

**Grassroots Canadian Muslim Identity in the Prairie City of Winnipeg:
A Case Study of 2nd and 1.5 Generation Canadian Muslims**

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Abstract

What are grassroots “Canadian Muslims” and why not use the descriptor “Muslims in Canada”? This thesis examines the novel concept of locale specific grassroots Canadian Muslim identity of second and 1.5 generation Muslims in the prairie city of Winnipeg, Manitoba. The project focuses on a generation of Muslims that are settled, embedded, and active in a medium sized Canadian metropolis. Locale plays a powerful part in the way people navigate identities, form attachments, find belonging, and negotiate communities and society. In order to explore this unique identity a case study was conducted in Winnipeg. Interviews with 1.5 and second generation Muslims explored the experience of grassroots Canadian Muslim identity. The project does not focus on religious doxy or praxis but rather tries to understand a lived Canadian Muslim identity by exploring discourse and space as well as strategies, social perceptions and expectations. Participant observation, community resources and literature also aid in the understanding of the grassroots Canadian Muslim experience. This study found that the attachments, networks, and experiences in the locale give room for an embedded Canadian Muslim experience and more negotiable identities than most studies on Muslims in Canada describe. These individuals are not foreigners living in Canada. Their worldviews develop out of this particular and embedded grassroots experience. They navigate a new kind of hybrid Canadian Muslim identity that is unique and flexible. This is the Canadian Muslim experience of 2nd and 1.5 generation Winnipeg Muslims.

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CHAPTER 1

I always have to decide honestly how Muslim to look at each meeting I take. Like it's a conscious decision on my part... You don't want to look ethnic, you don't want to look too different... because now there's a bias against what I stand for. And so one identity is sort of, one of my identities isn't as welcome as the other identity.... I think in the past it was a lot easier. Now it's not so easy.... it's easy for people to look down upon us and feel superior... I'm not naïve enough to think that, umm, history can't repeat itself, I mean Canada's great... but it has a dark past... I mean I don't think its past any group of people to hurt another group of people, especially when they feel threatened or they feel superior. I think Islamophobia exists in Canada, I'm not naïve enough to think that it doesn't. But I don't think that it plays as big of a role as it plays in American politics and American culture. Excerpts from interview with Alia¹; a hijab-wearing Canadian Muslim woman in Winnipeg.

I was born and raised in Canada and I love every part of being Canadian... it plays a huge role in my life... being Canadian, being born in Canada. I feel like I have a lot of opportunities... Being Canadian means freedom of speech and... things like that. I don't ever feel that I am... that the country hinders on my capabilities, of, sort of, doing what I want... I do think that people are more tolerant and willing to embrace other cultures and even religions in Canada than they would in... maybe they wouldn't in other countries. Excerpts from interview with Anila; a post-hijab Canadian Muslim woman in Winnipeg.

INTRODUCTION

Recent controversies over the place of Muslim women in Canadian Public space,² the shariah tribunal debates effectively culminating in 2005³, the proposed 2014 Quebec Charter, public opinion,⁴ as well as proposed security updates⁵ and ongoing security profiling suggest a heavy bias against Muslims in Canada. This trend further suggests that the belonging of Muslims is, at this present time, a heavy public, socio-political burden in this nation. No whisper of diversity and no dialogue of the embeddedness of Muslim communities in their locales have entered the imagination of these biased anti-Muslim discourses. Minimal consideration has been granted to the identity and dimensions of second-generation Canadian Muslims except to say that they are rapidly becoming radicalized⁶. Media expounds this narrative and misses in disclosing the reality that many second-generation Canadian Muslims are, in fact, not interested in taking part in extremist regimes. The

¹ All of the interviewees' names have been changed to allow anonymity.

² Including the anti-hijab rhetoric employed by legal decision makers like the Quebec Judge, Justice Marengo, (Rukavina, 2005), and government officials (Taber, 2015; Payton, 2011) as well as misleading information shared by Canadian decision makers (McGregor, 2015).

³ CBCNews, 2005; Simmons, 2010.

⁴ For example the 2006 poll by Environics, the 2015 poll by Angus Reid, the opinions expressed in the Bouchard-Taylor commission, and attitudes like those reflected in the EKOS poll 2015.

⁵ More generally security profiling and more specifically legal implications like Bill C44 which many are worried to be directed at Muslims.

⁶ Though studies in Canada do not indicate such a rapid threat, media and policy changes do (Woods, 2015; Harris, 2015; Hall, 2014; Mulholland, 2015).

situation here in Canada is also not differentiated from that in Europe, where studies indicate radicalization at higher rates in combination with socio-political and economic dissatisfaction⁷. This bias is not new, just slightly different, perhaps, from the way Muslims were conceptualized a couple of decades earlier. Still perceived as outsiders, though arguably more for their skin colour being that of ‘otherness’ in general, Muslims and other minorities are often placed at the outskirts of Canadian-ness.

In the changing landscape of Canadian diversity, working towards understanding the complexities of second generation experience and identity negotiations is an opportunity to further our understandings of the effects and outcomes of immigration and its impact on citizenship and belonging in Canada. As the quotes above demonstrate, second generation Muslims in Canada express a spectrum of experience and feelings on their place in Canada, often both feelings of belonging and those of being ‘othered’ can reside within the same person. This qualitative research study is an attempt to shed light on the contemporary identity discourses and challenges of second and 1.5⁸ generation Canadian Muslims and show the diversity in Canadian Muslim identity.

“Where are you from?” Is a rather confusing question to someone born and raised in a particular place or society, as is being told to go home, when home is simply ‘here’. Foreignness, a misguided stereotype burdened on those of the non-majority skin colour and appearance is deeply embedded in the collective public imagination. This stereotype is thrust on many second generation Canadians at some time or another by misguided fellow Canadians. Like those participants in this study and others like them, it is an identity experience that many second-generation Canadians

⁷ For this reason the literature engaged in this study does not concentrate on European sources.

⁸ 2nd and 1.5 generation which I tend to refer to as second generation but encompasses children of the immigrant generation either born in Canada or having arrived at a young age. Read further for more discussion on what this means for this study.

encounter and feel forced to provide some form of an explanation⁹. I myself remember shopping in the local mall for school supplies at the age of 11 when an elderly woman with two toddlers in tow grabbed my arm and yelled at me, “people like you should go back to where they came from,” leaving me feeling quite aware that I was not white and quite confused, as where I came from was just a few blocks away and I knew no different. Such an inaccurate yet potent attitude that frames how many Muslims in Canada are viewed and something that many build their identities against strangely often gets shrugged off as simple ignorance and many would say it was just ‘no big deal’. The big deal is that it affects how these Canadians are seen, how they see themselves, how they are thought to fit into society and a consequence may be that they are placed on the outskirts of what it means to be Canadian and how they can exercise their citizenship.

This is the context in which many second generation Canadians come to maturation, especially in metropolis centres smaller and less diverse than Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. Muslims are commonly conceptualized as migrant outsiders to the West stubbornly holding onto their religious identities in opposition to Western liberal democratic values and norms; diasporic transnationals with allegiances to an ‘other’ homeland who look, think and act different from the West’s perceived peoples and cultures. Scholarship looking past the surface of Muslims in diaspora as outsiders is lacking and as a result areas of policies, laws, ‘multiculturalism’ and immigration continue to work on stunted discourses and outdated understandings of Canadian Muslims.¹⁰ For this reason this study is meant to go past the idea of Muslims as diasporic, transnational foreigners in Canada; I am seeking to go further than ritual practices and ideology and instead focus on exploring the concept of a grassroots Canadian Muslim identity forged of the unique experience of being Muslim and Canadian. An identity that, despite sometimes being conceptualized as an outsider, also holds responsibility and

⁹ The experiences are plentiful and can be found all over social media, YouTube videos, news reports, academic literature and other forms of information sharing.

¹⁰ Some major headway is being made in the area of immigrant youth and young adult studies in recent years, for example the edited work by Beyer and Ramji (2013) and unpublished work through the Religion and Diversity Project by Beaman and Selby which provide more nuanced understandings, however this area does not have enough work widely available or yet utilized outside the arena of scholarly inquiry, and would benefit from more studies, particularly ethnographic studies. This is the area that I hope to contribute to and hope to see grow in coming years.

pride in its place in being Canadian. In other words, I am seeking to explore discourses, attitudes, actions and interactions of second and 1.5 generation¹¹ Muslims in order to find out what being a Canadian Muslim means.

Being Canadian Muslim can mean many things to different people¹². This study goes past Islam and religious practice versus Western secularity discourses surrounding Muslims today. It seeks to understand Canadian Muslim identity as a whole rather than in separate parts. One of the project participants adequately explains the sentiment many Canadian Muslims hold towards their place in the larger scope of Canadian belonging:

I was born and raised in Canada. This is 'home'. This is who I am even when people, when society and the media and even religious extremists try and tell me and other Muslim youth otherwise. I am Canadian and I am Muslim. These two things are intertwined in me. It's up to me to figure out what this means to me. Sometimes the things I do, others don't see as Canadian or Muslim, but they are because I am. Excerpt from interview with Alayna; a Canadian Muslim Woman in Winnipeg.

This research and the considerations it seeks to unveil are important because Muslims are commonly perceived as outsiders to Western standards and sensibilities. They are increasingly conceived of as foreigners opposed to Canadian values and norms.¹³ This negative opinion of Muslims is rising¹⁴ and has been translated from a stereotype among people to the level of politics

¹¹ The study includes second generation and 1.5 generation Muslims. Second generation are here defined as those born in Canada who are the children of immigrants. 1.5 generation are commonly described as those who immigrated before the age of puberty, usually before 11, and have had a large portion of their socialization in the host country. Though there are differences for the purposes of this study second and 1.5 generation would have many similar factors concerning identity due to their schooling and socialization processes as well as the influence of their family and parents' backgrounds. When referring to second generation I would also be speaking of 1.5 generation unless otherwise specified or noted. A great deal of work needs to be done in the field of Muslims in Canada. Differentiations between second and 1.5 generation are not yet widely studied or available. For the purposes of this study the topic at hand produced no major differences as those of 1.5 generation that participated considered themselves raised in Canada similar to second generation and had arrived very early in their lives.

¹² In this thesis I use the term Canadian-Muslim and Canadian Muslim. This is not to suggest that my participants call themselves Canadian Muslim, but most refer to themselves as Canadian and are by default Muslim. Most work on Muslims in Canada refers to them as Muslims or Muslims in Canada or Muslim Canadians. I find it interesting that laypeople, scholars, media and politicians insist on calling them Muslim first, highlighting that they are not like other Canadians. This is precisely what my thesis works against. These people very much find themselves to be Canadian and express this. Therefore I found it most fitting to refer to the second and 1.5 generation Muslims I study as Canadian Muslims rather than Muslim Canadians. Rarely if ever did they pose themselves as Muslim over Canadian but rather as Canadians that are Muslim.

¹³ An Environics survey in 2006 shows that most Canadians believed that Muslims want to remain separate from society at large. Despite findings that Muslims themselves say that they are interested in integrating into society (Focus Canada, 2006: 6).

¹⁴ Angus Reid's 2013 Survey shows that 54% of Canadians outside Quebec (and 63% of Quebecers) have an unfavourable view of Islam while in 2009 only 46% held this view.

and policies as recent statements by Canadian politicians as well as policy and decisions makers may indicate¹⁵. Current movements by decision shapers and makers suggest that the recognition of Canadian Muslims as a part of this nation can be nullified¹⁶ based on a superficially ascribed identity on all Muslims as foreign, opposed to Western norms, oppressive towards women and violence-prone. To many this shows a concerning trajectory placing Muslims on the outsides of Canadian citizenship and rights. Despite this increasing burden on Canadian Muslims, those paying attention will see trends mobilizing Canadian Muslim identity and seeking grassroots constructions of what it means to be Canadian and Muslim. These are evolving, particular to their locales, non-homogenous and often employ a public expression; they are also optimistic as well as realistic about the place of Canadian Muslims.

This thesis analyzes the concept of Canadian Muslim, a concept not present in most studies of Muslims in Canada. Thus far, scholarship on Muslims in Canada commonly focused on statistics, ethnic issues and descriptions of religious practice (Abu-Laban, 1980; Awan; 1989; Hussain, 2005), media (Canas, 2008; Hijri, 2006; 2010; Karim, 2009; Sharify-Funk, 2009; 2010) and law (Beaman, 201; Sharify-Funk, 2010). Fieldwork has been concentrated on Muslims of a particular ethnicity (Coward, Hinnells & Williams, 2000; Eid, 2007; Berns-McGown 1999) in the large metropolis centres of Montreal and Toronto (Eid, 2007; Hussain, 2005; Kazemipur, 2014¹⁷; McDonough, 1994; Berns-McGown, 1999; 2000; 2005; Zine, 2012). Work specifically exploring Canadian Muslim identity is slowly increasing (for example Bakht, 2008; Beyer and Ramji, 2013; Mossiere, 2012;

¹⁵ The Prime Minister decided to appeal a recent federal court ruling that would allow Muslim women to cover their faces while taking the oath of citizenship but a Tory email mentioned that the government wanted to ban “hijab while taking the oath” which would be a wide ranging and fundamentally discriminatory ruling aimed towards Muslims but something that immigration minister Chris Alexander’s office seemingly supports, the terminology of niqab and hijab being used interchangeably here (Geddes, 2013). The way the issue is voiced and being responded to seems to indicate a harmful precedent. The story about sentiment and policy directed towards Muslims in Quebec is even more disheartening. For instance, a Quebec judge would not proceed with a legal case in which a woman was wearing a hijab (Rukavina, 2105).

¹⁶ Socially, but perhaps with changing policy and security it may even become legally possible.

¹⁷ Though he does not seem to do fieldwork of his own he does bring together findings in others’ fieldwork in this publication to put forth his ideas about Muslims in Canada.

forthcoming works by Selby and Beaman)¹⁸ but there is still a lack of fieldwork pertaining to Muslims in smaller metropolis centres, particularly second generation.

This project explores the idea of a grassroots Canadian Muslim identity through a case study of Muslims in the prairie city of Winnipeg Manitoba. The project focuses on carrying out an ethnographically based study of the Muslims in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in order to delve into the concept of a naturalized Canadian Muslim identity negotiated in the peculiarities of this medium-sized metropolis community due in part to unique encounters with the systems and societies of this Canadian locale.

Researcher Positioning

This project is a labour of passion. Having the opportunity to engage religion and culture studies in Canada at this time is a unique endeavour. With a new and quickly growing diversity, official and sometimes conflicted protections of multiculturalism, freedom of belief and expression, Canada's proximity and relation to America in context of Post-9/11 changes, and its experience of diversity in the 'West', studies of religions and cultures in Canada will increasingly provide peculiar and unique insights into identity negotiations and community developments in the 21st century. Muslim populations in particular are perched at unique nodes of identity negotiations and belonging. As a second generation Canadian, a Muslim, a researcher, a service provider, and having grown, matured and worked in medium-sized metropolis centres in Canada, I have witnessed peculiar, particular and local constructions of communities, negotiations of minority identities, and the effects of growing diversity in Canada. With a background in academics and immigrant non-profit work as well as government immigration work, I have participated in research, service delivery and ground level engagement to aspiring, new and settled immigrants and immigrant generations in Canada. I have observed unique developments and subtle differences between Muslim communities and identities across North America not studied in major capacities in existing scholarship. As such I am

¹⁸ Forthcoming works by Beaman and Selby, n.d..

perched on the peculiar position of insider researcher and bring this awareness and this insight into my own work in this project.¹⁹

My experience as a second-generation Canadian Muslim, within an emerging Muslim community, has given me access to a long developing discourse and experience of Canadian Muslim identity. Being an insider to the development of a community has shown me some of the ways new immigrants navigate the Canadian landscape to create and carve out a space for themselves, their concerns over longevity and generation, their attempts, successes and failures in making roots and attempting to remain connected to their place of origin and heritage. Working in immigrant demographics I have, first hand, come to understand the pressing needs of new Canadians, the complexity of the support available and the lack thereof and the effects on their generations. My academic interest and research in minority communities in Canada stems from the personal and professional learning and experiences I have gained through my standpoint and positioning. In this time and place, I feel strongly that the perspective I am able to draw from can provide interesting insights into some of the effects, problems and successes of the project of immigration and diversity in Canada. This being said, I am not endeavouring to provide myself as a subject of study and do not intend to draw myself into the narratives of my project participants as some ethnographic studies have done. Rather, I have chosen to explore my hypothesis, that there are interesting, and often ignored, grassroots Canadian Muslim identities essential to understanding diversity and the changing landscape of Canada, emerging locally and feeding into larger discourses of Muslim identity and Canadian belonging by providing a deeper look into the inside rhetoric of the community and the people. I have taken this hypothesis to the test by letting the project participants engage open-ended interviews (methods will be discussed further in Chapter 3) to assist discovering the validity of my thesis. What I found resounded well with what I suspected: that there is a uniquely grassroots and

¹⁹ Recognizing standpoint and the importance of positionality is a contribution of second-wave feminism (for example, see the work of Dorothy Smith, 1987). Smith's project, political in nature, developed a sociology "capable of explicating for members of the society the social organization of their experienced world, including in that experience the ways in which it passes beyond what is immediately and directly known, including also therefore, the structure of a bifurcated consciousness." It is intended to challenge male hegemony and to empower women. (Smith, 1987: 89; as per Luxton and Findlay, 1989). It is with this spirit of challenge that I navigated my own research.

Canadian Muslim identity discourse and experience. I found that there is a multifaceted experience of being Canadian that is often overshadowed by discourses of otherness in the public imaginary.²⁰

While I am pleased to see some of my suppositions were confirmed, it left me with many questions about the past, present and future of Canadian Muslim identity. Certainly it left me with the desire to engage in more studies and I look forward to conducting more research in this field.

Though some would claim that outsider perspective and insight is key to authentic knowledge because of its detachment, a more encompassing perspective involves acknowledgement that insider perspective can give special, particular and peculiar insights that an outsider would miss. This insider versus outsider debate is not new (see Kikumura, 1998; Smith, L., 1999 for some examples of the debates) but modern understandings recognize the positive and negative of both insider and outsider research and they recognize that there is no clear black and white demarcation but instead the positioning of insider-outsider occurs in shades and can be more fluid at times with many variables and overlaps as well as difficulties (Rabe, 2003: 150; Smith, L., 1999: 134-138). As such, I have taken the position that despite being an insider to the Canadian Muslim population I am able to provide insights that an outsider may not. As a researcher I take on a degree of outsider perspective while also maintaining an insider status. As a researcher with this overlapping position I also hold a degree of power in the way the research is carried out and constructed (Rabe, 2003: 151) while recognizing that the participants also hold power in the way that they narrate their stories and relate to my inquiries. In order to mitigate some of the difficulties of being a researcher who has been an insider I decided to come to the research with a bit of distance, stepping away from participation, stepping away from community and letting the interviewed and those observed provide wide-ranging narratives, stories, information and help construct the inquiry as well as the results through their narratives and actions. During this physical and timely distance I laid out foundations for my academic interest and discussed the project in several forums so that my intentions were made clear. I

²⁰ I will stress that this project does not explore radicalisation as a factor of identity as it did not become a component of the research findings and is outside the scope of these research inquiries. In addition ideology and sectarianism did not exhibit a strong presence but are discussed where they did show up.

came to the interviews having briefed the participants through postings in social forums and newsletters as well through individual communication with those that participated in the intended research. More on the particulars of the method and approach will be found in Chapter 3.

Before beginning the exploration it is important to set the contextual basis of the study. I will therefore provide a brief historical context and situate the community of interest.

Historical Context

Though Daood Hamdani claims Agnes Love (who was of Scottish decent) was the first Muslim woman in Canada other findings show earlier periods of Muslim migration (to the area that is now Canada) that did not form viable communities or a strong Muslim presence (1999). The first wave in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries consisted of Spanish (Andalusian) Muslims removed from the New World colonies by order of Charles V of Spain. The next influx was of Muslim African slaves who were often highly educated as well as literate in Arabic (Bilge, 1987: 426; Kelly, 1998: 83). The earliest official record of Muslims in Canada, the 1871 Canadian census, records 13 Muslim respondents in the country (Nagra, 2011; Yousif, 2008). The 1881 and 1891 census record zero Muslim respondents (Nagra, 2011: 4) and in 1931 there were only 645 Muslims (Abu-Laban, Quereshi & Waugh 1983). The first half of the 20th century saw a slow growth rate likely due to restrictive immigration policies. The latter half of the 20th century has seen a dramatic increase in Canada's Muslim population due to factors of economic and educational natures, political upheaval or alienation, reunification with family in Canada, and the freedoms and opportunities that Canada offers (Nimer, 2002).

Scholars have often described Muslim immigration to Canada as occurring in waves (Abu-Laban, et al. 1983; Eliade, 1987; Smith, J., 1999; Yousif, 2008). I discussed two preliminary but non-substantive waves above. Next I will discuss the phases of Muslim immigration which left a lasting presence of Muslims in Canada.

Initially the immigration of Arab Muslims to Canada may be attributed to the misfortunes of the agricultural economy in the Greater Syria region of the Ottoman Empire prior to the First World War and the economic losses due to the opening of the Suez canal (Haddad, 1983; Kelly, 1998) as well as attempts to escape conscription in the Ottoman army (Zine, 2012). This first of the enduring phases of Muslim migration to Canada was made up of primarily men from the Greater Syria region with little formal education and low English and French literacy with high economic hopes and the intent to return home with the anticipated wealth from Canada (Eid, 2007; Haddad, 1978; Kelly, 1998). Due to the language barriers and low rates of formal education many became labourers and merchants. The majority did not return to their homelands, had low community and religious ties and became assimilated (Eid, 2007; Haddad, 1978). They were, as a result, the base of the next wave of immigration. In general this era was highly xenophobic, as evidenced by Canadian history and publications. These immigrants were seen as lowly strangers within a 'white Canada' (Haddad, 1989; Kelly, 1998: 86). Andrea Lorenz relates a rare historical narrative of early Muslim migration in Canada:

The Syrian peddler was something of an institution in most Western settlements," wrote Gilbert Johnson. "Sometimes on foot, with a pack on his back and a case of trinkets and smallwares in his hand, but more often with a horse and a light wagon in summer, or with a sleigh in winter, he travelled the prairie trails on more or less regular routes." (Lorenz, 1998 as cited by Zine, 2012: 4)

Lorenz relates another historical narrative of an early Arab migrant to the USA and then Canada.

Salim Sha'aban, Lorenz explains, brought a wife to Canada:

For the young Arab woman who landed, tired and bewildered, at the port of Montreal, a long train trip across the prairies lay ahead, followed by more travel by horse and wagon. The railway link to Edmonton had been completed in 1904, and agricultural settlement existed only in a band 50 kilometers (30 miles) wide on each side of the single railway line. Beyond that, the great prairies were still the land of the Cree, Assinaboine [sic] and Blackfoot. The winters could hardly have been less welcoming. One 1907 blizzard drove the mercury down to 48 degrees below zero (-55 °F). Yet Larry Shaben, Sha'aban's grandson and a leader of today's Alberta Muslim community, recalls that his grandmother, who lived to be 99, was "fiercely passionate" about Canada, and called it "a wonderful country." (Lorenz, 1998 as cited by Zine, 2012: 5)

By 1901 Canada's Muslim community had mostly settled in Alberta and Saskatchewan and numbered just under 50. By 1911 the numbers had risen to 1,500, most of

whom were Syrian and Turkish migrants working in the construction of the western railways (Abu-Laban, 1983; Hamdani, 1997; Lorenz, 1998; Zine, 2012).

In the early twentieth century Canadian governments were enforcing racial exclusion policies to halt Asian immigration. When the First World War broke out many Muslims were sent back to their country of origin under classification as enemy aliens. As a result the population of Canadian Muslims dwindled. In 1931 there were only 645 Muslims in Canada, mostly of Syrian and Lebanese background (Abu-Laban, et al. 1983; Kelly, 1998), a number much smaller than two decades prior. Despite this, in 1938 the first mosque was built in Edmonton, Alberta (Abu-Laban, et al. 1983). In the years after the first World War new immigration laws aided the reunification of the families of the previous immigrants from Greater Syria (Smith, 1999). These immigrants were similar in their educational and literacy capacities. This phase instigated the beginnings of a settled and institutionalized presence of Muslims in Canada.

The post-World War II era saw a relaxation of Canadian immigration policy which opened doors to areas of South Asia. This shift saw an increase in immigration from non-traditional areas increasingly further afield than Europe. This brought in a well-educated class of immigrants who pursued a higher education and better quality of life than their predecessors, and they became more familiar with Western attitudes and society (Smith, 1999). This phase of immigration was increasingly diverse with higher economic ambitions. The immigrants also often came from areas of political upheaval (Eliade, 1987). For example, those emigrating from Egypt in the mid-century were often middle class and at odds with the economic policy of President Nasser (Ohan & Hayani, 1993: 24). Many immigrants also came from areas of regional conflict (e.g., Palestine-Israel, Iraq-Iran, Iraq-Kuwait) or civil wars (e.g., Lebanon, Yemen) or as a consequence of major social and political changes which especially affected the wealthy and middle classes. Increased immigration from well-connected and wealthier immigrants meant better sharing of information 'back home' and more familiarity

abroad with Canadian immigration and opportunities, thereby drawing more interest and making the process of immigration to North America attractive to those from non-traditional areas of immigration. The second wave of Arab immigration brought to North America a much more diverse population, one that differed greatly from the earlier group. Where the majority of the first-wave immigrants were Lebanese, the new immigrants came from all over the Arab world. Being relatively better off, many of these new immigrants who began as students at universities decided to stay, whether because of more opportunities or because of the danger(s) of returning home. This phase of immigrants came with better defined views of Western attitudes and the role of democracy than their predecessors and had greater success while leading full and productive lives due to ideas that had been imported to their homelands.

The year 1967 saw a major shift in immigration policy from a previous 'white Canada' policy to the more open points system. This new non-discriminatory immigration policy was made law through an amendment to the Immigration Act thereby establishing a merit-based points system for the immigration selection process to Canada. This change drew diverse immigration to the country. Muslim immigrants came from non-traditional countries of origin providing an ethnic, cultural and religious diversity to the Muslims in Canada (Bouchard, 2007). Immigration ranged from Pakistan to the Arab world, from South America to Asia. Particularly, the opening of immigration saw a rise in Muslims as educated professionals and trained workers coming from South Asia and the Middle East. This phase of immigrants is economically heterogeneous, highly educated, and have higher attachments to community, culture and religion. They came from areas experiencing Islamic revival, rejection of Westernization and political upheavals. They were not as quick to unconditionally assimilate as the previous wave and sought to institutionalize their faith in their new homeland thereby providing a more permanent and lasting presence. This phase saw a large increase in mosques and faith-based organizations. The class structure shifted significantly though there was also a significant rise in refugees from different areas of the world.

Besides the comparatively affluent immigrants of the post-World War II phase, relatively large numbers of semi-educated Arabs, primarily engaged in commerce, came to North America in the 1990s as political refugees or as temporary residents to escape the wars and violence of the Middle East region. In addition there has been a huge influx of Muslims from South Asia since the opening of immigration in the 1960s as well as a large influx of Somalis in the 1990s, due to the civil war, who settled large populations in Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton and Calgary.

Today, the Muslim demographic of Canada is the fastest growing religious population and numbers just over 1 million which represents about 3.2% of the nation's total population. This is up from the 2% (or 579, 640) reported on the 2001 census (Statistics Canada, 2011; 2001). Statistics Canada reports that two-thirds of Canada's Muslim population live in the three largest metropolises of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. Among Muslim immigrants who came to Canada between 2006 and 2011 the largest influx came from Pakistan (Statistics Canada, 2011). Estimates put Muslims at 35% of Canada's religious minorities while projections show an expected growth to 50% in over the next two decades (Statistics Canada, 2010). This growth is due in part to the high rates of immigration from countries with majority populations of Muslims, the younger median age of Canada's Muslim population and higher birth rates (Statistics Canada, 2010: 2011) as well as converts. Although large scale statistics do not exist on the topic of Muslim converts, the presence and contribution of converts does affect larger Canadian Muslim identity.²¹ These last two factors of conversion and non-immigrant generations mean an increase in Canadian born Muslims, some of many generations.

The above contextual overview demonstrates the growing diversity of Canada's Muslim population. It also demonstrates their lasting presence and the fact that there are more and more generations of Muslims born and raised in Canada. The focus of my study is this exact phenomenon,

²¹ Though outside the scope of this study, the identity negotiations of Muslim converts makes for a fascinating study on its own. Mossiere, for example, presents a study of women converts and Islamic dress that sheds some light on the identity negotiations of converts (2012). There is currently limited research available on this topic but surely the growing number of converts affects the discourses, forms and boundaries of Canadian Muslim identity.

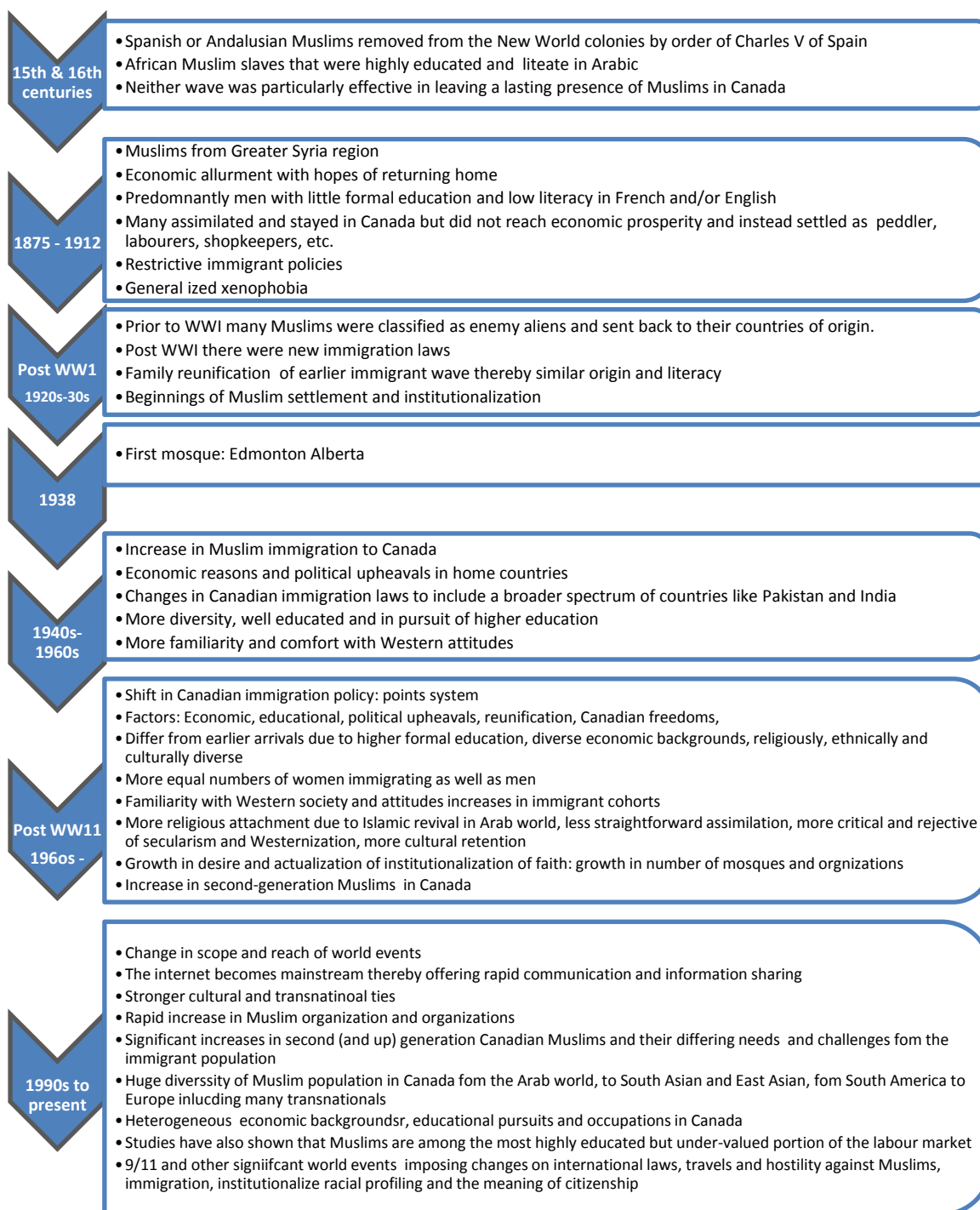
Canadian Muslims raised in Canadian diversity developing unique identities and associated discourses. I concentrate my study in one of the larger, (but not nearly the largest) metropolis centres of Canada that has had a significant growth but is still not at the level, size or growth of diversity in the Toronto-Montreal-Vancouver metropolises. This metropolis of Winnipeg, Manitoba has become more diverse over the years and poses an interesting case study. Below, Table 1 and Figure 1 summarize the growth of Muslims in Canada followed by an overview of Muslims in Winnipeg.

Table 1: Muslim Population of Canada, 1871-2011

Year	Muslim Population
1871	13
1881	0
1891	0
1901	300-400
1911	1,500
1921	500-600
1931	645
1951	3000
1981	98,165
1991	253,260
2001	579 640
2011	1,053,945

Sources: Abu-Laban (1995: 135); Haddad (1978: 15,19); Kelly (1998: 85); Rashid (1985:15); Statistics Canada (1981; 1991; 2001; 2011); Waugh (1983: 76)

Figure 1: Timeline for Muslims in Canada²²



²² Timeline addresses Canada and the region that became Canada prior to its establishment.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Winnipeg is a nice city because well there's [sic] different things about it. I mean if you just think about, like, the place, the land, like it's a very you know kind of you flat, prairie land, big, big skies, fresh, fresh air, fairly clean water. I mean these kind of things made me feel... I feel kind of free and easy... seeing like the big skies, and as you know, cold as our winters are, there is something about them that I do enjoy. I grew up here, so I love that crispness of that cool crisp air and the snow fall ... that has influenced [me]... [I] already talked about diversity in Winnipeg, but I think Winnipeg has been quite progressive too... we have a strong activist culture in Winnipeg, grassroots type culture, and I think that's the way I connected with a lot of non-Muslim people when I was in my teens and early twenties, and twenties... I became involved in some of this activist culture, like more human rights stuff... I was involved in that sort of human rights-activism for human rights culture that exists in Winnipeg, and I kind of met different people in that circle that aren't Muslim but still share those values, and that was kind of an important phase in my life... But that's the one thing about Winnipeg though, there's a lot of enthusiasm... like now with the, for example the CMLI, the Canadian Muslim Leadership Institute, and efforts they're doing and like building bridges and engaging other communities right, not just on a superficial level but actually talking about important issues things that matter to them. So I think there is, there are grassroots efforts that are being made that allow individuals and groups and communities to come together on a more deeper level. Excerpt from interview with Anisa; a second-generation, Winnipeg Muslim Woman.

As Canada has grown in population and diversity through immigration, so have its major metropolis centres, some exponentially so. Though the majority of immigrants have settled in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal, the growth in smaller metropolis centres over the last few decades has also been significant. Some of this is through immigration from abroad and some through internal relocation from other Canadian cities for those following opportunities and economies.

Winnipeg, a medium-sized, isolated, Canadian metropolis still below the 1 million population mark numbering 730,018 with a 5.1% population change between 2006 and 2011, is the 8th most populated city in Canada. It is located in the prairie province of Manitoba and is neighboured by farmlands and small towns (Statistics Canada, 2006; 2011).

To begin to understand the makeup and culture of Winnipeg I will provide some brief statistics and historical context to situate the context of this study. The National Household Survey of 2011 identifies the majority (460,755) of Winnipeg's population as Christian with the largest sub group as Catholic. The second largest religious group is Muslim at 11,265. The 'no religion' population is over 200,000. Shifting from religion, the population of Aboriginal identity is estimated at over 78,000. The portion of the population that identifies as ethnically European is almost 515,115, while those of 'Asian' origin make up the second largest ethnic grouping at 117,435. Of this grouping,

South Asians make up over 23,930, Arabs and Central Asians number 6,995 and the East and South East Asian population numbers at 86,725, with the Chinese population being over 20,410 and the Filipino population being at 58,535. The African population is over 16 000 with the largest identified group being of Southern and East African origins at 5, 820. The Caribbean and Latin populations combined make up less than 20, 000 (Statistics Canada, 2011).

To put these figures in perspective of this topic approximately 20% of Winnipeggers identified as immigrants and almost 20% identified as visible minorities. Fewer than 65% identified as Christian while 1.6% identified as Muslim. According to Statistics Canada the number of immigrants in Winnipeg rose significantly during the decade between 2001 and 2011, three times as much as every decade since 1971 (2011). Winnipeg is by far the largest city in Manitoba and as the concentrated centre of the province much of the history of Muslims in Winnipeg is better understood alongside the history of Muslims in Manitoba since those in outlying areas associate with, move to, and participate in Winnipeg. The following will discuss in more depth the history of Muslims in Winnipeg and Manitoba as well as the development of the Muslim communities.

Muslims in Winnipeg, Manitoba

That's one of the things I did love about Winnipeg compared to Toronto. The community here-the Muslim community is diverse within itself. I remember growing up... that our friend's circles were full of Arabs, Somalis, Sudanese, Pakistani... I loved that... I remember not caring you know what I mean? I thought that was really cool even as a kid. Whereas when I moved to Toronto, like, you didn't associate with other...you went to the Pakistani mosque or you went to the Lebanese mosque, and you didn't really make friends outside your own ethnic group. Even within Pakistani's it was 'are you Sunni?', 'Are you this?', 'Are you Hanafi?' like there were pockets even within that. I've never experienced that in Winnipeg, even to do this day I've never experienced that... I'm so happy he [dad] came here, despite the cold weather, despite the mosquitos... Winnipeg is a really good place to be, it has that small town mentality yet I feel in a city... I felt that the Winnipeg Muslim community, here as a kid, really adopted that Winnipeg friendly feel like internally. Like I remember going to the masjid on a cold night for taraweeh and it was just warm, like you just felt warmth from everybody and I never felt that feeling anywhere else, [not even] when I prayed in beautiful mosques in Pakistan or mosques in the Middle East... I don't necessarily feel the way I did in that little mosque over on Hazelwood. Excerpt from interview with Asif; a second-generation Winnipeg Muslim male.

Though reports on Muslim history in Winnipeg indicate immigration to have been ongoing though slow prior to the early 1960s, substantial growth began once immigration to Canada opened up for non-traditional source countries in the latter half of the 20th century. Prior to this, the rather

closed door immigration policies of Canada did not see a large or sustainable Muslim community in Manitoba. The 1960s saw an influx of Arab and South Asians students immigrating to Winnipeg, many remained and established families. This trend of students coming to Manitoba has continued and increased in the following decades. Organizations are a key part of the history of the development of the Muslim community of Winnipeg. Later chapters discuss the importance and engagement of organization(s) however this introduction gives a brief description of some of the central and active organized bodies in the Winnipeg Muslim community. Before beginning these descriptions let me put them in context of the community history.

Common knowledge of community history as well as recounts of community history in newsletters, interviews and magazines tells us that the few Muslims in Winnipeg in the 1960s felt a need to establish a communal Sunday prayer in the basement of one of the community members' for the couple dozen or so families that constituted a community presence. One of the first areas of the Muslim population of Manitoba to organize was the Muslim Students Association (MSA) at the University of Manitoba, at first informally. Under the MSA, prayers at the university were also eventually instituted as a regular activity available for any Muslim on campus. Though the first significant population of Muslims were university students some of them also brought families and the community slowly grew. By the end of the decade numbers had grown and in 1969 the Manitoba Islamic Association (MIA)²³ was incorporated as the first definite community organization. The MIA was the organization under which religio-social needs of the Muslim population were addressed and the solutions became institutionalized for the Muslim community of Winnipeg (rituals, space and social programs). It has since become the umbrella organization for many of the community's needs and subsequent organizations. This organization has remained, by and large, the central organization for the majority of Muslims in Manitoba up until present day.

As the Muslim population increased there was a need for communal prayers and prayer space. Out of this need was born the desire for a mosque in Winnipeg. Fundraising for a mosque began the

²³ The following section will discuss the organizations in greater detail.

same year as the incorporation of the MIA. By this time the community Sunday prayers had shifted to a Unitarian church, then to the International Centre and by 1972 Friday communal prayers were also established at the University of Manitoba. 1975 saw the completion of the Hazelwood Mosque which could accommodate a couple hundred people. Then, in the facility of the mosque arose the Weekend Islamic School in the mid-1970s. Later, in the 1990s, the weekend Islamic School was re-named Al-Noor and eventually transferred to the Churchill High School facility where it operates to this day with hundreds of youth attendees and a full faculty. The social support service, the Takaful fund, also arose out of the MIA, in the spirit of Islamic tradition, to support those in need of financial assistance.

In 1984 the Trinidad Muslim Group, independent of the MIA, was founded thereby establishing an Indo-Caribbean Muslim presence. Other ethnically based groups with Muslim affiliation also thrived in this decade like the Pakistani Association, which eventually bought a building for use as organizational headquarters and as a community centre. This building was later used as a mosque on Fridays and even later used as a community and social centre by the Somali population that arose in the 1990s. Though the Pakistani Association was not explicitly Muslim, the majority of its members were closely intertwined in the Muslim community as well.

By the beginning of the 1980s the annual summer camp also arose out of MIA participants' efforts as well as MYC and MYNA members in the 1980s and early 1990s. The 1990s saw the formation of a very active Muslim Youth Council of Manitoba (MYC). This council was active through the 1990s and held retreats, camps, day camps, *halaqas*²⁴, taekwondo, swimming and many other activities for the growing demographic of Canadian Muslim youth and families. While 1991 census reports indicated less than 4000 Muslims in Manitoba (Statistics Canada 1991), 1999 MIA reports indicated numbers closer to 5000. With this growth youth organized and thrived in the 1980s

²⁴ A *halaqa* is a discussion circle or learning group in which topics related to religion are primary. They can be informal or formal. In Winnipeg Muslim culture *halaqas* are often reoccurring learning/discussion groups (weekly, monthly, etc.) that are based on common age, needs or learning objectives that are linked to religion. For instance, a teenagers' Friday night *halaqa* occurs on Friday nights once a month, a youth girls *halaqa* occurs once a month, and sometimes families may instigate their own *halaqa* sessions. They are not always about religion but have become an opportunity to socialize with others of the Islamic faith, often with some degree of interest in topics of faith. These topics may be narrative related, Qur'an and *sunnah* related, and may even have an elder involved to give advice or role model for a younger generation. They vary greatly.

and 1990s and though they were not under the official umbrella of the MIA they were supported by MIA and many of the MIA members had children who participated in MYC and (Muslim Youth of North America) MYNA activities which later became staples for the community youth like weekly *halaqas*, sports activities, learning clubs and mentorship circles. The MYC and MYNA members participated heavily in the annual summer camps and eventually grew to take organizational and leadership positions and became a part of the ‘pioneer generation’ of the Muslim community as the youth of the original Muslim ‘settlers’ (these terms have been used by some of the second generation in describing the history of the city’s community). As they entered university they also grew into the MSA at the University of Manitoba and the one that later arose at the University of Winnipeg. With the fading of the MYC and MYNA a gap grew in the needs of the second generation. Many of them transferred into roles as young adults and new initiatives sprouted in the 2000s related to the needs of the young adults. Youth activities continued to be supported by the MIA, individuals, and new organizations such as Muslim Association of Canada (MAC) and Islamic Social Services Association (ISSA).

