Every single one of the women stated that areas where there are a lot of Muslims or other people with similar backgrounds as themselves were “safe zones”. They perceived that the headscarf was accepted and did not raise a lot of attention in such places. Due to this, the risk of being exposed to an Islamophobic hate crime was judged to be lower in such areas:

That’s a place where I can be where I feel that I won’t be judged for example erm and that’s like you know you won’t get those weird stares […] it’s not that feeling of having to be ready all the time you know, someone will yell something or stuff so that’s nice, it’s like a little what’s the word, safe zone, for me anyways, and I think for many, many girls who veil, so that’s Rosengård. (Sara)

On the other hand, areas that the informants perceived to be typical ‘Swedish’ areas were considered less safe for them. Several women said that they felt like they did not belong in such areas. This was based both on their perceptions about different places in the city and their own experiences from having been there. The risk of being the victim of a hate crime was judged to be higher in such areas, which subsequently led to a fear of being victimized if spending time there:

Those stares, when you see those stares you understand “you’re in the wrong place.” (Mona)

Limhamn that’s where only Swedes live so like it has become like, no I don’t want to walk there alone because something might happen there like that someone attacks you. (Hana)
The informants had very clear perceptions about where is was and where it was not safe to be a Muslim woman. Different areas in Malmö were clearly divided into safe or unsafe zones. This may have a segregating effect as these women live their lives according to these geographical boundaries. For example, several informants stated that they avoided places where they did not feel safe. Perceptions of places as safe or unsafe have the potential to make these women self-segregate in order to protect themselves from Islamophobic hate crimes:

But I really think that immigrants especially like those who veil, Muslims, erm seek each other out I really think so, so it’s you feel safer that’s just how it is. (Sara)

Although all of the women described how their lives were affected by Islamophobic hate crimes, the majority of them also expressed different counter-reactions to the threat of victimization. This included the expression of a refusal of letting the fear of hate crimes hinder them in their everyday lives. However, as stated by one woman, even though she did not want the fear to influence her life, this was not always possible to change:

I used to feel safe in a way, but now that I wear the headscarf I can’t take those roads, not because I’m a coward but because I know something can happen, and sometimes I try to be stubborn [...] if something happens it’s gonna happen I don’t care but like you can’t do it without thinking about it anyways. (Maryam)

Another informant said that she tried to turn negative feelings, such as frustration, around to a positive force. Due to this, she held lectures in schools about issues such as racism, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism:

It’s an anger that I want to erm process and be able to really fight for them my sisters and brothers, the girls I know, my friends so no I’m gonna fight for their sake because no one should have to be attacked. (Hana)

**International and political issues**

All of the women believed that Islamophobia was increasing in Sweden, and that this was due to international events, the political climate, and media’s portrayal of Islam and Muslims in connection to this. The women’s perception that Islamophobia is growing also affected their lives, for example by increasing feelings of unsafety and fear.

The one factor that all of the women described as affecting their lives the most was attacks of terrorism in the name of Islam around Europe. When such attacks occur, the informants felt more afraid of going outside due to that the risk of being victimized was perceived to be larger in the aftermath of terrorist attacks. Several respondents said that such events, for example the terror attack in Paris in November 2015, changed their perception of Malmö as a safe place:

Like if you were gonna be exposed to an Islamophobic hate crime it was at that time because it was so new and everyone was thinking about it and expressed sympathy for what, what happened in France so it was a lot of like that you had to stay at home [...] I’ve always experienced Malmö to be a safe place but suddenly it was unsafe just because of that event. (Leyla)
And then when you go outside you feel like what if I get attacked now or do they hate me even more now [...] every time something happens you fear the consequences. (Elira)

This shows the impact international events have on these women’s lives. The respondents were aware that terrorist attacks would affect people’s perceptions of them. Thus, Islamophobic stereotypes about Muslims as a safety threat affect these women in their everyday lives, especially in the time following such attacks. The majority of the women also stated that the picture of Muslims as terrorists was exacerbated by the media coverage in connection to such events.