The 1990s saw the Winnipeg community as a hotbed of growth, youth involvement and activity. The community became well known in Muslim circles across North America as having many active volunteers, conferences, community activities and charitable events and outreach. The community members were imbedded in the growing Muslim presence across the continent having membership in organizations like Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), MYNA and many more organizations. The late 1990s saw the establishment of the Manitoba Muslim Newsletter and over the years this newsletter has developed into the most consistent form of information sharing about Muslim community events, milestones, community members and so forth. The newsletter is available in print and has an online distribution as well as a website with most information and articles from the print editions and a regular community email forum as well as a recently created a Facebook page.

The annual summer camp faded in the 1990s and then, following renewed interest, was revived in the 2000s and went through the operations control of several individuals (the youth that were now adults with a nostalgia for the ‘good old’ community days’) and organizations until being taken under the wing of MAC in the end of the 2000s decade. It has since become a pivotal part of the Canadian Muslim youth experience and immigrant youth are encouraged to attend to socialize in ‘Canadian Muslim’ ways (camping is considered a very Canadian experience). Though these camps were taken over by MAC they are run in relatively the same way.

Under the support of the MIA the institution of the imam as community spiritual leader was also developed. In the late 1980s MIA invited the first imam from abroad (Nigerian background) to lead community prayers. This imam remained for three years. 1991 saw a second imam, from Guyana this time, who remained for three years. Many waves of immigrants and refugees had come into the city by this time and many had become incorporated into the Muslim community. Needs quickly increased. In 1996 the first full-time Islamic School opened. The community desired a longer term for an imam and in the year 2000 the third imam (from Tunisia) was brought. This imam remained for over a decade and still resides in Winnipeg, but was recently relieved of his position due to not meeting the expectations and needs of the community and taking sides during MIA elections and disagreement with community majority. This is an indication of the changing role and understanding of authority and imams across Muslim communities in North America. By 2001 the Muslim community of Manitoba as a whole numbered just slightly over 5000 though community estimates ran a bit higher. By the next census in 2011 the numbers in Winnipeg alone were more than double this.²⁵

²⁵ Data on divisions, sects and Muslims by culture are unfortunately not available in an accurate form. Sunni, Shia and Sufi often used the same resources and participated in the same discourses. Though there was a Shia organization, many Shia also attended events and activities at the main mosques, separate activities were based on needs, like specific holidays or specific prayers. However even Shia holiday events had many Sunni attendees and vice versa. There is now a newer Shia organization (Yaseen Centre) but again many initiatives in bridge building and holidays are jointly organized by the different organizations or with the support and endorsement of the different groups. It seems peculiar in the sense that there is less sectarianism and more about cooperation between organizations over issues of Muslim presence in Manitoba. My observation is that sectarian issues arise within the Sunni population over minute differences and these

At the end of the 20th century, the growth in population, in diversity and in needs caused a shift in the community. The year 1999 saw the incorporation of ISSA. This organization emerged out of social needs with a religious spirit. It is not specifically religiously oriented but maintains a spirit of Canadian and Muslim. Through ISSA many social programs and supports arose (or were additionally offered) as did many other organizations. ISSA also supports existing social programs in the city like Child and Family Services, refugee and immigration settlement, public institutions' spiritual care departments, women's programs and services, integration programs, children's activities like summer tent camping and development in Muslim communities across Canada like training for service providers and imams. Its reaches are different than that of the MIA in the 21st century though some services are duplicated. ISSA also does a great deal of proactive and reactive media engagement for the Muslim community in a way different than the MIA ever had. Post-9/11 this has increased. It also engages governmental organizations including the RCMP and Heritage. Most of the activities that ISSA involved itself with were to fill gaps beginning at the edges of MIA services that were more social and less religious issues.

The 21st century has seen a huge growth and development in community organizations, new mosques, initiatives, committees and newsletters. By this time Friday communal prayers were established at several locations including universities and colleges, the Health Sciences Centre, community ethno-cultural centres, hospitals, and the mosque. In 2003 Ecole Sofiya, a fulltime French-English-Arabic Islamic School, was established as was the Islamic institute of Manitoba (IIIM) in downtown which was predominantly an information centre about Islam and Muslims in Manitoba. 2004 saw the opening of the second major mosque in Winnipeg the Winnipeg Central Mosque. This mosque established a city centre facility and presence for the Muslim population in Winnipeg.

sometimes result in differences or arguments about the form of prayer offered in the 'mainstream' but largely differences do not cause different mosques being opened. Most mosques work in collaboration with the other centres and mosques.

When ISSA opened a physical location in the inner city it further reinforced the inner city presence of, and services for, Muslims. In 2006 the Canadian Muslim Women's institute was initiated through ISSA and established as a stand-alone inner city organization offering services, such as a food and clothing bank, to Muslim women new to Canada. In 2007 the Yaseen Centre also opened in the inner city, independently of any existing organization.

The mid-to-late 2000s decade saw the proliferation of many organizations. CICC was also organized in 2007 by a coming together of some community members. Further, in 2007 the largest mosque in Manitoba opened its doors in an area on the edges of the suburbs that is now a part of a more affluent population of the city. Just as many Muslims had moved into areas adjacent the Hazelwood mosque in the then suburbs of St. Vital, many have now moved into the suburbs surrounding the Waverly Grand Mosque. The same year this mosque was opened and the realization of the expansion of the Muslim demographics in Winnipeg was becoming a reality for the community to deal with, the Islamic Social Services Association (ISSA), along with some government support, launched the major public awareness campaign, the first of its kind, highlighting the contributions of Muslims in Manitoba in the forms of media engagement, bus tags, billboards and posters about Muslims in Manitoba. The year following this, the Manitoba Muslim Seniors Association was established in order to address the growing Muslim seniors' population. In 2010 the CMLI was officially in operation of its Leadership Program. In 2013, jointly with the RCMP, ISSA put out a booklet addressing extremism in Muslim communities which was met with some degree of controversy²⁶. The year 2013 also saw the opening of the first mosque of differentiation. The Bilal mosque was opened to serve the growing African, particularly Somali, population²⁷ though they still work with the rest of the Muslim community in large events and outreach.²⁸

²⁶ The RCMP later withdrew their support for internal reasons but likely due to the controversial nature of the subject.

²⁷ Not a sect division (i.e. Sunni or Shia) but it seems some socio-cultural factors and needs played into the opening of this separate mosque. Most of the Somali population is concentrated in the inner city and felt the Grand Mosque catered to a more suburban demographic. However, their programs are still interwoven with those of the Grand and Central Mosques as well as advertised and supported by them and vice versa.

²⁸ This section was compiled through multiple reference sources: Mukhtar, 2010; History of Muslims in Manitoba- Manitoba Muslim; Timeline of important events in the history of Muslims in Manitoba- MIA website; Statistics Canada,

Below, Tables 2, 3 and 4 summarize the population growth of Muslims in Manitoba and Winnipeg. Figures 2 and 3 summarize the development and growth of Winnipeg Muslims and their community. The section following will briefly discuss a few of the central community organizations previously mentioned in order to provide an understanding of community infrastructure and sources of engagement that are discussed in the data analysis. Figure 3 is best understood with the sections preceding and following it.

Table 2: Muslim Population of Manitoba, 1981-2011

YEAR	Muslim Population of Manitoba	Muslim Population of Winnipeg
1981	1,925	1,635
1991	3,525	3,235
2001	5,095	4,805
2011	12,405	11,230

Source: Statistics Canada, 1981; 1991; 2001; 2011

Table 3: Muslim Population of Winnipeg in 1981

	Total Population	Male	Female
Winnipeg	1,635	950	680

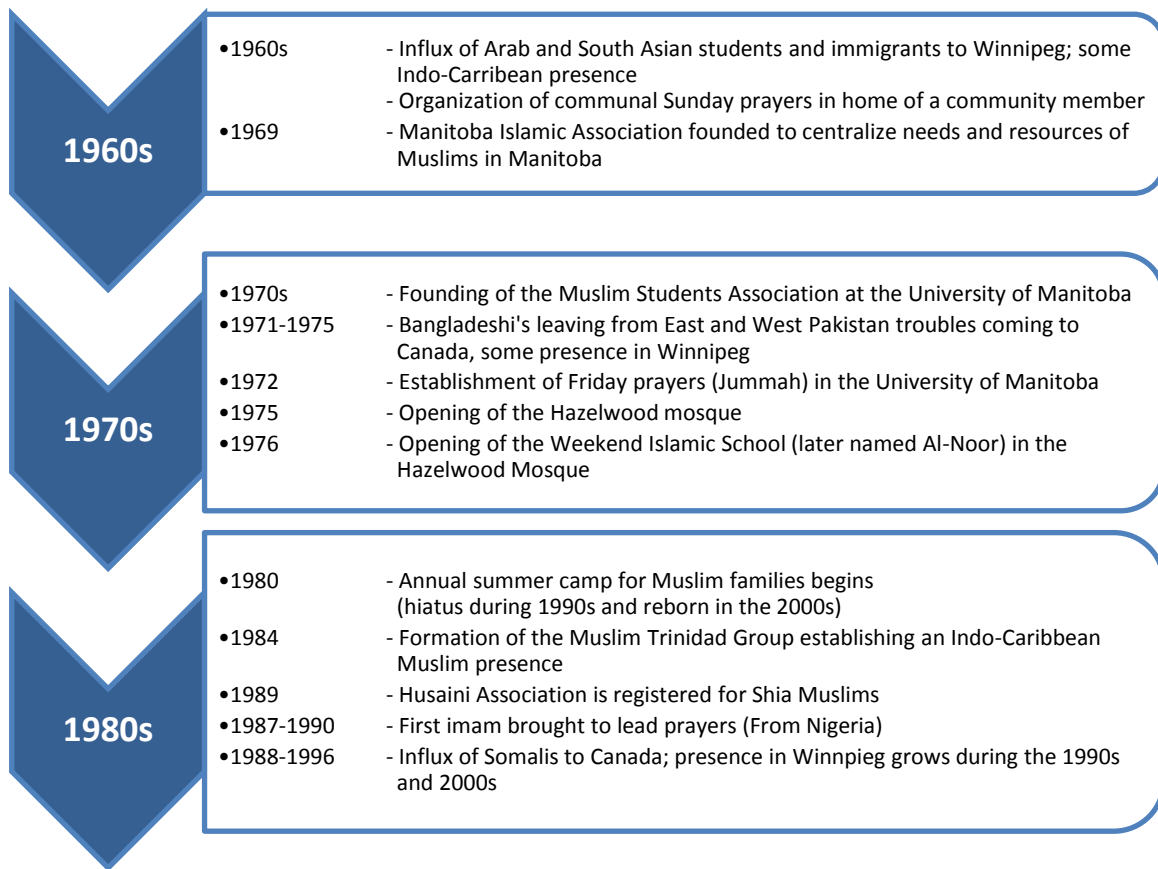
Source: Statistics Canada, 1981

Table 4: Muslim Population of Winnipeg and Manitoba in 2001

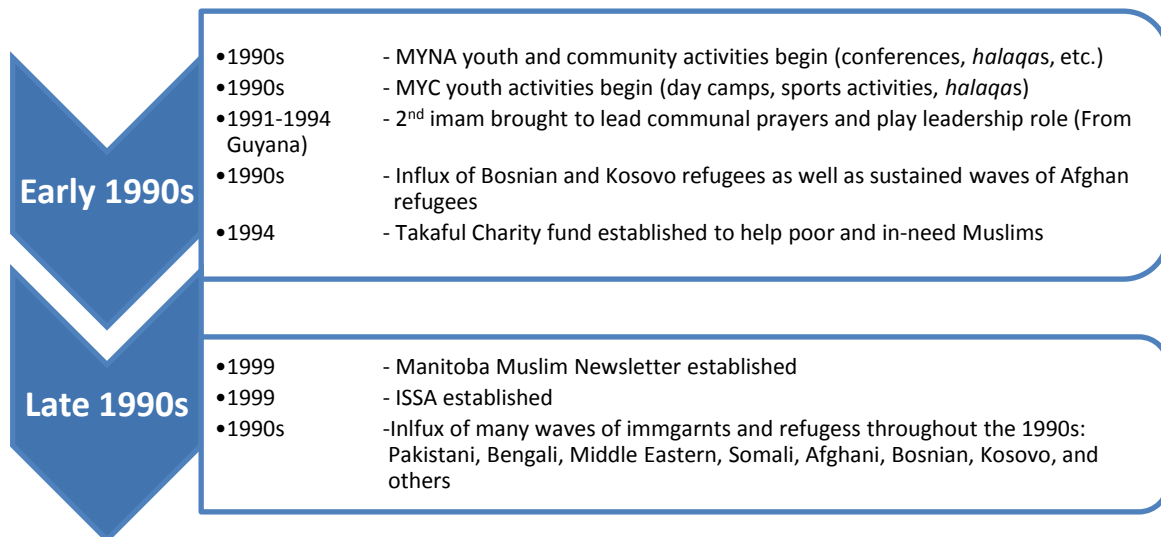
	Total Population	Non-Immigrants	Immigrants	Male	Female
Manitoba	5,100	1,370	3,340	2,720	2,375
Winnipeg	4,805	1,195	3,225	2,595	2,210

Source: Selby, 2007

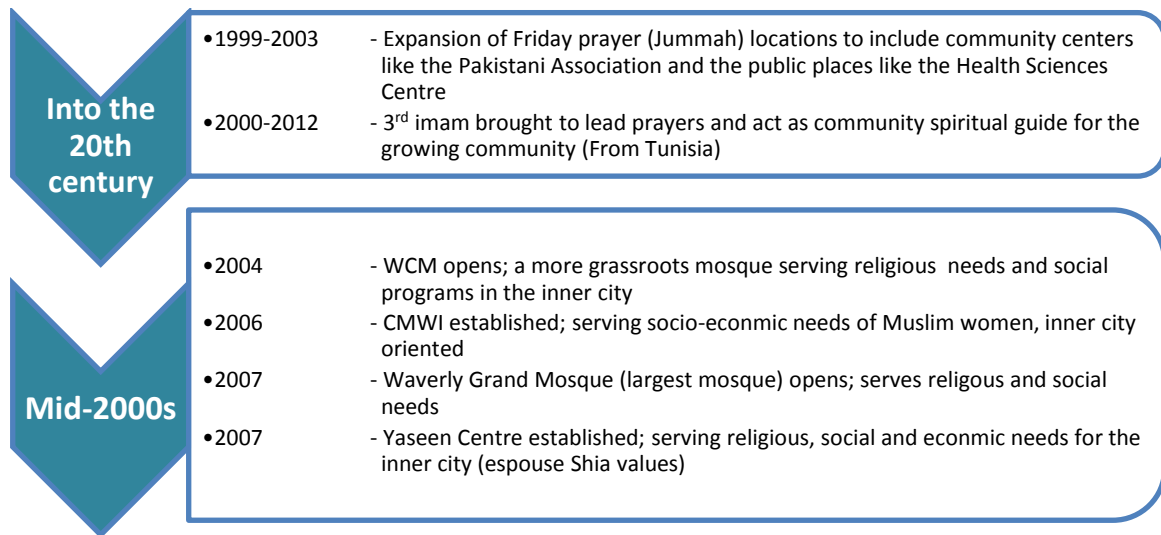
Figure 2: Timeline of Significant Events and Developments for Muslims in Winnipeg



1990s to Early 2000s Shift from basic religious needs to growing diversity and social needs services



2000s Growing diversity of Muslim needs: Shift from one mosque to multiple mosques



Late 2000s Shift to “Canadian Muslim” identity: Interests aligning with belonging and citizenship & Focus on youth generation development.

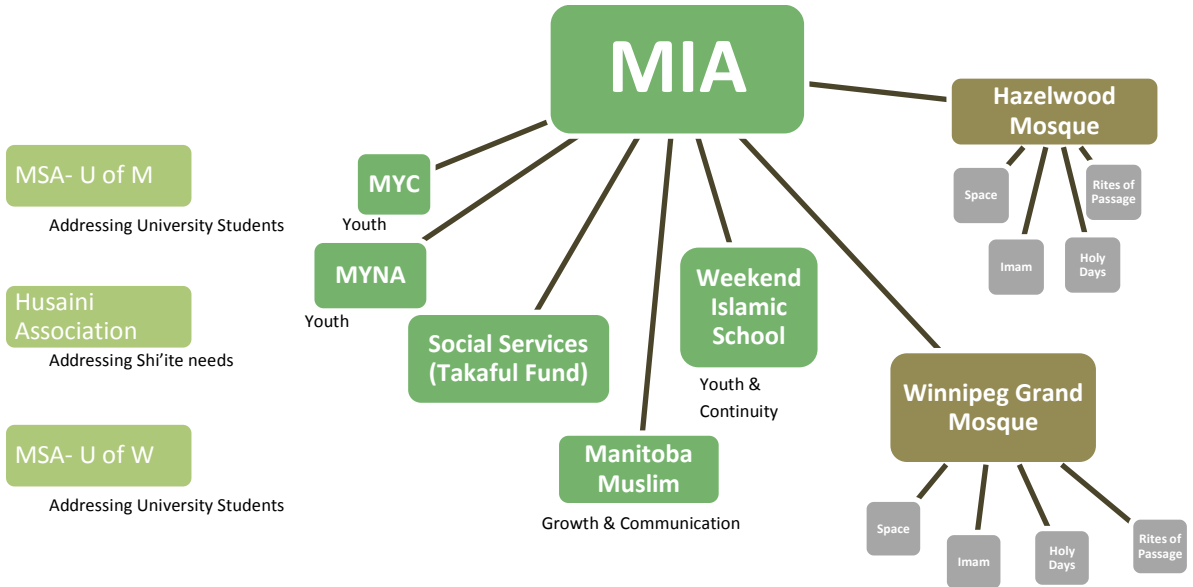


Figure 3: Organizational Structure of the Winnipeg-Manitoba Muslim Community

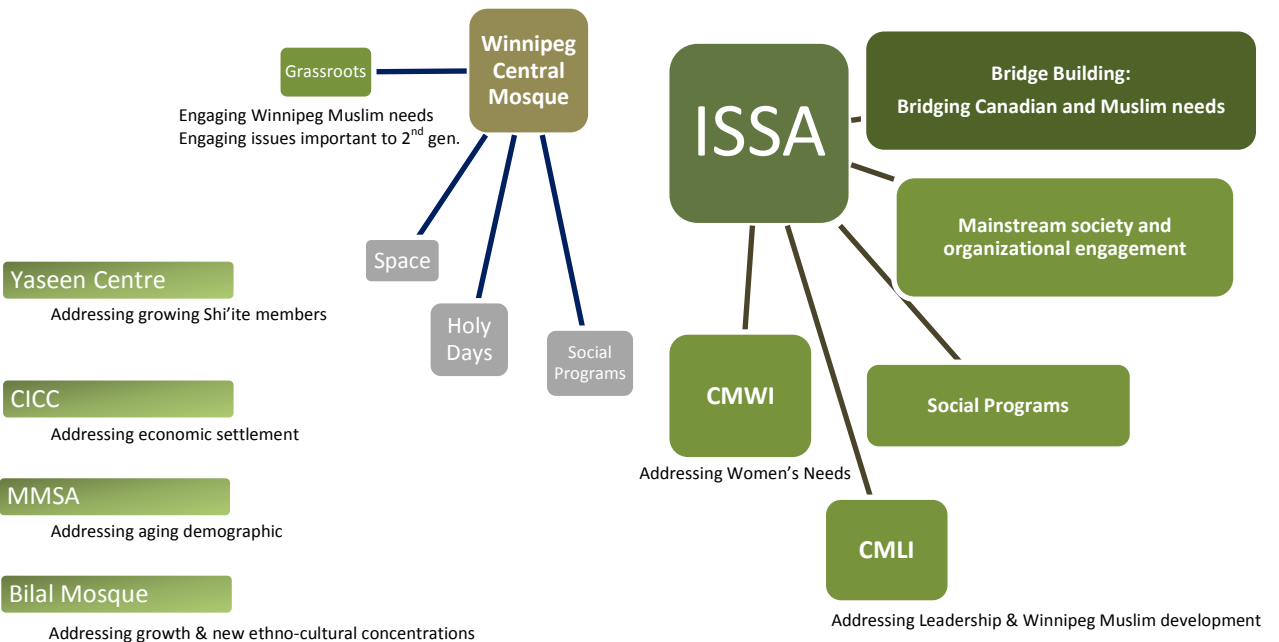
Muslims in Winnipeg

Slow Population Growth

Religious, Social, Spatial & Educational Needs Development



Initiatives to bridge Canadian and Muslim needs together develop



Organization and Institutionalization of Muslims in Manitoba²⁹

As the data analysis chapters will show, social interaction and organization was a part of nurturing Muslim identity in Winnipeg. The organizations arose on a needs basis and while they initially began to address certain needs many grew to encompass tangent needs and sprouted new organizations. Figure 2 shows shifts in the types of growth and organization in the Muslim demographic in Winnipeg. Figure 3 attempts to visually depict the highlights of organizational structure in this community prior to the organizations' descriptions provided below. This is a loose depiction of relations and timeline. Some independent organizations, like the MSA, do not fit neatly in a visual depiction as they may have originated from and provided for multiple needs difficult to display in a this format: they are depicted on the left side of the diagram. Those organizations may have arisen independently but most Winnipeg Muslim organizations tend to work together in the present day. Some, like the mosques, satisfy multiple religious, social, and spatial needs in the population. This section is meant to provide a basis for the later chapters when these organizations are brought up in the data.

Manitoba Islamic Association (MIA), Hazelwood Mosque and Waverly Grand Mosque (WGM or Grand Masjid).

The first formal organization of Manitoba Muslims, the MIA, was formally incorporated in 1969. The president was elected by community goers the following year and a constitution was approved. Early community members have described the MIA as,

A necessary step in the organization and recognition of the Muslim community in Winnipeg... The founders of MIA set in motion an ambitious vision articulated in the MIA constitution preamble. Stated in the preamble is: "We, the Muslims of Manitoba, hereby join together to form an association headquartered in the city of Winnipeg to be called the "Manitoba Islamic association" whose primary objective is to create, nourish, and maintain a truly Islamic community in Manitoba for the Muslims" (Mukhtar, 2010).

²⁹ This section compiled through multiple community references: Mukhtar, 2010; History of Muslims in Manitoba- Manitoba Muslim; Timeline of important events in the history of Muslims in Manitoba- MIA Online; Mian, 2011; Kibria, 2011; Elbakri, 2011; Elbakri(b), 2011, unless otherwise specifically noted.

The MIA undertook responsibility to fundraise for the first mosque in Winnipeg. This mosque, known as the Hazelwood mosque, opened its doors in 1975. It was located in a residential area in the south central end of the city and could host a couple hundred people for prayers and activities. It quickly became the centre of the Muslim community of Winnipeg and held this position throughout the 1980s and 1990s and early 2000s. Founding members of the community consider the establishment of the MIA and the opening of the Hazelwood mosque as significant historical events in the development and growth of the Muslim community.

In 2007, the largest mosque in Manitoba, referred to as Grand Masjid or Waverly Mosque, opened its doors. Fundraising had been done in the community for many years prior and it was considered a huge source of pride to have put together the resources needed to establish, open and run this place of worship, community centre and the grounds surrounding it. This mosque is located on the outskirts of the south west end of the city. It has been noted that it is difficult to get to for some Muslims due to the lack of good bus services to the area (the newest affluent suburb) so large community activities will often offer a shuttle service from the Winnipeg Central Mosque in downtown to bring community members over to the Waverly Mosque..

Since MIA's incorporation, from the time of a few dozen Muslim families with no official mosque space, it has grown to serve a community of over 10,000 Muslims and manages two major mosques in the province, generates revenue, and runs many of the community's central religious activities like prayers, *iftaar*³⁰ meals during Ramadan, sermons, classes, management of funerals and organization of zakat (charity) to name a few. It has been at the core of the community for decades until the 21st century when growth in the community saw the sprouting of many more organizations. Though it is still the central organization there are now many options available to people seeking services and space.

Imams and executives represent the core of the highest body of decision making in MIA. They are meant to function as a team where the roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. In the history

³⁰ *iftaar* is a fast breaking meal taken at sunset prior to the 4th prayer of the day *maghrib* .

of MIA all major conflicts within the organization have included polarizing factions that often see the imam arguing against the executives leading to said imam's dismissal or resignation. Part of the issue is that up until the present day the same governing structure and the same working framework created in 1969 is how the organization is still structured. One example is that the MIA constitution has not been updated to reflect the community growth, needs and demands and the executives are preoccupied with day-to-day functions and administration. In the last few years there has been an increased move to change the structure and codes in order to reflect the needs of the community. The other issue, up until recent years, is that the participation of younger and second generation Muslims at the leadership level of MIA had been non-existent for a large part. Considering the many active second generation individuals in the community this lack of their input in the organization does not reflect the community makeup and community needs. Part of the reason for this could be that the Muslim Youth Council (MYC), Muslim Youth of North America (MYNA-Manitoba), and the Muslim Students Associations (MSA) were where youth activities and input were delegated and once these youth grew up it has taken a long time for them to become accepted as adult contributors to the leadership of the community. In the 21st century many issues sprouted around this topic and although it took time the second generation is now heavily influential in leadership roles and decision making in the community infrastructure.

There has also been a lack of Muslim women as elected members in the MIA. Considering the amount of successful women, the contribution of women in the community and the input of women in community decisions, this seems a strange fate for the MIA. One of the issues I took note of was the reluctance of women to take on a position in the MIA as it was often a place of conflict. They occupied similar roles in other organizations and contributed heavily to MIA activities but did not manifest in the central MIA committee to the same degree that men did. The other reason was that more men than women were elected by the community. Women in the community are active at a different grassroots level, often initiating organizational development outside the MIA. Many of the

organizations that began in the 21st century were initiated and supported by the women of the community such as ISSA, the CMW and even the new mosques.

In recent years there has been a call for the MIA to represent itself as a Manitoban organization specifically. This is particularly interesting for the course of this research study. A well respected community elder states,

To be Manitoban, MIA needs to act as a genuine Manitoban organization not an alien body residing in Manitoba. MIA needs to be actively engaged with the larger society, showing concern to all local issues and being an integral body of the civic society... MIA should remain at its core, Manitoban and Canadian in its culture, outlook and norms. (Mukhtar, 2010).

Youth Committees:

Muslim Youth of North America (MYNA) and the Muslim Youth Council (MYC)

MYNA and MYC were youth organizations particularly active in the 1990s. MYNA had North America wide presence and often MYC volunteers and members were also active in MYNA and MYNA events (conferences and so forth). MYC was a local group with heavy presence. MYC held a variety of events like day camps, *halaqas*, taekwondo classes, women's' only swimming and other activities that addressed the needs of the youth of the community.

Muslim Students Association (MSA)

MSA has also been a group active throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The MSA has presence on campuses across North America in different ways. The MSA at the University of Manitoba was founded in the early 1970s and the MSA at the University of Winnipeg has been on and off over the years depending on student needs, presence and organization at the university. It has been specifically more active in the 21st century having secured a prayer space/mosque space for university students. In fact, Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, President and Vice-Chancellor, welcomed guests and applauded the students and community responsible for the creation of the University of Winnipeg Masjid, stating:

The University of Winnipeg is proud of our tradition and continued support and encouragement as a place of inclusion. We know that providing respectful spaces that allow students to pause and reflect is an important part of creating a campus committed to holistic health and wellness. (UWinnipeg News Centre, 2013).

The MSA at the University of Manitoba has a place in the founding of the organized community. Communal prayers were held there prior to the community having their own mosque or formal organization. As early Muslim immigrants to Manitoba were often students it was a place of connection, organization and activity over the years. It has been an active part of the growth of the community and a touchstone for many first, second and subsequent generations of Muslims. Over the years it has had its own struggles with leadership and ideological splits over things like the setup of prayer spaces, women in leadership positions, what sort of activities to host and so forth. In general members come and go as their university careers start and finish but the presence of the MSA has been central to the character of the Muslim community of Winnipeg despite its changing membership. It has hosted annual conferences open to the community, activism events open to all university students, Islam awareness events on campus and fasting and *iftaar* events that bring together students from all over the world.

The group's mission states that,

The MSA is here to serve not just the Muslim community on campus but the entire campus community. The UMMSA puts on various events throughout the year. Ranging from Islam Awareness Week (IAW) to monthly movie nights. The UMMSA organizes daily prayers that are held in the Muslim Prayer Room... as well as the weekly Friday Sermon prayer (Juma). (University of Manitoba- Muslim Students' Association Facebook Page)

Winnipeg Central Mosque (WCM)

The WCM is a religious centre serving the Muslim community in downtown Winnipeg. It was previously an empty restaurant and bar purchased in early 2004 by one of the community elders, Dr. Rahman (Winnipeg Central Mosque, n.d.). His family, along with the help of many community members, put a great deal of time and effort into fixing and cleaning the building in order to prepare it to work as a house of worship.

The WCM board members work hard to keep an open, accepting and diverse community space. WCM functions as a regular and consistent mosque for the Muslims of Winnipeg as well as a community centre and event and education space. Regular prayers, Qur'an classes, *halaqas*, workshops, seminars and festivals are held for the Muslim community and the broader community of

Winnipeg. To my knowledge, it is the first mosque in Winnipeg that does not contain a barrier between men and women's prayer spaces and it is also the first mosque to have a women deliver a sermon during Taraweeh prayers in Ramadan which is a significant development.

Yaseen Centre

The Yaseen Centre of Manitoba was established in 2007 and considers itself the first Shia Centre in Winnipeg. The website describes it as an

Independent, non-cultural, non-profit, non-political, religious, social, and charitable organization... providing the Shias of Winnipeg with different programs such as Wiladat, Shahadat, Eid Prayers, Friday Prayer, Dua Komail, Ramadan, and Muharram Programs. Apart from regular programs, it deals with Islamic burials, marriage vows, and khatm Qur'an... The vision of Yaseen Centre of Manitoba is to be a multi-race Shia Centre promoting the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and Ithna Ashari school of thought. (Yaseen Centre of Manitoba, n.d.).

The Yaseen Centre does not restrict its activities to the Shia community; they participate with the larger Muslim community in joint events, festivals and other activities. In the springtime they aid in sandbagging efforts to keep Manitoba communities out of flooding danger and they also participate in public information session like the Public Teach-in Café, a bridge building event in 2010, with the purpose inform the general public on "what Muslim women wear and why?" (Yaseen Centre of Manitoba, n.d.). They organize many charitable events and activities including providing food for remote First Nations reserves in need of assistance. The Yaseen Centre also serves as a mosque.

Canadian Islamic Chamber of Commerce (CICC)

CICC is a not for profit organization started with the goal of uniting and networking Muslim businesses. It was incorporated in 2007 as a not for profit and "aims to contribute to the development of a strong Canadian Muslim business community through education, networking, mentorship, cooperation and communication." (Canadian Islamic Chamber of Commerce Website) With their goal dedicated not only to business success, "but also the active participation of Muslim businesses in the greater Canadian business community. As advocates for our country, Canada, and our religion,

Islam, we hope to contribute to an environment where Muslim businesses can thrive and make a positive contribution to Canadian society.” (ibid) The website further explains that the CICC was formed in 2001 but failed to thrive and was revived in 2007.

Muslim Association of Canada (MAC)

According to their website,

The Muslim Association of Canada (MAC) is a religious, educational, social, charitable and non-profit organization. MAC provides services and programs designed to assist in the holistic educational and spiritual development of the Muslim individual and family. A primary tenet of MAC is community involvement and service not only with the Muslim community, but with every community, regardless of faith or background. (Muslim Association of Canada, n.d.)

MAC, as a larger organization in North America, has root ideologies that are tied to the writing of the late Imam Hassan al-Banna and the Society of Muslim Brothers. The core is one of “constructive engagement in society, [with a] focus on personal and communal empowerment, and organizational development” which have had a deep impact on much of the Muslim world (Muslim Association of Canada Website). Though these are the same revivalist ideologies of the Muslim Brotherhood which is seen as a threat in many Muslim majority countries, their presence in Winnipeg has, over the years, shown to be aimed at inclusivity of voices, fairer access to community resources and being the voice of those community members who were not being heard (in many cases, women). In most cases MAC worked quietly, did not offer open membership for its core board(s), and did not espouse a particular ideology.

Islamic Social Services Association (ISSA)

In 1999, at the annual conference of Muslim Social Services in Virginia, ISSA was founded and a board was appointed. Separate non-profit organizations were incorporated in Canada and the US. ISSA Canada is headquartered in Winnipeg and has a voluntary board of directors and an Executive Director to oversee the organizational function and projects. ISSA is an inclusive and charitable voluntary organization with a mandate to work in collaboration with mainstream

organizations in human services to provide family, health, social and welfare services. It considers itself a bridge building organization that advocates, collaborates, educates, and builds awareness while also offering direct services and support to individuals and communities (Islamic Social Services, n.d.).

ISSA is active in offering educational services across communities (such as public information and Q&A forums on hot topics), working with mainstream organizations, writing in to local media about issues of importance concerning immigrants, refugees, and Muslims in Manitoba as well as establishing service providing programs or organizations. It also frequently hosts events for the Muslim community and for non-Muslims that work to strengthen ties and provide opportunities for growth.

Husaini Association

The Husaini Association of Manitoba is a registered charity and seems to have picked up activity in the 21st century with the growing needs of Shia Muslims in Manitoba. The organization holds prayers, celebrations for special Islamic occasions, is an information source for ithna- ashari shias in the province and facilitates funeral rites as well as arranges hospital visits for the sickly. They also bring in speakers, help out newcomers and assists families when there is a need (Husaini Association of Manitoba, n.d.).

Education

Al Hijrah Islamic School was established in 1996 as the first full time Islamic school in the province. Enrollment is in the hundreds and the focus of the school is delivering the curriculum as well as teachings in Islam and providing an environment where Islam is a norm.

Ecole Sofiya, the second fulltime Islamic School in Manitoba, was established in 2003 and runs a tri-lingual curriculum of English, French and Arabic for Kindergarten to Grade 6.

The *Weekend Islamic School* has been in operation since the 1980s and is now called Al-Noor Weekend Islamic School. It offers classes focused on religious education on Saturdays for all ages. It has been a staple in the Muslim community for decades and many generations of Muslim youth have memories of spending their Saturdays at the weekend Islamic school.

The Manitoba Muslim Senior's Association MMSA

The MMSA was founded in 2008 and is an organization focused on Senior's activities and needs in the community. The members are, by and large, the many active and original members from the early and founding years of the community whose needs have shifted and who need a place to call their own. They are well respected and continue to have input and success in the community. They have held conferences addressing the generation gap between seniors' and youth, they have held feasibility projects exploring senior's housing needs and they consistently hold educational and leisure activities for the community.

Canadian Muslim Leadership Institute

CMLI launched in 2010. It is an organization whose primary initiative is the Leadership Development Program through which participants connect and learn from community leaders, activists, academics, leadership specialists, life coaches and facilitators. The program focusses on critical thinking, self-discovery and building cross community connections. Mentors include the President of the National Association of Japanese Canadians, a professor of Religion and Culture at the University of Winnipeg, A CBC radio host, and others who offer their experience for the participants to engage. The CMLI goal is to nurture future leaders within the Muslim communities through non-traditional leadership, meaning that one does not need to be in a titled position to build community and be a leader but can contribute in many other ways. CMLI developed out a forum hosted by ISSA in 2008 that spanned Muslim communities and organizations across Manitoba to honour the achievements and discuss the needs of future Canadian Muslims. The CMLI website

explains that “The forum participants recognized that to meet the needs of the future and ensure the continued growth of the community they would need to work together to build a strong and connected Muslim community, a community that could continue to actively contribute to Canadian society” (Canadian Muslim Leadership Institute, n.d.). The website further specifies that “CMLI provides a leadership training program to develop emerging Canadian community leaders, within the diversity of Muslim communities, with the vision to strengthen existing relationships, create new and robust community connections, and to improve the quality of life for all Canadians through the open exchange of ideas” (Ibid).

The Project

The foregoing sets the background to this research undertaking. I have introduced the, perhaps novel, concept that Muslims in Canada should be conceptualized (and do self-conceptualize) as Canadian Muslims embedded in their locales and part of a growing domestic identity.

This project offers an ethnographic case study of a local presence of Muslims that has a history and character of its own in a medium-size Canadian metropolis. An emerging and local grassroots Canadian Muslim identity is observed through discourses at communal and individual levels. Below I set out the outline for the ethnographically-based thesis project presented here.

I began with an introduction to the topic, the researcher, the history, facts and the community of study. Chapter 2 will discuss the literature surrounding the project. The first section begins by building the understanding of identity that is brought into the project. First, I begin with the understanding of identity as a dynamic engagement involving both internal and external components. Second, we engage the aspect of community and the social in identity constructions and navigations. Third, I explain the literature on immigrants and generations in identity studies. This touches on religion and children of immigrants to develop an understanding of the difference between immigrants and their locally born and raised generations. The next section provides literature on ‘What Constitutes Canadian Identity.’ We begin by looking at the Christian roots of Canada. Second,

we look at literature on diversity and multiculturalism. Third, we explore belonging through citizenship and fourth, belonging through organization. This section ends posing the ambiguous character of Canadian identity. Section 3 explores the concept of ‘Canadian Muslim’. Section 4 develops literature on the ‘other-ness’ of Muslims in Canada to better understand Muslims in Canada in the 21st century.

Chapter 3 develops the methods and major theories utilized for this study. An understanding of discourse theory and discourse analysis is first developed as the primary point of departure for this study. The spatial analysis theory of Kim Knott is discussed as a secondary framework carried through the background of the study. Lived religion theory is explored as a third lens of understanding carried throughout this project. Together these build a study based on discourses, spaces and lived experience to develop an understanding of this emerging grassroots and local Canadian Muslim identity. Next, I discuss the ethnographic method and the approach taken in carrying out this project. Following this I reveal the collection of data and its associated characteristics which were also discussed in the project’s introduction history. Lastly I discuss the more general typological understanding I bring into this project.

Chapter 4 is the first of the Data Analysis chapters. It examines a series of important social considerations. I begin by looking at expectations of ‘what a Muslim is’ or, more accurately, “what a Muslim looks like”. Next I look at perceptions of Muslims through stereotypes, discrimination and Islamophobia. Following this I shift to the social aspects that came to light in the research. These are categorized through the major ones that came out of the data: Family, Friendships, Community and Organizations. Next I shift into discussion of the media that was identified at the many levels of research as a major player in the social construction of identity. Following this the discussion turns to gender which crosses with many of the other social sites discussed in this chapter. Following gender, I develop the concept of the local social space in which this study was conducted that came out in the data.

Chapter 5 explores strategies in identity construction. I begin by discussing a basic strategy developed by many minorities that came through heavily at the surface of interviews: that of desensitization. Humour also surfaced as a strategy to mitigate perceptions of being Muslim. Next I discuss the strategy of fitting in or 'being Canadian' employed by many of the interviewees in both conscious and unconscious ways. I also explore education, independent decision making, information seeking and being a representative. Reactive formation of identity also came out in the data though not always negative as much literature has previously discussed (think radical turns from 'Western' nations - this did not come through the interviews or community observation as a strategy and seems to be an isolated experience in this population). Social organization and movement also came through as important strategies developed in this section.

Chapter 6 is the last Data Analysis chapter and looks at Grassroots Canadian Muslim identity by discussing the interviews, discourses and the space of the study to analyse the data and discuss key points. Here I develop the crux of the project, the emerging local identity of Canadian Muslims in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The final chapter explores the project conclusions and summarizes the findings.

This research is important on an individual and national level. There is a lack of understanding on Muslims in Canada and it prevents the full participation and acceptance of Muslims as Canadian. This work sheds light on some of the nuances, the spectrums and the attachments of Canadian Muslims as well as their embedded lives and communities.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the preceding chapter I have outlined the organizational infrastructure of the community of study in order to develop an understanding of the points of organizational engagement that are important in the development and negotiation of identity for Canadian Muslim identity in Winnipeg. This chapter will focus on the topic of identity through a literature review. I explore scholarship on identity; specifically I look at identity development and negotiation, the factors that may affect them while keeping the topic of Canadian Muslims in mind, and the strategies that are employed. The literature study will show the understanding of identity I have taken into the thesis project; an understanding that identity is socially ascribed as well as individually chosen, dynamic, reflexive, and performative.

This chapter examines several areas of scholarship to bring clarity to the topic of Canadian Muslim identity and develop a feel for the research and trends leading to the topic. The literature review is divided into several areas. First, the subject of identity is considered with a view to religion and migration. This section on identity focuses on religion in relation to Muslims in diaspora by exploring immigrant identity, minorities and immigrant generations. It builds an understanding of identity as dynamic and complex as opposed to the outdated notion of static identity. Second, a concept of Canadian identity is explored. Here I develop a discourse on what it means to be Canadian to understand the ‘Canadian’ in Canadian Muslim. Third, the concept of Canadian Muslim is considered by discussing literature in the area of Canadian Muslim identity. Fourth, other-ness in the form of discrimination is factored into identity considerations; or other-ness as it factors into Canadian Muslim identity. The conclusion summarizes trends and themes as well as gaps that emerge from this literature study.

1. Identity

To understand the negotiation and development of Canadian Muslim identity in Winnipeg it is important to first understand identity. The following will explore the concept of identity through studies and scholarly reflections on the topic.

1.1 Identity: A Dynamic Dialogue of Deep Self-Definitions and Social Constructions

Identity as a concept highlights the individual's social locations and psychological constructions in a world of increasing uncertainty (Asad, 2003: 161). Identity is difficult to define and even more difficult to determine in isolation from any of the host of factors which contribute to it. Contemporary studies prove static conceptions are not sufficient in explaining the dynamic complexities, especially in the study of minorities and religion (Eid, 2007; Hijri, 2010; Sayed, 2006; Moghissi, Rahnema & Goodman, 2009). Scholars like Homi Bhabha (1994) and Edward Said (1978) note that fixed, static understandings are culturally and historically embedded in the idea of an 'other' being gazed at. This rigid understanding of identity makes it easy to categorize and say something about the other but neglects to take into account the fact that identity is often constructed, changing, negotiated and re-negotiated consciously and unconsciously through multiple lenses. These perceptions create an 'other' to be pitted against a certain 'normal' (Shanaz Khan, 1998).