The women described that other factors than terrorist attacks could increase Islamophobic attitudes. Several of the informants said that the debate around the refugee situation in Sweden and Europe had increased Islamophobic sentiments. Although the majority of them were born and raised in Sweden, negative attitudes towards refugees affected these women. Thus, due to their identity as Muslims, they were put in the same category as refugees. This ‘otherization’ shows an unwillingness to view Muslims as more than a homogeneous group and being Muslim is not viewed as compatible with being Swedish. For example, one informant described that she had been singled out by her teacher during a class discussion about recently arrived refugees:

They always want you to say something as soon as it can be connected to you, I’m not a refugee, not that there would be anything wrong with being one, but why are you looking at me. (Maryam)

The refugee situation is a current topic within Swedish politics and the political climate was brought up by the majority of the women as adding to the increasing Islamophobia in society. Several respondents said that they thought that Islamophobia had become more normalized in recent years:

I didn’t think like this before but you have started developing this way of thinking just because you hear so much about that racism is increasing [...] so that’s gonna show in society, if I go out at night there’s a bigger chance that I am exposed to that racism just because I am a woman and wear a headscarf. (Leyla)

Apart from the risk of being exposed to hate crimes, Islamophobic attitudes in society made all of the women feel like they needed, or that it was expected of them, to defend Islam. All of the informants described that they often felt like they had to disaffiliate with terrorists in the wake of such attacks. People around them expected them to have an opinion about these attacks and to actively express dislike towards terrorist attacks or organizations:

We have to distance ourselves [...] it feels like it’s a pressure from society that you have to distance yourself in order for people to understand that you also oppose what happened, it feels, it still affects me, me who live in Sweden I’ll be affected by something that someone else did in another country. (Nadia)

This made the women feel like people viewed them as potential terrorist unless they expressed or showed them the opposite. Although, this was generally seen as
something negative, some of the informants also described that there were positive outcome of such international events. For example, some interviewees said that it could get other people interested in learning more about Islam:

*Because of these things like there’re both positives and negatives when these things happen, because when they happen we can show people the right side of Islam.* (Maryam)

Figure 1. Overview of themes and subthemes.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the themes and how they connect to each other. Islamophobic incidents and hate crimes were perceived to be a normal and common part of the informants’ everyday lives, and were experienced both in the public sphere and in more formal settings. These experiences of Islamophobia restricted the women’s lives in different ways, both through creating geographical boundaries in the city and through leading the women to alter and negotiate their behaviours. Further, awareness of Islamophobic hate crime against other Muslim women affected the informants by making them fear that they would too be victims. Finally, international and political issues were perceived to increase Islamophobic sentiments and also had the potential to restrict these women’s lives even further, by for example making the city feel like a less safe place to be Muslim in.

**Written diaries**

In the following section, the results from the diaries will be presented. The experiences described by the informants ranged from verbal abuse, hostile stares, and aggressive e-mails, to questioning and otherization. All diaries were detailed and contained a lot of information about the incidents the women had experienced. The diaries offer insight into experiences of Islamophobia that are perceived as normal parts of their lives and may not be as easily caught through interviews. As such, the diaries provide a detailed snapshot into the women’s everyday lives. The following quote illustrates a seemingly minor incident at a train station, but which instilled several negative emotions:
I get eye contact with a man who gives me an uncomfortable feeling. I turn around to avoid seeing his face. I look over now and then to confirm that it really is the way I think and that it’s not me who’s over-reacting. I turn around and see the anger in his eyes. Anger of something inside of him that wants to get out, and seeing me triggers him even more into reacting in some way. He’s pacing back and forth, back and forth. I can’t read his mind but I still feel a sense of discomfort and something is telling me to stop looking in his direction. A Swedish, white man in his thirties, who looks a bit like a skinhead [...] He’s still looking towards me while pacing back and forth, back and forth. Just like every other day I’m thinking ‘it’s coming now, something’s going to happen now, maybe he’s carrying something that can harm me’. In the middle of this thinking I get a picture in my head of what may happen. There’s my train. Maybe we will end up in the same carriage. No we didn’t, luckily. But we got off at the same station. Maybe I will see him again. (Informant 1)

Hostile stares may not be seen as particularly harmful, but as this quote demonstrates, such low-level incidents can have negative consequences. As all of the women were repeatedly exposed to different types of Islamophobia, it is not possible to understand these women’s experiences through only looking at one specific event since these are a part of a broader continuum. Further, the incident described above instilled a sense of fear as the informant interpreted this as a threat of physical violence. As such, the awareness that there is a risk of being victimized because of the veil may lead to that more minor incidents are interpreted in this way. None of the interviews were able to catch the feelings this woman describes in such detail provided above. Another informant describes the verbal abuse she experiences on her way to work in the following segment:

Today I walked to work like I always do. [...] On my way to work there’s a small hot dog stand that I always pass by. There are usually middle-aged men with Swedish backgrounds standing there. It’s very rare that I can pass by without getting stared at or have silent comments thrown at me. Today, no one said anything, but of course they all stared at me. It always feels uncomfortable, and I’m always afraid that someone will yell something stupid or in other ways provoke me. I usually chose to wear a hoodie or a jacket with a hood on it while I walk in that direction, as it’s also along a bicycle path. It is often that someone yells something while they bike past me. (Informant 2)