One way some scholarship considers identity is as a split structure with two critical components: internal and external construction (Asad, 2003; Eid, 2007; Kazmi & Hashim, 2010; Sayed, 2006). Talal Asad explains that we declare an identity to the world and require it to recognize this identity. This identity depends not only on the name we proclaim to the world, but how we see ourselves as well as how others perceive us, acknowledge our assertions of identity and the ways in which we are excluded or make exclusions (Asad, 2003). In this view, identity is a name given to the way we are positioned and the way we position ourselves within a narrative of the past (Hall, 1990(a)); a way we construct ourselves but also a way we are constructed by others (ibid). It is seen as a split structure containing a great deal of ambivalence (ibid). This view of identity, on its own,

can be somewhat static. In reality, people have multiple and fluid identities which they develop, deploy and likely re-develop over the course of a lifetime and differently in different circumstances. Sometimes aspects of identity become solidified in particular ways.

The key point to take away from this view is the understanding that primary constructive forces become the experiences and interactions of both the internal and the external: a dialogical engagement of the self and that outside itself that creates a narrative of sorts (Kazmi & Hashim, 2010). There is an aspect of production or performativity here. Self-definitions should be examined with an awareness of the external representations (Eid, 2007) but also cognizant that these are outside the self and not the whole or even necessarily the majority of the identity. They are, however, important to understand identity constructions and expressions. According to Stuart Hall (2003), markers of identity reflect historical experiences and shared practices. As a result, we define our identity through a negotiation and development with others. In the case of minorities, the concept of the ‘other’ may define or form a realization of one’s own self through a point of differentiation (Asad, 2003; Duderija, 2008; Eid, 2007; Hall, 1996a; Said, 1978; Sayed, 2006); the ‘What am I?’ is defined against the ‘What am I not?’ (Hall, 1996a: 345).

It is this dialogical engagement of the self and that outside itself that is the performative aspect of identity. In her studies on gender identity Butler writes of the performative aspect of identity that “it operates as an interior essence that might be disclosed, an expectation that ends up producing the very phenomenon that it anticipates... Performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration” (1999: XV). The internal features of ourselves, ones that we anticipate, are produced through performative engagements with the world around us (Butler, 1999). It is important to understand this internality is not just a false metaphor for the organization of a core self but an essential component of identity. It is precisely the cyclical dialogue of the self with the world around it that is the way in which identity manifests; a process of making oneself and being

made (Butler, 1999; Goodman, 2006; Moghissi, Rahnema & Goodman, 2009). It is in this way that performativity is a crucial aspect of identity (Mead, 1910).

Eid (2007) discusses a situational approach to identity (influenced by Nagel (1994) and Okamura (1981)). He explains identity to have a changing nature which can take different forms depending on which culturally shared parts are mobilized in the search for meaningful self-definition (Eid, 2007). In light of this view, identity then becomes flexible to the situation dependent on the context, audience and the person who draws from their identity ‘toolkit’ (Ibid³¹; Goffman, 1959). This is especially salient in exploring multidimensional identity structures like Canadian Muslim identity which contain multiple sources or ‘toolkits’ from which identity is formed and reformed.

1.2 Identity: The Social Aspect: Religion, boundaries and communities

This binary point of differentiation is also present in the construction and negotiation of Canadian-immigrant/minority identity. According to Eid, internal boundaries emerge through the shared memory and (social) history that provides the material for construction of collective and individual selves (the ‘us’) (Eid, 2007: 23; see also Kazmi & Hashim, 2010). Further, religious identity can be thought of not only as the spiritual component but also as a collective identity. Religion can be a key component of identity; both in the sense of believing (individual) and belonging (collective or community) (Duderija, 2008: 374). Identity is the individual self and the unique social context external to the self in a dialogical engagement (Kazmi & Hashim, 2010).

One way to take a measure of religious identity is to assess familiarity with beliefs or norms of the individual’s religion and their religious practice (Eid, 2007: 33). This is the route many survey-based or quantitative studies take in asking questions based on ‘how much?’ and ‘how often?’ Meredith McGuire (2008) on the other hand observes that attention to questions of doctrine, practice and adherence, are outdated definitions of religion coming from predominantly Judeo-Christian and European concepts of religion rather than the ways that people develop and experience spiritual

³¹ Though Eid is referring to ethnic identity I feel that this definition is especially fitting to Canadian Muslim identity.

meanings. McGuire finds lived religiosity by looking at the different ways individuals bring sacred meanings to everyday activities (and assumes to a degree that we can know religious and spiritual in the absence of institutional connections), thereby linking the planes of sacred and profane.

Another method of studying identity suggested by Eid is a focus on the social aspect of identity to strengthen or build up group ties. This requires contemplation on a 'binder' or a structuring agent (Eid, 2007: 34). Though Eid explores religion as the social binder, it is important to understand that identity can be tied to other individuals to some degree and culture, politics, ethnicity, community and a host of other social sources can also be understood as the structuring agents within the toolkits. Eid breaks religion down into subjective and objective aspects in a four by four interdependent matrix (Isajiw scale, *ibid.*) examining the socio-cultural use of religion. The subjective aspect of religious identity refers to self-identification with religion or community. The objective aspect of religious identity refers to the extent to which feelings of belonging are coupled with corresponding levels of religious practice and community participation (*ibid.*). He further breaks down religious identity to subjective/cultural and objective/cultural; the former referring to a sense of belonging to one's religious culture and the latter referring to the level of religious observance and participation. This goes back to the two parts of identity discussed previously: believing and belonging; the individual and the collective. This, however, creates an explicit distinction between culture and religion and assumes culture is tied to group belonging and religion is tie to the individual.

McGuire's work (2008) on religion and identity takes a different approach by considering 'lived religion' - the personalized interactions of religion and its interweaving social contexts - in a more fluid and changing manner. She finds that the 'religion' is much less obviously located than identity studies let on because our understandings of religion spring from European Enlightenment concepts and definitions with specifically Christian foundations intertwined with secular theory. She explains that in the contemporary world religious authenticity is not confined to institutional 'religion', rather it is sincerity that determines authenticity (particularly in the North American

context, in Canada for example where the Supreme Court would use the rhetoric of “sincerely held belief”).

Mehmoona Moosa-Mitha explains that the resiliency of a faith-based identity lies in faith (or religion) being an orientation device of sorts to mitigate dissonance (2009). Through this, one may organize and measure choices one makes and cultivate sense of self (ibid). Jasmine Zine similarly refers to religion identity as an ‘anchor’ in her studies of Muslims in Canada (2009).

Whether we call it the source, anchor, toolkit or something else it is clear that there is a social aspect to identity from which an individual may draw from or push against, even when religion/spirituality is of the individual de-centralized character and particularly when community of some sort is involved. Chapter 4 will discuss in more detail some social drivers and factors in identity construction particular to the demographic of study.

1.3 Identity: Immigrants and Generations

Regarding immigrant identity, it is important to understand that religious pluralism in Western liberal democracies, combined with law and policy, encourages (and sometimes pushes for) institutional, social and theological transformations in the religions of migrants and minorities (Duderija, 2008: 372; Fournier; Gilliat, 1994, 2009; Sullivan, 2005). Gilliat (1994) researched the effects of pluralism on minority group religious identity and categorized identity responses into three categories: exclusivist, which is uncompromising and protective of identity; borderline, which can be described as ambiguous or situationally determined; and assimilationist, which attempts to adopt host society identity forms (Portes & Zhou, 1993). More recently, Geraldine Mossiere has explored Islam in a Western context by studying converts in Quebec and Muslim dress performance (2012). Mossiere explores how clothing and attire create shared bonds of belonging within groups that are often particularly meaningful for minority populations, like Muslims in Western societies and Muslim converts (2012). There is an overall lack of studies on the effects of pluralism on the identity construction of minorities. However, the shariah tribunal debates (culminating in 2005) produced an

interesting examination of Islam and Muslims in western societies. Much has been written on the topic (for example: Bakht, 2005; Korteweg & Selby 2014) and advocates have spoken on the interesting node of negotiation Muslims are at in developing a new kind of Muslim-ness here in Western societies that are free from the regimes and established hierarchies in Muslim majority countries (Lawyer Fasal Kutty for example, 2014: 123-150). Korteweg and Selby explain that the debate reflected “a very Canadian, intensely diverse immigration context” (2012: 377). Julie Macfarlane (2012) and Christopher Cutting (2012) both illuminate something that remains invisible in discourses about Muslims: individual Muslims have fluid, ad hoc and often negotiated relationships with shariah and fiqh (jurisprudence) which make up the ‘rules’ of religion (which themselves can be open to interpretation). What the studies on the shariah debates have shown is the failure of the Canadian public to understand the intricacies of everyday Muslim life and the opportunity to provide an avenue for what many people perceive as a clashing worldview to become adjusted within the Canadian framework to suit Canadian needs (Selby & Korteweg 2014: 379).

Sociological studies indicate the centrality of religion in immigrant identities (Awan, 1989; Beyer, 2008; Duderija, 2008; Hashmi, 2000; Moosa-Mitha, 2009; Zine, 2009). This is because immigrant people are often transplanted from majority identity circumstances in which religious community and society stand in a complementary relationship, to one in which they become the minority, meaning that their identity may stand in opposition to societal norms³² (Duderija, 2008: 372). Immigrants, through uprooting and resettlement, experience intensification of religious commitment, increase in self-awareness and potentially group cohesion, through re-evaluative processes within the new context (Duderija, 2008: 372-373; Hashmi, 2000: 163-173)³³. Zine finds that the ‘religion’ in diasporic identity is a lens to mediate the challenge and dissonance of the

³² By opposition, I do not mean a static opposition as identity can be a fluid thing with many points of intersectionality, but that the main perception of the ‘thing’ that is identity may be one of opposition (see Beaman, 2011: 461-463). For example, ‘visible minority’ can be an identity label given to Canadians who are typically not of white, European descent and who have a history of discriminatory policies enacted on their populations in Canada. It is a title that in and of itself stands in opposition to a mainstream or majority. ‘Muslim’ is likewise a label that for many stands in opposition to the ‘West’. In neither of these cases would I assume that identity is static.

³³ Though it is important to note that there is not an abundance of studies to show the degree to which this may occur, it is often assumed to be the case in studies on immigrant integration and communities.

contradictory value systems acting as a centering or rallying point in identity and decision making (Zine, 2001: 401-402).

Religion-based identity does not proportionally relay a practitioner's level of orthodoxy or orthopraxy. Rather religion-based identity for Muslim minorities demonstrates new forms of religiosity that manifest as central 'anchors' in negotiating and re-negotiating identity (Duderija, 2008: 374). This is shown in the studies by Rima Berns-McGown (1999), Paul Eid (2007), Haideh Moghissi (2010) and Thijl Sunier (2010). This is particularly the case with the '1.5 generation'³⁴ and onwards who have significant engagement, time and exchange with the 'host' society (see Eid, 2007 or Zine, 2009).

Intergenerational relations are important for passing on or modifying traditions and are among the most intimate and powerful in social life (Cole & Durham, 2007: 2). However, studies not differentiating between the first and second generations are problematic because they reinforce ideas that immigrant experience is all the same whether born or raised elsewhere or in a new milieu. There has been relatively little research devoted to the topic of second generation identity construction, particularly concerning Muslims in Canada (Beyer & Ramji, 2013; Duderija, 2008; Eid 2007; Berns-McGown, 1999; Moosa-Mitha, 2009; Ramji, 2008; some of the work is found in dissertations such as Sayed's 2006 work and Hussain's 2005 work). Most of the observations are found in larger works on immigrants through brief mention, such as that by Cole and Durham (2007).

Much research on generations has focused on issues other than religion, such as culture and economic attainment (Abu-Laban, 1980; Awan, 1989; Model & Lin, 2002). Much research on religion has focused on religious institutions, doxy and praxis common to the immigrant generation, (Bramadat & Seljak, 2005; Coward, Hinnells, & Williams, 2000; Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000; Berns-

³⁴ '1.5 generation' typically refers to those born in another country that immigrated to Canada at a young age and have been socialized here since migration.

McGown, 1999). I am choosing to focus not on religion doxy and praxis, but more on lived religion and self-ascribed points of view. I find lived religion and self-ascriptions of religion are also an indication of acculturation to Canadian/North American society where lived religion can be a more normal form of spirituality as statistics show native-born populations moving away from church organized religious praxis and doxy (Bibby 2006; 2012; Hildebrandt, 2014). In addition, these second generation hybridizations and experiences of lived religion are precisely the points of interest that will shape and change the global system of Islam. What is meant here is that those that construct these new religious identities that test boundaries and norms create currents of change in the larger global system of that religion and of religion in general (a concept that Beyer discusses in his 2006 work on global systems).

Peggy Levitt's work on immigrant identity (2002; 2009) concentrates on tackling generational issues and topics. Her edited collection, *The Changing Face of Home: The Transnational Lives of the Second Generation*, brings together several scholars in chapters exploring identity construction for children of immigrants (2002). Rubin Rumbaut's work in this collection tells us that definitions of first and second generation are not always consistent. He develops a general spectrum of definition to say that first generation refers to those born and socialized elsewhere who have moved to the 'host' country after the age of adulthood (eighteen); they are often simply referred to as immigrants (2002: 48). Second generation refers to those born and socialized in the host society, or the children of the immigrant first generation (ibid.). I would interject that first generation is better reserved for those born and raised to adulthood in another place and culture who may immigrate as adults; 1.5 should be used to refer to those born elsewhere who immigrated early in life (I discuss this in more detail below) so that their socialization has to some degree also occurred in the host country; and second generation refers to those born and raised in the 'host' society where one or both of their parents immigrated and settled (Canadian born).

More recently, Peter Beyer, Ruby Ramji and others have carried out studies among second generation Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist youth in Canada (see Beyer & Ramji 2013). These findings

are somewhat mixed, but several trends or patterns stood out. First, the second generation's approach to religion is highly individualistic and based on their own experiences, searches and critical evaluations. This also reflects trends in the general Canadian population. Second, the influences on religious orientation were fairly similar. Family and parents were a primary influence in second generation religious orientations, but most sought clarification and evaluation through engagement with print media as well as electronic (or online) media in their critical filtering and rational considerations. Third, the findings showed a significant difference among the three religious groups as to second generation orientation towards their religion. For example, Muslims displayed fairly consistent understandings of what the basics and fundamentals of their religion were: the Five Pillars. This coincides with global understandings of what the basics of Islam are. Second generation Hindu and Buddhist Canadians did not display a globally consistent model or expression of the fundamentals of their religions across participants. The other findings were that the majority of these youth had a positive orientation towards Canadian multiculturalism in policy and practice, as well as Canadian diversity and that there was a universal rejection of politicized religion. (Beyer, 2008: 31-38; Beyer & Ramji, 2013)

The '1.5 generation' differs from second generation in that they *may* have stronger ties (real or imagined) to their countries of origin (Levitt, 2002:123-143; Sayed, 2006: 18). Some have pinned the age to just before the teen years (eleven or twelve), while others have said it is anywhere before adulthood (Rumbaut, 2002: 49). Rumbaut explains that he coined the term, "1.5 generation" in his early work in the 80s, and that it typically referred to those who immigrated before puberty (2002: 48-49). The 1.5 generation have slightly different experiences due to the fact that their cultural integration occurs at a different point in life than those born here: perhaps in a more concentrated way, but also because of their potential initial lack of English proficiency and social understanding (Levitt, 2002; Sayed, 2006: 18). There is a noticeable lack of studies on the differences between second and 1.5 generation even though it is possible that the difference may be very small, if at all. For the purposes of this study, 1.5 generation will be defined as preceding puberty so as to limit the

socialization factors prior to arriving to Canada that may not be accounted for in a study of this limited size.

For second generation Muslims, religion often remains an important part of identity (Hussain, 2005; Moghissi, Rahnema & Goodman, 2009; Sayed, 2006). Scholarship shows that what tends to occur is a removal of religion (Islam) from immigrant culture and ethnicity to a more inclusive and 'pure' form of religion that is also more encompassing and accepting of difference in practice beyond the basics (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000). In Europe, studies show that religion removed from ties of heritage tends to become politicized or radicalized (Abbas, 2007: 3-13), while Canadian studies show a rejection of politicized religion in second generation youth. Beyer's study shows a universal rejection of politicized religion in second generation Canadian Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists (2008: 36-37). Sunier says that, instead of static portraits of Muslim youth radicalizing, researchers should set their focus on the active agency of Muslim youth in identity negotiation (2010: 129).

Studies on second-generation immigrants in America have found that they are more ethnically American than their immigrant parents (Bacon, 1999). According to some scholars, their identities are stuck between two worlds (Bacon, 1999; Bhabha, 1994; Dwyer, 2000; Hall, 1999). According to many others, identities are more fluid than static, but often have competing parts or forces (Hijri, 2010; Kazmi & Hashim, 2010; McGuire, 2008; Sayed, 2006). The resulting tensions have forced immigrant families to negotiate and re-negotiate adoption of certain Canadian practices and maintenance of their own traditions (Sayed, 2006: 18). The children of immigrants carry with them a degree of this maintenance of tradition and negotiation with Canadian values (though as pointed out, not in the same way as the immigrant generation). This generation may be highly influenced by their parents' immigrant generation but will often construct and negotiate identity differently with certain components of their parents' home experience in conversation (or argument) with their own home (Canadian in this case) experience. Eid argues that immigrant children focus on identity strategies that move away from the pre-fabricated boundaries of both host society and country of origin (2007: 25; also confirmed by Duderija, 2008: 373). This is seen in the ways that Islam changes for the

second generation, not through a mish-mash of home and host values put together haphazardly, but through a syncretic negotiation that is continuously revisited with deep self-reflection as well as perfunctory enactments.

The fact is that Muslims come from a variety of backgrounds including, but not limited to, the Middle East, South Asia, East Asia, Russia, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, South America, Europe and other Western regions. Having settled abroad there are 1st, 1.5, 2nd and onwards generations that are consciously and unconsciously constructing, negotiating and renegotiating identity through a host of factors individually and as communities. They are affected by the rules of liberalism and democracy as well as the assumptions of pluralism and, as a result, their religious outlooks may shift and change in the new milieu. There remains a tendency in Muslims in 'diaspora' to give precedence to religion as a salient point of identity recognition and assertion over and beyond ethno-racial, national, linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Jacobson, 1997; Moosa-Mitha, 2009; Sayed, 2006: 9). Rubina Sayed argues that this is best understood through the Islamic concept of *ummah* (2006: 9). According to Syed Nasr (2003), the *ummah* refers to the entire community of Muslim believers; it is transnational and inclusive, going beyond national, racial, ethnic, class, geographic and political limits and boundaries (see Dwyer, 2000). Some studies have found that identifying oneself as part of the Muslim *ummah* strengthens in times of perceived attack or oppression of Muslims. Others have found that in a post 9/11 North America, Muslims may emphasize their Western identities over Islam (Haddad, 2004a; 2004b; Sayed, 2006: 9). Muslim identity is by no means an absolutely passive phenomenon. It is important to note where and how agency is negotiated in identity construction and assertion.

2. WHAT CONSTITUTES CANADIAN IDENTITY

2.1 Christian foundations

Canada is a country built on European (English and French) Christian roots that has grown to embrace a largely secular character with Euro-colonial undertones.³⁵ Its claims to separation of church and state are coloured by the inclusion of religion in its foundations, such as the Constitution, as well as the national anthem. Statistics show a predominant demographic in Canada identifies as Christian (Bibby, 2002: 85; Statistics Canada, 2011). However, the numbers also show that in Canada individuals participate in religion less through formally institutionalized and organized structures and more through personal and private avenues, thereby seemingly disengaged from official structures and regulation (Eid, 2007: 36). Despite this, scholars have noted that the discourse or appearance of a ‘white’ and Christian Canada is still in place (Sayed, 2006: 47), especially when it comes to the regulation of ‘foreign’ religious practices (Razack, 2008)³⁶. Canadians are not, however, leaning towards areligiosity or atheism, but less regulated forms of traditional religion (Bibby, 2002: 138-139)³⁷ and can practice syncretism or *bricolage* in their lived religion (such as that discussed by McGuire, 2008).

In Canada, religion being relegated to an increasingly private dimension means that individuals are free to meet their personal spiritual needs within their personal, private spaces (Bramadat & Seljak, 2005: 4, 6-7). The privatization of religion, however, does not imply a lack of communal space for religion. People still hold belonging to a wider community of believers with a shared memory, practices and organizational history. This sense of belonging can be one anchor of identity amidst a sea of pluralism and individualism. What the privatization of religion also means is that at the point of the ‘removal’ of religion from the public sphere there is a Christian majority thereby leaving an atmosphere of Christian norms. Individuals whose spiritual/religious needs manifest in

³⁵ Beaman explains that in this Occidental world religion is bound by terms of Christianity (2010: 2).

³⁶ See also Beaman’s discussion on accommodation and tolerance as tools of continuing power relations (2011: 6)

³⁷ It should be noted that Bibby’s anxieties are about the decline of ‘traditional’ religion and despite the study being older it still shows that there is a sense of anxiety over the decline of traditional religion in scholarship which can be seen side by side with anxiety over the rise of ‘foreign’ religions.

public spaces in non-Christian ways (through apparel or action) are called into question and are often seen to pose 'harm' to the stability of society because of these 'norms'.³⁸

2.2 Belonging though Diversity and Multiculturalism

Beyer shows that diversity has been a continuously developing theme in Canadian history that began in the 1960s with changes in the nation's identity regarding diversity, multiculturalism and tolerance. Despite this, the migrant minority is still conceptualized as somewhat less Canadian or differently Canadian (in generous terms) than the white Anglo- or Francophone (even if they were not born here). He explains that the 'visible minority' status that was added to the census in 1996 identifies Canadians who were largely excluded from being true 'Canadians' before the 1960s (2008: 9-40).

Diversity is flourishing in Canada. Statistics show a growing demographic of religious minorities and increasingly these minority demographics are visible in higher echelons of society and decision making systems. The discourse of multiculturalism beginning in the 1970s and progressing through the years has become a pivotally important part of the character of Canada and the way Canada defines itself differently from other nations (even those grappling with the idea or reality of diversity). Canadian multiculturalism puts forth the idea that difference is acceptable, and perhaps even beneficial (Biles & Ibrahim, 2005; Khan, 2002; Sayed, 2006). This is a particularly significant point for minorities and minority Canadian identity. In practice however, many have claimed that Canadian multiculturalism makes difference a token to be appreciated in pocketed moments (such as for cultural shows, food and music) (Biles and Ibrahim, 2005: 156; Bhabha, 1990: 208). Still others claim that multiculturalism takes away from Canada by promoting an attachment to elsewhere

³⁸ Religion's manifestation in Canadian public space is a controversial issue as demonstrated through media and law. See Beaman's work on religion and law (2008; 2010), as well as her work which touches on the problem of religion in Canadian public space by discussing accommodation and tolerance as inadequate tools for diversity. According to Beyer, religion is somewhere between a problem, a reality and an irrelevance (2008: 20-21).

(Bissoondath, 1994). The fact remains that in all these instances that there is a dominant 'Canadian' society in which there exists a diverse minority.

2.3 Belonging through Citizenship

One of the most salient ways of claiming belonging to a nation and society is to take citizenship (Adams, 2007). Some of the most significant indicators of newcomer integration are to be observed at the level of political participation which includes taking citizenship and voting. Adams finds Canada is exceptional in the extent to which newcomers seek citizenship and participate politically (Bloemraad, Korteweg & Yurdakul, 2008). Newcomers demonstrate some faith in the Canadian political system through their participation. An especially notable form of political participation is running for political office. Canada has the highest population of foreign-born legislators in the world and has been close to matching the proportion of foreign-born legislators to the actual population of the country. Australia, Britain, France, and the United States are all lagging behind Canada in this regard (Adams, 2007: 65-73).

Compared to other Western nations, up until recently³⁹, Canadian citizenry has remained exceptionally open, highly encouraged for those residing in its borders with the capacity to do so, and public opinion generally recognizes positive contributions by immigrants (Adams, 2007: xi, xiv). In addition, newcomers seem to hold great pride in being Canadian, and are optimistic about their place in the country (ibid.). Adams explains that some of Canada's success with immigration is a result of its open experiences which themselves stem from a dependence on immigration for growth and being the first country to officially adopt multiculturalism as a policy. The other factor that contributes to Canada's success with immigration, in Adams' view, is that the points system invites a certain calibre of immigrants that have much to contribute to society, the economy and the culture of Canada. He does note that these contributions are not appropriately or consistently rewarded or honoured (ibid.),

³⁹ One example of recent changes is the Conservative Government's bill C-24 which gives the government powers to revoke the citizenship of Canadians who have dual citizenship and are found guilty in terrorism or treason cases. The government called it the "Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act" (Chan, 2014).

especially when it is taken into consideration that the professional accreditation of immigrants is a major economic sore point for those who cannot find appropriate jobs after migrating. The Statistics Canada Website even ventures to say ‘the re-accreditation requirements they [immigrants] must meet often act as barriers to the full utilization of their skills’ (Boyd & Schellenberg, 2008).

The discourse and debate over what being Canadian means is under re-negotiation according to Kymlicka (2003). The one thing that Canadians are quick to lay claim to is that we are nicer, friendlier and more accepting than those we share borders with (Sayed, 2006: 50), and we are more open to immigration than our Western cohorts. We envisage ourselves as the kindly hosts inviting the immigrants to our land and wanting them to feel good about being here (Biles & Ibrahim, 2005: 156-157; Kymlicka, 2003). Surveys show that Canadians feel diversity contributes to the prosperity of society and is central to the Canadian imagination (Biles & Ibrahim, 2005: 165).

2.4 Belonging through Organization

Another way to claim belonging is to organize and address issues and problems. In Canada there is an understood agreement between society and minorities that minorities will help others integrate in the early years after migration. McDonough (2000) notes that Muslims adapt to Canadian society often through participation in organizations or look to what they perceive as reputable Muslim organizations to find ways to adapt. Many organizations and social services are offered by religious and/or ethnic groups to assist new migrants and minorities (Biles & Ibrahim, 2005: 161). The Canadian voluntary sector, including the area of social services, is heavily populated by religious groups attempting to bridge the gap between service needs and the lived experiences of new immigrants. In addition, minority groups are active in the arena of anti-discrimination and foreign affairs. Moosa-Mitha (2009) finds that Muslims look for social inclusion through voice, vision and visibility; all of which are better and stronger through efforts of collective engagement.

2.5 ‘Canadian’

Some difficulties in defining ‘Canadian’ identity emerge from regional fluctuations and differences. Our nation is so vast and sporadically populated that we can observe significant differences that emerge depending on province, French vs. English, and rural vs. urban experience and residence. For instance, Francophone culture is different than Anglophone and both differ in urban and rural settings. Vancouver hosts a different feel of being Canadian than does Toronto; both are significantly different from smaller metropolis centres like Winnipeg and Halifax. An easily definable pan-Canadian concept or identity does not exist. This is perhaps the reason why it is more acceptable to be a hyphenated Canadian, a minority Canadian, or a Canadian who is also something else.⁴⁰ Survey data and media suggest that Canadians are beginning to worry that there is more immigration coming into the country than we are capable of handling (Adams, 2007: xi, xiv), and despite increasing religious diversity, public discourse marginalizes religion, specifically the religions of immigrants (Biles & Ibrahim, 2005: 164).

Being a Canadian means understanding the base values of Canadian society; whether or not one agrees, or if these base values are real in practice, is not always the question to ask. The values of democracy, pluralism, individuality, equality, freedom, and safety are central to the Canadian imagination. It is important to understand that although Canadian history demonstrates tendencies to marginalize non-European, non-Christian minorities, things are perceived to have changed (Bramadat & Seljak, 2005: 224). The contemporary Canadian imagery is one of a post-colonial multicultural society moving towards openness with its roots in both French and English European history that struggles to negotiate changes to the socio-legal fabric upon which the nation is laid⁴¹. At the root, being a Canadian simply means living in Canada and perhaps being a citizen (Adams, 2007: xi, xiv;

⁴⁰ As opposed to negotiating an identity in a place like Britain or the USA that have a decided national identity that one is encouraged or pressured to accept. The diversity of Canada may be similar to other Western nations, but the lack of a solid national identity pushed on immigrants seems to provide a more open societal atmosphere and a noticeable lack of civil uprising or opposition to the nation.

⁴¹ Alongside an uneasy parallel category of the aboriginal ancestry of Canada that often becomes invisible and overshadowed by the described imagery of the Canadian nation.

Biles and Ibrahim, 2005: 155-156, 161-162). The ambiguity in the definition of what it means to be Canadian is conceivably our best tool to manage our diversity. The rest is up to the definition or construction of the individual and the society around them.

3. CANADIAN MUSLIM

The research on Muslims in Canada varies from that in Europe by demonstrating a diverse spectrum of adaptations to being Muslim and Canadian. In Europe, research shows Muslims are not finding belonging. Canadian research also differs from observations in the United States in terms of ethno-cultural demographics and the choice of American identity (which is often perceived to be strongly defined and pushed upon American immigrants) as opposed to syncretic or hyphenated Canadian identity (which, as discussed, is rather ambiguous).

The complicated factor in this construction is that “Canadian” is a rather ambivalent identity category that does not necessarily negate a minority identity and contradictions can co-exist. Some Canadians might say that the fact that a person is born here does not result in belonging and that they are perpetually an immigrant (See Sayed 2006). I disagree, I think that there is a constant negotiation that allows for the existence of a different kind of Canadian identity that encompasses minority-ness. The ambivalence embedded within Canadian identity allows one to be a Canadian, a minority-Canadian, and internalize this identity instead of having to choose ‘Canadian’ as a standard European-origin fit and thereby feel like an outsider. Sayed (2006: 41) explains that the disharmony between the two main components of identity manifests during the teen years, but diffuses to what I would expect to be a continual negotiation in the adult years. This is not unique to Muslims, but to minorities in general. Jacobson (1997) explains that central issues of gender, family, sex, and alcohol remain pertinent tension points of identity for Western Muslims. I would add that religious practice is also a changing internal struggle or negotiation at different points in one’s life as is the role and centrality of family.

As the previous section has shown, the label of Canadian is a highly ambiguous, varied, and un-defined concept of peoples living within the boundaries (and sometimes outside) of the Canadian nation with some feeling of being Canadian. The concept of Muslim on the other hand is a global label applied to people who may slightly be tied by a central belief in a God-head that is found in various nations, geopolitics, races, ethnicities, and other systems and forms who may or may not see themselves as a part of the Muslim *ummah*. At best we can assume that one is a Muslim if he or she says he or she is. Many times Muslim-ness is assumed through participation, heritage or action even if one would not call themselves a practicing Muslim or affiliate with a community.

4. OTHER-NESS: Muslims As Others

As previously discussed, fixed and static perceptions of identity, particularly concerning minorities, are culturally and historically embedded in the idea of an ‘other’ being gazed at (Bhaba, 1994; Hall, 1996a; Said, 1978). This unyielding understanding of identity makes it easy to categorize an individual and community but neglects to understand the reality of minority identities as negotiated, dynamic and complex. Shanaz Khan (1998) finds that questions about identity create the ‘other’ in searching for stable ‘truths’ and the answers to the ‘who are you?’ questions. While scholarship proves that this outside-looking-in view of identity is not the whole story, it is important to acknowledge that this external aspect of identity does, in fact, shape identity.

Studies may show that many Muslims recall living in a post 9/11-induced hostile environment (Nagra, 2011). Others have found that in a post 9/11 North America, Muslims may emphasize their Western identities over Islam (Haddad, 2004a; 2004b; Sayed, 2006: 9). What is certain is that 9/11 affected Canadian Muslims in many ways, including: they have been challenged as legitimate Canadians, they have been othered in a large-scale and pervasive way that differs from the past, they have lost rights, they have had to renegotiate identities as individuals and as communities, and they have been forcibly tied to the events occurring under the wide banner of Islam and Muslims worldwide, to name a few.

What is also certain is that this did not suddenly happen after 9/11. There is a long history of generalized and specific xenophobia in Canada⁴². Anti-Muslim sentiment has been present since Muslims' early entry into what is now Canada and this sentiment lasts to present day (Helly, 2004; Razack, 2008; Thobani, 2007). The Gulf war in the 1990s saw an escalation of discrimination towards Muslims in Western nations. This fear of the other is still present as exemplified by the proceedings of the Bouchard-Taylor commission of 2007⁴³ and the rising physical threats to veiled women in Quebec that came alongside the controversies over the veil in public space. Razack (2008) explains that Muslims are seen as outsiders, even expelled by the laws and structures of Canadian society. Their safety and security is compromised, their identities are forcibly confined, changed and externally recreated and there is a loss of freedoms. Muslim men are imagined as barbaric and dangerous while Muslim women are envisioned as meek, oppressed, foreign and not deserving of access to their citizenry and rights⁴⁴. Their racialization is two-fold: as Muslims and as gendered Muslims. This has a heavy impact on how they are conceptualized, how they are treated and how they may see themselves. It is important to understand the impact of this complicated aspect of Canadian Muslim identity. Dependent on their experiences, to cope, they may reclaim their religion, push away from it, make excess assertions of their Canadian-ness or they may push away from Canadian society. In doing so this othered-ness ultimately reshapes what it means to be Canadian Muslim; different from the generations before them and the ones that lay in wait. Baljit Nagra's study (2011) finds that Canadian Muslims often define Canadian identity through multiculturalism and by

⁴² Examples like the Komagata Maru and "White Canada" campaigns in the early 1900s demonstrate a generalized xenophobia. Depictions of migrants from Greater Syria reflect orientalist tendencies and caricatures when describing these migrants in Canada; thereby demonstrating "otherness" (Said 1978; Helly, 2004; Razack, 2008; Thobani, 2007). Current regulations (for example the shariah tribunals of 2005, CBCNews, 2005; Simmons, 2010), security profiling and controversies directed at Muslims, public hostility towards hijab wearing women (CTVNews, 2013), decisions makers' discrimination towards Muslims (Rukavina, 2105; Taber, 2015; Payton, 2011), and a host of other examples come to mind to demonstrate anti-Muslim sentiment (as well as public polls: Environics, 2006; Angus Reid, 2015; EKOS, 2015). The history of discrimination and xenophobia in Canada is not limited to Muslims, but certainly has affected Muslims and is presently concentrated towards them. The subject is too wide to address thoroughly in this thesis, but work such as that of Razack (2008) can shed light on the development and concentration of discrimination towards Muslims.

⁴³ Here I am not referring to the recommendations in the Report (2008) but the public proceedings.

⁴⁴ The case of R vs NS (2013?) and the subsequent Supreme Court outcome which translated to the ability of the court to deny a veiled woman access to legal justice is a prime example of the ways in which Muslim women can be pitted outside the law and thereby denied serious rights.

doing so they will see Canada as more open, tolerant and favourable to Muslims and Muslim communities as compared to other Western nations. I would add that they also see Canada as more tolerant than Muslim majority countries with the access to plural conceptions of what it means to be Muslim and Canadian.

Nagra makes an interesting note that since 9/11 Muslims in Western nations are not only vulnerable to increased discrimination, but their religious identities are also increasingly subject to external construction. Their religious identities are used to organize social inequalities normally associated with racial minorities thereby making 'Muslim' a minority identity that is vulnerable to the same social processes of systematic inequality, external labeling and otherness as other ethnic and racial groups (the leading connection being the black population in America) (2011: 6- 7).

This mistreatment of minorities (currently and pervasively Muslim) demonstrates Canada's foundation as a racial state which has been hidden or smoothed over under the banner of multiculturalism (Nagra, 2011: 10). Razack (2005) demonstrates that the marginalization of Muslims has unveiled the borders and boundaries of who is and who is not Canadian. Not surprisingly, this demonizing of Muslims has been crucial to a sense of national identity among Canadians in a post 9/11 world where Muslims are the others that the secure nation of Canada functions against (Nagra, 2011: 10; Thobani, 2007)⁴⁵. As such, even legal citizenship for these people does not give them access to full citizenship rights. They may also be treated as second-class citizens due to the effects of this lasting othering and demonizing in a structural way – through laws, sentiments and through 'emergency' tactics based, quite simply, in racialization (Nagra, 2011; Sassen, 2004).

In light of this, it may be better to think about Canadian citizenship for Canadian Muslims as dynamic; as negotiated, subject to change, collectively acted upon and existing within a realm of social, political and economic relations further shaped by hierarchies of classification. Citizenship,

⁴⁵ Think of security certificates, revocations of citizenship and such policies that arose post 9/11 and specifically envisioned the "Muslim" man as the subject; in addition, the anti-veiling rhetoric surrounding Muslim women in contemporary policy, law and culture.

and the lack of full access to it, is a point of belonging that is negotiated internally and externally (Nagra, 2011: 14).

CONCLUSIONS

To summarize the preceding literature review, identity is best understood as dynamic with internal and external components and a degree of static perceptions. It is passive and active, individual and social, with self-reflexive and performative facets. The social aspect of identity is complex and considers belonging and boundaries from within and from outside. Canadian minorities often retain religion as the structuring agent of identity and the engagement of this source can differ between generations.

An important consideration of identity for Canadian Muslims is the notion of what it means to be a 'Canadian' amid the ambiguity of the term (Sayed, 2006: 3), while also navigating what it means to be a Muslim; connected to a different heritage but at the same time connecting to an emerging discourse with other Muslims in Canada. Research shows that while the tenets of faith remain the same worldwide, the way Islam is practiced and lived by Muslims differs from place to place. The research in Canada shows a uniquely Canadian Muslim identity emerging that is different from elsewhere and that also varies from place to place and community to community. Generally it tends to include religion (Islam) as a foundation or anchor for values (Berns-McGown, 1999; Zine, 2009), sometimes as an ordering tool to structure daily life (Duderija, 2008), and often a source to draw inspiration from to participate and contribute to the good of society and social programs (McDonough, 2000; Moosa-Mitha, 2009). The contemporary trend in research is leaning towards interview or groundwork-based studies taking the researcher out of their armchair and into the field; engaging Muslims in order to build an understanding of what it means to be Muslim here and now (Beyer, 2008; Ramji, 2008). Other trends discuss exclusionary or misguided laws, policies, and social structures that prevent Muslims from full participation as citizens and keep them at a disadvantage in the social structure of Canada (Beaman, 2011; Nagra, 2011; Razack, 2008).

There is a concentrated and rapid growth of Muslim populations in Canadian metropolis centres and as a result there is an emerging Canadian Muslim identity. Canadian Muslim identity is dynamic, engaged and reflexive; it is fluctuating and continually changing; it is shaped by internal and external factors; it is Canadian and Muslim. Despite this, until recently, very few studies have been devoted to Canadian Muslims. Most focus on Muslims in Canada, thereby promoting foreignness of immigrant identity or focusing on ethno-religious issues or identity. Research models have tended to lean towards questionnaires or theological discussions with few studies looking at identity construction. The majority of research focuses on the large metropolis centres of Canada, thereby ignoring completely the unique communities and identities flourishing in smaller metropolis centres. Observation and understanding of Muslim identity in rural settings and in local ways in Canada is almost non-existent. Why is this? It seems to reflect the trend of conceptualizing Muslims as outsiders to the fabric of Canada. There are gaps in literature about what it means to be a Canadian Muslim at this time.⁴⁶ It is for this reason I aim to better understand Canadian Muslims at a grassroots level. I seek to illuminate these gaps. The work this literature review intends to support is precisely an exploration of Canadian Muslim identity in order to appreciate the unique and active construction of identity and engagement with society around this identity to better understand not how foreign Muslim identity is to Canada, but how realistically Canadian Muslims are navigating identity and producing a new concept of what it means to be Canadian and Muslim.

⁴⁶ See the religion and diversity website for a description of work in progress in this area (Religion and Diversity Project: Projects, n.d.; Beyer & Ramji, n.d.).

CHAPTER 3

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

The previous chapters have situated the context of Muslims in Winnipeg and the observed concerns of Canadian Muslim identity. This chapter describes the theory behind the work and outlines my methodological approach to answering the query into grassroots Canadian Muslim identity particular to the locale of Winnipeg and the techniques engaged for data collection as well as the general categorization that may prove useful in some of my analysis and assessment. In addition I discuss some of the limitations and shifts in the work as they came to light. I end by describing the data analysis and general characteristics of my data.

Theory

My understanding and research on Canadian Muslims and identity led me to a multi-perspectival theoretical approach. The main consideration of this work was identity negotiations and constructions in a particular locale. In exploring this phenomenon, it became imperative to think about discourse theory in combination with spatial analysis, thereby producing a work examining discourse and space of a demographic of Muslims in Winnipeg to understand the reflections and actions of identity particular to these people. Further, this ethnography explores the concept of lived religion, which became important in understanding the experiences of second generation Canadian Muslims.

Discourse theory has roots in the poststructuralist idea that meaning in the social world is constructed through discourse and that the fundamental instability of language leaves meaning as never quite permanently fixed. This understanding of discourse theory views individuals as the subjects of discourse. What is missing is the acknowledgement of discourse as a two-way phenomenon; as formative and transformative. Understanding discursive struggle, then, is understanding that different discourses engage in struggle to achieve meaning and hegemony. As such, discourse is transformed through contact with other discourse; it is not a closed entity

(Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Fairclough claims that discourse is just one of many aspects of social practice and that critical discourse analysis is actually the study of change (1995). His focus on intertextuality shows how one may investigate the reproduction of discourses and discursive change through new combinations of discourse (Ibid). We may venture into ideas of discursive psychology to understand how people use existing discourses flexibly in negotiating representations, identities and social constructions. The stress is on the individual as both the product and producer of discourse in contexts of interaction. Discourse then, should be explored as both generative and constitutive in the social realm (Ibid).

Discourse has been described as a group of statements belonging to a discursive formation, not timeless or ideal but in fact a fragment of history posing limits of its own along with divisions and transformations (Foucault, 1972). Discourse is a form of power that circulates in the social field and can attach to strategies of domination as well as those of resistance (Diamond and Quinby, 1988; 185). Truth, then, is a discursive construction suiting a knowledge regime. The majority of discourse analytical approaches utilize a conception of discourses as meaning-giving statements or power structures. Other approaches open up the field of discourse studies to produce varying and often conflictual understandings of discourses existing side by side with competing or conflicting knowledge regimes and structures of power. Ideas of power and knowledge in relation to discourse and therefore social practice are important to take forward in the ways we think about discourse, majority and minority. Essentially, as discussed above, discourse is generative and constitutive. The struggle between different knowledge claims could be understood as a struggle between different discourses (power struggles) which represent different ways of understanding aspects of the world and construction of different identities for speakers. Prevailing discourses become important in understanding power structures but changes and shifts are also important to understand the social world. Questions emerge: Which meanings change? And what makes meanings change? Both of these underlie the concept of Canadian Muslim identity in this project.

Consideration of discourse therefore becomes the primary starting point in this study and discourse analysis becomes an important tool. The second consideration is space which is informed through an understanding of spatial analysis inspired by Kim Knott's work. Knott's book (2005) offers an approach to locating religion in society on the basis of religious-secular spatial analysis. By using spatial theory, she locates religion in both cultural and physical spaces. In a similar manner I seek to explore a space, less physically bound and more conceptually created: a community. In this general space I seek to locate the overarching discourses of identity as Canadian Muslims and explore these discourses to uncover what meaning is created in a "Canadian Muslim" identity bound to a particular locale. I differ from Knott's method to 'locate' religion through spatial analysis and instead seek to locate an identity, or discourses (negotiations and constructions) of Muslim Canadian-ness, in a particular locale.

Essentially what I am trying to do is observe and understand the special space for representation, participation and action created by this community to suit the needs and purposes of Canadian Muslim identity. Knott states that these spaces of representation are experienced by those who make imaginative and symbolic use of space to realise the possibility of resisting the power of a dominant order, regime or discourse (2005: 16). These spaces allow the group to live with the imposed order while also challenging it and transcending it by opening up space for re-imagination (Ibid). In locating the expression of agency in and through space, Knott forces me to consider what this space is. Space being not only a product, but a construction reconstructing of itself (Ibid), is an important concept since the aims are to seek the trajectory of identity being reformed in this community. My initial theory led me to see this space as the religious space. However, upon reconsideration I understand the space is a nexus of the religious and secular-national-local acting upon one another; it is the space where they intermix, affect one another, and negotiate, shift and sometimes change. The reason for the reconstruction of identity is precisely an effect of the secular on religious and of religion's challenge to the more dominant secular system.

Particularly relevant is the idea that space may also produce new but different spaces; not unlike how discourse may produce new but different discourse. For example, a ritual gathering in a sacred space may present new social groups or cultural products which themselves have a physical form (Knott, 2005: 16). For instance the growth of a second generation and its needs may require a larger, or differently structured, mosque. I wonder then, what kinds of space and rituals were present in this community that offered opportunities for new space? My observations point to organizations. Organizations prove to effectively bring solidarity and change. The largest discovery here was not that organizational authority was required, but that access to and involvement in organization(s) was a space to build rapport and nurture a discourse; in other words, the space of an organization was also a space to negotiate, express and sometimes solidify identity.

Knott's idea that space is a methodology, a medium and an outcome (2005) is a new way to think about space and therefore religious identity. I find it intriguing and useful in conceptualizing communication, form, restructuring and identity navigation for my project. The idea that social and mental spaces of discourses are inscribed with power is not new; in fact it is akin to the roots of discourse analysis; however the way that Knott conceptualizes them is helpful in understanding religious space (Ibid) and therefore identity for religious minorities.

The third theoretical approach undertaken in this project is a concept of lived religion. McGuire (2008) asserts that religious authenticity is no longer confined to official "religion" but is rather in the individual. McGuire illuminates that much theory and research about religion was and is grounded in the official definitions of religiosity that emerged during the period of European Enlightenment and that this may not be reflective of religion and religiosity outside the scope of that place and time (2008: 19-44), particularly in studies of Muslims.

Though I agree that this view of lived religion is important to individual practice, I feel it is just one part of this study and does not take away from the understanding of communal identity that is ever present in minority communities in Canada. The approach I am taking sees the community being researched as navigating through individual religious beliefs and systems to construct a

common identity in order to support a common goal of sustainability. Part of this reconstruction does employ lived religion but it does not negate collective expression. The lived religion experiences are, in fact, what seem to come together to produce certain pivotal points of identity that are then carried collectively.

McGuire's assertion that scholarship has tended to assume a cohesive cognizance (often static) to people's belief and practices when often there may not be such thought-out consistency (2008: 11-12) is on par with the way I understand people's beliefs and practices; however, when it comes to the community I am studying, I think the trajectory is to ritualize (or make coherent) certain components to create a sustainable structure. What becomes a concerted effort began from individual lived religion experiences. This ritualization may not be as obvious as performative ritual but exists in structures of organizations, meetings and documents. I do see that the identity of the community comes from a community-effort syncretism and bricolage; rather than a straightforward Islamic identity. I am conceptualizing this identity as a syncretic intertwining of Islamic identity and Canadian identity unique and specific to this community.

Through interviews and broader discourses I was able to explore this thread in identity of bringing a sort of sacred meaning by sanctifying the perceivably profane world; though I do realize that the separation of sacred and profane is much different in theory for Muslims than for Christianity and secular understandings of religion.

The way in which I felt this work shed light on my project was in how McGuire discussed the different ways people draw from ethnic and cultural backgrounds, family histories, as well as their personal experiences to create a spiritual practice incorporated into their daily lives. I would extrapolate this to further say their individual experiences come together in the organization to create a syncretic communal system and trajectory. McGuire's ideas may help locate 'religion' (or meaning) in practices and actions that may not usually be seen as substantively religious or of significant religious meaning.

Method and Approach

As a second generation Canadian Muslim having grown up in a community in a medium sized metropolis of Canada, this thesis stems from my knowledge of Canadian Muslim identity evolution over the years. It stems from a curiosity about the experience of Canadian Muslims across the nation to which I have been an insider. I am familiar with the events, activities, discourses and concerns my project participants talk about during the interviews and I feel this gives me a deeper understanding of the material which can translate into more layered understandings of the phenomenon I seek to unpack here.

My extended university career led me to realize my interests lay in the social sciences with a focus on Canada and Canadian society. While embarking on a new field of study and acclimatizing to the academics and literature in the area of religion, culture and Canadian studies I also worked at a not-for-profit where I encountered many new Canadians and experienced firsthand what I was dealing with in my academic studies on minorities and multiculturalism in Canada. I worked on diversity and integration projects, collaborated with those embedded in the programs of multiculturalism and saw the effects and opportunities of migration on new Canadians and their generations. My curiosity on Canadian diversity and management of this diversity quickly grew alongside the learning and on –the –ground experience. I was privy to the discourses about and on what it meant to be a Canadian and how the rhetoric on minorities was internalized and routinized on the ground as compared to the literature and policy level.

Muslims, at the forefront of media and popular discourses on belonging and not belonging pre- and post- 9/11, stirred a personal curiosity in my academic journey. I began by wanting to know how Muslims were being Canadian and why the rhetoric and discourses surrounding Muslims pit them as outsiders when my experience with Canadian Muslims was that they were quite content to be Canadian alongside being Muslim and sought ways to become contributing members of Canadian society while exercising their faith and cultures. My graduate experience compounded this curiosity as did the growing fear-inspired rhetoric about Muslims in the media and popular culture. While I had

the opportunity to study other minority communities in Canada I chose to engage in one that I felt a deep understanding of as both an insider and outsider; a member, a service provider, and a researcher. In part, because I knew the long-standing social history of the Canadian Muslims in Winnipeg and because, from the perspective of researcher and community worker to communities in Winnipeg, I saw something peculiar, particular and grassroots that I did not see in such a concentrated way in the larger centres like Toronto and Montreal where many studies were focused. This is the primary method and approach I bring to this study; an intimate insider knowledge of Canadian Muslim social history in Winnipeg and an even more intimate understanding of the spaces and discourses between and about second-and 1.5-generation Muslims in Canada and the effects thereof.

My introduction discusses the insider-outsider perspective I bring; one that accepts me as insider but gives distance and space to let the data and research build the project around the thesis. A thesis that proposes a particular and unique grassroots Canadian Muslims identity for the second and 1.5 generation Muslims in Winnipeg. The following section delves into the method and theory used in this research.

The more research I engaged with and the more literature I read on Muslims in diaspora, minorities in Canada and studies of Muslims in Canada, the more I have come to understand the lack of work that does not treat Muslims as a homogenous whole. The purpose of this research is to investigate the participants' identities as Canadian Muslims. Not as first generation immigrants confronted by a new culture, but as a Canadian generation being raised in a Canadian society having to contend with a variety of identity dimensions in their lives; the primary one of concern for this project being their Muslim identity. My objective was not to determine orthopraxis or orthodoxy but rather to take those who identify as Muslim and investigate their attitudes towards being Muslim, being Canadian, and the interaction and flux of the two. The question of religious ideology or lack thereof was not central to the investigation. However, participation in community and time spent growing up in Winnipeg did play a central role. Going into this project I brought with me the idea

that second generation Muslims in Winnipeg form their own uniquely Canadian Muslim identities specific to their locale, therefore community and social development in Winnipeg do play a large role in their identity negotiations.

My interest in this project was not to explore general tendencies of Muslims constructing religious identities in Canada but rather to explore the impetus to a Canadian concept of Muslim identity that is created at individual and collective levels, locale specific and grassroots in nature. I feel strongly that this approach can uncover important shifts for Muslims in the global religious systems of Islam and more particularly it can uncover a wealth of information about the realities of Canadian Muslims that are important in considerations of Canadian communities and minorities.

To explore these queries I took two major considerations into this project: 1) Experience and attitudes of a lived religion nature for those that fit the demographic of study that collectivize at a larger organized level. 2) Discourse and spaces of a grassroots locale-specific Canadian Muslim identity.

This project undertook a case study approach of Muslims in Winnipeg, Manitoba. This allowed me to focus my questions to locale specific observations and develop an understanding of grassroots navigations of Canadian Muslim identity. I utilized a case study approach to allow me to gain rich, deep and detailed data and insight into the query I undertook.

I went into this study with the idea that where an individual resides and their attachment to a community will play a large role in how they perceive their Canadian Muslim identity, how it is negotiated and how it is expressed.

The approach taken in this study was to take into consideration the aspect of community and societal involvement in developing the participants' identities along with their individual experience, attitudes and perceived backgrounds. The assumption is that backgrounds play a big role in setting foundations but exposure and involvement to a certain community, to common values, and the character of that locale will further shape what these individuals may do with these foundations and

how they may or may not reconcile the specificities of their values, ethics and rules with their actions in society. In other words, a Canadian Muslim in Winnipeg will have developed their identity in part depending on the norms they can draw from (or sometimes push away from) in addition to the specifics of their religious and cultural background and the way they were raised by their parents. The curiosity being pursued is the uniqueness of a grassroots Canadian Muslim identity in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The Winnipeg Muslim demographic makes up a relatively unified⁴⁷ yet diverse community residing within a “small city⁴⁸”. This community is similar and yet different in experience and character from other Muslim communities across Canada. With a medium sized population⁴⁹ and until the 2000s only one mosque serving the entire community the Muslims of Manitoba have experienced growing pains in the last 15 years and are at a provocative point in defining and navigating Canadian Muslim identity specific to their locale but also connected to the changing face of Islam and Muslims in the West.

Current research on Muslims in Canada has overlooked cities outside the large(st) metropolis centres. These large cities have populations so large that there are multiple communities separated along lines of ethnicity, language and other markers of differentiation. The studies often over-emphasize orthodox Muslims, ethnically specific groups, religious fanaticism or take the route of non-organized populations of Muslims (see McDonough, 1994; Yousif, 2008; Berns-McGown, 1999; Nagra 2011). What is missing are studies on Muslims that take interest in grassroots attitudes and expressions of Muslims that feel embedded here and now in particular Canadian locales instead of looking for divisions or generalizations. This study will contribute to shedding light on this phenomenon.

⁴⁷ In comparison to other large metropolis centers of Canada.

⁴⁸ Winnipeg is no longer a small city but still has a small city character to it that resonates with its population.

⁴⁹ Winnipeg is the 7th largest city in Canada but its population is 4 times less than the populated metropolis of Toronto and is even less than Toronto’s suburb of Mississauga (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Data Collection

This research project explored the concept of identity as Muslim and Canadian through the observations of Muslims in Winnipeg and through the involvement of 22 second generation immigrant Muslims, aged 18 to 39, that had at least one immigrant parent and were either born in Canada (second-generation) or had arrived in Canada before the age of ten (1.5 generation)⁵⁰. These participants are self-claimed Muslims regardless of ideology, affiliation or type of Muslim, and were currently living in Winnipeg or had lived in Winnipeg for a significant portion of their upbringing and young adult life (10 plus years). The semi-structured personal interviews were conducted over the summer of 2013 while general participant observation was conducted over several years, 2010-2014, in addition to engagement with community resources and public engagements as well as general observation.

Since the project was exploring a concept of embedded grassroots identity, it was important to require participants to have at least partially grown up, and contributed as an adult, in Winnipeg. While my initial focus was on second and 1.5 generations, the project organically grew to include a convert who, surprising to me, expressed the grassroots Canadian Muslim identity concerns and discussions I heard in the interviews with the 2nd and 1.5 generation participants⁵¹. All interviewees were well embedded in the Muslim population/community and wider Winnipeg locale. Previously I have conducted research in a small segment of South Asian Muslims in Winnipeg and have also worked as a volunteer and community member. As such, my entry into the community was not unprecedented and general knowledge of my interest in cultural-religious studies was previously known to the community leaders and many community participants. Exercising networks to generate interest was easier than actually acquiring volunteers.

⁵⁰ In total 22 interviews were conducted in the summer of 2013 (May to July). One interviewee is a convert from a loosely Catholic household not of Muslim background but is adopted into the family and is of unknown background. Another interview is not included due to being cut short and not being able to be completed in the mentioned timeframe.

⁵¹ Since I did not extend the invitation to converts and acquired this source by snowball sampling I cannot precisely discuss the data but I did notice that as a male convert, married to a second-generation Muslim deeply embedded in the community, he had built a support system of many Muslim friends and was avidly involved in the community. Therefore it was no surprise that his discussions reflected the Canadian Muslim grassroots identity discourse.

I went in with the expectation of 20 interviews and generated about that amount through advertisements in the community newsletters, on the community email listservs, the community Facebook page and through requests to the community that the advertisement be put in their various social media forums⁵². In addition to the interviews, I attended prayers and events at all three major mosques multiple times every summer between 2010 and 2014; attended the major community events during the summer months⁵³; and kept up-to-date on events, accomplishments and activities through newsletters, public announcements/engagements and email listservs. Since my advertising methods produced snowball recruitment, this provided me with a good way to talk to people who were not regularly part of these forums but were within the project outlines. I did not recruit from student groups, as seems to be a popular norm in ethnographic studies of Muslims, as I wanted to ensure that my participants came from a range of life experiences. It was important to my research, given my focus on community, that I capture the experiences of those who have a long term commitment to Winnipeg and to the local Muslim community there.

I conducted all of the interviews between myself and the interview participant and the interviews were transcribed verbatim. Selection was based on an open call for interested volunteers in community newsletters and email listservs as I was seeking generally involved individuals. This selection method meant that data was not representative of the entire Muslim population of Winnipeg but rather those that had some degree of interest/involvement in the mainstream community which encompasses different sects, ethnicities and cultures. I was not seeking general representation of the entire Muslim population but rather those that actively identified as part of the Muslim community of Winnipeg to some degree. These in-depth interviews broached subjects of religion, worldview, societal involvement as well as experiences, perceptions and attitudes towards a variety of topics. Interviewees were asked about their upbringing, their involvement with their religion and

⁵² Which spans religion, sect and cultures; anyone can subscribe by request. The listservs are monitored for malicious content so one can be removed if posing a 'problem' but initial acceptance is simply an interest.

⁵³ Conveniently the fasting month of Ramadan was during the summers and there were heightened group activities during this time.

communities, and their involvement and attitudes towards Islam, Muslims, Canada and Canadians. They discussed their views, the gaps they may or may not feel with their parents (the first generation) and how they situated themselves as Canadian Muslims in the larger Canadian society and structure.

It is easy to assume that this generation is trapped between two worlds; that of Canada and that of their parents' religious and cultural background. I did not go into this project with that assumption. I wanted to go in with an open mind and hoped to find something unique in comparison to this common generalisation and assumption.

Definitions of what makes someone Muslim vary from scholar to scholar, discipline to discipline and from culture to culture. Muslim may mean adherence to the five pillars of faith, attachment by culture, or transference through family. A Muslim may be secular but with affiliation to the religion. One may be culturally Muslim or be non-practising but consider themselves spiritual. There are a host of ways to be Muslim. My question is not how Muslim are you (they), therefore I do not explore, in any depth, questions of ideology or religious adherence⁵⁴, though this may have become evident through some of the interview questions and responses. My queries were built around Canadian Muslim identity specific to a locale, and ground observance has shown that this Canadian Muslim identity is an umbrella term encompassing a huge diversity of types of Muslims. Although categorizing might be useful at the level of quantifying population information such as in the study of Beyer and Ramji (2013), for this particular study it was imperative that the interviewee's own self-definition(s) be utilized in the classification; these self-definitions varied widely. I provide a general typology at the end of this chapter but it is more a guideline based on my observations and information than a strict schedule. I did not focus on orthopraxis in this study; I focused on intention, action and conceptualization of identity as well as institutional involvement and activism with a

⁵⁴ Åke Sander (1997), at the Institute of Ethnic Religions in Gothenburg, Sweden, has suggested a four-category classification system, defining what makes someone a Muslim. A Muslim can either be an "ethnic," "cultural," "religious" or "political" Muslim. A person belonging to an ethnic group in which the widely held belief of the population is Muslim can be considered an ethnic Muslim. A cultural Muslim is someone who is socialized in a Muslim culture. A religious Muslim would be considered a person who performs the Islamic commands and a political Muslim is a person who claims that "Islam in its essence primarily is (or ought to be) a political and social phenomenon" (Sander 1997: 184-185).

consideration for the importance these individuals placed on being Muslim. The general categories I utilized for the research outcomes will be discussed in the analysis. Ethical clearance for this research was obtained through the University of Ottawa.

Who are these Winnipeg Muslims?

Of the 21 interviewees used in this study 13 were women and 8 were men. 9 of the women wore hijab in some form on a daily basis. None of the men wore religious clothing on a regular basis but ‘3-4 maintained a regular beard which might be perceived as a religious garb by outsiders. Several of the men explained they sometimes partook in cultural clothing (like an Arab style *thawb*, or South Asian *kurta*⁵⁵) but it was not always the culture of their family heritage. The women, likewise, also explained having worn ‘cultural’ clothing that was not necessarily their culture of heritage. Though I feel strongly that this is because of the diversity of Winnipeg Muslims and very ‘Canadian,’ outsiders may (or would) perceive this as dressing in Islamic cultural clothing. 14 participants were second generation by both parents, 4 participants had one immigrant parent and one ‘Canadian parent’ which, for this study and many others, still classifies them as within the spectrum of 2nd generation, and 2 were 1.5 generation (born outside Canada, immigrated early). The interviews also included one individual of unknown background/generation and one who was a convert with parents of European heritage that were not recent immigrants. All participants have or had spent 10 or more years in Winnipeg.

The ethno-cultural backgrounds represented were as follows (some identify with more than one in their family background): 12 Pakistani, 5 European, 2 Bengali, 1 Somali, 1 Algerian, 1 West Indian, 1 Mennonite, 2 Canadian (self-ascribed- European descent with many generations in Canada), 1 Lebanese, 1 Syrian, 1 Russian, 1 Metis, 1 East Indian, 1 Ukrainian, 1 Unknown. The age ranged from 18 to 39 across the spectrum for both genders.

⁵⁵ A *thawb* is a gown-like garment and a *kurta* is a long and loose tunic top.

All participants were educated beyond High School. The majority (19) were university educated (with one starting in the fall) and many had college and technical training in a variety of areas including but not limited to film, photography, medical fields, technical skills, fine arts, technical arts, cuisine and trade, and so on. Statistics Canada shows the median ages of Muslims in Canada to hover around 28 and it also shows that Muslims are among the mostly highly educated demographic in the census (Census 2001).

The participants in this study varied widely in their practice of Islam from very devout to ‘high holiday’ participants⁵⁶. No one identified as non-believers and all had some involvement in the community even if it was, as some would classify, cultural Muslim affiliation.

Typology

When considering typology, I found literature on Muslims, particularly Muslims in Canada, was limited to Judeo-Christian (or it could be said poor but popular social-science) typologies of liberal-moderate-conservative and fundamental. According to my observations, research and readings on Canadian Muslims these categories or typologies are both misleading and incorrect when considering studies of Muslims. I therefore take a cue from Beyer and Ramji’s 2013 work and group religious identification in a similar manner while expanding definitions to suit the demographic in this study (2013: 54 and passim). The basic skeleton of typology utilized here is as below.

The participants sought in this study were at least somewhat community involved second-generation Muslims who self-identify as such. While participant and community observation encountered persons from category 3 to 10 with a majority falling in the categories of 4 to 9, the individual interviewees reflected ranges from 5 to 9. Of course, typologies are largely subjective and it is important to note that the typologies here reflect the individual at the time of the interview. However, those that changed religious involvement often stayed within categories ranges or fell into a drastically different category. Observations of Muslims in Canada show religiosities, religious

⁵⁶ The Data Analysis chapter provides a more thorough categorization.

identities and religious practice to be more boundary and rule driven in the youth according to orthodoxies as well as familial culture and rules. They may be more in flux in their 20s with introduction to post- secondary education and professional settings while they are varying in later years but may often become more relaxed. My study shows that those participants who were younger had more 'ideal' aspirations and expectations and were more heavily influenced in day-to-day decisions by their family expectations rather than religion. Those in their mid to late 20s demonstrated more thinking about alternatives and individual pursuit of information for decision making while still being considerate of their families opinions on moral and life passage event like marriage and partner choice. Those in their 30s and beyond often demonstrated desires to make choices different than the religiosities of their youth and 20s but came to varying decisions on enacting these desires in their adult lives. Those on the higher spectrum of typology often made religious choices different than their families but were also more embraced by their families due to the "religious" (or more "pure") character of these choices (if and when families were religiously inclined). Those in the spectrum of moderately involved might hesitantly make choices different from their family's expectations based on personal choices that had varying effects on the social relations with their families (real or imagined).

For instance a category 7 regularly practicing individual from a moderately involved family made the choice to wear hijab. She was met with backlash from the family due to the 'personal' nature of the choice when she was part of a moderately religious family. However an individual (also from category 7) from a highly involved family made the choice to wear hijab even though no one in the family wore hijab and was not met with any negative reactions. The opposite case of individuals coming from highly involved families, having worn hijab consistently by their own choice, and desiring not to wear it later in life, was met with varying degrees of reservations and negative reactions. These examples show that typologies are not as clear cut as they seem; they are in flux and can change completely in different phases of life. Despite this, the general typology considered in this research is described below. It should be taken loosely with the understanding that most fluctuate

within ranges but can drastically shift from categories at different times in life and for different reasons. It has been my observation that most of the older participants conceptualized identity more fluidly in their later years. But this was not across the board and not always for the same reasons or even on the same issues. I also observed a repetition of pattern: the younger cohort seemed to express the way the older cohort expressed and understood Canadian and Muslim at earlier stages which eventually seasoned over time and became more instinctive; the struggles and considerations were similar but conceptualized a bit differently. For example, the input of family and parents was thought of differently in later years. Rules and expectations were conceptualized differently with years of independent negotiations having occurred. This is interesting but also requires a great deal more study. It may point to phases in experience and development of identity in general but would be interesting to study specifically with regards to Canadian Muslim identity.

General Typology for Muslim Classifications Pertaining to this Study

Non-religious

1- Non Religious: Reject Muslim identity or identity of Islam; no spiritual interest; non-involvement in Muslim communities and organizations.

2- Non Religious but Spiritual Interest: Reject Muslim identity or identity of Islam, but have some spiritual interest.

3- Non Religious but interested in being involved: Reject practice and belief in Islam. May maintain Muslim-cultural identity and have some spiritual interest.

Involved

Muslim identity important but not central orientation; Islam is important but not whole systemic package. Some community involvement.

4-Minimally involved Cultural Muslim: Muslim by cultural identification. May observe Islam on major events/holidays such as Eid. May attend some community events. May be more involved in alternate community building such as Muslim-Progressive labelled groups (LGBT or gender alternative groups, human rights groups labelled or associated with 'Muslim' causes). May be more involved in cultural rather than religious Muslim events/activities.

General Typology for Muslim Classifications Pertaining to this Study

Continued

5-Somewhat involved Holiday Muslim: Likely regularly involved in major holidays and maybe community participation or alternate community building such as Muslim-Progressive labelled groups.

6-Moderately involved and Selectively (or Moderately) Practicing: Efforts to be practicing, involved in community events and community building.

Highly involved

Religion is an important factor in daily life. Considerations of Islam are important such modesty, honesty, 5 pillars, and prayer 5 times a day. Pursuit of religious knowledge is a characteristic of the individuals in this category as is community participation and community building.

7- Regularly involved: May fall short on professed belief but belief entails a standardized Islamic ideal to regularly engage ritual, prayer, religious obligations and maintain 'correct' moral behaviours. May express guilt at not meeting religious ideals and desire to be more efficient in regular religious 'obligations'. Likely involved in community events and community building.

8- Highly involved and Religious: Belief and practice largely align with Islam at center of orientation; a standardized Islamic orthodoxy to engage ritual, prayer, religious obligations and maintain 'correct' moral behaviours. Regular community involvement. Gender interactions conservative but not restrictive.

9- Highly involved and Regularly Religious: Islam is central orientation. Adopt a more sectarian life, especially in social settings. Still actively participate in professional realms of career and volunteer works. More gender conservative. Involvement in community.

Highly involved; Highly Religious

Reproduction of ideal Islam along the lines of a rather standard and strict orthodoxy of modesty, honesty, 5 pillars, prayer 5 times a day. Conceptualize Islam as a unified system with clear defining characteristics. Pursuit of religious knowledge is a characteristic of the individuals

10-Highly involved and Highly religious: Islam at center of life as orienting system. Adopt a sectarian life in social and professional settings. May still participate in community but strict gender relation mores restrict interactions and contributions. Oppose trends of modernization concerning proscriptions but encourage separation of religion from culture and ethnicity. Pursue a purist religious ideal.

10.5- Highly religious Selectively Involved: Islam at center of life as orienting system. Avoid interactions that challenge perceived proscriptions (gender, drinking, etc.). For example, Salafis. More individualistic, less community involvement. Would not look to community or imam for religious advice but rather pursue individual study of religion. See themselves as religious 'purists'.

*like Beyer and Ramji there is no category of political Islam. It does not fit in the scope of this study and no participants of primary political orientation were found/involved in this study.

Data Analysis

I analysed the data using two approaches: discourse analysis and spatial analysis. Discourse analysis is a broad methodology generally involving the close analysis of texts and interactions considering the hierarchies of power and knowledge to dig deep into meaning and structure. In my research, discourse analysis was used to explore the micro and meta discourses occurring in the demographic of interest. The language at the level of personal interviews is central but larger expressed discourses are just as important to understand the reach of these personal level experiences and navigations of identity. I kept an ear to the way participants and the community talked about themselves and the language around life and belonging in Canada as a Muslim. Discourse analysis allowed me to explore how these Muslims perceive of themselves in their locality and the competing discourses they may be pushing against in order to (re)construct an identity and even project or engage an image.

The process of data analysis went along with each step of this research from inception of the idea to literature engagement, distant observation, direct observation and consideration of the data. The research questions, project structure and carry-through impacted the data collected and vice versa. Interview transcriptions were all done manually by listening to each interview and typing the conversation in computer files. Once transcribed, I read the interviews multiple times prior to manually coding them. Coding was carried out first broadly and then more and more specifically resulting in several stages of coding. Labels were initially broad ('Canadian', 'Muslim', 'clothing', 'negative experience', etc.) to locate themes and then more specific to mine for data and opinions on topics such as religious identity, Canadian identity, societal involvements, attitudes and so forth. More specific subthemes of volunteer interests, interactions and specific experiences and thoughts emerged as the process continued and shed light on the more particular interests of this project. Much data was gathered and analysed but some would fall outside the scope and relevance of this work.

After coding the data several themes emerged regarding Canadian Muslim identity in Winnipeg: 1) Social sites of negotiation 2) Perception and expectations of insiders and outsiders

affect constructions of Canadian Muslim identity and interaction, 3) strategies in navigating being Canadian Muslim are occurring simultaneously at an individual level and communal level, and 4) shifts in second (and 1.5) generation identity can be particular to the locale in which they are groomed and negotiated and have resulted in noticeably grassroots Canadian Muslim identity discourses. These themes weave in and out of the data and can be seen throughout the following data analysis chapters.

In order to explore these themes the data analysis is divided into three sections. 1) Unpacking a series of important social considerations pertaining to Canadian Muslim identity. This chapter is meant to unpack considerations on social sites and social space that are seen throughout the interviews for a deeper understanding of the next data analysis chapters. 2) Strategies for navigating perceptions and expectations. This chapter is the meat of the data. It explores themes that emerge through the data regarding identity navigations. 3) In the last data analysis chapter the concept of a grassroots Canadian Muslim identity in Winnipeg is examined and unpacks the interviews and data to explore what this means.

Summary

This thesis, exploring grassroots Canadian Muslim identity comes from a multiperspectival theoretical approach. I employ discourse theory, spatial analysis theory and lived religion theory to build the research study and do the data analysis.

The primary approach that brought me to this work is experience. Experience with Canadian Muslim communities, experience with research on Muslims in academia and on-the-ground projects, and experience as an insider with an intimate knowledge of second-generation identity experiences. This, and an ethnographic research method, is the deep approach I can bring to the work on Canadian Muslims.

My method of research, ethnography, is a people-based approach dealing with primary data. This research is within the scope of existing work on Muslims, identity and Canadian studies. My

research data also explores community resources, space and discourse. Canada-wide Canadian Muslim discourse, space and studies were also useful to form understandings.

The approach taken, that community and locale play a factor in Canadian Muslim identity, was an important one for this study, one that I feel is missing in present studies on Muslims in Canada. It was an observation made prior to this particular project and one that I was able to explore in more depth through this work. This is why I chose a locale and community I had a deep understanding of in order to be able to delve into the material and explore it in its complexity.

Primary data collection through interviews was conducted over the course of a summer in 2013 while participant and general observations were made over the course of several years (2010-2014). Advertisements for volunteers were placed in the Manitoba Muslim social forums (Facebook) and sent through the main community email listservs. This was to reach Muslims in Winnipeg who were affiliated with and active in the community. From there snowball sampling was also helpful in reaching those outside the main social forums. The interviews yielded the primary data for the study that was explored in combination with larger discourses in the community and, when pertinent, across Canada.

The interview participants were, what one may informally classify as, 'your everyday Muslim'; meaning that they were varied in age, occupation, background and family lifestyle, participated in community and attached a degree of importance to Islam as a part of their worldview and lifestyle. They differed in appearance and expression of Muslim-ness and most considered themselves a degree of practicing Muslim. None of the interview participants expressed interest in political or religious extremism.

I present a general typology that is theoretically considered throughout this research study. However, in practice I observed this sort of rubric was not as useful as one might think as identities of these participants went through many phases and were quite fluid in relation to the way Muslim identity is conceptualized. Sometimes I employ this typology and sometimes I choose other ways to describe these people that make more sense in the context of the discussion.

The data analysis utilized discourse and spatial theories and analysis with the idea of lived religion theory running throughout. The themes that emerged were concentrated around space, discourse and lived religion and the data analysis chapters are organized roughly around these themes: 1) Unpacking a series of important social considerations pertaining to Canadian Muslim identity; 2) Strategies for navigating perceptions and expectations; 3) A concept of grassroots Canadian Muslim identity in Winnipeg. These chapters explore the social, individual and locale nature and navigations of Canadian Muslim identity for these Winnipeggers. The following chapters turn to this data analysis.

CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS

UNPACKING A SERIES OF IMPORTANT SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS PERTAINING TO CANADIAN MUSLIM IDENTITY

On the complexity of Canadian Muslim identity Zine notes,

The Canadian Muslim diaspora is a complex, contradictory, and hybrid space with a mix of liberatory possibilities and productive tensions occurring within and against certain oppressive social and political conditions that create the terrain for a distinctly “Canadian Islam.” Islam in Canada has been a highly generative site for new epistemological and ontological positionings. Beyond sectarian orientations, there are new movements towards “moderate” or “progressive Islam” that have gained currency and have spearheaded controversial moves such as female-led prayers and encouraged the promotion of gender equity within religious sites... There are also new cultural drivers shaping the Muslim presence in the Canadian national imagery. (Zine, 2012: 2)

Making sense of identity negotiations is an intricate undertaking. The climate of antagonism toward Muslims combined with the unique mix of diversity in this country makes identity negotiations for Canadian Muslims a particularly complex phenomenon. This being the case, it is ever more important to break down key social aspects of identity negotiations for Canadian Muslims. This section will delve into a series of important social considerations which shed light on the discussions of identity in the following chapters.

Studies demonstrate the importance of social space and encounter on identity negotiations. One of the ways to understand identity construction is to consider the social space(s) of influence and negotiation. Ramji explains that in order to understand how space(s) between oneself and others are negotiated it is important to examine what social relations are important in nurturing and shaping these identities (2013: 123). Pratt’s ideas on contact zones are helpful in thinking about these negotiations of identity. According to Pratt, contact zones are “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination” (2008: 7). They are the spaces of encounter in which peoples come into contact with each other and establish relations, conditions of coercion, inequalities and conflict (ibid: 8).

As with the work of Beyer and Ramji (2013), contact zones in this project are the spaces and situations encountered in identity negotiation that require one to decide more precisely what kinds of

personal identity lines they will draw and how. These zones, or social spaces, inform and influence identity negotiations. Some contact zones identified through my research can be categorized as large scale society including a general public consciousness; media; politics; close to home community including religio-cultural expectations; family including religious, cultural, ethnic and other inherited ‘spaces’; friends which is a flexible and variable zone; and gender which also falls into societal, communal and familial categories. A contact zone can be a space where difference and inequality become visible and where dominant norms and ideas test non-dominant norms and ideas.

In this section I am seeking to unpack considerations and observations of some of the key social constructions from which and into which Canadian Muslim identity may flow. I feel strongly that a reflection on these topics is required to have a deep understanding of Canadian Muslim identity in Winnipeg as they are common social sites of identity considerations. In order to better understand Canadian Muslim identity I will discuss public consciousness or perspectives by breaking the topic down into: 1) A standardized perspective or expectation of Islam that exists in general consciousness as the backdrop of what a Muslim is and is not then; 2) Public perception, Islamophobia and stereotypes through 3) Social relationships: Family; Friends; Community; 4) Discourse shaping media; 5) Gender; and 6) The urban space- the locality of Winnipeg. In this chapter the interview data aids reflection on other data sources. Chapter 4 goes more in depth with the interviews as this chapter is a preparation for deeper unpacking of the interview data.

Expectations or “What a Muslim looks like”

While there is a vast spectrum of religiosity amongst Muslims there is something, some kernel of a standard Islam, which many consider in the backdrop of identity constructions. Whether or not this Islam is a ‘real’ Islam is not the point, the point is that it is often the globalized “orthodox” model of Islam that seems to be a standardized perpetuated perspective of Islam as a religion without differentiation given to religious divisions or variations. This “orthodox” Islam tends to include the 5 pillars as well as a religious-moral orientation that extends to lifestyle through considerations of

hadith and *sunnah*,⁵⁷ avoidance of pork and alcohol, restrictions on gender interactions and gender roles, modesty in public and private, humility, actively working to make the world a better place, living one's devotion to a singular God, continued learning about a "pure" Islam and a degree of proselytism (Ramji, 2013: 144; Rippin, 2005). I do not intend to go into details about the different kinds of Islams, the divisions or sects, but the importance here is to understand the generalized "orthodox" model of Islam that many Muslims and Canadian society understand as the backdrop to all Muslim identities. This general social consensus can make it easier to grasp why certain issues become sticking points in identity considerations. It also appeared as a thread throughout my interviews as a factor in identity considerations when it came to being a "good Muslim," whether it was personally accepted or rejected or purposefully left unattended.

Many of the participants expressed this orthodox model of a Muslim when asked what role religion played in their lives. For example, Alia responded,

(Laughter)... I don't know how to break it down for you. Like Muslim as in I try to pray. I try and fast. I'd like to go to hajj but I'm not sure if I'll ever have the coin for that. I believe in God and the prophets and stuff.... . What other, oh charity, right now in too much debt to give charity but I look forward to give charity when the when the situation calls for it (laughter).

Anisa explains,

Ok well I guess I practice in different ways, the most, I guess basic ways is through rituals like the ritual of prayer, so I'll pray five times a day in accordance to what I was taught as a Muslim and what the Prophet Muhammad used to do and what is sort of described in the Qur'an. So praying five times a day and fasting during the month of Ramadan... giving charity when I can, and going for the pilgrimage. I was blessed to have gone to Hajj, the pilgrimage, once in my life with my family in 2005, so that was also an aspect of practice, 'cause [sic] we wouldn't really have gone unless it was something we were supposed to do, and yea the declaration of faith which is just-basically I see that as sharing with people that I'm Muslim, like when, you know it arises, I might tell people oh by the way I'm Muslim. I might say 'oh I don't eat that I'm Muslim'. Like I do like to share my faith and my identity with people if it's relevant.

Adam, who converted to Islam, offered an explanation of his religion similar to the interviewees who were born Muslims,

It's a big role, I mean especially coming from, you know I wasn't born in Islam, so it's a complete life change for me, so it's rare to see someone do that and then only maybe do it half way. So religion is more or less front and centre for my life, day to day, praying and things like that and as far as identifying what type of Muslim and etc. I mean I guess you can just say practicing Muslim pray five times a day,

⁵⁷ The *hadith* are the sayings of the prophet as passed down in oral tradition, the *sunnah* are the actions. They are considered part of Islamic tradition and many consider them the models for good Islamic behaviours. Different sects in Islam place different emphasis, but a general expectation of Islam would consider the *hadith* and *sunnah* as very important.

fasting in Ramadan, this kind of thing, but I mean there's only so much of that you can say, without going into issues of matters of the heart.

The interviewees demonstrated that while 'matters of the heart' and sincerity are important to Muslims it was the practice and manifestation of doctrine and a degree of orthodoxy that symbolized a good Muslim in an outward social sense. Oftentimes, those heavily involved in the community would keep personal decisions or lifestyles - that were outside a more conservative or orthodox model - quiet and private⁵⁸.

Common (negative) Perceptions: Stereotypes, Discrimination and Islamophobia

It is commonly known that post 9/11 negative perceptions of Muslims and Islam have been widespread. This is not to say that pre 9/11 negative perceptions were not plentiful, in fact the colonized history of traditionally Muslim areas of the world has long since 'othered' and orientalist Muslims and Muslim settlements across the world. In Canada, xenophobic sentiments have abounded over the course of the history and the development of Canada. Negative stereotyping of Muslims or "Islamophobia" in Canada arguably became increasingly evident following the Iranian Revolution in the late 1970s. During the Gulf War in the 1990s anti-Muslim sentiment in Canada also rose significantly. Sharify-Funk notes that prior to September 11th, 2001 the media coverage of Muslims was an "unfocused view obtained through a magnifying glass held at a considerable distance" but after September 11th it was "up close, distorted, sensationalist and flooded with stereotypes" (2009:75).

⁵⁸ Not precisely to appear as a 'good' or 'bad' Muslim but because of the nature of small communities and information circulation. Many preferred to keep personal decisions outside more conservative interpretations as personal and not a part of their public or community life. It is interesting that this division of personal and public was apparent in most participants' lives. Perhaps this is reflective of the rapid changes occurring between generations. I could not delve deeply into the topic but I expect it was to allow them to naturalize their Canadian Muslim identity as they saw their generation as the trailblazers of Canadian Muslim identity but they also did not desire to cause strife in their families for decisions they felt that ultimately their parents' generation should not have influence over. It is a complicated topic that deserves more attention and I suspect is similar in other minority communities with immigrant parent generations whose cultural acclimatization is different than the generations born in Canada. Some similar areas of research can be found in studies of South Asians in Canada such as those by Coward, Hinnells and Williams (2000) and generations like that by Cole (2007).

My interviewees recollected more generalized xenophobic encounters prior to 9/11 directed as racial-foreign slurs and statements than the type of discrimination directed at Muslims post 9/11. For example, Abdullah recalls: “When I was a kid in grade maybe, maybe grade 1, the first day of school. I was standing in line, we were waiting outside.... and some guy [is] just like “hey brownie” and I was like what 6 or 7 years old and I just started crying.”

Anisa, one of the young Muslim women participants, affirmed Sharify-Funks’ (2009) observation of an unfocused view of Muslims by recounting stories prior to 9/11 with focus on race and appearance rather than religion⁵⁹. She narrated a racist encounter where the perpetrator could not tell her from a nun and another where she was not sure if the discrimination was based on skin colour or the way she was dressed (with hijab). Discrimination prior to 9/11, as experienced by Muslims in Canada, was often due to generalizations and lack of information about differences. Anisa also told me of a rather humorous encounter (in retrospect) that relays the lack of understanding about Muslims prior to 9/11,

There was this one time, I think I was in grade 7 or something and I was riding my bike and wearing my scarf (laughs), and these two boys like who were younger than me rode by me, and they were like “Would you hurry up, that old lady’s going faster than us” (laughs). They were like calling me an old lady because I’m like wearing a scarf, but it was funny you know but it was sad at the same time.

Post 9/11 there is a great deal of ‘information’ floating around in the public consciousness and discrimination takes on a different and often more directly threatening and distancing character.

Research shows a rise in antagonism directed towards them by non-Muslims since 9/11 (Baljit, 2011; Zaman, 2009). When asked about experiencing discrimination prior to and after 9/11 Anisa recalls: “I was in my early 20’s yea, so all throughout my teens, my whole teens, early 20’s I felt that... Like, 9/11 was just you know, I felt prepared for dealing with that, because it was, you know, it wasn’t a new thing in the sense that it wasn’t the first time [I was discriminated against].”

⁵⁹ There is much literature on Islamophobia and race and the interchanging of religion and ‘looking Arab’ in the fear of and discrimination against Muslims (Taras, 2013; Tyrer (2013); Meer (2014)). But Sharify-Funk (2009) is right that the view prior to 9/11 was much more amorphous on ‘otherness’ while now all things (race, clothing, foreignness, actions, politics) are attributed to or conflated with being Muslim/of Islam.

On the spectrum of discrimination, Anila, who may be identified as a cultural Muslim, articulates,

Going to grade 7 and 8 it wasn't nearly as difficult I mean you always face some type of racism or you know some type of different stereotypes but after 9/11, umm I was in Winnipeg when that happened. I could... you know... just me, me personally, nothing changed for me... but people that I'm close to and around me I know it changed for them... I would say a lot of people that maybe didn't face as much racism growing up depending on what neighbourhood of the city they were in, started to feel a little bit more... either threatened or you know you just felt something and then I think even just the whole thing of people's identity. People just started to rethink of you know their position you know in the city or as Muslims or how they identify themselves as well.

A number of studies have charted the post 9/11 discrimination and sentiment towards Muslims in Canada. The Canadian Islamic Congress conducted media research reports from 2000-2004 examining the country's largest daily newspapers. They found the widespread use of terms like "Muslim extremist" and "Islamic militant" when reporting disturbances in Muslim-majority countries (Selby, 2007). The Canadian Council of Muslim Women sponsored a project investigating the effects of 9/11 for Canadian Muslim women in 2002. McDonough and Hoodfar found that Muslims across the country revealed a sense of repulsion about the terrorist attacks as well as suffering about unfair negative stereotyping of (2005: 148). In 2004, the Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR CAN) published its own report, "Presumption of Guilt: A National Survey on Security Visitations of Canadian Muslims" which concluded with an increasing trend in security monitoring of Muslims in the general populace and the targeting of Muslim men sought for questioning by security officials. A study by the Environics Research group in 2006 revealed a disparity between the almost 60% of non-Muslim Canadians who felt that Muslims wanted to remain distinct from other Canadians, and the 23% of Canadian Muslims who felt that way. Interestingly enough, the survey also revealed that compared to Muslims in the U.K., Germany, France and Spain, Canadian Muslims appear relatively more contented and "moderate". Focus Canada found that, "Canadians remain uncertain about Muslims living in this country (2010)." They continue to explain that "A majority continue to believe they want to remain distinct rather than adopt mainstream Canadian customs, although this view has declined marginally since 2006. And a growing proportion now endorse a ban on Muslim head scarves in public, with this sentiment most prevalent in Quebec (Ibid)".