This woman was prepared to receive abusive comments from unknown men every day on her regular route to work. This repeated abuse in public made her feel like she constantly had to be on the alert, and be prepared to get victimized. As such, she had started to alter her behaviour and hide her Muslim identity in order to protect herself from this. On another day in her diary, she describes an incident of verbal abuse from a man at the same location:

It was frightening, especially since I was alone. I think it’s so painful that they take the liberty to hate you for no reason! When I came home I went straight to bed and slept through the rest of the day. (Informant 2)

Although this woman thought of these incidents as a normal part of her life, this did not mean that she was not affected by them when they occurred. The abuse
was interpreted as an attack on her identity, and that the perpetrator did this because of hate towards Muslims. The third informant described an incident at work where a client was eager to talk about the actions of Daesh and wanted to discuss Islam with her:

> Of course it made me feel like “oh no, do I need to ‘explain’ this again”. At the same time I felt that, it’s good that he asks since then I get the opportunity to explain. But then I sat there thinking “why do I need to explain? Why is it expected of me that I need to defend?” (Informant 3)

The informant saw positive sides of explaining Islam but it was still described as draining to have to do this over and over again. That other people expected her to do this because of her Muslim identity was a common feature of her life. As such, to not be seen as a potential terrorist herself, she had to actively oppose their actions. A similar situation was described by Informant 2:

> Today I was at home and was going to check the organization’s e-mail. And just like that, we had received yet another provoking message. This time from a middle-aged man with Swedish background. He wanted to know our position on all of the terror attacks in Europe and confirm our view on violence [...] He rounded off with a classical “I think all of you should fuck off!” Then he started to send articles about shootings that had happened in Malmö and asked us what kind of garbage we were up to [...] We decided that the next message will be reported to the police if he doesn’t leave us alone. It’s always hard to have to take sides on things you don’t have anything to do with. It’s very disturbing and unfortunately an everyday experience for many Muslims today.

From this, it is also more apparent that questions from people who ‘mean well’ may nevertheless be interpreted negatively as abusive comments and questioning were a common experience among these women.

**DISCUSSION**

The aim with this study was to explore how Islamophobic hate crimes were experienced by veiled Muslim women in Malmö. Islamophobic incidents and hate crimes were a normal part of these women’s everyday lives, and Islamophobic hate crimes were expected to happen. Due to this, the women were prepared to be victimized and structured their lives according to the threat of victimization. Thus, Islamophobia is an issue that permeates every aspect of their lives.

The sample in the current study was small and non-representative and it is therefore not possible to generalize the findings to all Muslim women in Sweden or in Malmö. However, the results generally support what has been found in previous studies on Islamophobia and Islamophobic hate crimes against veiled Muslim women (Allen, 2015; Listerborn, 2010; Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). The women’s experiences of Islamophobia were not isolated, one-off occurrences, instead, their experiences were characterized by repeated Islamophobic incidents over the course of their lives. As such, this was a common and thus anticipated part of their day-to-day lives. As noted by Listerborn (2010), although much of
Muslim women’s experiences may be seen as minor, they are a part of broader structures that make Islamophobia towards veiled Muslim women possible.

The feminist framework of the current study had implications for the whole research process: choice of topic, research questions, recruitment, data collection, research procedure, and ethical considerations. By focusing on the experiences of people who are generally not listened to, the purpose of the study was to generate new knowledge and challenge Islamophobic stereotypes about Muslim women in Sweden. This led to a focus on the women’s subjective experiences of Islamophobia. Such experiences were particularly highlighted by the current study’s use of the diary method. Although only three women completed this task, it gave detailed insight into their lives which was difficult to catch through interviews. In light of this, the advantages of this method should be considered in future research on Islamophobic hate crime victimization.

Islamophobia affected the women’s lives in a multitude of ways, one of the most consistent findings in regards to this was that the women experienced fear of future victimization. This was closely related to other women’s experiences of hate crimes, and thus, the claim that hate crimes are message crimes that affect the whole targeted group was supported in this study (Perry & Alvi, 2011). As such, and as argued by Perry (2014), hate crimes have the intended effect of instilling fear among Muslim women as a group. The fear of Islamophobic abuse restricted the women’s lives as they altered their behaviours in a number of different ways to manage the risk of victimization. Essentially, they were not able to live their lives as they wanted to. Such behavioral alterations have been reported previously (Funnell, 2015; Perry & Alvi, 2011; Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). For example, the majority of the women in Zempi and Chakraborti’s study had, in some way, altered their lifestyle to protect themselves from victimization. However, behavioural changes is not exclusive to the fear of hate crime victimization (Hvitfeldt, Westerberg, & Irlander Strid, 2016). But, what seems unique for actual and potential victims of hate crimes is how this affects their expression of identity.