Studies show that, Muslims in Western democracies like Canada are living in an environment increasingly hostile towards Islam and Muslims in the post 9/11 era (Baljit, 2011; Razack, 2008). Their citizenship, national and cultural allegiances are questioned. Their interactions with state surveillance might increase in comparison to the average Canadian because they are envisioned as threats and not thought of as real or loyal Canadians.

Anila explains,

You have to find a way to overcome.... like post 9/11, umm, I guess, you know it would change some of my experiences, mine and my family and people around me's [sic] experiences. You know when travelling outside of Canada... it became like ease of access and mobility, you know, to and from different countries. Of course became more difficult with all the new policies. With the anti-terrorism act and all the watch-lists and things like that people that I was close to were targeted unfortunately, you know, without cause... you know just delays, being stopped, being searched, you know when you know in your heart that there is no reason for it, but it just happens.

Relatedly, quantitative data shows the economic security of Muslims in the Canadian labour market is also compromised by a variety of factors (Baljit, 2011: 3). This degree of scrutiny, alienation and othering might indicate that Canadian citizenship and general 'Canadian-ness' may not be as easily available to Muslims in general, even those born here. In addition to recollections, feelings and general systemic attempts at othering demonstrated in studies and polling, Muslim Canadians also suffer a deeper level of discrimination by being conceptualized as threats in the nation state which can be seen in public discourse and policy. Razack demonstrates that Muslims are othered through postulations about their gendered and racialized identities: Muslim men being painted as the barbaric other and Muslim women being conceptualized as the helpless subordinate needing saving from their oppressive families, communities and religion (2008). This racialization of gender has an impact on how Muslims are treated by other Canadians and how they perceive of themselves and the ways in which Canadians will see them and their communities (Baljit, 2011; Choudhry, 2001; Helly, 2004; Macklin, 2001; Selby, 2012). It is especially evident in debates, policies and lived experiences (Focus Canada, 2010). Muslims' personal and communal identities, safeties and securities might be challenged and might suffer a loss of freedoms from experiences of alienation or victimization in public spaces such as workplaces, schools and public transportation.

On perceptions in public spaces, Alina, who wears a hijab and comes from a very conservative familial background, explains,

At work, everyone obviously knows I'm Muslim. I'm surprised at how few questions I get about it in the working world. I think people tip toe around that subject. I mean, like, today for example, somebody was saying, 'Oh I'm not a religious person and I don't like fundamentalism, like in Christianity for example'. They were talking about a bunch of churches being built in White Ridge, but then he looked at me and he apologized, and I'm like 'It's ok, I'm not a fundamental Christian, it's ok' (laughs) and if you knew me, I'm not conservative in my views whatsoever..... I think I have a persona that projects, when they first see me, of this holier than thou person and it's totally not it at all, that's not me, I'm very casual.

On feeling discriminated, though most of the interviewees talked about general awareness and feelings of being different when people treated them a certain way either at work or in public, some had more actively conceptualized the perceptions of Muslims as outsiders. For example, Alia explains,

To be honest with you, before 9/11 I think I kind of celebrated it. But now I feel threatened, flat out threatened. I worry about what's in our future. I'm not naïve enough to think that, umm, history can't repeat itself. I mean Canada's great and all, but it has a dark past. I mean we had (pause), camps where we kept Japanese people. We've had, we did medical experiments on First Nations people. We've had residential school programs. I mean, I don't think its past any group of people to hurt another group of people, especially when they feel threatened or they feel superior... Right now I think the general population feels threatened by Muslims because of what's happened...They feel superior to Muslims...It's easy for people to look down on us and say, 'Oh they're just a bunch of taxi drivers,' or 'Oh they're just a bunch of restaurant workers,' but we have intellect and we have experiences... But at this point, and just the fact that we look different and our skin color is not white, for many parts it's not white... it's easy for people to look down upon us and feel superior that, but I think that's dumb... I worry about that, I worry about that a lot actually. It's no accident the name I gave my son. I gave my son, like, sort of an English-er sort of name (chuckle). It still has historical sort of ties to our Muslim culture. But it's my attempt to reduce some discrimination that he may face, it's an attempt.

Alia further related a personal story of a recent experience of being targeted because her husband had a common Muslim name. She offered,

I have an example if you want. Someone called my house the other day and they left a message for my husband...I'm pretty freaked out... because I don't understand who this woman is, how she got our number, like, how she figured out that someone by the name of [his name] lives in this place! The woman didn't leave her name, didn't leave like a phone number... She called form a blocked number so I have no idea who she is. But she totally thought she was superior to us and she totally thought she was kind of on her moral high horse telling us how to live our lives and stuff.

Although personal recounts, data and research will show an increased hostility both at a public and systematic level towards Muslims, it also shows that, of the Western nations, Muslim Canadians

still feel relatively more content and are considered more moderate (Environics, 2007). Despite relating stories of discriminatory remarks and interactions with state surveillance, almost all of the interviewees, at one point or another, stated that racism was not a large factor in their lives and experiences as Muslim Canadians. I noticed in the interviews, especially with the hijab-wearing women, an interesting, perhaps unconscious strategy in coping with public discrimination or alienation, which was desensitizing oneself over time to negative public interactions (downplaying or ignoring) which I will further discuss in the strategies portion of the data analysis in the following chapter.

Social Relationships: Family, Friends and Community

Family

In ethnographic research studies on Muslim identity a common thread of inquiry is family background. Many will admit that their family and their family backgrounds have helped shape their identity, particularly in their youth. This often affects pivotal life decisions such as education, careers, relationships, marriage and future families (Beyer & Ramji, 2013; Eid, 2007; Berns-McGown, 2009; Moghissi, 2010), as well their relationships with their parents (Beyer & Ramji, 2013). Although attitudes on issues, as well as tolerance and their particular understanding of their religion, can vary widely from their inherited backgrounds and parents' opinions (see Ramji, 2013: 123, 55, 101 for some direct examples of attitudes and actions varying from the certainty of their inherited backgrounds). Ramji observes that the highly religious regard their parents as role models while the moderately religious may quarrel more with their parents regarding religious practice, particularly if their parents were more religiously involved, and the non-believers often had poor relationships with their parents if their parents were more religiously practicing (2013: 123).

In considering social relations of family it is important to reiterate the topic of generations discussed in the previous chapter. The issue of generations is important because generations after the immigrant or first generation are considered a bridge and thereby more comparable to native-born

demographics as well as their parents' immigrant demographic (Beyer, 2013: 5). They grow up adapting to both the "host" society and their parents' societal background. By extension, those who arrive young, prior to puberty (referred to as 1.5 generation), are more similar to the second generation (ibid). Beyer explains that this points to the greater malleability of the young in adapting to new circumstances. The generations after immigration are therefore of interest for long-term consequences of immigration (ibid). They are of key interest for the development of communities and identity in Canada. Beyer explains that the 1.5 and second generations are places of boundary reconstruction and hybridized authenticity that both the forbearing generation and the native-born may have taken for granted (Beyer, 2013: 5-6). As such, they are also important to the understanding of the global religious system of Islam (Beyer 2013: 3-20).

In discussing the anchor of religion in his Canadian lifestyle Abdullah explains,

I'd say as far as being a Muslim, I feel that it is all-encompassing with your everyday life, from the moment you wake up to the moment you go to sleep, some part of your religion at any, at every activity you're doing, is in place there... My parents always taught me the idea say *Bismillah* before anything. So I try to do that, and I try to make sure that whatever I'm doing, the intentions take into consideration my faith and sort of what God would see me doing, um but as far as putting a title on it, I don't know, it's hard to, it's hard to say... I'd say I'm practicing.

Friendships

Regarding friendships, studies show that more religiously involved Muslims tend to seek friendships of like-minded religiously involved people of the same gender (Beaman, Nason-Clark, & Ramji, 2013: 252). For men that are more religiously involved, the mosque is also a network of social relationships while women of this category of religiosity may not frequent the mosque as often. Women who are religiously moderate and highly involved in the community are more apt to frequent the mosque and form their close social networks through mosque and community related activities, especially as youth. The moderately religious but highly involved are still conscious of gender limitations in relationships and may form their close personal relationships with same-gender individuals but are less strict and more accepting of gender interactions, especially when it comes to community work and community building (Beyer, 2013: 74-111; Ramji, 2013).

Community and Organizations

Organized social relationships are also important in religious identity. Many Muslims, particularly practicing Muslims, have local and often-times expanded affiliations to professional networks of Muslims such as student groups, economic interest groups, social justice or social service organizations as well as involvement in local mosques and religious groups. Some may also maintain local and international internet relationships to networks of other Muslims (Ramji, 2013: 124-125). These organizational involvements are important because they are voluntary involvements in an official capacity which can speak a great deal depending on the level of involvement in the activities and types of activities. They can speak to the social consciousness of members, political interests and point to the issues important to the members. For example, involvement in the MSA Islam awareness week on campus may indicate a general sense of importance in increasing the understanding or even the proselytism of Islam to colleagues, while involvement in an economic professional network of Muslims like the CICC can indicate awareness of the struggle of Muslims in Canada's economic system and a desire to help alleviate the issue⁶⁰. Influential in identity development, close relationships often end up being formed in these organizations.

Following the discussion of a standardized orthodox model of Islam, it is important to note that as an individual participating in the community of Winnipeg Muslims, it seemed an unspoken prerequisite for respected participants to understand this orthodox model of Islam and to hold it in esteem as an ideal to aspire to. This is not uncommon in Muslim communities. A certain degree of orthodox behaviours are expected of those regularly involved in the community as they are deemed role models for others and sources of information. Whether or not one follows through the practice and adherence to doctrine in their own life is one's own decision, but it seems important to represent

⁶⁰ Essentially a person tries to make social interactions as profitable as possible. If the 'relationship' is costing more than the rewards then it is not profitable (Stuart, 1990). While this applies to one-on-one relationships, it is particularly true of organized social relationships. With this in mind, it can be understood that involvement in organized social relationships or networks that take work, one must feel inclined towards the activities or works they are involved in.

oneself as a Muslim aspiring to orthodox principles to become a respected and involved community member. Most of the interviewees discussed needing to ‘keep up appearances’ and remain within norms of a more orthodox Islam while engaged in community and organizational works and kept personal flexibilities to themselves.

The community becomes a contact zone in the sense that one’s personal decisions are affected by expectations in the community. In order to volunteer regularly or participate there are certain standards that one may feel obligated to exemplify. In addition, for women wearing hijab, one issue that became evident for the ones who were considering no longer wearing it was community. They felt sensitive about community perception and expectations on them and so their decisions were often prolonged and real challenges for them, in part due to the aspect of community and feeling like they might be viewed differently.

Discourse Shaper: The Media

Media coverage of Muslims has reached a peak in a post 9/11 world. The consequences have been weighty for Muslims and for Muslim identity development particularly here in Canada where we are substantially exposed to media from our neighbours to the South where media representations are often heavily stereotyped and venomous. Regulations and societal expectations have arisen to “herd” the dangerous Muslim threat away from society’s public spaces and places and as a result Muslims have been heavily stereotyped and discriminated against. Said explains that Muslims have become a kind of scapegoat for all that the West does not like whether political, social, economic, artistic and so forth (Said, 1997). The media ingests, reflects and produces this negative view of Muslims.

Being that Islam and Muslims are a media-favourite topic, it is important to understand the way Muslim identity converges with media, especially here in Canada. The media is not merely a source of fact. It is a particular re-presentation of information often to suit a discourse, viewpoint or agenda. Through re-presentations the media selectively construct social reality and identity by

relaying a particular discourse in public space. The media not only primes and frames the discourse on Muslims to society but it also creates a discourse about Muslims that Muslims themselves are forced to engage, build against and feel responsible for.

The media are highly influential in their ability and proclivity to shape and define social narratives and controversial discourses but are also culpable of being captured by certain actors, views or even stereotypes within a debate or topic. Sharify-Funk notes this in her observation that the view of Muslims prior to 9/11 was a hazy ‘other-ness’ that became more focused after increased attention on Islam and Muslims worldwide (2009:75). The media often use value-laden language and imagery when referencing Muslims and regularly employ disproportional weight to negative depictions and outrageous fringe opinions.

Ahlan and Carler outline media framing of Muslims and explain that studies exist in a range of ‘Western nations’ with Muslim presence (2011). Media about Muslims provides “an image of oriental life that consists of 50 percent wars, catastrophes, revolutions, terrorism, crises and tensions” (Hafez, 2000 cited by Ahlan & Carler, 2011). A simple survey of media constructions of Muslims would show Muslims as foreign, dangerous, backwards, alien and threats to be weary of in our societies. Depictions are racialized, stereotyped, discriminatory and gendered. The media’s influential position in interpreting (“reporting”) events and thereby constructing society’s “reality” affects individuals’ perceptions of Muslims and ties them en masse to negative imagery, events, ideologies, actions and language. Indirectly this affects individual and large-scale interactions as well as justifies rules and actions of exclusion. For example, portraying Muslims as alien threats or fundamentalists paints a large brushstroke over Muslim identity that leads to a generally accepted and internalized image of Muslims that is widely recognized, perpetuated and acted on. This creates a particular struggle in the development of identity by providing an identity stereotype that many Muslims are forced to engage, fight against and feel responsible for.

Depictions of Muslims in the media are of a particularly biased view, this is evident.

Additionally interesting to this study are the Muslim engagements with media and the internal-external Muslim discourses constructing identity through the use of media, particularly in Canada.

In reaction to portrayals of their co-religionists, Muslim self-representation and advocacy has attempted to enter the media discourse resulting in new sensationalisms, fiery polarizations as well as attempts to normalize discourses. All of these have affected Muslim communities and identity in Canada. The media standard has become a common portrayal of a collective Western “we” that leans towards exclusive secularism, individualism, libertarianism, and women’s freedom (but only if it suits the “we’s” view of what any of these mean) that is opposed to the Muslim other; or in inter-Muslim discourses where one party will be painted as closer to this “we” thereby shaping what it means to be genuinely Canadian.

The outcome has been increasing pressure on Muslim communities to prove themselves to qualify as part of this “we” and not at the opposite end from it; to prove that they are genuinely part of the majority and not ‘those others over there’. The media have taken vested interest in some of these inter-Muslim discourses and play a part in the presentation and framing of these negotiations. Often they use a binary framework of ‘conservative versus liberal’ or ‘moderate versus extremist’ framework, consequently leaving the majority of in-between Muslims without a voice and alienating most Muslims (Sharify-Funk, 2009: 75-77).

For example, in the public conflict between the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC) and the Muslim Canadian Congress (MCC) on the issue of shariah arbitration as it played out in the media in 2005 (see Selby, 2012 for more on the debate), there was an active attempt to construct an intra-Muslim debate and thereby play a role in Muslim identity negotiations and what it means to be genuinely Canadian and genuinely Muslim. Through the juxtaposition of two polarizing discourses of the CIC and MCC the media did not just reflect some Muslim opinions on a controversial topic. Rather, they chose to portray a polarizing discourse that essentially came down to identity politics and what it means to be genuinely Canadian and Muslim. They did this by pitting a mainstream

Muslim discourse against a dissident Muslim discourse and ignoring the spectrum in between or outside of these extreme (Sharify-Funk, 2009).

Minority groups recognize that it is through the media that labels are perpetuated and groups are categorized and represented. The competition to influence coverage and portrayal or align with a media outlet is important when groups are seeking support, where social change is sought, where inclusion or fair representation is desired in majority culture, and when parties have a vested interest in a controversial issue (Sharify-Funk, 2009).

There are several examples of the ways Muslims have used the media in Canada to shape or re-shape intra-community discourses. One example is the documentary “Me and The Mosque” (Nawaz & MacDonald, 2005). This documentary looks at the controversial issue of the barrier segregating women’s prayer space in the mosque buildings in Canada. The documentary sheds light on a particular second generation discourse and a removal of Islam from immigrant culture and ethnicity to a more inclusive form of Canadian Muslim practice (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000). Much of this second generation-influenced discourse on the barrier claims the practice to be a non-Islamic foreign immigrant import that has been blindly accepted by Muslims wishing to use the mosques; the discourse is indicative of a Muslim youth generation seeking to reconcile the religious roots with their experience as second generation Canadian. When this documentary came out many Muslims were not pleased to have their ‘dirty laundry’ aired in public media space, but since then, it has forced them to take notice of the issue. Additionally it brought forth an intra-community gender discourse by a Canadian Muslim woman producer which further broke through gendered depictions of Muslim women both inside and outside Muslim communities. As a discourse contested by an insider, it was used as justification for change. Though many mosques have kept the barrier in place, others have struggled with it. For instance in the Winnipeg Grand Mosque that was built in the last decade the barrier has been a constant issue whereas in the original mosque it was just a given. Sometimes the Grand Mosque’s barrier is complete and impermeable and at other times the congregation or mosque executives decide to take part of it down or build up another part of it— this is highly reflective of the

committee changes that run the daily function of the mosque and not necessarily the community that attends. The Winnipeg Central Mosque (WCM) began operation at the same time in the last decade. It was a converted bar-turned-mosque and there is no barrier between the genders. Just within the city of Winnipeg (which played a big part in the *Me and the Mosque* documentary), there has been an opening of the discourse and this has shaped the identity politics within the community, especially the way the community engages society around it. Oftentimes the WCM is portrayed as a more open-minded grassroots Canadian mosque because of its lack of barrier.

Within the locale of Winnipeg local media is also frequently used by the Manitoba Muslim community to provide a message or entertain a dialogue or engage an issue. For instance, CBC in Winnipeg hosted a Muslim Youth Forum in 2011 over the radio and Facebook that invited the public to call in with questions and comments on the Forum's question of "Do Canadian Muslims Need to Change?"⁶¹ This panel brought together a diverse and expansive group of Muslim youth to entertain callers and engage in dialogue. The responses were as diverse as the participants, as were the callers and questions⁶².

Another Media forum that has shaped identity for Muslims in Canada is the TV *series Little Mosque on the Prairie* (Nawaz et al., 2007-2012). It puts issues in the private homes of its viewers for them to contemplate the normality of Muslim daily lives and it puts the issues of Muslim communities and identity 'out there' for the communities and individuals to have to engage. Once the issues are out there, they are up for consideration.

An analysis of *Little Mosque* is a good example of Muslim (internal) discourses engaged by media (external) in a particular urban space, not unlike the origins of the small prairie city of Winnipeg Muslims. The reason the fictional town of Mercy can be seen to reflect the Winnipeg experience is that Winnipeg is also a small-town-feeling prairie city that began with a very small Muslim population that experienced many of the same discourses that emerge out of *Little Mosque on*

⁶¹ A blog replay was made available on the CBC Website (CBC.ca, 2011a; CBC.ca, 2011b).

⁶² See the CBC Manitoba Facebook page for the event information (2011).

the Prairie. In addition, the show's creator, Zarqa Nawaz, spent time at Muslim summer youth camp with the Winnipeg community and based a large chunk of her documentary *Me and the Mosque* on mosques in Winnipeg. Further, one of the interns and one of the writers taken onto the show's crew grew up in the Winnipeg community. So there is a complex intertwining of ideas born of the urban prairie experience of Muslims in and around Winnipeg.

Little Mosque on the Prairie has emerged from within the hegemonic socio-political public discourse as an anomaly in the machinery of media challenging the 'othered' portrait of the Muslim in the Western mindset (Canas, 2008: 195- 196). It is a particularly Canadian media phenomenon, mimicking the slow humour of the Canadian show 'Corner Gas' and engaging Canadian multiculturalism in the isolated frontiers or the Canadian Prairies. The Canadian series first aired in January of 2007 on CBC and has since been a focus of much public attention. It revolves around a small Muslim community settled in a fictional Canadian prairie town called Mercy and reflects Zarqa Nawaz's own experiences as a Muslim in the West. The series develops three important discourses on Muslims in Canada: Muslims as minorities, Muslims and gender misrepresentations and Muslim diversity in Canada.

In the show, the mosque located within the Anglican parish hall is a metaphor playing on the reality of a Muslim minority within a predominantly 'Christian' Canada. It signifies the general aim of the show's overall storyline which begins by exposing a Western hysteria over the 'Muslim threat'. The very first episode is focused on representing the discriminatory xenophobia (Canas, 2008: 198) in a post 9/11 world towards Muslims, Islamic practice and culture.⁶³ This introduction was a strategic move to expose (through comedic delivery) widespread but irrational fears towards the Muslim Other⁶⁴ in the socio-political collective consciousness. The first encounter between the Canadian Muslim community and a non-Muslim Canadian takes place when a 'white'⁶⁵ man,

⁶³ See Alvi and Hoodfar (2003) for some insight into the xenophobia towards Muslims.

⁶⁴ Like Edward Said's orientalist 'other'.

⁶⁵ I am using the term the way the show uses the depiction of the small-town white-folk to represent the average Canadian.

Marlon, wanders in on a prayer session while looking for the construction company owned by Yasir, a secular Muslim. He quickly leaves the place and calls the ‘terrorist hotline’ and exclaims, ‘Osama Bin Laden also ran a construction company’ thereby exposing the ignorance and illiteracy of Marlon who represents the everyday ‘white’ Canadian in this show.⁶⁶ The other scene illustrative of this assumed ‘otherness’ of Muslims takes place in the airport where the new Imam of Mercy, Amaar, is detained and interrogated by the police. Despite the humorous medium of delivery, the scene resonates with the experience of many Muslims who feel forcefully connected to events outside their control. It exemplifies a widespread hysteria over the ‘Muslim problem’ in the West predating 9/11 and a widespread fear within the Muslim community as being automatically labelled as an alien threat despite their loyalties, nationality and birth. The first episode is important because it shows some of the mainstream prejudices and assumptions associated with Muslims in the communities in which they live, by the machinery of the media, and in public institutions⁶⁷ and policies.⁶⁸ It demonstrates the institutional channels that often produce public perceptions about Muslims and Islam in Canada.⁶⁹

One of the important (teachable) non-Muslim characters in this show is the conservative media talk show host, Fred Tupper. He refers to the imam as ‘Johnny Jihad’ and a ‘Bedouin Buckaroo’. Through his character and radio show the prejudices and stereotypes about Muslims are (re)created and perpetuated. This demonstrates the issue of the media in the West operating as a site for the production and dissemination of marginalizing orientalist images and discourse which are not only perpetuated, but internalized by the groups in question.

‘Canadian Muslim’ is an identity many Muslims are fighting to prove in a dominant culture that has not yet accepted them as ‘real’ Canadians. *Little Mosque* is facilitating this construction of an

⁶⁶ See Canas (2008) for a more in depth look at the episode.

⁶⁷ Though the episode does not focus on public institutions, the following episodes often demonstrate the inadequacy and discriminatory reality and potential of Canada’s public services, institutions and bureaucracy through the character and office of the Mayor and Sarah as the Mayor’s assistant. For example, consider the episode about the request for a female lifeguard at the public pool being rejected (Episode 4).

⁶⁸ Such as security policies like bill C-36 that influence and construct discrimination of Muslims at airport and border crossings (Yousif, 2008).

⁶⁹ Canas, 2008: 199-200.

open and changing Canadian Muslim identity as minorities through television as a medium of pop culture. It is important to understand that the media, as a tool of popular culture, has a reach that far extends that of scholarship and the Canadian bureaucratic machinery and institutions; essentially it places the discourse in the homes of millions of viewers, and for those watching the show, it forces an engagement with the information delivered and views presented, even if it is a passive engagement.⁷⁰ *Little Mosque* develops a discourse about Muslims expressing the difficulties of a minority community in Canada that must navigate the largely Anglo-Saxon and Christian machinery and are then further marginalized through a collective perception of Muslims as threatening agents of infiltration.

Islam has consistently and pervasively been associated with unabashed gender inequality and injustices. *Little Mosque* also works to break down the un-nuanced ideas about the subjugation of Muslim women. Many episodes of the show make mention of, or are focused on, issues of gender and Muslims by showing the complexities, tensions, and contradictions inherent in gender relations within both Muslim cultures and Western culture. For example, one of the most contentious aspects of Islam is the segregation imposed between women and men. The second episode of the series demonstrates this. The beginning of the episode shows some Muslim men trying to set a barrier inside of the mosque. The conservative⁷¹ Muslim character, demonstrates the most interest in this barrier while the hijabi⁷²-feminist, is the first one to oppose the barrier. The African Muslim woman wants the barrier for the added privacy it offers her and her cultural familiarity with it while the imam explains that the barrier does not have a theological foundation in Islam.⁷³ The barrier issue later

⁷⁰ Thus is the pervasiveness of popular culture a perfect tool; it is particularly salient in an age of globalization where the show has, in fact, been picked up by many foreign media outlets including, but not limited to, Israel and potentially the United States.

⁷¹ I purposefully use different words to describe Babur (conservative, traditionalist, etc.). No one of these terms is appropriate on its own and popular usages of the term are not considerate of the connotations and realities of labeling as such.

⁷² This is a popular term used to denote a hijab-wearing Muslim woman.

⁷³ This is a key 'teaching point' for both Muslims and non-Muslims as both sides often assume the barrier is a given due to its presence and prevalence in mosques (in Canada). In fact, there is not only no theological justification for the barrier but

becomes a public matter when the conservative radio host airs the issue in his typical bash-the-Muslims hosting style. As a result, Western feminist women organize a protest outside the mosque to which one of the convert-Muslims has to negotiate an end. In the end, the imam makes a very ‘middle-way’ decision to keep half the barrier up for those who want to use it and leave the other half open. This may seem like the only choice that is possible, but the issue of the barrier has been controversial and complicated within mosques around Canada for some time now. The episode sheds light on two major issues: 1) How gender segregation is negotiated in Muslim communities with diverse opinions held by both men and women on the barrier; 2) How universal Euro-Amero-centric battles of feminism do not always employ avenues appropriate to engage non-white-non-Christian women’s issues and may further exasperate issues of freedom of choice.⁷⁴ In fact, scholars on the issue of gender and race explain that both white and patriarchal underpinnings go hand in hand with Western-liberal-feminist ideology to blockade non-white-non-Christian women into a corner, thereby removing their agency (Razack, 2008; Spivak, 1988; King 1988; see also Reina & Mills, 2003).

The Muslim woman of *Little Mosque* is painted as an ordinary individual. She is not presented as opposing Western sensibilities. Not all the women veil. And most of the female characters are vocal and strongly opinionated women. The main character is portrayed as a successful woman who has internalized the values and norms of the society in which she lives. She is portrayed as a feminist who also engages pop culture, works as a physician and even dates. The Muslim women of *Little Mosque* laugh, participate in politics and activism, partake in public displays of affection, have marital disputes, have influence over the people and particularly men in their lives and even use sex ‘as a weapon,’ demonstrating how the show is actively working to re-create the discourse on Muslim women.

traditionally, since the time of the prophet, Muslims have prayed in open mosques; granted women were usually situated behind the men to maintain modesty (*Me and the Mosque* also discusses this issue).

⁷⁴ The feminist women organized a demonstration against oppression as a collective action pushing ethnocentric Western feminism as a banner to oppose an issue that they wanted to end without ever even discussing it with the women who were experiencing it and negotiating through it. This demonstrates an ignorance present in Western feminism towards diversity and human experience.

The presence of a young Canadian-born imam on *Little Mosque* generates different responses that point to the diversity within the Muslim community in Canada. For example the African immigrant Muslim woman, says ‘You don’t even look like an imam’. This demonstrates a common perception of imams as old, bearded and often foreign. The hijabi-feminist Muslim who belongs to a younger Canadian-born generation, states that the new imam is what a spiritual leader of a community should to be: progressive, knowledgeable and born in the culture of the place they counsel and lead. The traditionalist also expresses his non-acceptance due to the imam’s unorthodox or non-conservative appearance. In engaging the idea of Muslim diversity the main character of the show is a hijabi-feminist with a mother who is a convert to Islam and a Lebanese father who is a lapsed Muslim. The imam, also second-generation, has parents who pushed him to practice as a lawyer as opposed to getting involved in religion. This seems to be a commentary on the phenomenon of second generation Muslims seeking their religion and practicing differently than their immigrant parents⁷⁵.

In engaging a discourse on diversity, one episode paints a particularly poignant picture when the imam suggests that he be the only speaker at the mosque’s open house and the African Muslim woman asks him “What do you know about being a *Black* Muslim woman?” This is a critical indicator of the diversity existing in Muslim communities, especially the different experiences and opinions of what it means to be Muslim⁷⁶ and what it means to be Canadian with multi-hyphenated and layered identity.

In exploring the discourse of Muslim identity being engaged by Muslims in the media, *Little Mosque on the Prairie* is a particularly Canadian phenomenon. The show works with recognizable stereotypes of Muslims to explore the public discourse on Muslims. It explores questions of identity and authenticity as well as issues arising out of the lived multiculturalism and diversity of Canada and of Muslims. The use of comedy to address these various themes works to construct and present

⁷⁵ This phenomenon of second generation immigrants with non-practicing parents choosing to affirm their traditional identity has been studied by scholars and is a curious but prevailing phenomenon (Dhruvarajan,2003).

⁷⁶ Ibid.

normative Muslims in a Western context in order to dismantle a non-normative frame of reference (Amari, 2008: 56). The show is an intervention into the highly volatile arena of cultural politics regarding Muslims in a post 9/11 world (Canas, 2008).

Television and broadcast media are not the only forms that can influence Muslim identity. Recently there was a book published that has received a great deal of attention called *Love Inshallah: The Secret Love Lives of American Muslim Women* (2012). According to the New York Times it offers “[P]ortraits of private lives that expose a group in some cases kept literally veiled, yet that also illustrate that American Muslim women grapple with universal issues.” With stories that transcend stereotypical conceptions of Muslim women with varying degrees of emotion and narrative, the book discusses taboo subjects and re-shapes the image of Muslim women. The book has a heavy social media presence and Muslim women across North America engage in debates and encouragement in the line of work the book and its authors have taken up; that of reshaping the discourse on Muslims and gender.

Canadian Muslims have often been deprived of an authentic voice in media and concerns about media representation can be a daily matter due to social perceptions. Many may construct their identities in opposition to or in defence of common perceptions of Muslims perpetuated by the media or by the message of what it means to be and behave as a Canadian. Due to the prevalence of Islamophobic media rhetoric, many will seek counter-discourses in identity construction. As a result Muslims have themselves taken interest in reshaping discourses about their faith, their practice and their belonging.

The examples I have presented illustrate the ways Canadian Muslims have used and engaged the media to shape and re-shape discourses on Muslims. Radio, social media, television and documentaries have been pivotal sources of identity re-negotiations in addition to organizational press releases news media engagement and public media appearances. These provide counter discourses to the negative stereotypes found in mainstream media sources. The topic of media is pivotally important for who and what it engages.

Gender

Gender plays an important role in the transmission of religion, worldviews and socialization. Women often play a key role in this transmission as the foundational educators of their children and as community members. In fact, studies show that women's religious involvement exceeds that of men in societies around the world including Canada (Beaman, Nason-Clark & Ramji, 2013: 25).

Muslim women in Canada face a unique quest for identity. Muslims in North America, as an active part of society, are a fairly recent occurrence or more correctly, of fairly recent notice⁷⁷. As well, women's liberation in North America has been a recent phenomenon⁷⁸. This is important to understand in order to situate the circumstances of Muslim women and the public discourses around Muslim women. Some of the issues around gender as a social influence are similar to those across North America and may be discussed as such. I will proceed to discuss gender expectations, hijab, worship space, and racialization and gender construction from the outside to build an understanding of the social influence of gender in identity constructions and negotiations.

Examining Islam in the form that it takes in the countries where it is a majority practice will show that the place of women is often already decided by a long standing tradition. In North America we have a blend of many different kinds of Muslims, both immigrant and North American born and raised from all parts of the world and many and varied cultures and societies. The quest for Muslim women is one of individual identity and acceptance in a society where it has historically been a challenge for both. In making a place for themselves, Canadian Muslim women can face a multitude of issues from within the community as well as those from outside the community.

For example, the ideal of the Muslim woman, in most Muslim communities, is one that is demonstrated through devotion to God and an observable modesty. Beaman, Nason-Clark and Ramji explain that for the "highly involved" which some may recognize as a more religiously conservative Muslim woman, the religious goal is the remembrance of God in all things with a delineation

⁷⁷ In the 2001 Statistics Canada Census report Muslims were the fastest growing religion in Canada.

⁷⁸ Women have only been recognized as persons under the Canadian law as recently as 1930 and have only been given the right to vote in Quebec since 1941 (McDonough, 2005).

between religious goals and cultural behaviour that often places limits on their socialization (2013). They further explain that these Muslim women are socialized to spend time with other Muslim women where they feel less pressure to navigate boundary delineations of religion, gender and culture. Free time is often spent in learning activities, better understanding their religion and development of self (Ibid). My observations show that these “highly involved” or more conservatively religious Muslim women often strive to maintain an Islamic identity within a Canadian society: they choose to dress modestly, avoid close opposite gender friendships, limit gender interactions, contribute to their communities in gender appropriate ways and strive to marry Muslim men. These decisions and actions are then presented to younger Muslim girls as the ideals and when they start their own families these values are then transmitted to their children. Though the spectrum of real Muslim women in Canada varies greatly, this ideal is presented as the norm to strive towards for Muslim youth. Men similarly have ideals they strive towards and seek similar-minded religiously devoted social groups, particularly once they are in university where they have access to MSA groups and other like-minded Muslims. Their socialization also involves more mosque involvement than their female counterparts (Beyer & Ramji, 2013).

In discussing expectations and issues around modesty a hot topic in the discourse on Muslim women is the *hijab*. Hijab is, vaguely translated, the veil. There are several views on the subject but the extreme ends sit at to cover or not to cover. For those on the side of not covering, the interpretation may be that hijab is not a commandment, not a requirement; rather it is an imposition of patriarchy in the lives of believing women or a multitude of other reasons. On the side of covering, or supporting the practice of hijab, there are also several views: There are those who feel it is a free choice; those that feel it may have been practiced but is not necessary; those that think it is was encouraged and therefore should be practiced; and those who feel it is a commandment by God and therefore a requirement of Muslim women⁷⁹. Even within those who practice the hijab there is great variety in the degrees of coverage, the necessity of the practice and the elements outside of personal

⁷⁹ Not inclusive, there are many more opinions on the subject, I only list a few.

body that fall into the category of hijab such as modesty and space. Muslim women's perspectives must be accounted for since they make up more than half of the Muslim population of the world. Most communities envisage and teach an ideal of hijab, but realistically they encompass a variety of opinions and practices. It is this variance in practice that has allowed and encouraged reforms within Muslim populations and communities to improve the status of women. In Canada the spectrum of views is vast and many have adopted the opinion that hijab is a personal choice (just as religion is a private matter; reflective of Canadian attitudes on religion).

Statistics show that Muslims are among the most highly educated in Canada (Statistics Canada 2001). The fact is that the majority of Canadian born Muslim women are educated and many are also career oriented. They may consider themselves Canadian as opposed to Pakistani or Egyptian (for example). In so doing, they may find the cultural expectations (of a culture they consider themselves only acquainted with) unrealistic in this society, or they may not. The cultural as opposed to religious understandings and expectations of marriage and family life can become a big issue for Muslim women depending on familial expectations⁸⁰. Although there is a void of statistics on this topic in Canada, Moroccan data on marriage in contemporary Muslim society shows an increase in the median age of women who are getting married. I expect this to be a similar trend here in the North American Muslim population. It is likely that more and more women wait until they are older, thus stabilizing their socio-economic status, before they decide to get married. This is also reflected in general trends on marriage in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011). This increase in socio-economic stability also leads to more women not marrying or being divorced. This has caused shifts in Muslim communities in the expectations on young Muslims to choose marriage as the mainstream way of life. As such, there are more single women households that are contributors to these communities (in addition to the fact that many immigrant families coming from areas of strife are single parent families). This is quite different from immigrant generations and Muslim majority societies elsewhere in the world. Particularly because, in the past Muslim communities in Canada have been more South

⁸⁰ If and when families differentiate between religion and culture.

Asian and Arab dominant. Where there is the expectation of dual parent families. This is an important shift in Canadian Muslim identity for generations after the immigrant generation.

This issue of the cultural expectations on Muslim women to marry in traditional households may inhibit or interfere with career and societal participation. Some women may sacrifice career activities to satisfy family and community and to prevent being ostracized. Some may change career plans or abandon them altogether to play the role that is culturally acceptable within a family unit. Some will not succumb to the pressures and will blaze new trails on this front. Many of the interviewees accepted that being married and having a family were the expectation and norm for Muslims. Four of the women interviewed were married and three had children. The majority were not married, with five of them under the age of thirty and four over the age of thirty. Two were divorced, one remarried. Of the males, three were married and two had children. The interviews made it evident that those women who were unmarried were under familial pressures to pursue that domestic development sooner rather than later, while the males did not exhibit the same experience of familial pressures on that topic.

The struggle to disentangle culture and religion is an ongoing battle many Muslims voice. As culture greatly affects a woman's role and mobility in society, it is at the forefront of Muslim women's issues. For many second generation the release of religion from the boundaries of culture (in different ways and through different means) seems to be the route attempted to discover the fundamentals of religion and that which is able to be reinterpreted (Eid, 2007). For many devout women, this proves to be the one thing that will allow Muslim women to form their religious identities and make changes as well as open debates and attitudes. The interviews showed that the women in this study were more prone to think of religion and culture separately (not necessarily negatively, but separated to understand roots of gendered issues and suggested or implemented different decisions). Alina explained that it was her parents' culture that kept her from exploring her interests in religion and only when she was able to disentangle the cultural view on religion was she able to make an independent decision on how she wanted to incorporate practice into her life and take

on the hijab. Alayna felt similarly restricted in the ways she could wear her hijab until she came to a reasoning that wearing it in a particular cultural fashion was not necessary, despite others' norms and protestations to trying a different way of covering. In foregoing the cultural norm and opting to try more diverse ways of veiling, she felt more comfortable in exercising her religious identity.

Muslim women in Canada are in an interesting position where many are forging new identities as Canadian Muslims. Understanding this social factor of gender is important to the broader topic of Canadian Muslim identity and thereby important to the global religious system of Islam (Beyer, 2006). The contemporary Muslim woman is in an advantageous position in which she can mould and form the ideals of generations of proficient Muslim women to come. Their struggles and triumphs are not theirs alone but those of an entire society. Though some may claim Islam is stagnant, I find that the rich tradition of debate and social revolution is embedded in its very being and even more so as a diaspora phenomenon. Muslim women in Canada are at the forefront of adding to this rich tradition. They are creating a space for themselves both in the Muslim community and in the Canadian community as a whole. They are charging new territories with new tools of armament to institute change and open debates that may be taboo in other societies around the world. Bullock (2009) for example writes about Muslim women activists that are carving new territory and dealing with taboo subjects across North America. The creators of the recent and influential book *Love Inshallah: The Secret Love Lives of American Muslim Women* offer a nuance view of the lives of North American Muslim women. With a steady social media presence, they relay the narratives of Muslim women that make the audience question traditional gender expectations. They engage narratives and subjects not often discussed, or even realized, when thinking about Muslim women.

In contemporary North America women have easy access to knowledge, education, and privileges that have previously been the comforts of men. Here they are not fighting for survival by having to live in the traditional domestic roles. This being said, many of those societies from which Islam and/or immigrants have come may rely on traditional gender roles. Either the socio-economic situation requires it, or ethno-cultural conditions do. When it comes to the generations of Muslim

women after immigration in Canada it is important to understand that though they are often aware and influenced by these traditional roles, they also practice agency and make decisions about how to reinterpret these traditions.

Patriarchy as a common societal hierarchy has not been outrightly forbidden by Islamic tradition, thus the cultures under which Islam has flourished have continued the ancient trends, traditions and cultures. Often decisions along the way have become institutionalized into the corpus of Islam. One of the issues stemming from within patriarchy that is pertinent to the study of Muslims in Canada is the issue of the barriers and segregation of the sexes in prayer space. In traditional Islamic societies it has been customary to have women's prayer spaces relegated to private or domestic arenas and when there is space in mosques for women it is often segregated from men's prayer space⁸¹. Barriers between men and women are practiced in mosques worldwide. Many of the immigrants coming to North American societies do not realize that the barrier system may, in fact, be a social construction of culture and tradition and not a religious requirement (Nawaz, 2005). In North America in 1992 52% of mosques had barriers. In 2000 66% of mosques had barriers (ISNA). From the 2001 Statistics Canada Census analysis we also see that from 1991 to 2001 there was an influx of Muslim immigrants; many of whom came from previously patriarchal societies in which Islam was also practiced⁸². The establishment of mosques increased and the majority of mosques across Canada have segregated prayer spaces. There are many reasons behind the increase in gender barrier mosques in North America. However, in the documentary *Me and the Mosque*, Zarqa Nawaz explains that in the time of Muhammad when Islam was just beginning, barriers were not practiced in the mosques. She relates traditions to support this finding. Despite this, it was only in 2004 that a woman won the

⁸¹ Islam has spread into many areas where patriarchy was previously practiced and the trend of patriarchy continued in those areas.

⁸² Oftentimes immigrants come to North America, especially Canada, carrying their culture with them as it is a 'multicultural' society. They often do not separate culture and religion like their Canadian generations tend to do. In North America they may continue their brand of Islam, not opting to embrace other trends or ways. As a multicultural society they would expect that their ways are protected and allowed and thereby continue in their practice, i.e. the barrier system. It would take questioning and reframing by insiders (say for instance a second generation) to change or alter practices.

right to pray in front of a mosque barrier in Canada⁸³ (Nawaz, 2005). This documentary has large portions filmed in Winnipeg. In fact, the barrier in Winnipeg mosques has been a contested space with the second generation as well as some immigrants in Winnipeg for over two decades, spurring debates and arguments between community members.

Now that we can understand some key topics in the circumstances of Canadian Muslim women as gendered discourses from within their communities, I will briefly outline some from outside the community. Hamdan writes,

[H]istorically, the status of Muslim women was used by imperialist and colonialist powers... to refer mainly to the inferiority of Islam as the dominant faith of the colonized countries... not only was Muslim women's status used to target Islam, but these discourses also use other images of Arabs and Muslims that commonly characterized them as anti-Western, uncivilized, backward, uneducated, illiterate, violent, and rife with men who subordinate women... Such images are considered "common knowledge". (2009: 1-2)

Zine writes,

Increasingly, Muslims figure prominently in contemporary public debates that shape our national consciousness and public policies, from the Maher Arar case, security certificate detainees, and the arrests of eighteen Muslim males in Toronto on alleged charges of "home-grown terror," to racial and religious profiling, Ontario's debates over shar'ia (Islamic law) tribunals, and Quebec's questions of "reasonable accommodation," its banning of Islamic headscarves and face veils, and its xenophobic "citizen's codes." (Zine, 2012: 1)

These issues circulate in the collective public consciousness when it comes to Muslims in Canada. Although they are not truly indicative of Muslim identity they do influence how Muslims are conceptualized, racialized and gendered as others outside the Canadian norms and values. They create a public concept of Muslim identity; one that is particularly gendered and racialized. These views may become points of contention in identity development for Muslims; something to build against or away from (a topic already developed in the literature review). Issues from outside Muslim identity that can affect its development, particularly the gendered aspects of identity, may be stereotyping, discrimination, systemic alienation, media discourses, and harassment. These issues are vast and can have lasting effects.

⁸³ There are mosques without barriers but the ones that do have barriers do not, for the majority, appreciate that women pray in front of the barriers.

Below I discuss a severe view of racialized and gendered Muslim identity from the outside by engaging Razack's discoveries in *Casting Out: the eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics* (2008) to demonstrate the reality and severity of racialized and gendered identity constructions from the outside.

Razack looks at how the ordinary Muslim is cast outside the limits of Western sensibilities and law through 'race thinking' which removes the 'Muslim' to a different category of (sub)human thereby deserving of a different state supported treatment (a state of exception that can be seen in prisoner abuse, security certificates, and legal ostracization) often painted as pre-emptive measures essential to the stability of the (Western) world thereby necessitating punishment and control. Razack's work (2008) focuses on the racialization and exclusion of Muslims through gendered lenses. In constructions of Muslim men in the West, the racialized and gendered lens focuses on the 'dangerous' Muslim man as a 'terror suspect' continually in the state of exception to laws and norms afforded to all other persons in Western sensibilities and laws. Razack examines the idea of Muslim men under the security certificate program in Canada depicted as predictably monstrous and continually placed outside the protection of the law. In addition to the discussions provided in Razack's work, we see this racialized and gendered construction of the threatening Muslim man present in media, and to name a few physical locations, at airport and border crossings.

Razack goes on to clarify the stereotyped construction of the imperilled Muslim woman by taking the reader through feminist rhetoric connected to race thinking and management of Muslim women through Western legal systems. In the practical world we see this management of Muslim women by the limits to the acceptance of Muslim women donning the veil in public space. For example we see it in the expulsion of veiled women from public space in Quebec, we see it in the attempts of harassment against veiled women, and we see it in legal implications such as the case of *R vs NS* that lead to a Supreme Court engagement with the veil (or in this case the niqab) in court. The results of which eventually were decided by lower courts in ruling against allowing the woman to have her case in court if she 'chose' to wear the niqab. Razack explains that the use of gender in

the rhetoric of the 'war on terror' ideology is the way the narrative is transformed into one of saving the Muslim women from not knowing any better. Further developed is an understanding that the global phenomenon of gender equality is one tied to policing of Muslims and the idea of who is and is not permitted as a citizen. This delves back into the section of the literature review that relates to other-ness and creating an outside construction of identity and boundaries.

The movement towards managing Muslims in Western states is actually creating oppression of women's agency to make change in their communities by blocking access to community, legal and governmental institutions and legitimizing the voice of the 'monster' man that the state so desperately is trying to quiet. So we see that Muslim women are being erased from society's public space, further they are being erased from Muslim communities' public spaces and discourses with larger society. Additionally, the state wants to let perceived injustices against women persist by removing the potential of arbitration to the invisible (private) realm in which there is a high likelihood of abuses of power and information for lack of regulation. Here another state of exception is created; one that places the woman far enough away that she cannot offend the progress of Western society. This then brings certain questions to mind: Is the progress of Western law and politics only progress if it can silence the Muslim as the long standing orientalist "other" and the enemy? Does this mean that there is no possibility of the 'Muslim' in Western law and politics? These are questions that not only circle in the realm of academia but on the practical front in racialized and gendered exclusions of Muslims from society and law. They lay bare the hegemony in Western politics and the law that seems to seek to erase the Muslim 'other' by silencing the voices of the men and women by creating (different yet similar) states of exception for both.

Gender is a complex topic. Gender combined with racialized alienation and othering is an even more complex and layered experience. Above I have discussed gender as a social site in identity and gender issues from within and outside Muslim communities as it may influence Canadian Muslims in this study. Next I turn to the space as a social site.

The Urban Space: Winnipeg

Often in the discourses about Islam in the West we get broad generalizations spread across the entirety of the ‘Western world’. These generalizations are filled with statistics painting either monolithic portraits of all Muslims or cutting populations by ethnic boundaries that may not be appropriately applied. The experience of Muslims in Canada is conditional on many factors, including but not limited to socio-economics, education, resources, gender, discrimination, space, locality, and legal decisions. Most importantly but rarely considered are the intersections or convergences with the particular local urban space. Orsi writes:

What people do religiously in cities is shaped by what kinds of cities they find themselves in, at what moments in the histories of those cities, and by their own life experiences, cultural traditions, and contemporary circumstances... City people have acted on and with the spaces of the city to make religious meanings in many different ways. They have appropriated public spaces for themselves and transformed them into venues for shaping, displaying and celebrating their inherited and emergent ways of life and understandings of the world. (1999: 46-47)

An interesting line of inquiry into the experience and expression of identity for second generation Canadian Muslims is to consider the convergence of Muslims and the urban space.⁸⁴ Migrant communities create organizations, associations, volunteer efforts, integration programs, faith-based organizations, rights discourses, and media all the while also acting in mainstream organizations, political life and civic duties particular to their locale. What this means is that the experience, identity and movements of Muslims in Toronto will differ from that of Muslims in Winnipeg which will differ from that of Muslims in Halifax even if other variables like gender, ethnicity, family background and class seem to align.

Canada’s self-definition as a multicultural country with no “official” religion has meant minority groups can claim the right to public space and be taken seriously. Muslim need and demand for public space is not unique but is particularly noticeable in the highly charged atmosphere of Islam

⁸⁴ Hughes seeks to highlight the convergence between Islam, the spatial dimensions of North American urban life and the construction of personal identity (Hughes, 2004: 341). I choose to instead seek to highlight the convergence of Muslim identity and the urban space to better understand the effects of and capacity of both the urban space and the Muslims that reside within it. In this paper I am not particularly interested in Islam’s convergence in these matters but more so on Muslims as actors.

and the West in the 21st century (Berns-McGown, 1999: 24-26). The central question in the inquiry of Islam in Canadian urban space is one of how the community makes space within the multi-layered urban landscape to carve out and project a Canadian Muslim identity (Hughes, 2004). By looking at Canadian Muslim identity in this way we are able to shift focus away from the automatic process of ‘othering’ Muslims and instead look at the way they fit into the fabric of Canadian urban space.

In this last section I will consider some of the following questions: How does the Muslim community of Winnipeg act on the space(s) around them in transformative ways? Are modes of sacred spaces different than the ‘home country’ and if so, how? What do the changes and tensions say? Are these changes similar to other situations across Canada? And, does this space fit within the urban landscape of this Canadian context?⁸⁵

This approach seeks insights into the ways change is created and the navigations of minority communities’ in particular urban spaces in Canada. It is not focused on the ideology or fundamentals of Islamic tradition and not particularly on the statistics behind studies of Muslims, though these do form a foundation of understanding the space. Rather, the approach seeks insights into some of the ways social structures are navigated and how minority communities may become embedded in their locales by exploring the space they reside and act in. In this section I will briefly outline the way that Winnipeg Muslims engage the space of Winnipeg in unique and particular ways.

What the creation of Canadian Muslim identity in an urban landscape of Canada means is that a Canadian Muslim has a space from which to draw and in which to reside that allows them to be different than, let’s say, a Pakistani Muslim or an Indonesian Muslim. It is not just a Canadian expression of Islam but a local identity which one may partake in or claim as their own based in this society. They can then perceive of the world in a manner different than their coreligionists from elsewhere and tap into resources unique to their urban landscape; keeping in mind this is one facet of their identity.

⁸⁵ The first four of five questions are also asked in similar ways by Hughes (2004: 340)

For Hughes the importance of this line of inquiry is the question of if “we understand any better the various nuances or the ways in which individual Muslims have imagined and reimagined their religion over here?” (2004: 341). Muslims in Canadian urban settings do not just embed their religious selves onto a passive landscape. They actively carve out space for their families and communities. In seeking communal space they often create mosques that act as community centres, sometimes also as schools, places of social service, social halls, libraries and oftentimes the space is contested by ethnic factions, gendered issues and ideological questions and differences. Sometimes these mosque spaces are contested by wider society such as the British Columbia mosque shown in the documentary *New life in a New land* by Wharnsby and Rahman. Many studies on Muslims in Europe will discuss the presence of Muslims in urban centres and cities. However, it is important to keep in mind that the situation in Canada is different from that in Europe, in that in Canada bans on Muslims places of worship and practice are not usually widely supported by policy and law whereas in Europe the situation can be different.⁸⁶

For Muslim communities oftentimes the visible mosque space interacts with the community around it. In Winnipeg for instance, the original mosque that had a capacity for a couple hundred people was situated in a residential neighbourhood. In the summers, it sometimes held garage sales and open houses that invited the surrounding community to participate. At other times, the mosque hosted community activities. This community quickly outgrew the mosque capacity as the population increased. Due to this growth, they often had issues over parking that caused clashes with some neighbours, coincidentally at a time when overcrowded prayer spaces in universities elsewhere in Canada (McGill) were being contested and presented in the media. In addition, many Muslims chose to move into adjacent neighbourhoods to be closer to the mosque. Similarly since the Winnipeg Grand Mosque was built in the mid-2000s many Muslims have moved into neighbouring areas. The lands immediately adjacent the mosque were relatively clear of residences until recently and the area

⁸⁶ But perhaps this is changing. Consider Immigration Minister Jason Kenny’s recent statements on banning the niqab from the citizenship oath ceremony (Goodman, 2014).

is larger so the issues with neighbours are not there in the same ways. Instead the green dome of the mosque appropriates the land around it and during Ramadan and on Fridays many Muslims can be seen walking to the mosque for prayers.

In considering the Winnipeg Central Mosque it is perhaps important to note that the building was previously a restaurant and bar. It was purchased and re-appropriated as a mosque space. It is well known to the surrounding neighbourhood that it is a mosque and is on a main downtown thoroughfare frequented by a different segment of the Muslim population of Winnipeg in addition to some who frequent the Grand Mosque as well. The area itself is one surrounded by a less affluent population and adjacent to many areas that are considered to be less safe than the suburban streets around the WGM. Since the use of the mosque began, the area is noticeably friendlier,⁸⁷ especially during the hours the mosque is in use. On Fridays and in Ramadan the streets all surrounding the mosque can be seen filled with Muslims and their families going to and from the mosque and the mosque has held picnics to invite the surrounding neighbours and Muslim families to. This mosque has no barrier and often draws in introductory university and school classes as well as workshops and seminars with both mainstream and Muslim organizations, politicians and service bridge builders, especially because it is seen as a more gender friendly space. The feel of the mosque is different for many reasons including that of the neighbourhood, the regular attendees, and the less conservative layout and board members.

For many years a large Somali population frequented this mosque due to the demographics of the Somali population in Winnipeg lying closer to this central location. For a time, murmurs had been going through the community that some of the Somali population wanted to create their own mosque to suit their needs and eventually the Bilal mosque came into being in 2013. Prior to this, my research shows that there were no mosques in Winnipeg devoted primarily for ethnic-specific populations though there were community and prayer centres specific to certain divisions of Islam like the

⁸⁷ Less problems seem to occur in the area immediately surrounding the mosque, while previously the bar and abandoned building was not considered a particularly friendly area to walk through.

Ahmadiyya community (even members of the Shia communities frequented the ‘mainstream’ Sunni-dominant Muslim activities of the main mosques though they had smaller centres of their own). This ethnic-division of Muslim communities is a phenomenon readily seen in larger Metropolis centres like Toronto and GTA. The new development demonstrates the growing population, diversity and needs of Winnipeg’s Muslims. The Winnipeg Grand Mosque on the other hand is frequented by a diverse population living further from the city’s inner core. This includes some of the same Somalis who utilize Bilal mosque and the Central Mosque, converts, and a variety of other Muslims. However, many South Asians and Arabs can be seen here from the earlier generations of Muslims that settled in Winnipeg as well as their children and grandchildren who grew up and participated in the Muslim community through the Hazelwood Mosque. The Hazelwood Mosque is now in less frequent use, though for decades it was the hub of the Muslim population in Winnipeg.

The Winnipeg Muslim community and its individuals find unique ways to insert themselves into the fabric of the urban space. Not only are they integrated through their careers and job choices, but many volunteer time to mainstream organizations, sit on boards and committees across the city, participate in elections and campaigning and find themselves embedded there. For example, the Muslim community’s sandbagging efforts in the spring season when flooding occurs demonstrates how the community finds ways to insert themselves in the unique needs of Winnipeg. The CMLI (discussed below) is also a unique venture to incorporate Muslims into the fabric and society of Winnipeg and is based on a past mainstream program called Leadership Winnipeg.

Within the context of North America, Muslim communities may encounter other competing religious communities that may also be proselytizing faiths and they may display hostility towards one another. In the context of Winnipeg it was important to consider how the Muslim community interacted with other communities. I observed that the Winnipeg Muslim community made efforts to build bridges with other faith groups and community organizations⁸⁸. In fact, the Canadian Muslim

⁸⁸ In the larger scope of Winnipeg, I have also observed other Winnipeg communities and organizations work towards bridge building.

Leadership Institute (CMLI) runs a year-long leadership program that seeks out different communities to talk about and teach their adult students what leadership means to their communities and how it is carried out. In one session with an Aboriginal community centre, the attendees were taught of the ways to respect elders and their importance in the Aboriginal community. Having been embedded in the landscape of Winnipeg for many years and having observed the way the different communities of Winnipeg interact and often invite other communities to foster understanding and sharing of resources I believe this is a reflection of the peculiarity of Winnipeg's small-city character.⁸⁹ This reciprocity that seems to be a characteristics of Winnipeg faith/culture- based organizations is reflective of the way the city attempts to deal with its diversity and the opportunities it affords its many and varied citizens and groups. It is one of the ways the Muslim population feels connected to the urban landscapes of Winnipeg's larger social systems.

Now that some consideration has been put into the first of the five questions⁹⁰ I will shift into the second consideration of sacred space for this community which has already been touched on when discussing the mosques in Winnipeg. In this discussion it is important to note the diversity in the Winnipeg community and likewise the diversity in mosques in 'home' countries. One observation that is directly visible is the barrier system that is discussed in Nawaz's documentary *Me and the Mosque*. Women's space in mosques in some communities is a highly contested issue. In Winnipeg, there are voices that speak up against the practice of the mosque barrier and there are many that want to enforce the barrier practice. There are variances in practice: the Winnipeg Grand Mosque gives options of where women may choose to pray, including, a balcony, curtained areas and occasionally, a barrier free space; the Winnipeg Central Mosque has never put up barriers; and the Hazelwood Mosque has enforced a more strict segregated prayer space for men and women for several decades

⁸⁹ I am not suggesting that it does not happen elsewhere but that the unique culture of reciprocity in Winnipeg faith and culture based organizations is reflected in the way the Muslim community seeks to carve and define its own space and interactions.

⁹⁰ The questions again were: How does the Muslim community of Winnipeg act on the space(s) around them in transformative ways? Are modes of sacred spaces different than the 'home country' and if so how? What do the changes and tensions say? Are these changes similar to other situations across Canada? And, does this space fit within the urban landscape of this Canadian context?

now. If one considers the religious culture of mosques in South Asia as example, there is generally no real prayer space for women in most of these mosques as women are expected to practice religion in the domestic space while men are expected to pray in congregation at the mosque. In the Arab states the practices vary, but in some mosques women's prayer space is delegated to a more private area. Some mosques, in Turkey for instance, have separate prayer areas for women but in more conservative societies, even if there is a space available, women may be expected to pray in their homes. What can be said about gendered mosque space in 'home' countries is that women do not always have the same access to public prayer space as men and are often expected to pray in their own domestic spaces (though this is not consistent across mosques).

One thing that is certain is that Winnipeg has struggled with the issue of gendered space in the mosque. This increased with the population growth and as diversity began to flourish in the Muslim community; it increased when second-generation voices came to question the practice of barriers after seeking knowledge disentangled from the cultural religion many claim is practiced in their parents' 'home' countries. As mentioned above, the barrier in the Winnipeg Grand mosque is tiered. The second floor is a half balcony made of glass just for the women, the first floor has prayer space behind the men that is curtained with sheer material and there has been a space adjacent to this with no barrier. However, when a more conservative committee took over mosque operations they built a solid wall over the space. Of the other mosques, one has a barrier and one does not. So we see that the gendered space has changed and shifted over time in Winnipeg mosques. Furthermore, when the immigrant generation created the mosque it was not a replica or transplant of mosques in their 'home' country but a decision based on their ways of practicing. With time, the second generation has come to question and shift expectations of what a mosque entails. In fact, the Winnipeg Grand Mosque even has a gymnasium attached to it that was built with the purpose of sports and recreation use for the children of the community as well as wedding celebrations (which are not typically celebrated in mosques in 'home' countries).

Moving onto the third consideration on the meanings of changes and tensions; while this consideration is important in discovering the shifts in the needs and attitudes of the community and its generations it is too large to seek to unravel in this paper. I will simply highlight some recent tensions for consideration. First, as mentioned is the issue of gendered space and gender inclusion in the leadership of the community. While the mainstream committees of the community seek to include women in leadership positions, it seems that many women find it difficult to find a voice without fitting into a mould of what is expected of them (discussed above in gender and standard expectations of Islam) which is often different than what is expected of a participating man. Gendered voices and leadership have been an ongoing struggle in this community. Though many want women to actively participate in the leadership of the community, the fact is that their participation is lacking for a multitude of reasons one of which I would identify as the norm tends to be men who come forward to offer leadership or are sought out to provide it. Another reoccurring tension that can be seen in the community is also on the issue of leadership and control of community assets. In the 1970s the community was just a few hundred people and now the numbers are over 11, 000⁹¹. Despite this growth, leadership still thinks in terms of a small community⁹². There are many different cultures, ideologies, needs and wants and often leadership becomes an issue that tears apart community loyalties. Recently the community underwent a strenuous legal case that began out of what the general body of the community deemed an illegal move, contrary to the constitution and bylaws of the main community organization (MIA) that runs the mosque, to elect a president. The General Body (registered members of MIA) called for re-election and the president felt he was illegally ousted and so began a legal battle to sue for injustice. The result was a court monitored re-election which saw the desires of the General Body realized. While this case was a rather unique and especially tumultuous for the community it is not a singular occurrence. Outbursts over leadership

⁹¹ Statistics Canada's census of 2011 quotes the numbers as 12,405 for Manitoba and 11,230 for Winnipeg while the community estimates are higher.

⁹² A common lament in the mainstream Muslim community is that the main mosque organization needs an update of its constitution which was created to suit a community of a few hundred and has fallen behind in its responsibilities and accountability.

tend to occur in times of growth and change for this community. There were similar struggles over leadership in the 1990s, also at a time of great growth in the population. In the more recent occurrence, the issues were centered over the active portion of the second generation, with heavy support from their ‘parent’ generation, attempting to make shifts to the way the community organization reflected the community’s character (or more accurately the reflection of a not-back-home mentality⁹³). They desired to see a Winnipeg centered Muslim identity versus a ‘back home’ leadership mentality; one that many felt the ‘unjustly’⁹⁴ seated president held who was also described as hoarding power and acting undemocratically. So the major points of change and tension seem to come with growth in the community and a realization of needs that come from a development of Canadian Muslim needs and identity. Tensions result over leadership issues and the future direction of the community.

The other change we see with Muslim communities in Canada, which also affects the Winnipeg Muslims, has to do with the interaction of the government. For instance, in order to hold charitable status organizations and committees are formed to run the affairs of the mosque and often these extend to running the affairs of the community, so there becomes a tiered legally supported structure to these communities. Though governments do not tend to interfere, there are times (such as in the recent legal case) where internal community decisions are made by Canadian legal bodies. In ‘home’ countries, a non-Muslim government would not have the same authority to shape religious spaces and community identity in this ‘liberal’ and democratic way. So this is definitely a change in circumstances for a diaspora Muslim community and in this case, it is city-specific and has had an effect on the community, its leadership and the democratic avenues available to community members for future struggles.

The fourth consideration is over the situation of this community compared to others across Canada. This paper does not allow me to go into depth on this issue but, in brief, I will highlight a

⁹³ As described by a participant.

⁹⁴ As describe by community members in interviews and participant observations.

few similarities and differences. One will notice that though Winnipeg's Muslim population is large it is still small in comparison to larger Metropolis centres across Canada. Winnipeg as an urban entity considers itself a small community though it is the capital city of Manitoba. The Muslim community of Winnipeg likewise echoes this small city character and considers itself a small community. It often struggles in dealing with the size of the community when making decisions and changes and carrying out programs. The community's central organization still holds bylaws and a constitution that reflect the needs of a community of two hundred people. The newly elected executives had been talking about changing these rules, but at the time of this study no concrete changes had been made though functional changes are evident (bigger more inclusive main mosques, proliferation of organizations and activities, etc.). It is different from the GTA, Montreal and Vancouver communities in that many of those populations fissure off into ethnic, cultural and linguistic segments; they have many mosques based on these boundaries and often events are structured around these considerations. Some of these mosques will not elect members but may appoint board members based on cash donation or initial investment in constructing the mosque. Inclusion of the second generation in pivotal leadership roles is more new to this community as is the work in bridging generational gaps and espousing a more Canadian-Manitoba-Muslim culture.⁹⁵ In the central community newsletter one of the well-respected first generation community leaders writes:

MIA is "Islamic" and "Manitoban"...To be Manitoban, MIA needs to act as a genuine Manitoban organization not an alien body residing in Manitoba. MIA needs to be actively engaged with the larger society, showing concern to all local issues and being an integral body of the civic society. Certainly, MIA has made some inroads; however, it is a long way from being a truly Islamic Manitoban organization. Given the high turnover in the Manitoba Muslim community, the risk MIA faces, despite its long history, is its propensity to be colored by the customs of any dominant ethnic group at any particular time. Other Muslim ethnic groups can have their own sub-stream on the margin, but MIA should remain at its core, Manitoban and Canadian in its culture, outlook and norms. (Mukhtar, n.d.)

Diversity is another difference in this community. Winnipeg's Muslim activities and mosques are more generally diverse in nature and mosque attendance often depends on where one lives or works rather than on one's background (though the very recent development of the Bilal mosque contests this idea). Though there are certain populations with higher representation in each mosque

⁹⁵ This is echoed in the interviews, in community resources and in community leader's sermons and speeches.

depending on where congregants live and who they are socialized with. One similarity that is seen across Canada and reflected in literature is a staunch desire of second generation Muslims to be recognized as Canadians; not always having to answer the ‘where are you from?’ question with hyphenated or foreign expectations (Eid 2007; Hirji 2010; Berns-McGown 1999; Moghissi, Rahnama & Goodman 2009).

The last question I have taken into consideration in this section is: does this space, this community, this identity of Winnipeg Muslims fit within the urban space of Winnipeg. I feel that I have provided some discussion of this already, but in summation we can see that Winnipeg Muslims’ ‘Canadian Muslim’ identity stems from the unique history that Muslims have had in this city, the networks and bonds they have made with individuals, organizations and communities, their contributions to the fabric of Winnipeg (through careers, volunteer efforts, organizational belonging and so on), and their unique attempts to carve out and present a Canadian Muslim identity. A most pertinent example is found in the 2011 CBC radio hosted Youth Forum openly discussing the question “Do Canadian Muslims Need to Change?” The callers from across Canada discussed a question with panellists that many communities would not be willing to engage with outsiders (CBC.ca 2011 a; 2011b). The essence of this type of engagement (that is increasingly present in Winnipeg⁹⁶) is reflective of Winnipeg Muslims’ place in Winnipeg as a whole. They are a part of the urban space, a part of the dialogue that continuously flows to express a character of this particular locale.

Many of those who grew up in this community have created lives elsewhere but still find themselves connected through family and bonds of community and still consider themselves a part of this community despite participating in other communities. Those who take part in the Winnipeg community are generally aware of the unique history, including the struggles of leadership in the first mosque, the hurdles to build larger mosques and the waves of growth that have passed through. Individuals and families that have been here for decades often characterize themselves through the

⁹⁶ The radio engagement, public teach-in cafes, public forums, festivals and so forth.

uniqueness of Winnipeg's harsh winter climate, spring floods and plentiful mosquito encounters in the summertime. Identity for them is not simply that of 'Muslim' or even 'Canadian Muslim' but rather uniquely grassroots Winnipeg-Muslim.

In the words of Hughes, "People and communities do not simply appear in cities, they actively move to them. Within such environments, they encounter other groups and there exist many potential obstacles to their mental and religious well-being. Despite this, such communities still carve out meaningful space for themselves" (Hughes, 2004: 349)

This last section discussed some of the convergences of Muslims and the urban space of Winnipeg. It demonstrates the potential for a unique Canadian Muslim identity particular and embedded in this locale and how it is developing. This lens of observation offers a different way to think about second generation identity, space and social factors. The subject of grassroots Canadian Muslim in Winnipeg identity is taken up in more depth in Chapter 6 to develop a deeper understanding of the interview data and this locale-specific identity.

Conclusions

Canadian Muslim identity is a complex negotiation. This chapter explored a series of social considerations that surfaced in this study to unpack the social discourses and spaces to facilitate a deeper understanding of the identity focus of this study.

Through the interviews it became apparent that community-affiliated Muslims can have certain expectations on their behaviours. There is an idea, by insiders and outsiders, of what a proper Muslim is expected and perceived to be. Whether or not this translates to one's personal life, the expectation is there to model this behaviour in community and public settings. The first two sections of this chapter explored what expectations and perceptions of Muslims may look like. As a researcher, the expectations and perceptions that arose were ones I foresaw, nothing truly new in studies of Muslims. What was interesting was that the community is considered a degree of intimate space, much like an extended family (as many of the interviewees expressed) but it is also still a

public space in which discourses are shaped and certain aspects of identity are welcome or expected. This seems to indicate that the level of community – much like organization- is a vehicle to negotiate, shape and foster larger and more pending identity discourses related to societal discourses (like minority identity, Islamophobia, Canadian- Muslim belonging, etc.). Community can also provide resources for private and self-negotiations, but these seem to be done on more intimate levels with confidantes, friends and family. Essentially there seems to be a separation of private and public in the space of the community even though it is an intimate insider space.

The media takes up a significant portion of this chapter. This is because my research shows that it is a powerful tool shaping discourses on Muslim identity in the social, public, political and cultural arenas of Canada. It does not just form opinions for outsiders but forms, shifts, and changes internal community discourses and dialogues. It also forms materials for public consumption that can change the ways Muslims are able to exercise their identities. The media can provide discourses to fight against as well as ones to find belonging in; they provide discourses for othering and discourses for normalizing. The exploration of media makes it evident that a concept of “Muslim” is built in the public consciousness by the media and this “Muslim” affects how real Muslims can navigate, conceptualize and express their identities. The media has shaped inter and intra community discourses; it can shift who is accepted as a Canadian and who is painted as an outsider; and it can bring community discourses into the public consciousness. Understanding the media as a discourse shaper is important in the social considerations for this project and the topic of Canadian Muslim identity.

In shifting the considerations towards gender I sought to unpack some of the ways gender is conceptualized at a societal, communal, familial and individual level. These levels factor into the movements and negotiations of Muslims. In fact, they are deserving of studies of their own⁹⁷. In this section on gender I also explore Razack’s work on gendered and racialized discourses on Muslims to put into perspective a more severe but real effect of public opinion and action regarding Muslims in

⁹⁷ Mossiere (2012) for example.

Canada. Though severe, it does give us a real understanding of the kinds of discourses around gender and race pertaining to Muslims that are employed at the level of society and nation that have real effects on the movements and freedoms of Muslims.

Lastly, this chapter discussed the urban space of Winnipeg as a social site. This thesis poses a concept of grassroots Canadian Muslim identity in Winnipeg. Without unpacking the social site of Winnipeg, the data loses context and depth. This section contextualized the space of Winnipeg as a factor and part of grassroots Canadian Muslim identity for these Winnipeg Muslims. The unpacking of Winnipeg in this section should be taken in consideration along with the information presented in the introduction to build a foundation for the following chapters, particularly Chapter 6. The five questions presented in this section speak to the locale, its peculiarity and its place in Canadian Muslim identity constructions, navigations and expressions as explored in this research work.

The preceding explored the data through the lens of social sites and space as a series of important social considerations to build an understanding of the city, community and its peoples' social systems to better understand Canadian Muslims. The social is an integral part of understanding minority communities and minority identity in Canada. The following chapter delves into strategies of navigation and speaks to much of what is unpacked in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5 DATA ANALYSIS

STRATEGIES IN NAVIGATING PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

The interviews and observations of this research venture revealed several strategies for navigating perceptions, expectations and social sites. The ones that became more centrally evident through my research are discussed in this Chapter. Below I discuss the following strategies individuals may partake in when navigating their Canadian Muslim identities in light of perceptions and expectations: desensitization; humour; Being ‘Canadian’ or ‘fitting in’; self-education and independent decision making; being a representative; identities of resistance; social organization; and social movement.

Desensitization

Regarding discrimination Salentin (2007) writes, “When young people with migrant backgrounds experience discrimination this is not by chance but is embedded in certain social backgrounds.” He says that discrimination “may even be “rational” if it serves to defend privileged access opportunities to status hierarchies...” The explanation continues to tell us that prejudice toward the outgroup and discrimination is “very effective at generating favorable status differences between the ingroup and the outgroup...” and that ultimately “all social inequality is the result of past discrimination, or discrimination occurring in parallel function systems.” Salentin explains,

I regard it as indisputable that in modern societies ascriptive disadvantages such as those based on origin are commonly regarded as illegitimate because the merit principle is meant to be the only factor determining social position... the grounds for this kind of unequal treatment are not regarded as illegitimate in every society. Thus, in feudal societies it was generally accepted that access to positions of leadership was made difficult for, or denied to, persons of lowly origin, regardless of their ability or merit. Only in the modern age did bourgeois classes question the nobility’s ascriptive privileges (2007).

It is this type of understanding of discrimination that informs observations of unequal treatment and experience on Canadian minorities, particularly Muslims. For the large part Canadian society is perceived as a welcoming, diverse and the most accepting of multicultural expressions. We have rhetoric built into our constitution and legal protections against discrimination towards non-majority communities and freedoms of belief. Despite these freedoms being relatively new in the

Canadian consciousness (we do have a strong history of xenophobia and systemic discrimination with a privileged Anglo-Saxon Christian majority). Despite this Anglo-Saxon privilege, most minorities, especially Muslims, arrived after the 1960s and grew up and participated in a society espousing protections on freedoms of belief, religion and culture that encouraged diversity. It is this that now makes discrimination an issue here in Canada.

Discrimination and Islamophobia do exist in Canada. What is interesting is the ways in which Muslims deal with these issues and experiences. One of the strategies I noticed in my interviews and observations was that although many individuals reported incidences of discrimination and related their experiences, they always followed (either immediately or later) that ‘it wasn’t a big deal’ or explained that discrimination was not really a large factor in their experience. This thread became more and more evident as I conducted more interviews. I initially thought some individuals just did not notice, but the more I came across it I realized that it was a desensitization and sometimes a down-playing of discrimination against Muslims on a personal level and became a coping mechanism. They would notice other kinds of discrimination towards them; say for example for being a woman in a male dominated work field, having a different socio-economic standing, or discrimination against Muslims at a more meta-level, etc.⁹⁸ Several of the women participants explained that when they were younger and started wearing hijab they felt discriminated against as Muslims, but as time went by they did not notice it as much. Alina recalls:

I remember... my husband started to actually notice it more. Maybe I just don’t notice it- I have no idea, because after we first got married-he would notice looks, he would hear comments. I never- honestly I never heard it and after a while he would say you didn’t hear that guy say that? You didn’t see that person look at us? And I’m like not really. I’m like I don’t know maybe I’m just aloof and I don’t notice these things, but he really picked up on that.

Alayna explained,

I remember when I was younger and I started wearing the hijab I always felt like people were looking at me. I don’t know if it was mean or curious, I don’t know. But maybe there were less people who wore it back then? Eventually I stopped noticing. When I was older, like in university, and I spent more time out with friends they [my friends] would notice. I guess I just cope with being looked at as different by not paying attention. I care but then again, not really.

⁹⁸ Similar to second wave feminism debates around race. However I do not think that these discriminations were experienced as more harmful but rather easier to identify and label for both the victim and the perpetrator.

Aida similarly explains,

I guess I don't know if I'm noticing things less, like ever since I started wearing hijab right? I would get comments and things here and there, and in the beginning it was really hard to deal with them. But I feel like over the years, now that I know that just last year I was walking with one of my friends, she didn't wear hijab, and we were walking downtown and somebody made a comment and I didn't even hear it, and she was like you didn't hear that? And I was like no. So I guess it just doesn't faze me anymore. I'm more confident in who I am and more comfortable with who I am... it just took me more, I guess more understanding (pause), and just taking time to really understand why I'm doing what I'm doing and why I am following what I'm following, and it just made me more and more comfortable with the knowledge that I seeked.. sought.

With the men, the differentiation in noticing and not noticing was not as evident. Most reported racial-ethnic-cultural discrimination rather than discrimination based on religion. For example 'looking Arab' or 'being brown' were the expressions of prejudice whether at work, in public or another setting. Perhaps this is due to the fact that Muslim women, specifically hijab wearing, are more identifiable as Muslims, so discrimination becomes more expressly targeted but men can 'look Muslim' and the perpetrator would not be sure enough and thus use a more generic expression.⁹⁹ Interestingly, the Muslim women in this study that had never worn hijab for any extended time did not report discrimination or negative experience on a religious basis. This of course requires more observations and study, but it is an interesting phenomenon and a viable theory of desensitization as a coping mechanism towards discrimination, especially in public settings where discrimination might be more frequently expressed.

Salentin discusses illegitimacy as the key factor that gives rise to the experience of discrimination (2007: 35). In thinking about the topic, I posed the topic of discrimination to several community members in different settings and at different times and it was often explained as ignorance about Muslims that was due to misinformation or misguided presumptions. Perhaps both desensitization and downplaying were internalizations of this view or belief that when discrimination of this type occurred in public settings it was not an important experience because it was ignorant and did not really make sense or affect them personally unless they were directly or harmfully attacked. It

⁹⁹ Much literature exists on Islamophobia and race. See for example Taras who writes about how "Islamophobia bundles religious, ethnic and cultural prejudices together even though a narrow definition of the term flags religion as playing the central part" (2013). See also Tyrer (2013) and Meer (2014) for more works on Islamophobia, race, religion and culture.

was the more vicious, or the one-on-one experiences and systemic discrimination that the participants expressed as important experiences in identity formation.

Downplaying or ‘not noticing’ these instances of discrimination is also a mechanism to help one to feel like they fit-in or appear to fit-in with peers and the rest of society. It is, however, important to note that in collective discourses on Muslims in Canada these individual public experiences of discrimination do become an important aspect in identity. What I mean is that though they are played down on an individual level for individual coping and identity negotiation, at a collective level they are actively discussed and become an important part of the Canadian Muslim experience and activism work towards combating stereotypes and discrimination.

Humour

Humour has long been a tool in breaking barriers and experiencing a common humanity. To call into the limelight of humour the strange nuances that make a group or experience peculiar means collectively engaging that peculiarity and often indulging in collective sigh of relief. Muslims are not particularly known for their sense of humour amongst non-Muslims; however the emergence of Muslim stand-up comics, TV sitcoms, movies and comedy tours shows a different side of the Muslim experience. Comedians like Azhar Usman joke about being Muslim and the uncomfortable atmosphere it creates in a post 9/11 world when someone realizes your Muslim-ness. Of his big evident beard, he jokes that “mean people look at me and wonder if I might be a terrorist” (the audience laughs uncomfortably) and that when women ask him if they can touch it he laughs and says, “I’m going to warn you right now but it basically feels like pubic hair. I’m sorry (*laughs*) it’s disgusting yet accurate!” which has the audience immediately cracking up (Usman, 2103). Comedic shock value allows sensitive subjects be broached in the name of comedic engagement. Azhar and

other comedians like him of minority or persecuted backgrounds have acknowledged that stand-up comedy is an art of protest coming from persons of persecuted or discriminated backgrounds¹⁰⁰.

In my observations and participant interviews I found that humour was similarly used to diffuse uncomfortable or awkward situations on an individual level of identity navigation. The strategy of humour was used to mitigate negative experiences and create bonds. Alina recounts a story that sheds some light on how humour can be use in an individual's social navigations to stimulate bonding or at least reducing barriers:

I think I have a persona that projects, when they first see me, of this holier than thou person and it's totally not it at all, that's not me, I'm very casual. Just to give you an example, I did the Colour Me Rad run a few weeks ago, and a friend of mine invited me with her friends it was like all her bridesmaids and whatever, and I had gotten to know them a little bit but they didn't know me very well. So I could tell they weren't being a hundred percent themselves around me, so I'm like ok whatever, like they were very nice, very friendly, but I felt like they were kind of holding back a little bit. So when we were running, we ran past these girls and they just stank and I'm like oh it smells like we just ran through ...[explicit descriptives]... I said something along those lines (laughs)... and they were like 'did you just say that?' like they couldn't believe it. My friend's like 'yea, that's something she would say' (chuckle) 'like if you got to know her that's something she'd totally say,' and it was super inappropriate but whatever.

On the strategy of using humour to mitigate awkwardness and negative experience at the workplace one participant explains, "I never really felt discriminated there... people have always been very welcoming to me, very, very, much so. If anything they go out of their way like 'oh you know we really like you here' and after a while I crack a couple jokes about being brown and they're like 'oh that's ok you know to joke about that stuff, phew', so yea."

One of the participants explained, "I think people understand their humanities through interactions so if you're not interacting then it's easy to just label people and have stigmas against people." Regarding the use of humour in combating stereotypes towards Muslims another participant said, "to get a different perspective even on a sort of like... in the political sphere or something like that... or... my sister is right now in the sort of media world, they are looking for different opinions and um different perspectives, different stories to explore so that's kind of cool."

¹⁰⁰ Comedians like Dave Chapelle and several local Canadian comedians of minority backgrounds have spoken in multiple forums about the value of comedy for minorities and persecuted groups.

On the topic of being and feeling Canadian the responses I received were often followed by deep and irony-filled laughter like ‘why even ask?’. One participant, for example, said, “uh yea, of course I feel Canadian! Maybe others don’t think so but I do! (*laughter*).” Another said, “a big role but only after I left Canada [for the USA] though... (*laughter*). I would say ‘yea but we have health care!’ It was always about health care.” One woman says, “It’s funny because... Why would you describe yourself as a minority, because maybe your skin colour is different... so are a lot of other Canadians *laughter*... they’re Canadian... But I have to be a minority, because people are going to see me that way, so I guess I’m a minority... *laughter*.” Many of the participants joked about the way society and people automatically perceived them as foreign and both found and used humour in toppling those misguided presumptions.

Similarly, ‘standard’ negative experiences of discrimination were often recounted with humour or laughter to show that although they are uncomfortable they are also comedic in that one almost expects them to happen and is shocked when they do not. Ultimately these Canadian Muslims use humour to dissipate lasting negative effects of prejudice and discrimination. Amal explained, “Sometimes at the airport... you get beeped for a random bag check *laughs* and then you gotta [sic] go through that scanner... I’d rather get pat down all the time *laughter* that’s right... it’s random...” On being randomly searched at airports and singled out in security situations Abdullah admits, “I find it funnier than anything.” While Alayna admits, “it’s frustrating and scary at the time, but they are always funny stories to talk about later. Especially to your non-minority Canadian friends who have no idea how uncomfortable it can get and how paranoid you can feel!” One of the young men with a very ‘Muslim’ look says, “well, I’m always paranoid about flying. You know there may be crazy people on the plane, or what agenda does the security person have?... You can let it rattle you for a long time or you can make it into a funny story. It’s your choice what you do with it. Making it funny helps.”

Despite not directly questioning on the topic of humour the interviews demonstrated the thread of humour as a strategy in relieving negative experience and awkward moments in the navigation of

Muslim-Canadian identity. Due to having grown up in the Canadian milieu, these individuals own the outrageousness or ridiculousness of the situations that arise due to their skin colours and apparently ‘religious’ appearance. They turn the negative experiences into bonding tools and fuel for cultural development and activism works. Often stories are recounted in public settings, in publications, media engagement and so forth and despite having experienced prejudice, these individuals will do the best they can within those circumstances to reduce the negative load of the experience to factor it into their concepts of being legitimate Canadian Muslims and feeling belonging. Such an approach seems to help break down barriers by inviting, through humour, a “taking seriously” of the hurt and alienation that some Canadian Muslims experience from non-Muslims.

Being ‘Canadian’

When it comes to fitting in almost everyone, youth or adult, has moments (or weeks or years) of feeling awkward and alienated for one reason or another. Add being a second-generation immigrant minority, particularly Muslim, to the mix and even more feelings of alienation can arise. Imagine being in school when 9/11 occurred. As an adult, imagine being at university or your job when you overhear colleagues discussing those ‘terrorists’ or those ‘oppressed’ Muslim women and then turning to you and saying ‘sorry’ like its related to you. When an educated adult acquaintance is telling a story about going through an airport and seeing a bearded man being taken for a random security check and their feelings of relief about their own ease of access, your Muslim colleague might be thinking about how frustrating those incidences actually are for the majority of Muslims for whom they are a common occurrence just based on the way they look. A degree of alienation can arise from these experiences. For a Canadian Muslim perhaps none of these common Muslim stereotypes or (mis)representations relate to you, and yet in some obscure way you are made to feel like your appearance and religious affiliation ties them to you in the mind of others. In a climate where how we appear and what we seem to believe could be our first identifier of in and out group

status, one surely feels a degree of desire to fit-in or be less noticeably different in their day-to-day lives at times.

For the 2nd and 1.5 –generation Canadian Muslims who participated in this study, having been raised in this country and society, their primary attachments are to Canada and they develop degrees of belonging in Canadian society, whether through dress, pop culture, professional lives, participation in politics, or a deep sense like patriotism and pride in their nation. This sense of belonging does not come out of thin air; many of them struggle with feelings of alienation in their youth simply for the reasons that teenagers do, but these feelings are also compounded by familial, cultural and ethnic traditions, rules and expectations that may differ from some of their peers. Some make decisions about acting on the perceptions and expectations presented to them. Some, as adults, change their minds or thoughts on previous decisions and actions. Identity navigations become complicated as individuals traverse the desires of their family, their understandings of religion and culture as well as society's expectations on them. This section deals with the attempts the participants make to 'fit in' and the ways they talk about being accepted as Canadian.