In the current study, much of the women’s behavioural alterations circled around navigating through Islamophobic stereotypes. The perceived ‘difference’ of these women mark them, as symbols of Islam, as being in opposition to Western values of equality and democracy. Perceptions of Muslim women as potential terrorists was a highly noticeable feature of the women’s lives and they were very aware of their visibility in the public domain. As such, they altered their behaviours to disprove such prejudices and to avoid drawing attention in public. Previous research has found that Muslims try to become less visible in public, and thus less vulnerable, by adopting different strategies to conceal their ‘Muslimness’, for example by taking the veil off (Mythen, Walklate, & Khan, 2009; Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014). As noted by Perry and Alvi (2011, p. 67), such alterations are “not a voluntary choice, but the ‘safe’ choice”. In light of this finding, Islamophobic hate crimes threaten the liberty of veiled Muslim women and has the potential to affect their expression of identity.

The women in this study were also exceedingly aware of Islamophobic stereotypes that mark them as oppressed and passive. Such perceptions made them feel more vulnerable as they understood this as they were ‘easy’ targets to attack. Thus, the results of the current study can be understood through Zempi and Chakraborti’s (2014) framework of hate crime victimization, built on the concepts
of vulnerability and ‘difference’ proposed by Garland and Chakraborti (2012). Veiled Muslim women may not only be targeted because of their group belonging, but because they are seen as ‘easy’ targets to attack since they are perceived as ‘different’ and vulnerable. This has several paradoxes to it. As noted by Perry (2014), presumptive victims of oppression also become victims of Islamophobia, and the vulnerability they are degraded for is exploited by offenders. Further, by instilling fear among these women, Islamophobic hate crimes reproduce the passivity that Muslim women are rebuked for by leading them to, in multiple ways, protect themselves from victimization.

Furthermore, as proposed by Zempi and Chakraborti’s (2014) framework, the vulnerability of veiled Muslim women may also be enhanced by situational and temporal factors, for example international events. In the current study, a consistent finding was that international and political issues increased Islamophobic sentiments, which in turn enhanced the interviewed women’s fear of victimization. Thus, in the wake of terrorist attacks, perceptions about Muslims as terrorists may be even more apparent, which increases these women’s feelings of vulnerability in public places. This has also been found to be the case since research consistently shows that such dramatic events increase Islamophobic hate crimes (Borell, 2015; Peek & Meyer Lueck, 2012).

Another paradox to these women’s victimization is that, as noted by Allen (2015), veiled Muslim women are both visible and invisible at the same time. Stereotypes about Muslim women as subordinate made the women feel ‘otherized’ and as they were inferior to others. Such feelings of inferiority have been reported previously by Perry and Alvi (2011). They noted that hate crimes can make both actual and potential victims feel uncertain about their place in society and like they are less worthy than the majority population. These findings correspond with Allen’s argument: veiled Muslim women become essentialized through stereotypical universalities that are ascribed to all Muslims. Accordingly, “the veil renders the individual woman behind the veil invisible and irrelevant: de-individualised and de-humanised” (Allen, 2015, p. 300). The veil becomes the main symbol of Islam, which legitimizes Islamophobic attacks on these women, as it is Islam and not the individual woman who is targeted. In light of this, and as argued by Chakraborti and Zempi (2012), as political and social constructions of belonging are outlined along the dichotomy of ‘us’ and ‘them’, it is more imperative than ever to disrupt Islamophobic stereotypes.

**Segregation as a protective strategy**

Zempi and Chakraborti’s (2014) proposition that veiled Muslim women may be at increased risk of hate crime victimization in places where there are few Muslims was corroborated in this study. A consistent theme in the current study was that the women had clear perceptions about where it was safe and unsafe for them to go as veiled Muslim women. Areas with a large Muslim population were described as ‘safe zones’, the neighborhood Rosengård was particularly highlighted as a place where they felt protected from Islamophobic incidents. This finding has also been reported previously in Listerborn’s (2010) study on veiled Muslim women in Malmö, and she also found that Rosengård was perceived as the safest place in the city. On the other hand, areas dominated by a ‘Swedish’ population were perceived by the women in this study as unsafe, and that there was a higher risk for victimization there. As such, and as noted previously by Perry and Alvi
(2011), hate crimes creates geographical boundaries for these women which they do not feel welcome or safe to cross.