One of the simplest forms of fitting in is appearance. Many Muslims, particularly covering Muslim women struggle with their journeys around modest clothing choices, trying to decide what makes sense for them and is best for their lives. There is no straightforward step-by-step instruction booklet for these individuals. Many of the participants came from families in which wearing a hijab was an anomaly at the time they began their journey. A few came from families in which their parents held conservative views and simply expected their children to follow suit. It was, notably, the women who had experience in hijab that struggled with dressing to suit their desires to fit in. The participants that did not veil did not express any significant struggles with dressing to 'appear more Canadian' as several covering women describe it.

Regarding familial expectations and on dressing differently, Alina, who came from a more religiously conservative family and was community involved wears a hijab and did not express any

negative feelings about wearing hijab. However, her family expected her to dress in a particular way which she stopped doing once she moved out of her parents' home. She explains,

I hated it. I never liked wearing it [*jilbaab*]¹⁰¹ once... you stood out... you really stood out... As a teenager those years were— you already feel so awkward, you felt more awkward and I never really noticed— I remember... they did a movie project in their English class, 'cause [sic] we were in [a] different English class, and they did some project... I remember, I watched a movie and I remember [classmate] was sitting next to me and he was like 'oh hey Alina you're coming up in this scene now' and it was just (pause), somebody was walking down the hallway with a camera and a bunch of students, and that was the first time I saw myself in a high school hallway with my peers surrounding me and how much I stood out. Like it was so distinct, and it wasn't-I felt like such a fob.¹⁰² Like I stepped off the boat and here I am. But I wasn't [foreign], you know. I spoke normally. I acted just like any other Canadian teenager would I felt, like personality-wise, but I looked so different and I feel that really did a toll on my psyche for a while. So I had always wanted to take it off. I think you just really want to be accepted by everybody, like you're this cool person and whatever, this and that. So I felt it even more then... I would not, never ever, I own one *jilbaab* now. I had so many before, I own one, and that's very much an active decision. Yea I didn't like wearing it at all. It wasn't a decision made by me, it was made for me, and yea, I actively, very much actively, took it off.

Almas talks about her choices in clothing in reference to 'normal' Canadian clothing as well, "I wear hijab, I wear the head covering... I wear modern clothes... I wear just everyday clothes... Canadian clothes... I have a Canadian culture, so I wear you know, Canadian clothes. I mean on different occasions, I like to change it up, of course (laughs) like any girl." On feeling different because of her choice in covering she says, "I do see myself as a minority in Canada... if I didn't wear hijab, I would probably feel less of a minority (laughs)." She continues to explain, "But I do wear hijab because I want everybody to see that here's a Muslim women that is doing something that's positive for her community whether it's the Muslim community or non-Muslim." She later explains,

As a kid you wanted to blend in as [much as] possible, you just want to be normal, but not only [was] I the only brown person... I had to wear hijab. Like, I wore a scarf on my head but I wore short sleeved shirts (laughs) so it was kind of funny. But yea, I mean as a kid you just want to fit in, and you would do anything. But ... this is my identity, this is who I am. My husband, he says if I wanted to take it off, I could... he would support me either way. Whether or not my family would be ok with it, that's another story but that's not their decision (laughs). But for my daughters, I would make it their choice. That would be totally up to them. I feel like they need to know what it is... because when you wear hijab it's like the flag, you have to represent... you're an example for our Canadian (laughs) for all of Winnipeg, you have to set an example!

¹⁰¹ The *jilbaab* is a long gown-like piece of clothing with roots in Arab cultures. Though her family was not Arab her mother started wearing a *jilbaab* and expected her daughters to follow suit.

¹⁰² A slang term meaning fresh of the boat (fob) or foreign.

So for her, even though hijab was initially a choice made by her parents, the choice as a young adult to keep wearing it with ‘modern Canadian clothing’ was active in conveying her lifestyle choices to the people around her as well and became part of her identity as a Canadian Muslim. Her statement later in the interview, “you’re like an ambassador to Islam when you wear hijab,” was a common sentiment expressed among the hijab-wearing women participants with both negative and positive reflections on the topic. One woman explained, “I think wearing hijab also gave me that sense of responsibility, ‘cause [sic] there’s always stuff about, you know Muslim women being oppressed and things like this...” Some felt it gave them a stronger identity growing up and living productive and engaged adult lives. They had to know who they were and what they believed in to be such visible representatives (whether they realized they were or not). A few of the women in their late 20s and 30s expressed that they felt they had done their jobs as representatives for their whole youth and early adult life and wanted to now have less visible identities as well, whether this meant keeping the hijab on or not. Alayna discussed this in her reflections on wearing the hijab:

I’m tired, you know? Over 20 years, oh my god has it been that long? It’s (laughs), it’s a long time to be a representative and have to answer every question that comes your way and defend a religion that sometimes people hijack and do crazy things with. You have to interact with anyone and everyone that comes at you; otherwise you leave a bad impression. No one stays the exact same for all their life. I feel like I’ve lived that responsibility. I’m ready to just be and not have to answer to random strangers anymore. I feel like I want to take it off sometimes and wear it other times. But that isn’t always an option. Because people look up to me and will worry... for some reason (laughs).

Anisa recounts her experience after deciding to stop wearing the head covering and the ways in which her experience in that particular mode of dress influenced her identity developments. She explains,

Just sharing my identity... I guess it used to be obvious because I used to wear hijab... I probably started when I was around 12 years old. So, I think around the age of 12 to 35... I was wearing hijab, so that was an important aspect of practice that was more explicit I guess. Now I find that because it might not be obvious I’m Muslim, I do like to tell people if the opportunity arises ‘cause [sic] I feel that, I don’t know, it’s just so much a part of my life... I still maintain a lot of, you know, the dress code in the sense that I try to dress modestly... and there’s sort of a behavior that you develop when you’re wearing hijab that kind of is, like (pause). I was telling you before (laughs) it’s part of my DNA now. It’s just part of my behavior where you still are. I still try to be outgoing and sociable but I know that there’s a part of me that’s a little bit maybe conservative or reserved in certain contexts.

She further reflects on identity and fitting in, “I’m still a minority, but it’s not because my hijab anymore, or my religion anymore, it’s because I look different, my colour’s different, and I can’t change that, like I can’t take that off, so I’m always going to be a visible minority (laughs).”

When asked of the ways she expressed being Canadian Amna admits,

I wear a headscarf so pretty much I'm very identifiable in the wider community as Muslim and umm so then you know the way that I interact with people is definitely colored by that... So my clothing style, I used to wear umm like *jilbaab*, long dresses and because somebody told me that that was going to be the right way to dress and more recently than the last 10 years I just I just decided that that looked too foreign for me and that I wanted to just wear normal Canadian clothes: pants, shirts, skirts, with my headscarf but... ummm but the rest of my clothing would be more Canadian looking because that was just much more reflective of my own culture.

All minus one of the hijab wearing women interviewees expressed a decision informed by careful deliberation on the way they chose to dress that were their attempts to negate the foreignness of hijab for Canadian society.¹⁰³ One woman said that because she had a public role she often actively chose to wear hijab styled differently so it appeared more fun and modern to mitigate people’s negative thoughts on hijab wearing women. She also made other attempts at fitting in that were interesting for this study. She explained,

Just the fact that we look different and our skin color is not white, for many parts it’s not white... it’s easy for people to look down upon us and feel superior that, but I think that’s dumb... I worry about that, I worry about that a lot actually. It’s no accident the name I gave my son. I gave my son, like, sort of an English-er sort of name (chuckle). It still has historical sort of ties to our Muslim culture. But it’s my attempt to reduce some discrimination that he may face, it’s an attempt.

Three of the interview participants made similar decisions on naming in the next generation. They kept Muslim names, or names that could have ties to Muslim cultures that were also more common in Western cultures. Most of them expressed that their choices were to alleviate some potential discrimination or simply because the culture they were most familiar with had these names that resonated with them.

The other topic that was also discussed above, downplaying negative experience and prejudice, is also a strategy for fitting in. For example using humour to downplay a negative experience can create bonds with work-mates or even cross boundaries with a particularly difficult person if it makes

¹⁰³ This is also reflected in the work by Mossiere (2012) and that of Hoodfar (for example the joint work in 2003 with Alvi). Muslim women and hijab encompass a spectrum of reasonings and experiences.

them laugh. It humanizes the (perceived) other and creates a common human connection. People also downplayed negative experience for personal gains of not feeling isolated by these experiences. Many reported incidences in their interviews but followed with sentiments like ‘but Canadians are generally great,’ ‘but this doesn’t make me feel less Canadian,’ and similar admissions. I found this interesting because some of the incidences reported were serious at the time they occurred but later became fuel for belonging and bonding. In general the understanding with Muslims is that it is inevitable, you will experience some form of prejudice or racism or discrimination. The participants in this study, for the most part chose to overlook most incidences as minimal and non-reflective on their identities, though in a larger sense they came up in discussions and public forums as either ‘teaching moments’ or ‘bonding moments’. Aida said, “I mean, any time you stand out right, like you look different, and if you’re not following the norm then you’re going to get something, you’re going to get some sort of discrimination.” Ayyub explained, “It’s just ignorance, it doesn’t really affect me but I will talk about it if the right opportunity comes up, like if I’m doing a public talk, because I think it’s important for people to know.”

Overall most of the interviewees expressed making attempts at one time or another to better fit in or appear more ‘Canadian’ to reflect how they felt but how others may not perceive them. To alleviate alienation and prejudice, these attempts ranged from clothing to language humour, and decisions for their next generations to public participation in programs and activities about diversity and belonging.

Seeking Information for Informed Action: Self-Education And Independent Decision Making

When it comes to navigating perceptions and expectations, one of the first strategies for those in the highly involved category of individuals, or more commonly referred to as practicing Muslims, was to educate themselves. According to the interviewees, as youth when questions of religion came up, most of the participants sought answers from the generation before them. As young adults and late teens they had been encouraged by parents and community to ask scholars and teachers or talk to

prominent role models in the community but, many also independently sought information by reading texts about the Qur'an and *sunnah*. It was common for those who were teenagers and older in the 1990s and 2000s in this community to frequently hold, attend and travel to 'Muslim' conferences across North America. The conferences ranged from local MSA conferences where national and international scholars were invited to the annual ISNA conference in the USA which drew a variety of scholars, activities and entertainments as a centralized Muslim gathering in North America. Later, the Revival of the Islamic Spirit conference in Toronto became popular for the moderate scholars who encouraged finding ways to express and be truly Canadian and Muslim while remaining religiously practicing and spiritually seeking.

Besides conferences, many youth and adults attended weekly *halaqas* (learning circles) regardless of how devout, practicing or community involved they were. Individuals ranging from moderately involved to the highest category of highly involved attended *halaqas* which were often gender segregated but there were some exceptions. These *halaqas* varied in size. They catered to those that initiated and attended them, so some were very religiously conservative while others were moderate and encouraged open thinking when religion seemed at odds with societal practices. There was a regular Friday youth *halaqa* which had been running in Winnipeg for over a two decades which had a teaching component, a Q&A component and a large entertainment and social aspect. Most of the community's youth attended this *halaqa* at one time or another. These were common ways that those who matured from youth in the 1990s and 2000s as well as the current decade sought religious education combined with information on practicing their religion in wider society and navigating those complications. Strong social bonds were made at these weekly gatherings and even after people stopped attending they often stayed in contact with their peers and, interestingly enough, with the *halaqa* leaders to whom they asked questions that arose on religion and identity.

Besides the *halaqas*, conferences, texts, lectures and social forms of self-educations the new century has brought with it a generation of internet savvy young adults and many have taken to searching for information as well as social groups online. This poses a whole other question, but

according to those I interviewed the internet was often either a starting point or a supplement to information and decisions gleaned from talking to their peers, parents and elders.

When it came to making decisions most of the women respondents admitted that they preferred to seek information from their friends and peers because leadership and scholarship was male-dominated and their parents had different cultural expectations. They may begin by asking as leader or reading a text but many questioned what they learned and sought to discuss with their peers to make judgements on alternate choices. For instance on the topic of dress, many sought to arm themselves with information so they could make independent choices different from their families and local role models and be able to justify their actions to prevent disconnect.

Decision making is in itself a huge topic within the topic of identity and I do not have the liberty of an expanded discussion within the scope of this thesis¹⁰⁴ but what I found through the interviews and participant observation is quite interesting. I found that a) men often sought the advice of an imam or scholar or elder; b) women often first asked a scholar or elder, questioned that and the relevance to gendered experience, and then went to their peers for validation of alternate avenues and support; c) though much research on Muslims stresses the internet as an important and sometimes primary source of information¹⁰⁵, for those in the age category and participant description, most expressed the importance of a social factor in information seeking as well as a source such as Qur'an or *sunnah* and then also scholarly discussions. The internet was never a primary or authoritative source with these individuals; it was explained as a starting point, or a source for mining text and data, or a source for seeking alternate sources.¹⁰⁶ It was not expressed as a beginning and ending point for information; d) I did not encounter anyone who had a heavily involved online community or presence other than common social media forums like Facebook and Instagram or community email

¹⁰⁴ This would form a fascinating topic for further research and shed a great deal of light on Muslims in contemporary societies navigating socio-religious and even political experiences.

¹⁰⁵ Stoica, 2011; Schlicht, 2013; Rippin, 2013; Becker, 2009; Bunt, 2009.

¹⁰⁶ Bunt's research focusses on the technological influence of the internet on Muslims learning about Islam and experience as a 'second life' (2009). Many media reports as well as scholars echo this understanding of Muslims knowledge sources and identity building. However, my research did not indicate the same degree or intensity of the interweb as source of primary identity building. It was indicated as a supplement or starting point but was not a primary source of identity construction for these people, and it was not used in isolation.

lists. Perhaps this is because most of those individuals who rely heavily on the internet are actually not significantly involved in the community and have not had lasting bonds outside the virtual realm, but I cannot be sure of why this is; d) all of those who considered themselves practicing took on individual searches for information and knowledge but not all followed through on their findings. Some honestly admitted disregarding information that did not sit well with them. Overall self-education factored in as an important component of identity navigations for all of the interviewees though not many straightforwardly accepted what they read or heard.

Being a Representative

Muslims have been experiencing a very public narrative about their religion and their lives in the media, in literature and in public discourse. While in the 90s a Muslim was often relegated to the realm of a general ‘other’, the post 9/11 situation dictates a certain back story that comes with being a Muslim. This backstory can often be misinformed, monolithic, prejudiced and an unwelcome stereotype. Many Muslims feel the social responsibility of becoming a living breathing explanation of how they are in fact not those misrepresentations.

Muslims are commonly conceived of as backwards and lying outside the possibility of the civilized ‘West’. Razack explains that in the modern Western nation Muslim men are conceptualized as barbaric, dangerous and opposed to liberal ideals while Muslim women are painted as oppressed, suppressed and in need of saving (2008). In order to combat this significantly negative and common conception of Muslims, many young Canadian Muslims have invested a considerable amount of time and energy asserting their Muslim identities, claiming their Canadian identities, combating stereotypes and establishing themselves as rational, cooperative, educated and upstanding individuals and communities to alleviate the negative burden placed on them (Baljit, 2011). This asserting, claiming and proving can be referred to as being representatives in a way, some may even take it a step further and become ambassadors of Canadian Muslim identity. This section will look at some of

the ways the participants and community use the role of ambassador and representative in navigating Canadian Muslim identity.

On the concept of ambassador for a communal representation of Canadian Muslims, Abdullah, a student and young adult leader in the community, finds himself in a role that can sometimes be tricky for him to traverse. He explains that in his official position as representative he was not initially receptive to the idea as there was a great deal of responsibility embedded in it. He reflects,

When they told me that, I was like I don't really want to be a spokesperson. Like, I'll help do some media, I'll be a media relations person, but I don't like being a spokesperson and they still use that title sometimes, which is, I don't like and whenever now... what's happened is that they kind of defer it to me for any media stuff. It's like 'oh yeah call Abdullah'... and I don't know sometimes it... I get self-conscious that people might think... like he likes being on the news and stuff. Where I don't really like [that]. Like, I'm just doing it 'cause [sic] they asked me. So I try to defer to other people as much as I can. Um, but I guess because a lot of people get nervous about it, I don't get nervous about it... and that's why I think some of the other leadership positions want someone to be there as media relations. Like, they are like 'I don't really like doing it, so he'll do it because he is comfortable with it', but at the same time it's, it is the same kind of pressure... because you're that [role model].

Despite his reservations he does understand the power of putting forth ambassadors and representatives to help mitigate the negative stereotypes and experiences of Muslims. He admits,

Yeah definitely, I think it's really important, especially for other Canadians to know about Canadian Muslims because their perception might be that all Muslims are immigrants, that they don't speak English very well or that they, that they might not identify as Canadians and I think it is important for people to know that being Canadian, being Muslim aren't necessarily two separate things... Recently a friend of mine...who's born Canadian, converted to Islam, was on TV on Breakfast Television and I think it's really good to have someone like that go on to be a representative of a Muslim community so that someone can see, 'oh well yeah, he's white, blonde hair, blue eyed, young Canadian person who happens to be Muslim'. So it sort of can alter people's perspective of what their community is like, and I think that is because they might find it easier to identify with someone who at least shares the Canadian part of their identity and may not [be] seen as entirely foreign to them. Whereas, if you have someone, I don't know Arab guy or West African guy who seems already foreign to them based on their culture [that] will translate onto Islam as well.

Amna, a teacher, explained that second generation Canadian Muslims had the opportunity to be a bridge by being representatives and changing perceptions of Muslims as foreigners. They were that crucial step in-between Canadians and immigrant Muslims to help bridge the wide gap of misunderstandings.

On the topic of bridge building, it is important to note that many socially concerned organizations emerging from within the Muslims community of Winnipeg at the end of the 1990s and onward have taken notice of the youth and young adult generation in this demographic and work with

them to bring generational voices together to form bridge building initiatives when only a decade earlier this work was largely relegated to the immigrant settler generation. Organizations like ISSA and CMLI work diligently at bridge building in the larger society and media of Winnipeg. In 2007 ISSA ran a bus and billboard campaign that showed imagery of Muslims with corresponding messages. There were three predominant bus tags and billboards that were displayed across the city with partial government funding: one displayed a multigenerational Muslim family and read, 'Rich Heritage, Promising Future'; another showed Muslims in different career fields and read, 'Building a Vibrant Society'; and the last showed youth and sports and one of the girls wearing a hijab and doing taekwondo and read, 'Healthy Youth, Strong Community.' This visual anti-prejudice campaign in Winnipeg was followed by posters in schools and media engagement. It was meant to change representations of Muslims and alleviate negative stereotypes of Muslims as 'outsiders'. One of the organization's senior managers explained it as depicting Muslims as normal and in a 'hey we are just like you' sense. Many social, educational and economic, Muslim-based organizations in Winnipeg work diligently to also alleviate stereotypes and misinformation while building bridges with other organizations and communities in addition to carrying out their specific organizational goals.

The mosques in Winnipeg also hold open festivals, barbeques, multicultural days and similar events encouraging the larger community to participate a few times a year in order to have people come and experience Muslim cultures and activities. Though these activities are only a few during the year, it is important that it is the mosque organization hosting these activities as they understand the need to alleviate estrangement or stereotypes from surrounding society. The Yaseen Centre, the Zubaidah Tallab Foundation, the MIA and ISSA consistently hold charity events that contribute to the larger society such as sandbagging efforts, charity donations and assistance for other communities including remote First Nations reserves. They often get media coverage for these unique initiatives thereby displaying the integrated character of Muslim activities in Winnipeg and alleviating misrepresentations for the public. The Muslim communities in Winnipeg extend their reach outside the boundaries of their primary communities and seek to build bridges and contribute to their city,

their province and their country as is evidenced by their many activities and programs for social betterment.

Something that became evident is that at an organizational, communal and individual level, Muslims feel it necessary to represent themselves as open and contributing members of society to alleviate some of the negative conceptions and experiences their communities and individuals will come across. They actively embrace being representatives at an organized and individual level. For example, in both 2009 and 2011 the Millennium library in Winnipeg hosted an event planned by Muslim organizations inviting the wider community to come and engage a spectrum of Muslim women who would share their stories and their thoughts on a variety of subjects central to which would be, of course, Muslim women (Manitoba Muslim, 2010). These events drew in attendants well above the originally planned capacity of a couple hundred and brought forth a variety of questions, concerns and stereotypes that were engaged by these and other volunteer representatives. In a similar capacity, in 2011 CBC radio hosted a Youth Forum. This forum asked the question of Muslims and Winnipeggers “Do Canadian Muslims Need to Change?” This panel engaged a wide spectrum of volunteer representatives who engaged the public debate through radio and Facebook forums (CBC Manitoba Facebook Page, 2011; CBC.ca, 2011a; 2011b). The public callers and volunteer panellists discussed a question that many communities would not be willing to engage with outsiders. The essence of this engagement is reflective of Winnipeg Muslim’s place in Winnipeg as a whole. The Muslims there feel it as their responsibility to engage questions and concerns to facilitate a harmonious and grassroots Canadian Muslim identity that is flourishing there.

At the level of the individual, Aida explains that she always felt like she needed to know about her religion and know about why she believed what she did because anyone at a moment’s notice could bombard her with remarks or ask her questions because of her Muslims appearance, in other words, her hijab. It was notably those that were highly involved in community and relatively religiously practicing that felt this responsibility. The other hijab-wearing women expressed it as an ongoing and permeating responsibility. Those that classified as moderately involved or culturally

Muslim confessed they shied away from being representatives and voicing their Muslim affiliations. Anila, who was on the spectrum of minimally or somewhat involved holiday Muslim, divulged that she would not normally tell someone she was Muslim unless there was a reason or it came up somehow.

At the level of the individual one of the interviewees, a student in his 20s and avid volunteer in the community and in the larger city of Winnipeg, offered a detailed explanation of what being a representative in daily life meant to him. He explained that because smiling was said to be a form of charity by the Prophet he often tried to smile at strangers and that he felt,

It's important to do that just because it, it helps in general. Like if you, if you're smiling, you are feeling more positive and even with, even a random stranger, it again, I might not visibly look Muslim to everyone but I think it's important to represent that. I mean there's wisdom behind the reason why it's a form of charity right? I think it's important to do it for that reason and also to be representative... Say someone ends up meeting me after and finds out I'm Muslim, 'oh yeah that guy, ok he smiles'.... Automatically by being Muslim, I think you're somewhat of an ambassador or representative and like I said it's intimidating and there's responsibility, but having that responsibility can help improve people's perception. Having that pressure being [a] representative, okay well if someone knows I'm Muslim, then they take their vision or example of what Muslim culture or Muslim identity is based on me, if I'm the only Muslim they know. So, it kind of forces us to know yourself, so say someone who's not Muslim or from the general community asks you a question about, okay, 'why do you fast?' or 'why do you do this?' Someone else who may live in a Muslim majority country might never have to answer that question... [They] never have to think about that question and will just practice that for what it is, almost blindly, never questioning the reasons behind it, but when you're asked 'oh why do you do that?' you have to know yourself and have to share it with someone else so I think identifying as Muslim can help because it, and especially in a minority environment, because you have to learn more about yourself and you practice your faith more, or it helps you. It gives you an opportunity to practice your faith with more awareness of yourself.

On being a visible Muslim woman, one of the regularly community involved and hijab-wearing women, Amna, explained something that was reflected in many of the women's interviews; a desire to break stereotypes. She explains,

I also feel like... even though it's a lot less than when I was younger, I still feel like I'm representing my community. So I do have a feeling that I want people to leave with a positive impression of not, not even just Muslims in general, but specifically Muslim women that they can still be you know they might not [be] what other people have in their minds umm and like the stereotype. They can be educated and cool and funny and whatever. So I like to break people's stereotypes.

Alina, a mother in her 20s and fitness buff, explains that though she appears 'holier than thou' she talks like a sailor and when people get to know her they are always surprised and she likes that

this breaks their stereotypes. She confesses that they are always amazed that she has a sense of humour and that she can carry on par with their jokes.

Almas, a young woman of South-Asian and Anglo-Canadian descent, jokes that “when you wear hijab it’s like the flag, you have to represent your Muslims... (laughs) for all of Winnipeg, you have to set an example... Because everybody’s watching you! (laughs)”

Another young woman, also of South-Asian and Anglo-Canadian descent, explained that as a youth she felt heavily burdened by the feeling of needing to be a representative because of the visibility of it. She said,

I used to struggle with it a lot because I was just like ‘oh I’m a visible representation for Islam’ and you know ‘I can’t go into this store’, ‘I can’t go there,’ and ‘I shouldn’t be doing this’, ‘I shouldn’t be doing that,’ but I think over the years I realize, you know, that I’m still human and I’m going to, I guess, like, like Islam doesn’t make me (pause), take away my own personality, or you know make me be like this zombie in living... You are who you are and you’re all created differently, so that’s a gift in itself and you live it and apply it to your life and then be Muslim as well, right? So I feel like it’s helped me, I guess, accept that more and be who I am and also be Muslim.

The interviews made it clear to see that the responsibility of being a representative at an individual level is not always an active choice a Canadian Muslim will make. Sometimes they are simply set in that direction as youth and oftentimes they realize the impact at a later point in life and begin to actively be a representative. Sometimes they take this challenge on headstrong as youth and later in life may decide to step back. What is clear is that most regularly involved and any visible Muslims will, at some point, have this responsibility and do realize that it can be used as a strategy to mitigate the difficulties of Canadian Muslim identity at collective and individual levels.

Identities of Resistance and Reactive Constructions

Experiences of discrimination and alienation can cause reactive identities that demonstrate increased or renewed attachment and affiliation with the identity being alienated. Scholars have demonstrated that religious identities can be reactive when formed to challenge dominant (often negative) perceptions of that religion (Duderijia, 2008; Khan, 2002; Moghissi et al, 2009; Nagra, 2011). In a post 9/11 world, a world in which Islam is demonized and Muslims have become

perpetual suspects and continuously discriminated against and singled out, many have developed reactive identities to being forcibly othered. A strategy that is sometimes (unconsciously and consciously) employed is a re-attachment or stronger sense of being Muslim that is seen in post 9/11 identities. Many demonstrated a firmer identity emerging out of these experiences. Another type of reactive identity that emerges out of this experience is a firmer attachment and expression of being Canadian. Although reactive identities are common in most studies of Muslims, my data showed that if certain aspects of identities were reactive, often, over time, reactive identities mellowed in the demographic of this study. For instance, the narratives in these interviews demonstrated that identities tended to be more strongly reactive at younger ages (perhaps more strict rules around religious boundaries) but over time and involvement in community and society all of the older participants demonstrated more integrated views on religion and society, not feeling strongly at odds with either and demonstrating more desire to change and shift previously place boundaries. Perhaps this was due to the meta-discourse of identity that was occurring at a communal level that these individuals engaged. These were individuals that were not isolated, participated in volunteer and community building activities and were commonly involved in interfaith and bridge-building projects and discourses.

Almas, who grew up in a more cultural than religious household and chose to express more religious choices than her parents in her adult life, explains this type of experience and change,

I grew up knowing that I was different than most people around me. So, a lot of people in that situation may find themselves either wanting to hide their identity or expressing it even more, and I guess I decided that I wanted to express my identity, because at the time when I was – I guess when I started junior high that's when I started getting more into like religious community... My family we weren't necessarily very practicing per se in the sense that we went to the mosque... My parents might have prayed or fasted but it wasn't very apparent to us as kids, and they didn't impose that much on us... I think that being Canadian has made me emphasize my identity more because I, because it's a multicultural place... Being Muslim and being Bengali doesn't mean I can't embrace being Canadian, and being Muslim, Bengali and Canadian doesn't mean I can't acknowledge the fact that I'm female, and that I have certain aspects of that identity as well. So, I think like when you live in a place like Canada where there's so much diversity, like for myself, I felt like I went through phases in my life where parts of my identity were either emphasized or de-emphasized based on what I was going through at the time, and I think only now in my life I'm starting to really feel like things are meshing together and I don't have to feel like they're battling each other. Those aspects, that they actually can enrich, you

know, enrich me if I embrace all of them to the fullest and... just enjoy them, enjoy my identity, I think it's a blessing.

Several of the interviewees demonstrated a phase or period of time in which they felt they had to hold tight to their Muslim identity in reaction to being alienated in some way or another. Most found that public engagement and open-minded representation fulfilled the need to ease the burden of negative associations with the faith aspect of their identities. Many were adamant about expressing and feeling like true and proud Canadians in whatever ways they could. This is also a reactive identity formation; being painted as an outsider often made these individuals more vocal in their attachment and belonging as Canadians.

On reacting to accounts of being othered and expressing the Canadian-ness of her family and herself as well as how it is difficult to understand the othering imposed on Muslims, Alina explains,

I'm like that's not racism, you've never experienced racism, don't even go there! But like I don't know, come Canada Day we make a big deal out of it, you know we go and find something to do, fireworks all that kind of thing, Canada day tattoos on the face, and whatever else. I can't even put into words how much pride I have being Canadian. I work for the Mounties and I kind of... that just adds to it [pride].

Amar, a multiheritage Muslim student, explains, "in the past when people would ask me where I'm from I'd have a very complicated answer and now I just say I'm Canadian and that's it because it's – I mean if you're Canadian—Canada's a very multicultural country and since I'm a multicultural person I felt that that's an appropriate answer."

Overall, the interviewees showed degrees of reactive identities. When observed, reactive identities were negotiations over being 'more Muslim' and/or actively expressing their Canadian-ness. In effect they embraced the different parts of their identities and the results for many of them were a development and expression of grassroots Canadian Muslim identities that were both public and private. Many felt responsible to publically engage the Muslim aspect and therefore be knowledgeable and act as role models while also publically acknowledging their pride in being Canadian, participating in society and finding unique ways to connect and engage the different aspects of identity as a whole.

Social Organization

In a world of highly contested definitions of religion Beyer reflects on religion as one of several functional systems¹⁰⁷ in the contemporary global society and claims that the global religious system has brought about a new model of religion (2006). Modern religion is posed as one of several other function systems in the global society; the capitalist economy, positive law, and academic education being a few other examples. As a functional system, he explains religion as constructing itself in a Luhmannian understanding as based on communication. Beyer goes further to say that social subsystems of these function systems are ways of continuously regenerating certain kinds of boundaries of meaning. These systems can be seen as conceptual parallels to the idea of ‘social groups’ except that they consist of communications rather than people (2006). This understanding of the function system model of religion is helpful in deciphering levels of discourse and their meaning to the larger phenomenon of religion.

According to Jung, who draws on the works of Beyer and Luhmann, in the framework of modern systems theory, organizations are social subsystems on an intermediate level (or the meso level) that draw the micro level up to generalize motivations and specific forms of social action and interaction to a higher level (a level closer to a function system) (Jung, 2014: 31). Organizations are situated between social interactions and functional systems; as such they can cut across other systems and boundaries.

A religious organization can draw economic concerns through a religious system by colonizing their specific communication through religious vocabulary and drawing it into the economic function system. A more direct example would be that a Muslim organization in Canada can draw the interaction of its members into a higher level of communication and thereby accessible to larger function systems of nation, law or economy by drawing the social issue (interaction) at the micro level up and into the function system of religion by using vocabulary of that function system. Jung

¹⁰⁷ At what Jung refers to as the meta level (2014).

explains that with face-to-face relations, interaction systems can only focus on one theme at a time thereby limiting the coordination and effects of social structures. Social organizations, instead, are based on rules and agreements through membership that establishes degrees of social boundaries thereby establishing communications that deal with resources and social responsibilities (2014: 31). Beyer explains that organizations can vary widely, be very complex, adapt to an infinite variety of purposes and cut across systemic boundaries that would otherwise stunt communications (2006: 51-52). Religious organizations such as temples, mosques, student groups, social work organizations, charitable foundations, youth clubs, and all the other types, give religion recursive presence; they shape communication (Beyer, 2006: 107). Through the organization, religious discourse at the level of social interactions can also enter realms we may see as secular, it becomes bureaucratized, develops membership structures and religious interpretations can be individualized (Jung, 2014: 31).

In the exploration of Canadian Muslim identity in Winnipeg it became obvious very early on that the interactions and communications of identity I was seeing and hearing at the micro level of the individuals were also echoing at a collective level of social movement and, above that, at the organized level were being drawn into higher levels of communication such as government, nation and economy. It is then no surprise that the organization plays a large part in identity formation for these individuals. However, these individuals also play a part in constructing a larger discourse on Canadian Muslim identity by their engagement through organization(s). This section explores the involvement and interactions of the demographic under study with organizations in navigating Canadian Muslim identity.

Through participant observation I was able to discover several types of ‘religious’ organizations important in this demographic at helping to aid, develop, express and navigate Canadian Muslim identity. The purest form of ‘religious’ organization that I came across was the *halaqas* or organized learning circle which are considered a place to gain and discuss religious knowledge. They were often, but not always, gender segregated and may have operated at familial levels or cross-community levels. Their influence in identity construction was significant considering

the personal nature of these learning circles. They were however often a first point of contact for youth with questions and needs to discuss questions of religion and identity. *Halaqa* groups often had a leader or elder of some sort that was tied into larger religious and social organizations and networks who could bring the discourses from this micro level into higher levels of organization in which the concerns and issues would be noticed and discussed.

Alina explains that her upbringing stressed religion over culture and that *halaqa* learning groups (which can be formally organized as well as less formal) were a key way in which she learned her religion. She said that growing up her parents regularly sent her to weekend Islamic school and *halaqas* groups and later to a full time Islamic school and that even as an adult she attended *halaqas* where she was given readings and stories and would have a chance to question religious rules and practices and be given more information by the *halaqa* elder. As an adult she began running her own *halaqa* group for the youth girls in the community and it eventually turned into a large religious and social gathering on Friday nights for the girls as they grew older. It became both a religious learning circle and a social interaction for these young girls who may otherwise have strict rules around going out on Friday nights. At the level of organization it cut across more stern boundaries set by religious families by the religious language it was posed in and it offered a social outlet for the girls where they engaged areas of religion but also other local cultural forms.

Abdullah, an adult in his 20s, explains,

I think one of my big mentors is Sheikh Ismael. I attend a *halaqa* with him every week and he's definitely someone who I would ask if I had an issue or a specific case that I had questions about. I'd definitely ask him just because I think he's, he has the Islamic knowledge to give me the Islamic perspective, but at the same time he understands the Canadian context as well in terms of he was a student here. He was involved with MSA and things like that so he's faced similar things and helped other people with similar problems and yeah, I think having him as a resource is really, it's a plus that I have him to talk to and ask him questions like that.

The *halaqas* become not only a place of religious communication but can cut across and touch on communications of economy, academics, and so forth through the discourses that arise in them and the actions and decisions their attendees take forward. It therefore becomes an important strategy

for Muslim youth living in a non-Muslim society to figure out how to navigate the complex intertwining of religion throughout their lives and society.

Anisa's experiences with *halaqas* were also positive and helped in identity navigations by drawing religion into other aspects of life. She disclosed,

It was really good like we — there was usually a small group of us maybe 6 or 7 and we had a lot of debates and a lot of brain teaser type exercise and — and you know when we used to have *halaqas* and all that were more interactive. Like brother Hussan, he was a teacher and his style was very interactive, we'd have little workshops; we'd go into little groups and discuss issues and then one person from the group would talk to the whole group to represent their own, so it was very good. It was a good opportunity to discuss things and to talk, to express your voice... [everyone was] probably within like 5 to 10 years either, like maybe older than me or, it was a large range of ages, but kind of like teenage or early university... Then I also attended the more intensive retreat type sessions. Like that one month long retreat, we also had this one month long, it was called Dawah Academy. It was in the early 90s and a lot of scholars from different parts of the world came and there was about 30 or so of us attending this. It was an intensive. So I attended like 2 of these types of things and it was just an opportunity to learn more details about religion, history, jurisprudence... these kinds of things, and also an opportunity to engage with other Muslims my own age and from different places like, throughout Canada and America.

This Dawah Academy also had entertainment aspects where one of the interviewees recalled an out-of-town attendee singing his own rendition of the Red Hot Chili Peppers *Under the Bridge*. It was, as Anisa later discussed, an experience not unlike the ISNA conferences across North America that many Winnipeg Muslims began to regularly attend in the 1990s and which local religious conference experiences were often modelled on: religion with a twist of North American culture. Later many also attended the Revival of the Islamic Spirit (RIS) conference in Toronto which was similarly modelled as a religious conference but particularly structured to stimulate sessions on how to be Muslim and Canadian. These *halaqas* and conferences (local, national and North America-wide) became very important in identity constructions and navigations for 1.5 and 2nd generation Muslims in Winnipeg who grew up in the 1990s until present day. Anisa explained that this was partly because of how isolated Winnipeg was (and is) and how once something became normal it stuck (like the particular style of 'dressing Muslim' involving the long *jilbaab* and fully covered hijab that one of the interviewees explains as a norm in the late 90s for young Muslim women in Winnipeg). Going to these conferences and seeing the different ways of being Muslim was important

in stimulating change and conversations that helped the community and its members grow and adapt to new needs.

Turning from the learning circle type of social organization we can look to the more formal organizations, the most pertinent and prominent of which that are observed in this study are described in the history introduction chapter to this project and have been discussed throughout. Here I will more particularly discuss some of them as they were engaged by the participants. The organizations are of several types and are not limited to the following descriptions which may at times also criss-cross: the mosque committees, the 'religious' activities committees, youth groups, the social service organizations, education and the activism groups. Below I will discuss some of the pointed discussions on involvement in and with organizations and follow this with a broader perspective to understand the collective level (the intermediate system or meso level).

One of the interviewees discusses their early experiences with the mosque,

I think, for me, I-it's been a really positive experience, just because it influences a person's outlook... I mean... yea, I like being around a variety of people. I think it's more enriching. It makes us more enriched as human beings if we are exposed to more, and I think attending the mosque, when I started going to the mosque, it was kind of a unique experience, because as a kid we were – our social network was so about being cultural and at school it was all just white people (laughs). I guess, you know, so it was different groups, but it was all the same people in one group, but when we went to the mosque it was actually more diverse. So, we were exposed to, you know, Pakistani families, families from different countries in Africa, families from different countries in the Middle East, North Africa, Asia, South East Asia.

One interviewee discussed how the mosque was actually an extended family to them and their siblings and helped them develop social as well as religious network outside their parents' 'dysfunctional' home. Similarly another interviewee explained that as he and his nuclear family moved far from their extended family, the Winnipeg Muslim community quickly became like their extended family and has remained as such. For many of those who grew up in the community when it was smaller, and the when the larger mosques were not built, the community did feel like a second home; with sleepovers in the mosque, bake sales, dinners and many other family oriented social events occurring. It is how many met their close friends and learned how other Muslims were acting and interacting in larger society.

Then there are the organizations that oversee the mosque and community activities. When asked how involvement in Muslim organizations related to the mosque was for Alia she said,

Well for example... I was an MIA trustee and my role got switched up. Now I'm an MIA... I don't even remember the title of it to be honest with you... It's something about maintaining um making sure that elections happen properly and the new executives like fall (pause), adhere to the rules and etc. etc. It got changed and I wasn't even aware because I didn't notice (pause), I didn't go to a key meeting where all this was explained. And I feel like if I was amongst, 'cause [sic] mostly its men in our community that do community stuff, so if I socialized more amongst the men I think I would have been more clued in but umm that didn't happen. So, I feel like in generally I, I, am one of the few in the community to have actual role like a role a voted in role in our community... Right now there's no other women [sic] like in MIA as a trustee or an executive or anything so I'm pleased that I have a position but I feel that it's hard for me to keep up.

For Alina, her status as a woman was key in her participation in the organization. She felt somewhat marginalized, but as she said, there were not many women in her types of positions at present. As a result, her voice and her ability to relay information to and from other women was important in communication and changes. She further acknowledged that it is through social interactions that people understand one another and higher level discourses like stereotypes and stigmas are changed and altered. She explained.

CMLI... it's an opportunity for like, Um, our people in our community to have discussions and growth with people among... with other faiths and cultural communities.... because I think people understand their humanities through interactions so if you're not interacting then it's easy to just label people and have stigmas against people.

One of the observations I made in my participant observation is the importance of volunteerism in this community. Volunteerism and later activism became evident as pillars for those involved in the community. It was a norm for all of the interview participants in one respect or another. Many of them went through some period in their lives (past or present) in which they were avid volunteers and participated in activism events that interested them. It quickly became obvious that this was a common strategy and part of 1.5 and 2nd generation identity as grassroots Canadian Muslims in Winnipeg. They volunteered in the community for religious and social events and often eventually branched into bridge building activities with other faith, cultural and purpose-based organizations. Their initial introduction into volunteerism came through their own participation in day camps, workshops and the like. Here frequent attendees were often later drawn into volunteering at the same

or similar events and programs. From there they may choose or be further drawn into other voluntary positions. The convert of the interviewees joked that once you volunteered it was difficult to get out. Despite the drain that some of them felt about volunteering at some times, most touted volunteering as very important to their social networks, religious and cultural learning and navigation and personal identity constructions. Many went on to become mentors themselves to pass on the spirit of volunteerism and activism to the younger community members.

On the importance of volunteering to his identity Amar explains,

Like volunteer work, so I have lots of friends from different countries. For example, in Syria and Lebanon, and they say this concept of volunteering doesn't even exist over there. Volunteering in Canada, like I've been volunteering since I was in grade 8, and volunteering is helpful or it's a significant part of my identity because through volunteering I connected with these different communities. It was through volunteering that I connected with the Metis community at first about 5 years ago, and it was through volunteering that I became a more, I don't know if you want to say a significant individual, but I became more of a 'somebody' who volunteers, is very active in the Muslim community as well, as well in general Canadian community.

Alia stresses that volunteering and social organization at the religious level helped her realize her capacities and grow as person as well as exposing her to a spectrum of diversity she was previously unaware of. She explains about her involvement,

The community... I think I'm pretty multicultural. I mean that's one of the things I loved about growing up in Winnipeg. Like one of my best friends was Bosnian another one was Pakistani another one was... [part] Filipino, another one was this and that... I feel like identity-wise I got a good spectrum and I enjoyed that vibrancy and those differences.

On the impact of volunteering through social and religious community organizations she divulged,

If I hadn't have had the opportunities to get as involved as I did, I wouldn't have known my own strength. Because, I'm not sure where else I would have had those opportunities to take leadership roles and how to navigate them. I made mistakes, don't get me wrong, but I don't know where else I would have had that chance.

Amna likewise found that volunteering taught her about herself and what kind of person she wanted to be. She found that volunteering taught her to give back and to be

An upright person... just person, you know, someone who cares about the world around them... that was a big part of what we were doing. Working for other people, i.e. it was not a question when I was going to camp and then I automatically transitioned into helping to plan those camps and other activities for other young people umm because that's what we did. We just, you know, you can't just help yourself you have to help the community as well. So I think that that's something that I value of myself.