Areas that the women in this study perceive as safe are commonly described as unsafe and crime-ridden by media reports of Malmö (Hallin, Jashari, Listerborn, & Popoola, 2010). Also, certain parts of Rosengård have been reported by research as areas where a large proportion of the population feel unsafe, and conversely, areas perceived by the women as unsafe have been reported to be particularly safe areas (Ivert, Chrysoulakis, Kronkvist, & Torstensson Levander, 2013). Interesting to note is thus that these women’s perceptions about different areas in Malmö seem to be the opposite from these findings.

Yet, that more multi-cultural areas are perceived as safe is not unexpected as the veil obviously does not attract as much attention in places where it is more common. The interviewed women are not perceived as ‘different’ in these areas, and as such they go from being highly visible in areas dominated by the majority population, to blending in in more multi-cultural areas in the city. Thus, in areas where these women are not as visible, the risk of being exposed to Islamophobic incidents are less likely. This is a dimension that is generally not acknowledged in studies investigating different neighborhoods. As such, they do not reflect the realities of veiled Muslim women. As Malmö has a large Muslim population, the issue of fear of hate crime victimization in different neighborhoods is a topic that needs to be explored in-depth in future studies.

Malmö is city that is segregated into more affluent contra poor areas and areas populated by the majority contra minority population (Andersson, Brämå, & Hogdal, 2007). In discussions about segregation, the focus is generally on more disadvantaged neighborhoods populated by immigrants, which gives the impression that social problems are isolated to these areas (Andersson et al., 2007). Although neighborhoods in Malmö that are populated by a large proportion of immigrants are characterized by more problems than other areas (Ivert et al., 2013), for the women in the current study, spending time in these segregated neighborhoods is a protective strategy. As argued by Listerborn (2010), this creates a situation where these women’s lives in more disadvantaged neighborhoods may be unsafe, but not in comparison to the threat they experience from the surrounding society. That fear of victimization has the potential to lead to that these women self-segregate was found in Zempi and Chakraborti’s (2014) research, and was also highlighted among the women who participated in this study.

This self-segregation is also problematic, but not for the reasons generally highlighted in these discussions. For the women in this study, the problem is not in areas typically viewed as disadvantaged or unsafe. Instead, the problem is that they do not feel safe to live or spend time in other parts of the city. As argued by Zempi and Chakraborti (2014), veiling in a Western country is seen as purposeful isolation and rejection of Western values. However, for the interviewed women, self-segregation is a strategy for protection. Consequently, the self-segregation they are reprimanded for is reproduced by that they are not welcome in other parts of the city. As such, this becomes a form of victim blaming where these women seem to be unable to do the ‘right’ thing. By focusing on the experiences of people who are generally not heard, as is the purpose of a feminist framework, this
study has illuminated new perspectives on segregation in Malmö. Thus, the segre-
gation of predominantly ‘Swedish’ areas and what can be done to include Mus-
lims there is an issue that should to be taken into consideration by policy-makers.

Islamophobia – the responsibility of society as a whole
Since much of these women’s experiences are not criminalized actions, the con-
tinuum of Islamophobic victimization is not caught by official hate crime statis-
tics, police reports, or media reports. Furthermore, even when they are criminal
acts, victims of hate crimes generally have a low inclination to report victimiza-
tion (FRA, 2009). Therefore, it is difficult to measure the scope of the problem of
Islamophobic victimization. As described in the current study, and as shown pre-
viously (Djärv et al., 2015), the unwillingness to report incidents of Islamophobic
abuse is often due to that these crimes are not viewed as serious enough and that
the women do not have confidence in that the police can or want to help them.

Therefore, it is important that police officers who do encounter victims of hate
crimes are aware of the nature of Islamophobic victimization, as lacking support
to victims can add to the distress they experience and may lead to that victims do
not report such crimes in the future. For example, it has been reported that re-
spectful behavior towards hate crime victims coupled with thoroughness in victim
interrogations is crucial in order to achieve higher clearance rates and reporting
figures (Körner, 2016). Further, although one single crime may not be perceived
as particularly serious, it is likely that this is a recurrent feature of Muslim
women’s lives, which cumulatively can have serious consequences. As noted by
Garland and Chakraborti (2009), reducing hate crime victimization to one-off in-
cidents may lead to that the police fail to treat this victimization with the gravity it
merits. Police officers must be attuned to the fact that, just as has been highlighted
in the work against intimate partner violence (Walby & Allen, 2004), the first re-
ported crime is likely to not be the first they have experienced.

As argued by Zempi and Chakraborti (2014), as Islamophobia is growing, provid-
ing support to Muslim women as hate crime victims is more important than ever.
To respond to issues of Islamophobia and the under-reporting of these crimes in
the U.K, a non-governmental third party reporting agency, TELL MAMA, was es-
established in 2012 (Awan & Zempi, 2015). Although there is still little evidence
that such agencies are being used by victims, it is possible that the mechanisms
behind them could work as they provide a less intimidating way of reporting (Gar-
land & Chakraborti, 2009). As the trust in the police is generally low among hate
crime victims, third party reporting agencies is a possibility to explore further in
Sweden. Non-profit organizations that have support among the targeted group
would be a promising avenue for this (see Chakraborti & Hardy, 2015).

A suggestion put forward by the Swedish police authority to increase hate crime
victims inclination to report is to launch a national information campaign. This
was done successfully in the extensive work against intimate partner violence in
Sweden (Polisen, 2015). As research shows that hate crime victims may not view
what happened to them as serious enough to report (Djärv et al., 2015), inform-
ation campaigns have the possibility to increase awareness and reporting fig-
ures. However, such initiatives must be tailored to the targeted group (Chakraborti
& Hardy, 2015), specifically as it is probable that the diverse groups that Swedish
hate crime legislation aim to protect are differentially informed about their rights.
The issue of lacking confidence in authorities is not only restricted to the police. Being discriminated against by other agencies has consequences for people’s trust in these too (DO, 2010). That veiled Muslim women are subjected to discrimination from authorities have been highlighted by the current study, and has been reported previously (FRA, 2009; Ghumman & Ryan, 2013). This can impact on certain group’s inclination to, for example, seek help for health problems (DO, 2012). This was also found in the current study, discrimination in formal settings led the women to experience a lack of trust in that the health care system or their schools could help them, which led them to avoid seeking help from these establishments. The women rather turned to other Muslims in their personal network than sought help from officials. The finding that victims of hate crimes rarely seek support from official authorities, and instead turn to friends and family for support, is in line with previous research (Andersson & Mellgren, 2016).

It is probable that veiled Muslim women in general will have experiences of discrimination or other types of negative treatment from their contacts with officials. As these women experience Islamophobia in every part of their lives, there is a need for settings where these women work, study, or in other ways spend their time to be open and prepared to help these women when they experience Islamophobic incidents and hate crimes. Thus, Islamophobia is an issue that a wide array of public agencies must work towards combating. In order for this to happen, one must first understand these women’s experiences of Islamophobia and victimization. That public institutions have knowledge about these women’s particularly vulnerable situation in society is crucial. As stated by Mythen et al. (2009), it is critical for a variety of professions such as politicians, criminologists, and social workers to understand how Muslims “see themselves, are seen - and, perhaps, moreover, see themselves being seen” (p. 750). For example, as it is clear that Islamophobia increases in the wake of terrorist attacks in the name of Islam, being attentive to Islamophobic sentiments and discussing these issues may be beneficial for professionals such as school teachers, particularly as research has shown that every fourth Muslim child and youth is subjected to harassment or other violations during a given year (Otterbeck & Bevelander, 2006).

**The setting of the study**

The fact that this study was conducted in Malmö has implications for how the results can be interpreted. Malmö is a multicultural city and has a large Muslim population (Lagervall & Stenberg, 2016). It is conceivable that Muslim women in other parts of Sweden have different experiences than have been reported in the current study. The participants perceived Malmö to be a particularly safe city to live in as a Muslim. However, Malmö is also the city in Sweden with the largest proportion of Islamophobic hate crimes (Djärv et al., 2015). Yet, it is not unexpected that the women feel safer in Malmö compared to other cities, due to the cities large Muslim population. In Malmö they can feel less visible and thus less vulnerable in public compared to other, and particularly smaller, cities.

Hate crime is not a phenomena that is exclusive to larger cities such as Malmö. Rather, hate crimes are police reported in the majority of Sweden’s municipalities (Djärv et al., 2015). Moreover, several dramatic reports of repeated harassment directed at Muslims in small towns have been highlighted by Swedish media. In 2012, the small city of Forserum was in the spotlight. During several years, Somali Muslims were harassed and abused, both verbally and physically (Orrenius, 2012, August 25). In another small city close to Malmö, Tomelilla, a woman and
her children were exposed to threats, stone-throwing, and verbal abuse during a year’s time (Orrenius, 2011, January 9).

Media reports like these undeniably affected the interviewed women’s perception of smaller and rural towns in Sweden, and made them feel more vulnerable in such places since they are more visible and easier to identify there. Such increased feelings of vulnerability have also been reported in studies on hate crime victims in rural areas (Williams & Tregidja, 2013). Further, Chakraborti (2010) explored issues of racism in rural towns in England and found that many ethnic minority households thought that their quality of life was affected by being marginalized from their communities and by the constant fear of racist victimization. Chakraborti argue that what distinguishes rural from urban racism is the impacts of such experiences on households that lack peer-group and institutional support. Chakraborti found that there was a need for support from agencies to victims of racial harassment and abuse, but that there were serious issues with the effectiveness of support mechanisms. Specifically, agency workers believed that racism was not a rural problem.

In light of this, it is possible that hate crimes have more severe consequences for victims in small towns where the population is more homogenous, and minorities are likely to be more visible there. However, as most hate crimes are never reported, it is difficult to know where Muslims are more exposed to victimization in Sweden. And, as noted by Chakraborti (2010), the issue of racism against ethnic minorities in rural areas have generally been ignored within research. Thus, future research should include smaller rural towns in investigations of hate crimes and Islamophobia in Sweden.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Islamophobia is an issue that permeates veiled Muslim women lives across a multitude of arenas. For both actual and potential victims, Islamophobia and hate crimes threaten these women’s liberty in their day-to-day lives. As such, Islamophobia impacts the whole society since it undercuts fundamental human rights.

As veiled Muslim women still remain a group who rarely are heard, neither within academia nor within the general society, this study aimed to give voice to their experiences. By listening to these women, we can start to address their needs. As the only other study investigating Islamophobia and hate crimes against veiled Muslims women in Sweden was also conducted in Malmö, there are a multitude of areas surrounding the gendered dimensions of Islamophobia that needs more research. For example, there is a need for more large scale research and studies conducted in other contexts than in Malmö.

What is evident is that Islamophobia is an issue that has significant consequences for veiled Muslim women in Malmö today. As such, and as Islamophobia was present in virtually every part of the women’s lives, it is clear that Islamophobia must be recognized and targeted in a multitude of different settings. That the police, the health care system, the school system, and authorities alike have sufficient knowledge about these women’s vulnerability is key in combating Islam-
ophobia towards them. This is important for several reasons: to avoid discriminatory practices towards these women, to provide adequate support and avoid secondary victimization, and to increase confidence and trust in these establishments so that veiled Muslim women feel safe to turn to these for help.
REFERENCES


Diskrimineringsombudsmannen. (2012). Rätten till sjukvård på lika villkor. Ödeshög: DO.


Penal Code, chapter 16, section 8. (SFS 2002:800)


Penal Code, chapter 29, section 2, clause 7. (SFS 2010:370)


APPENDIX A

Intervjuguide

Öppningsfrågor
1. Hur skulle ni definiera hatbrott/islamofobiska hatbrott?
2. Hur utbrett tror ni att hatbrott mot muslimer är i Malmö?

Personliga erfarenheter
3. Vad är era personliga erfarenheter av islamofobi och islamofobiska hatbrott? (Vilken typ av brott/incidenter? Verbalt, fysiskt, eller mer osynliga typer av islamofobi? Hur ofta händer det ungefär?)
4. I vilken kontext brukar sådana incidenter ske? (När, var, av vem?)
5. Finns det vissa platser i Malmö som du uppfattar som ”trygga” och ”otrygga” för muslimer att vara på? (Vilka platser? Vad är det som gör att visa platser upplevs som trygga eller ottrygga?)
6. Ni som är studenter på MAH, hur upplever ni skolan? (Trygg eller otrygg?)
7. Varför tror du att islamofobiska incidenter sker? (Tror ni att slöjan är de största anledningen till er utsatthet?)

Konsekvenser
9. Har ni någonsin tänkt att ta av er slöjan för att känna er tryggare? (Varför/ Varför inte?)
10. Om du utsätts för islamofobiska hatbrott eller incidenter, hur får det dig att mår/känna?
11. Upptäcker ni att ni på något sätt är ”beredda” på att kunna bli utsatt för islamofobi/hatbrott? (Räddsla, beredskap?)
12. Ni som har utsatts för hatbrott, har ni anmält det till polisen? Varför/varför inte?
13. Har ni sökt andra typer av hjälp eller stöd, t.ex. från organisationer eller vänner?

Vara en del av en utsatt grupp - budsksapsbrott
14. Brukar du höra om muslimska kvinnor som utsätts för hatbrott? (Via media, vänner, släkt etc.)
15. Om/när du hör om sådana händelser, hur påverkar det dig? (Känslor- och betendemässigt?)
16. Upptäcker du att uppmärksammade händelser, till exempel terrorattentatet i Paris i höstas, på något sätt påverkar islamofobiska attityder mot dig eller andra muslimer? (Andra typer av händelser/faktorer som påverkar?)

Påverkan på det större samhället
17. Vilken påverkan tror du att islamofobiska hatbrott har på muslimer i Malmö?
18. Hur skulle du beskriva att ”klimatet” är för muslimer i Malmö? (Trygghet, trivsel, tillhörighet?)
19. Tror du att hatbrott kan påverka/påverkar förhållandet mellan muslimer och icke-muslimer? (Påverkar till exempel hatbrott/islamofobi hur du ser/uppfattar på människor som inte är muslimer?)

Avslutning
20. Är det någonting jag inte har frågat om som du skulle vilja lägga till eller berätta om?
21. Hur har ni upplevt att bli intervjuade om detta ämne? Vad har varit positivt eller negativt?
Guide till dagbok

1. Har du upplevt någon typ av islamofobi? Detta kan vara allt ifrån ”ovänliga” blickar, kommentarer, diskriminering, eller mer fysiska attacker. Det är din upplevelse som är det viktiga!

2. Var i Malmö skedde detta? Berätta gärna var (ex. Gustaf Adolfs torg) och i vilket sammanhang (t.ex. restaurang, affär, på gatan, bussen på gymmet).

3. Varför upplevde du det som islamofobiskt? (Var det något särskilt som sades t.ex.?)


5. Övrigt – skriv om det du tycker var viktigt under veckan!
Informationsbrev till masteruppsats om islamofobiska hatbrott


Min uppsats kommer bestå av ett antal gruppintervjuer och individuella intervjuer med muslimska kvinnor. För att delta i studien ska du vara kvinna, identifiera dig som muslim, bära någon typ av slöja (alltid eller ibland), bo i eller kring Malmö, vara minst 18 år och prata svenska eller engelska. Det spelar ingen roll om du själv har varit utsatt för ett hatbrott eller inte för att delta. Varje individuell intervju kommer att ta ungefär en timme att genomföra, och gruppintervjuerna ungefär två timmar.


Vid eventuella frågor eller funderingar, kontakta mig enligt nedanstående mailadress.

Med vänliga hälsningar,

Anna Lindström
Annam.lindstrom@hotmail.com
Under handledning av Caroline Mellgren
Caroline.mellgren@mah.se
APPENDIX D

Bakgrundsformulär

All information du lämnar här kommer att behandlas konfidentiellt, den är endast till för att veta variationen på er som intervjuas.

1. Ålder _____ år

2. Vilken är din huvudsakliga sysselsättning?
   Student ☐
   Anställd ☐
   Egen företagare ☐
   Arbetssökande ☐
   Annat, nämligen _____________________________

3. Hur skulle du beskriva din nationella bakgrund? (t.ex. Sverige, Mellanöstern, Somalia osv)_________________________

4. Vilken del av Malmö bor du i?
   Norr ☐
   Söder ☐
   Öster ☐
   Väster ☐
   Innerstaden ☐

5. Vilken typ av slöja brukar du bära? _____________________________

6. Hur många år har du burit slöja? _____ år
**APPENDIX E**

Samtycke från deltagare i projektet Bi-
laga 2

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<tr>
<th>Projektets titel: (ifylles av student)</th>
<th>Datum: (ifylles av student)</th>
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<td>2016-01-25</td>
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<tr>
<th>Studieansvarig/a: (ifylles av student)</th>
<th>Studerar vid Malmö högskola, Fakulteten vid hälsa och samhälle, 205 06 Malmö, Tfn 040-6657000</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anna Lindström</td>
<td>Utbildning: Master’s Programme in Criminology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Din E-post</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Annam.lindstrom@hotmail.com">Annam.lindstrom@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jag har muntligen informerats om studien och tagit del av bifogad skriftlig information. Jag är medveten om att mitt deltagande är frivilligt och att jag när som helst och utan närmare förklaring kan avbryta mitt deltagande.

Jag lämnar härmed mitt samtycke till att delta i ovanstående undersökning:

Datum:………………………………………………………………………..

Deltagarens underskrift:…………………………………………………