Abdullah explains,

You'll see 10 year old or 11 year old kids and be like, 'I was that age at one point,' and now you know I am doing what my elders were doing, but I'd say a big part of my involvement was with those things. But I think the reason why I stayed is because the people who were there as the mentors... I mean I don't think I would have gone year after year if I didn't enjoy it and I think I enjoyed it because the people who were there were good at what they were doing. And then at the end of the day, I feel like you have to kind of give back because I received that benefit, so I have to pay it forward to the next generation... I've carried on with a lot of them. They'll all need people for succession of who's going to help out next.

When asked about thoughts on community and being involved one of the participants, a

Muslim filmmaker, explains,

I think the value in at least having some sense of community is that it creates in an individual, a sort of a social consciousness, you know? Like, a feeling of, you know, people outside of your own self and your own family; a feeling of responsibility; a feeling of togetherness; a feeling of camaraderie. Like a project I worked on, [about the] mosque, it really made me think about that. Like why, why do people want to have a space that they can see each other every day? Why do they want that? It's just, it's nice, to get together with other people. Its part of our nature, you know?

This reflection is interesting in that it the participant recognizes that through social organization the individual is tied to a larger consciousness or communication. Abdullah reflects on belonging to an identifiable organized community,

I think there are advantages and disadvantages... some people still don't know very much about Muslims and they might have preconceived notions or assumptions just by hearing that you're Muslim. But, at the same time I think it's beneficial because like I said... you're automatically by being Muslim, I think you're somewhat of an ambassador or representative and like I said it's intimidating and there's responsibility, but having that responsibility can help improve people's perception. Having that pressure being [a] representative, okay well if someone knows I'm Muslim, then they take their vision or example of what Muslim culture or Muslim identity is based on me, if I'm the only Muslim they know. So, it kind of forces us to know yourself, so say someone who's not Muslim or from the general community asks you a question about, okay, 'why do you fast?' or 'why do you do this?' Someone else who may live in a Muslim majority country might never have to answer that question.

These discourses of religion get tied into conversations about identity, economics, poverty, capitalism and so forth through the communications at the level of social organization. Abdullah further reflects on inter community discourses and bridge building interactions, "and that's nice because I feel like that's a greater Winnipeg thing rather than just a Muslim community."

These reflections are not an uncommon among the Muslims of Winnipeg. Many confess that growing up in the 90s in a small community it was community organization and involvement through organization that gave them sense of purpose that may have initially stemmed from a religious place

but that grew to include many aspects of social responsibility and involvement including prominent and background systems in society. For instance, there exist organizations in this community directed through religion to touch on the capitalist economy such as the Canadian Islamic Chamber of Commerce. Though this organization is meant to tie Muslims into the economy it also touches on issues of foreign accreditation and therefore academics and trade education by professing to work with Muslims who need assistance being successfully incorporated into Canada's economic sector. Though it is not phrased as such, the existence of these organized efforts shows the awareness of the reach of social organization for religious minorities in Canada.

My observations and data show that 1.5 and 2nd generation Muslims do, actively and passively, utilize social organization, often stemming from a place or rhetoric of religion or religious identity, to cross boundaries and embed themselves in the fabric of Winnipeg and further tie themselves as persons and as a community into the systems and discourses of Canada, thereby creating a uniquely Canadian Muslim identity and source from which to draw and in which to contribute.

They find unique ways to insert themselves into the being of the city and the nation by strategically creating and functioning within a spectrum of social organizations that cater to their needs on individual and communal levels and across parallel function systems. They may use avenues like CMLI to instigate cross-community communications and foster camaraderie with their fellow Canadians. For example the bonds they have created with the Aboriginal, Mennonite and Japanese communities in Winnipeg also indicate a unique tie to the locale and demographics of the particular location in Canada they exist in. By their recognizable involvement in the Muslim community and 'Muslim' organizations they are further drawn into other organized form of discourse and action in the city such as the RCMP diversity board, Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties, the Social Planning Council, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority diversity board, and even church poverty and activity boards. They may be initially drawn to fill diversity quotas but have proven active and productive members of these boards, thereby embedding themselves as productive and contributing Canadians. One example of social organization that received media attention and

demonstrated the particularity of a grassroots Canadian Muslim identity in Winnipeg is the involvement of Muslim organizations in sandbagging efforts in the flood season for the province. Though they did not have to say much about it, the mere action of Muslims organizing to provide support and labour in sandbagging efforts was interesting enough for the media to choose to report on it, thereby tying into a larger discourse on minorities in Canada and the concept of ‘foreignness’. Another example can be seen by the Zubaidah Tallab Foundation’s efforts at taking food to the Attawapiskat First Nation in Ontario when they were made aware of the poverty conditions existing there¹⁰⁸. While these forms of social organization (formal and informal) may be founded in religious rhetoric they have cut across boundaries and communication to tie into a local and national rhetoric and needs to embed this community and these individuals to their locale and to their nation. The particular project participants seem to recognize the power, effect and importance of organization at the level of personal and communal identity as well as national ties.

On the importance of the participation of 1.5 and 2nd generation Muslims in organized social activity and discourse Amna reflects,

Definitely, I think that it would important for people to know about Canadian Muslims because mostly what people, if they know about Muslims anyway, this is what I gather from my interactions with umm the wider Canadian society, that a lot of people only know of Muslims as a foreign body or foreign group of people with, you know, values and um cultural practices that are just, you know, almost diametrically opposed or something. That’s what people think umm and it just helps, I think, to have a little bit of a break between the immigrant community, just wider Muslim world, and Canadians in general and I think Canadian Muslims can do that; very easily. They just naturally do that because of who they are... .. speak up for, you know, people who are oppressed or ummm who don’t have a voice umm so I try and you know even vote that way or ummm you know bring up those kind of issues or whatever.

Summed up in the words of an interviewee, “I think that is the only way you are going to get sort of acceptance, not acceptance, mutual respect with the Muslim community and the greater community is if you support each other.”

These generations of Muslims in Canada are in fact not passive products of transnational exposures as many may reason; they are actors in Canadian society and effectively so through social organization. Here their shape may differ from similarly labelled demographics abroad. Due to the

¹⁰⁸ Winnipeg Free Press, 2013.

nature of society and system they must create organizations¹⁰⁹, associations, offer volunteer efforts, integration programs, faith-based organizations, rights discourses, engage the economy and media all the while also acting in mainstream organizations, political life and civic duties.

Social Movement

Beyer explains that a Luhmannian approach to social subdivisions begins with communications (2006: 36). Along with Luhmann's analyses of social interactions, social organizations and societal systems Beyer adds a fourth, social movements. Regarding the function system of modern religion, these are four ways that religion may gain form in contemporary society (Ibid).

Social movements are not parallel to function systems or organizations they are similar and yet different to both. Like function systems they are recursively structured around particular issues and elements that inform them but not particularly on membership. Like organizations however, they are highly adaptable in purpose, relatively easily generated and can begin and end individually without significantly altering society in a fundamental way (2006: 52).

Social movements are recursive; the elements that constitute this recursiveness are communicative. Social movements must have a discourse, they must have a self-narrative, they must have and mobilize resources and the mobilizations will be typical of the movement (protest communications like marches and demonstrations for example)¹¹⁰. In addition to these communicative elements they may also and usually do have social movement organizations to centre and express themselves in a manner not unlike function systems. They are often, but not always movements of protest and centre on issues not dealt with elsewhere. They can crystallize matters of other systems that are not dealt with by those systems due to structure (2006). They must first make their issue real then mobilize in order to thematize the issue as a problem needing solution in and

¹⁰⁹ In order to be recognized or to have monetary transactions they need to employ certain legal avenues and formalize religious organizations.

¹¹⁰ For example the grassroots women's piety movement in the mosques of Cairo studied by Saba Mahmoud (2005).

outside the realm of the movement¹¹¹ in other societal systems (Ibid). In this way their reach extends that of the function system even though they may arise as a way to challenge and/or reproduce the function system.

Despite their recursiveness, social movements are characterized by amorphousness.¹¹² They exist through mobilizing communications particular to their recursive needs and when the mobilization of these communications ends so does the movement stop to exist (2006: 52-53). Beyer explains that social movements are socio-structural equivalents to Weber's charismatic authority, inherently evanescent and subject to eventual routinization (Ibid). According to Beyer, religious social movements profile religion and give it social visibility but may not generate much religious communication (2006: 109). Jung explains that social movements articulate religion to achieve social change in new ways (Jung, 2014: 124). Muslim based social movements reinterpret the concepts of individual improvement and social responsibility in an Islamic framework. It is, however, also possible that the social movement's constitutive concerns could be transposed in its entirety onto a completely different communicative form (political regulatory, educational curricula, legal judgements or economic production for some examples) thereby making them essentially successful (2006: 53).

While Jung characterizes social movements hovering somewhere at the meso level of social subdivisions, Beyer's more encompassing view puts social movements at all levels and crossing all sorts of boundaries. In this way we can more thoroughly understand the reach and interactions of social movements as well as the power they may have to change and shape the function systems in which they arise.

A quick glance at the Winnipeg Muslims Facebook page will show that demonstrations, protests, petitions, and similar protest type communications are not infrequent in this community and

¹¹¹ An example is the place of women and the movement to question the rhetoric about women in modern Islamic revival who themselves accept or fall into the dominant patriarchal traditional rhetoric. Work discussing this is done by Jouili who examines the rhetoric around and by women in modern Islamic revival discourse (2011).

¹¹² For instance an amorphous movement of un-veiling occurs across Muslim populations. Though it is amorphous in character, there is still a current of social movement there (see for instance the work of Fadil which examines the practice of un- and not veiling to make sense of this practice and to examine the rhetoric, 2011).

many centres around foreign oppression and Canada's hand or place in these events and/or their aid to those perceived as victims. Two examples of more recent and ongoing issues that were mobilized in demonstrations were the catastrophic situation in Syria and the ongoing occupation of Palestine. In addition the 2014 deaths of two police officers in Ontario and Quebec were also followed by demonstrations condemning this type of 'jihadist' mentality attack. Domestic and local issues also employ social movements to bring voice to their matters. One example is the hijab discourse around potential bans in Quebec which generated extensive debates related to the proposed Charter of Values. Several forums of protest were organized to demonstrate concern and petition the Canadian governing system to bar the prejudiced proposed bans from being upheld. This type of demonstrative communication within a social movement is not new in this community either. They have been organizing rallies at the Legislative Building in support of different causes and issues for decades. These span generations, religious categories, age, gender and a plethora of other factor.

Conclusions

This chapter unpacked the data to explore strategies of identity navigation. The research revealed interesting strategies for navigating perceptions, expectations and social spaces of identity for Canadian Muslims. I begin with an observation that I came across in the majority of the interviews- that of desensitization towards discrimination and othering. Desensitization came across as an underplaying or ignoring of being stared at, being rudely addressed or publically engaged in an unwelcomed manner. Often these public interactions of perceivably discriminatory nature were shrugged off as ignorance and explained as not being taken personally. Sometimes they were shown to be forgotten until occasion arose that they were given opportunity to talk about discrimination experiences. These recollections were sometimes framed as Islamophobia, sometimes as ignorance and sometimes as generalized racism. Though on a social level they can downplay these experiences- perhaps to alleviate alienation- on a personal level they remain negative but also 'normal'

experiences expressed by many second and 1.5 generation Canadian Muslims. Desensitization is one way to navigate these experiences pertaining to visible or noticeable difference.

Humour also came across as a popular thread in the interviews and general participant observation. It was a common way to discuss past experiences of discrimination, to talk about feelings of otherness and to break boundaries and make social bonds. It was a bridge building tool to diffuse awkward situations and pass information along that may have sensitive feelings attached to it. Humour was expressed as one of the easiest tools to deal with otherness and discrimination.

Another common strategy in identity navigation that emerged in the interviews was to appear more “Canadian”. In youth this seemed to imply a desire to fit in by doing what their peers were doing but as these individuals matured they explained it as attempts to appear less foreign; to reduce the otherness that often comes with being a practicing Muslim, which can be appearance, behaviour or just simply someone knowing this status. This attempt to appear more “Canadian” was done in different ways. Some chose to dress in a more mainstream fashion (give up the *abaya* (gown) if they had worn it, or perhaps choose to wear more trendy clothes, style their hijab more fashionably, etc.). Some chose more shocking ways to express that they were ‘just like other Canadians’ by joking in unexpected manners, using colloquialisms, even cussing to break social awkwardness. A few of the interviewees simply did not disclose that they were Muslim, say for instance at their workplace, in order to forego the perceptions and expectations. Many chose to forego more conservative gender norms or restrictions. Others chose to go a step further and name their children with less “foreign sounding” names. Though the ways varied, most of the interviewees expressed consciously making a decision about their place as Canadian Muslim and choosing to appear more like their non-Muslim counterparts which to them meant appearing less perceivably foreign. The way this was conceptualized was different with age as it seems in younger years people might feel a dual identity while many expressed that with age their views on the ‘correctness’ of religious issues and choices mellowed and they no longer felt a duality and felt more at ease in their hybrid choices.

Negotiation between different aspects of identity then turns to another strategy identified during the interviews; that of seeking information for informed decisions. This was a common strategy for the interviewees. Whether or not the information gathered was used differed, but most expressed that they wanted to have multiple sources of information about religious issues before deciding if they wanted to practice something, abandon a practice, or adjust a practice. Many explained that they chose to seek knowledge in the Qur'an and Islamic tradition, counter this with lived experience of an elder, confidante, family or friend and make a decision that suited them from the different sources of information. None of the interviewees demonstrated a propensity to go with religious information point blank but often sought the experience of lived religion from someone they trusted to make an informed decision that worked with their lifestyle choices. Sometimes these were personal information seeking experiences but often there were many opportunities for group experience such as *halaqas* or conferences where they could ask questions, debate difficult topics and seek information from their peers and those who may have already had to grapple with the topics they were thinking about. It seems to me, by engaging the data, that information seeking to make informed decisions was not just common but very important to these Canadian Muslims. Many expressed not being able to just accept information but wanting to question, ponder on, and then decide if they were going to take the information and how to adjust it to suit their life and worldview.

A common occurrence for those second and 1.5 generation Canadian Muslims that are involved in a community to some degree is to eventually find themselves in the position of representative. This is partly because of the small community character of Winnipeg Muslims and the demand for resources. If you are involved in the community to some degree, eventually, the interviewees explained, people will be drawn to you for information and advice and this can grow and you can be seen as a role model and representative. The experience is similar outside the community where many times a Canadian Muslim may be the only Muslim available and accessible- say for instance in a workplace or classroom- and in the multicultural mosaic we live in often teachers, bosses or even colleagues will come to them for clarification and questions they have.

Those that found themselves in this position say that while it helped them define and shape their own identities but it also became somewhat burdensome at times. Many who were informal and formal representatives explained it as ‘wearing Islam on your sleeves’. That if you were identifiable as a Muslim where you engaged with other people eventually you would find yourself having to have answers and therefore looking to find answers to those questions. As a result people would see you as a role model of sorts and there was a certain pressure that came with this. Many had at one time felt the burden of these roles and later stepped away. In cases of informal representation, with colleagues or even friends for example, some, interestingly, admitted that in these informal roles they loved to break stereotypes and prove perceptions of Muslims wrong and shock people into thinking. This could be as simple as breaking gender norms that were expected of Muslims; for example, breaking the stereotype of a super pious hijab-wearing woman by swearing. But, not shockingly, in formal representative roles they took on a more clean slate and ideal Muslim role which could become tiresome after repeatedly being put in this role. Most of the interviewees felt the responsibility of being a representative and some also experienced a period as a formal representative in the community which they later stepped away from in order to build their own lives away from judgement and being a constant role model.

In the next portion of data analysis I discussed reactive and resistant identities. There is a body of literature on this topic as the research references show. However, I found that a great deal of my data demonstrated that identity can be a reaction to or resistance to certain social discourses or expectations. Here I briefly discussed the common threads of resistance and reaction that emerged in the data but this strategy could be employed towards many other discourses and systemic implements in a larger, or different, study.

Social organization and social movement took up the remainder of the strategies chapter. Social organization proved a major player in the negotiations of identity at a level above the individual as well as at the individual level. What I mean is that it was a well-utilized tool in bringing identity issues and discourses at the level of the individual to a more communal and often societal

level. Reversely, social organization(s) offered variety for engagement and consumption which could factor into identity. Social organization is a major factor in the identity negotiations and discourses of Canadian Muslims. It served as a platform and tool to shape, mould and remould identity in the community, in larger social discourses, and at the level of the individual by offering a bridge to meta-level function systems. In this section I discussed some of the ways social organization(s) emerged in the data by exploring the ways the literature and the participants frame and conceptualize encounters, observations, and involvements with social organizations in Canadian Muslim identity journeys. This lead me to a more theoretical discussion on social movements, which I did not have the opportunity to explore in great depth in my interviews, but have made some observations that were important to unpack in the scope of Canadian Muslim identity in Winnipeg as social movements did prove a part of the identity experience and construction.

The preceding has discussed some of the important and central strategies the research data made clear. These strategies are employed at the level of the individual and collective. They are: desensitization; humour; 'fitting in'; information and decision making; being a representative; identities of resistance; social organization; and social movement. The next chapter of the data analysis discusses grassroots Canadian Muslims identity for the demographic of study.

CHAPTER 6 DATA ANALYSIS

GRASSROOTS CANADIAN MUSLIM IDENTITY IN WINNIPEG

In Orsi's book *Gods of the city: Religion and the American urban landscape* (1999), he argues the importance of locale in identity constructions. Orsi explains that cities shape their people and people shape their cities by acting on its places and spaces to make meaning and thereby transforming their cities (1999). For Winnipeg Muslims this is precisely what I have found; locale plays a large part in belonging and identity navigations. Essentially, the experience, identities, movements and the communities of Muslims in one city will differ from those in another. Large metropolis centres with high proportions of Muslims will be different than the smaller metropolises like Winnipeg. The prairie cities will differ from the Maritimes and the cold north will differ from the warmer west coast.

The Canadian Muslims in this study do not hold religion in opposition to being Canadian but demonstrate embedded grassroots Canadian Muslim identity tied to their prairie locale. They expect their rights and freedoms, as embedded in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Multiculturalism policy and programs, and value of minorities' contributions to this nation, to be on-par with those of all other Canadians. They express that in practice this is not always the case, but still hope for the best. They express gratitude and pride in their experience and freedoms as members of this nation and speak out in activism when their rights and the rights of others are withheld. They participate in community and nation building projects and discourses. They contribute to economy, culture and societal programs even when and where systemic and societal barriers exist. They build bridges between communities, foster dialogues to expand inter-cultural bonds and form uniquely Canadian and local identities and communities.

Canadian Muslim identity is a relatively new concept. This is in part due to the fact that lasting Muslim settlement in Canada is a fairly new phenomenon, as outlined in the historical introduction to this thesis project. In conceptualizing a local manifestation of Canadian Muslim identity I examined

the project data for expressions and actions that had ties to concepts of generalized Canadian Muslim identity as well as unique and local expressions. Below I will discuss some of the narratives and findings.

Muslim expressions of Islam take many forms around the world and differ from country to country, region to region, city to city, community to community and individual to individual. Canadian Muslim expressions of identity are unique in the spectrum of Muslim populations because of the histories of Muslims in Canada, their geographic settlements, the particular landscapes of Canada and demographics of existing Canadian populations as well as the prevailing social culture of the nation's peoples. On the importance of Canada shaping Muslim identity one of the participants explains, "I think being in Canada definitely has shaped who I have become. Because of the things that, you know, the rights and the freedoms I have as a Canadian citizen, and things that are guaranteed to me in the charter, and things like that. Of course it has."

In addition to the freedoms and protections on diversity that have become a part of Canadian policies and culture, most participants expressed an appreciation for the opportunities that being a Canadian offered them. These ranged from freedom of belief to access to health care and, further, to economics and education. When asked what being Canadian meant Anila expressed,

I was born and raised in Canada and I love every part of being Canadian... it plays a huge role in my life... being Canadian, being born in Canada. I feel like I have a lot of opportunities that I probably wouldn't have had [had] I come from, you know, my parents country of origin... I'm obviously grateful that I live here... I take advantage of everything that I can. Being Canadian means freedom of speech and... things like that. I don't ever feel that I am... that the country hinders on my capabilities of sort of doing what I want... I just think there was more of an appreciation and tolerance of others in Canada. To an extent; not including Quebec¹¹³ of course. I do think that people are more tolerant and willing to embrace other cultures and even religions in Canada than they would in... maybe they wouldn't in other countries.

Another participant reflects on being Canadian,

You know you are really a part of the Canadian identity and you are more Canadian than you think... I think one of the things I kind of hold as being a Canadian value that does affect the way I think about things is the more, umm, cooperative... social cooperation that we have in Canada through different institutions... you know with public access to healthcare and umm pension and the way our tax system works... It goes back to what I said before, if we want to grow as a society as Canada then we need that sharing umm because we're growing... I don't think we can get to where we want to get to unless people

¹¹³ I believe the interviewee was referencing recent controversies over the veil and Muslims in Quebec that were also mentioned earlier in this thesis.

are cooperating to solve certain problems or to advance Canadian society and I think the best way to do so is through co-operation because of the diversity and how much further we get with diverse [opinions].

Most of the interviewees, at some point in their interviews expressed similar sentiments of gratitude for their Canadian experiences, freedoms and opportunities. Many of them had experienced the cultures and societies of their parents' countries of origin and while they felt a cultural appreciation for their heritage, they stressed gratitude and appreciation for their Canadian membership; specifically that they were raised in Canada with unique opportunities, freedoms and diversity that other countries may not have. They also expressed the importance of diversity and multicultural experience in Canada. Diversity in Canada was conceptualized as different from the other 'Western' nations, wider in a sense: more open, more tolerant, with more dialogue and more exchange.

In reflecting on Canadian Muslim identity Asif says,

There is a Canadian Muslim identity. Whether it's in comparison to, I guess, the Canadian identity that's not Muslim or a Muslim identity that's not Canadian. What I mean by that, I guess, [is that] Muslims are all over the world and every group of Muslims has their own unique identity... Canadians, definitely Muslims that are here in Canada, definitely have ways of practicing religion that are quite different than other places in the world and it's very unique in the sense that it's new... so it's definitely going through a lot of growing pains and exciting times as well... and then again it's a new cultural group in Canada and it's a unique cultural group in the sense that its very... it's religious and that religious group crosses so many cultural backgrounds that it's a matrix I guess of what it means to be a Canadian Muslim... So it's really neat because it's just a matrix really of what it means to be Canadian Muslim. It's very different, I guess, from non-Muslim society where I think the lot of cultural groups identify themselves in a more homogenous way, and religious groups as well. You know there's a lot of minority religious groups that are also kind of draw along the lines of ethnicity, so Sikhs for example. Sikhism is a religion and it only exists in India and it only exists in the province of Punjab, so it's very unique and very easy to identify cultural aspects... I guess Christianity is something similar to Islam in that there is that matrix aspect I guess. But yea, so that's very unique with Muslims and I guess also Christians too.

Asif further explains how Canadian Muslim identity differs from other kinds of Muslim identity experiences and the peculiarity of the newness of this identity:

I think we lack the cultural traditions that other, that a Muslim from somewhere else might have. What I mean by that is I guess there's certain things that lets say that a Muslim from Senegal he will practice Islam in a certain way because his forefathers have practiced Islam in that way for a thousand years and for that person Islam is what his father and mother and great grandfather were doing and their religious aspect is sort of preserved in that tradition whereas we don't have that tradition... then there's this conflict within that identity of what it means to be Muslim. Between those different cultural aspects you have people who want to reinvent what it means to be Muslim here so there's a lot of traditional things, culturally traditional things, that are thrown out and they try to get back to, I guess, what they perceive in their mind as fundamental ideas of what it means to be Muslim that are universal. So they'll start from those universalities and then try to build something from that. And I think that happens a lot... I think

there is [sic] definitely aspects where things do need to be manipulated. Cultural traditions do need to be changed or adapted to North America, but I think that a blanket perspective that we start by our basic framework is (pause), well if something is traditional we throw it aside and make up our own is the wrong aspect to do it. I think that if we were to rather accept everyone's tradition as being an acceptable way of practicing Islam and then go through that and weed out of that, I think that would be a lot easier. Or not easier sorry, it would be a lot healthier and a lot more beneficial.

Asif demonstrates a very real flexibility in hybrid Canadian identities that has often been overlooked in favour of a more black and white separation of hybrid parts. It is easy to pit the Muslim part of identity against the Canadian part to try and separate the two to study and make meaning. In doing this one would overlook the fluidity in Muslim-ness, the fluidity in Canadian-ness and the interesting negotiations and flow that concurrently occur between the two. Canadian Muslim identity is of multiheritage, multi-history, varied social factors and new circumstances. It is full of opportunity. It is grassroots and varies from individual to individual but holds a sense of centre in being Canadian and being Muslim together. There is a certain commitment to "Canadian Muslim" and to being Canadian and Muslim; this identity is flexible, adaptable, negotiated and filled with varieties and spectrums; it is new, grassroots, and full of potential. What Asif describes here is precisely the crux of Canadian Muslim identity; that it is in-flux, evolving, multifaceted and is not one against the other or superseding the other but the many aspects interweaving and forming a whole. He makes a valid point that throwing away tradition may be unhealthy and so what we see in Canadian Muslim identity is adapting tradition, making choices and sometimes new traditions. For instance, though one of the participants eats halal on a day-to-day basis, she amends this practice in travel and this has become a sort of tradition for her family. Another example can be seen in the way hijab is being modified to embrace trendy styles that make Muslim women feel more embedded in their Canadian and Muslim selves. The examples are plenty, but the point is that Canadian Muslim identity is a grassroots movement with many experiences, experiments, choices and practices incorporated into it.

The Muslim population in Canada is quite expansive in its diversity. Though populations have, over the course of settlement, developed history in certain areas, the overall population contains more diversity than most Muslim majority countries would. In addition to this, despite concentrating in the

large metropolises, the population of Canada is quite spread out. For this reason regional variances are important to note in identity constructions. The spectrum of choices and negotiations are heavily influenced by the choices, opportunities, restrictions and social atmosphere of the locale where one spends their years.

This research shows that Muslims in Winnipeg do not just consider themselves Muslims in Canada but specifically identify as Canadian Muslims and further as Muslims of Manitoba. They hold pride in their unique identity as Winnipeg Muslims and in their particular local experience. They value the experience of having developed and matured in the slowly growing mosaic of Winnipeg with feelings of unity and attachment to their local environment and the grassroots culture of Winnipeg. They express pride at having survived many impossibly cold winters with snowstorms and sub-zero temperatures, the flood seasons, and the swarms of Manitoba mosquitos which they jokingly refer to as their provincial bird. They tell tales of the prairie landscapes that offer them feelings of freedom and appreciation for the environment and the never-ending prairie skylines. They tell of their Canadian experiences of summer camps, snowshoeing, and watching the great prairie skies, engaging in diversity, building their communities and expressing their concern at world issues in a Canadian manner demanding their governing bodies to hear their voices and address their concerns. They voice their gratitude and appreciation for economic, social, cultural and religious opportunities their locale has offered them that allow them to freely contribute to society and feel at home in their province and in their city of residence. They build bonds with co-existing communities and foster dialogues to work past stereotypes and negative borders. They are uniquely embedded with grassroots organizations, social movements and identities.

One of the participants explains,

I think that it really, where you live the culture of your... sort of where you grow up has an impact on what kind of Muslims you are and maybe what kinds of things you emphasize in your faith. Like when you're living in a small town those things are important like being good to your neighbor and stuff like that.

One of the male participants who had grown up in Winnipeg explained his experience in Toronto after moving from Winnipeg for work and family and later returning. He talked about the unique feeling of community and the reflection of the larger Winnipeg community in the Muslim community itself:

For new immigrants, sometimes- not all- but I do feel that is a strong thing that I've seen a lot of, you know 'we're here and we're going to still act however the hell we want and not necessarily conform to Canadian values, not so much in Winnipeg I didn't see that, but when I moved to Toronto I really saw that. I saw pockets everywhere of people that never left outside their community kind of thing, like their areas in Toronto, say Thorncliffe Park drive, where it's all those apartment buildings, and it's all Pakistani and it's all Pakistani shops around. Like there's no need for them to go out and assimilate, like they've never had a white friend in their life kind of thing, you know?... you want to stay close to your roots and you find comfort when you come here and people of your own, but there's a lot to be said about assimilating and getting to know the values the rules and just how society here works. You know, we're so lucky enough to have boring politics, I'm grateful of the fact we have boring politics you know. Not necessarily boring, there are a lot of things Harper's doing that I don't agree with but no one's in the streets dying because of it compared to say Pakistan or Egypt or something like that... But that's one of the things I did love about Winnipeg compared to Toronto. The community here-the Muslim community is diverse within itself. I remember growing up... that our friend's circles were full of Arabs, Somalis, Sudanese, Pakistani... I loved that... I remember not caring you know what I mean? I thought that was really cool even as a kid. Whereas when I moved to Toronto, like, you didn't associate with other...you went to the Pakistani mosque or you went to the Lebanese mosque, and you didn't really make friends outside your own ethnic group. Even within Pakistani's it was 'are you Sunni?', 'Are you this?', 'Are you Hanafi?' like there were pockets even within that. I've never experienced that in Winnipeg, even to do this day I've never experienced that... I'm so happy he [dad] came here, despite the cold weather, despite the mosquitos... Winnipeg is a really good place to be, it has that small town mentality yet I feel in a city... I felt that the Winnipeg Muslim community, here as a kid, really adopted that Winnipeg friendly feel like internally. Like I remember going to the masjid on a cold night for taraweeh and it was just warm, like you just felt warmth from everybody and I never felt that feeling anywhere else, [not even] when I prayed in beautiful mosques in Pakistan or mosques in the Middle East... I don't necessarily feel the way I did in that little mosque over on Hazelwood.

Anisa, the filmmaker, reflects on her experience in Winnipeg and how the locale, the landscape and the diversity has influenced her identity,

Winnipeg is a nice city because well there's [sic] different things about it. I mean if you just think about, like, the place, the land, like it's a very you know kind of you flat, prairie land, big, big skies, fresh, fresh air, fairly clean water. I mean these kind of things made me feel, I don't know, I feel kind of free and easy in that sense and very at peace with my environment. I love the outdoors, I feel-I don't feel closed in because it's so expansive right? I think all those things definitely have influenced the way I am. Like being around water, I really like that, I love trees, big, big trees, the smells of the outdoors, like those kind of things. I appreciate them a lot and when I go to places that don't have that, like mountains are beautiful, but after a while I do kind of feel claustrophobic and I do miss the prairie landscape, seeing like the big skies, and as you know, cold as our winters are, there is something about them that I do enjoy. I grew up here, so I love that crispness of that cool crisp air and the snow fall and that kind of thing like. I think the change of seasons, the fact that we have such a dynamic change of seasons, is really nice, like it didn't really occur to me for the longest time that there were countries that are just the same all year round, you know, like they have the same weather, everything's the same, and it didn't even occur to me until recently (laughs), that wow we have such beautiful change of seasons. I think that has influenced, I mean... I appreciate it... [I] already talked about diversity in Winnipeg, but I think

Winnipeg has been quite progressive too in environmentalism, we as a city recycled very early on where other cities hadn't been, we have a strong activist culture in Winnipeg, grassroots type culture, and I think that's the way I connected with a lot of non-Muslim people when I was in my teens and early twenties, and twenties. I guess, I became involved in some of this activist culture, like more human rights stuff. Like when the Bosnian genocide was happening and the Iraq war and these kinds of things. [I was] going to a lot of protests and I had even made some speeches at those demonstrations. I was involved in that sort of human rights-activism for human rights culture that exists in Winnipeg, and I kind of met different people in that circle that aren't Muslim but still share those values, and that was kind of an important phase in my life... They managed to maintain this passion for many years for like a single cause, and I found that for me that single cause and passion was always just the Muslim community like maybe not a specific thing but just being connected to it trying to develop it you know just that involvement... But that's the one thing about Winnipeg though, there's a lot of enthusiasm... like now with the, for example the CMLI, the Canadian Muslim Leadership Institute, and efforts they're doing and like building bridges and engaging other communities right, not just on a superficial level but actually talking about important issues things that matter to them. So I think there is, there are grassroots efforts that are being made that allow individuals and groups and communities to come together on a more deeper level.

On the uniqueness of the Winnipeg Muslim community and identity Asif explains,

It's different, I definitely do think. I think it's a smaller close-knit community, so, and that has certain aspects like it's, it's important to do things socially here in Winnipeg, whereas in larger cities you can actually get away with niching yourself and not having as much of a social aspect to your practice of religion... In Winnipeg it's not the norm to have a wedding that's not big, and to have a large aspect of that be religious it's a religious event in most Muslims' lives, getting married. In Winnipeg weddings are usually bigger and there's a lot more people invited but in Toronto it's quite normal for someone to get married and to only have immediate family at the nikkah ceremony. Bu in Winnipeg it's just not socially acceptable... and I think as well we don't have niches or at least up until now we don't have niche Muslim or sub Muslim cultures.

This lack of serious division or segregation was one of the factors that almost all interview participants expressed as uniquely Winnipeg and possibly due to the small-town character of Winnipeg. Despite the isolated character of Winnipeg many of the Muslims there interact regularly with others across Canada and across the world.¹¹⁴ They are aware of the circumstances and situations and ways of practicing in other places across North America. Many expressed a degree of amazement at the lack of serious social, ethnic and cultural segregation in the Winnipeg Muslim community and a sense of unity among Muslims in Winnipeg even with all the differences in cultures and ways of being Muslim that exist. In discussing community, Amar expressed,

I feel that the cultural segregation isn't (pause), like there's some level of it in Winnipeg but it's not to a great extent, at least at this, at our, generation— at least this is what I felt in this community. The fact that it's, the fact that Winnipeg is so small, the Muslim community is also less broken up... you go to somewhere in the states and you'll see that there's actually a mosque for different cultural groups: there's the Arab mosque, and there's the Pakistani mosque, and there's the Somali mosque, that's not

¹¹⁴ The last chapter discusses some of the ways in which these Muslims interact with other Muslims outside their locales in the forms of conferences, education events and so forth.

really to a great extent, [that] hasn't happened yet in Winnipeg... come to mind again [it] has to do with culture, because culture plays a huge role in Islam, I feel, in Canada at least. So, if you were to go Alberta for example, there's a huge Lebanese population there and so it's kind of like... you're practicing Islam but you also have to practice Islam in the Lebanese way and there's a lot of Lebanese-like in Edmonton. It's very similar to Lebanon, the way they practice Islam. For example... the weddings are very Lebanese and the way they interact with other people is very Lebanese... It plays a role but it's not – because it's not so broken up at least in my point of view. I mean someone else might have a different perspective but in my point of view I don't feel that Winnipeg's cultural groups have been divided to the same extent as the larger cities and so culture doesn't play as significant of a role as it does in the larger cities. If was to go to Edmonton, I'll be going there in about a week, I'll have to, I might have to practice Islam differently.

One of the issues that studies and media regarding Muslims always focus on is how Muslims are at odds with Western values and societies. During this research I looked for ways these Muslims might feel or be at odds with Canadian values and society. In fact, I did not find any major ways that these Muslims would fall outside 'being Canadian' other than the times they were conceptualized and perceived as such by their fellow Canadians. What I found was that the ways they felt like outsiders were often intellectualized as traditional practices that they could change or do differently. For instance, some of interviewees who had been brought up to dress in a certain manner made independent decisions about dressing more 'Canadian'. For instance, girls who were taught to wear a traditional style of hijab might choose to alter the way they wear the hijab and the clothes they combined with it. Another instance of feeling at odds with larger society was experienced through discrimination, both individual and systemic. Discrimination and alienation were addressed in several ways which are discussed in the preceding chapter. These include, but are not limited to, personal coping strategies like humour and desensitization to larger organized strategies like activism work, public forums and bridge building. For instance, the 2009 "Muslims of Manitoba" bus and billboard campaign to build awareness of the Muslims integrated throughout Manitoba; the 2009 and 2011 Public Teach-In Cafés on Muslim Women's Dress; or the 2011 CBC public forum on the question "Do Muslims need to Change?"

It turns out that these Muslims feel that feeling-on-the-outside was not an acceptable phenomenon to their embedded entities and actually worked to alleviate the burden and prove

themselves as fellow Winnipeggers and contributing Canadians. On an individual basis, the topic of identities being at odds was brought up in the interviews and one young man explains,

I think it depends on the situation... we had this conversation at CMLI during our last café and an answer that really stuck was I'm Muslim when my rights as a Muslim are taken away, like for example, when I'm told that I can't pray then I'm Muslim... but in general, I don't really feel like being Canadian and being Muslim contradict each other... like I said it's easier to practice Islam in Canada than it is in Lebanon or other countries around the world.

Activism work in the communities of Winnipeg, aside from addressing discrimination against their community, was a common activity for the project participants. Almost all participated in social organizations and movements to address and petition on the issues they felt were important to them. Though foreign policies and events were a common activism activity (for many Winnipeggers in fact) they also demonstrated and petitioned on local and national issues like First Nations' needs, government accountability, and a variety of other issues. When and where more immediate actions of volunteerism were needed they also participated in these, oftentimes through their religious organizations, but also through more mainstream organizations. These Canadian Muslims volunteered for community building, multiculturalism events, diversity advisory boards and programs, sporting events, emergency relief events like sandbagging, aid to neighbouring communities (like First Nations communities experiencing low resources), poverty programs and advisory boards, commerce events and so forth. They participated in nation building through the careers they worked in and the economy they functioned in. These Winnipeg Muslims were navigating and raising new generations. They also felt tied and appreciative of the prairie lands, local cultures and communities. They celebrate diversity in their own communities through festival and cultures days and participated in cross-cultural events like Folklorama which explored immigrant cultures as well as local cultural events like the Morris Stampede, the Corn and Apple Festival, Aboriginal Festivals and the Icelandic Festival thereby sharing in the unique history and diversity of Winnipeg.

The glory of larger metropolis centres often entices away from Winnipeg. They are drawn there for economic, academic, familial and other reasons. However, many of them return to their

Winnipeg roots to visit, sometimes to stay a while and sometimes they return for good. One of these such participants explains that after leaving for the United States she felt even more Canadian and identified as such when people asked about her. She says,

I think... after I left Canada (laughs), now because it's an identify and you feel proud that your part of Canada and like when I lived in [the USA] I felt like it was different and the people were different and just... the role of being Canadian is very important because it's a ... it's part of identity again, it's just kind of what you relate to and you have the freedoms I always say we have free health care (laughs) so that's a big thing... like I can say well I'm Canadian or yea Canada's better.

Amar explains,

To some extent, I feel like when I first came here I was – I compared Winnipeg to these bigger cities, to Toronto, to Vancouver and such, with time I really formed a connection or an attachment to Winnipeg. I've visited these bigger cities afterwards and I can't, I don't feel like I can live in them anymore... If I were to live anywhere in the future it would be a city similar to Winnipeg.

Another explains that there really is nothing like the small-town-city feel of the urban prairie city of Winnipeg. Despite its cold harsh winters, spring flooding and swarms of summer mosquitos she talks about its expansive skies, fresh easy outdoors and the comfort of the flat lands. She explained that when she is away she is amazed at the changes in landscapes and climates but always yearns to come home to the familiarity of the space and community and the comforts of the 'free and easy' prairie lands.

What then can we gather about this grassroots Canadian Muslim identity in Winnipeg? We gather that as Canadians these individuals and this community is proud of its Canadian history, its contributions and its networks. The community, its individuals and its organizations work to create bridges and understanding with their fellow Winnipeggers and further with fellow Canadians through various forms, programs and activities. We see that its individuals are appreciative of their freedoms and opportunities and expect that they will receive these Canadian privileges on par with other Canadians through their hard work and contributions although their experiences tell them that there are barriers they must work past. Though not always embracing of it, they do see that they are envisioned as minorities and do acknowledge that their religious traditions have negative connotations. They often feel that they are working harder than their mainstream counterparts at alleviating these negative connotations in the larger society. Despite this, all those interviewed

expressed hope and optimism about their place and the place of their associated communities in the nation and particularly in the locale they reside in. They find Winnipeg to be a close-knit community that is embracing diversity and generally a great place to be. They create grassroots organizations to address needs and issues that are pertinent to their communities (immigrant resources, refugee integration, women's agencies, child and family services, youth activities, etc.) and hope that they will help alleviate burdens on themselves, their identities and the needs of their community and city. They take responsibility for their place in the society of Winnipeg. Activism and volunteerism are strong components of their identities. When there are foreign or domestic affairs that cause a backlash at the community they address these issues in public forums proactively. They actively construct, discuss and express local and Canadian identities (in media and public forums). Though they find Canada generally tolerant, most identified Quebec as an unfriendly territory to Canadian Muslims.¹¹⁵ Many expressed that Winnipeg was a socially cooperative society and acknowledged issues that were locally pertinent like the issue of poverty and crime and hoped to find solutions for them in the future. Many identified knowledge and appreciation of local histories and cultures like the Mennonites, the First Nations, the Japanese, the newer concentrations of the Filipinos and the Ukrainians and also participated in diversity festivals to support cultural expressions. All of the project participants expressed appreciation for the small-town feel of Winnipeg, the proximity to nature, and the feeling of unity for the Muslim population in the city. These are some of the things that make up a grassroots expression of local Canadian Muslim identity for Winnipeggers. Taken in combination with the preceding chapters and specifically with the knowledge of history from the introduction and the more thorough exploration of the urban space of Winnipeg we get a clearer portrait of Canadian Muslim identity in Winnipeg. Grassroots Canadian Muslim identity is an embedded identity emerging out of the prairie city experience of a developing Muslim community in

¹¹⁵ As discussed in the section on "Other-ness" in Chapter 2, in the Introduction and in quotes during the course of this thesis.

Winnipeg; an identity that is nuanced, diverse, local, unique, changing and full of forward momentum.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Summary of Research Findings, Scope and Limitations

There is a rapid growth of Muslim populations in Canadian metropolis centres and as a result there are emerging forms of Canadian Muslim identity. Due to the increased Muslim presence in Canada a noticeable Canadian-born and raised generation has taken root. This has meant a unique Canadian Muslim identity is emerging with novel experiences and ties to certain Canadian locales, to local cultures and to Canadian values¹¹⁶. Research shows that the Canadian Muslim experience tends to include religion (Islam) as a foundation or anchor for values (Berns-McGown, 1999; Zine, 2009). Sometimes it is an ordering tool to structure daily life (Duderija, 2008), but often it is a source from which to draw inspiration, foster social participation and work towards contributing to the good of society through social programs (McDonough, 2000; Moosa-Mitha, 2009). This research data demonstrates that values, experiences, inspirations and worldviews for Canadian Muslims are also anchored in being Canadian and the experiences and learning from whatever this may mean to these individuals and the communities and societies surrounding them. In analysing the data from this project I had to ask, what does being Canadian mean? What does it mean to be Muslim? What, then, does it mean to be a Canadian Muslim? There is ambiguity within these concepts. There is also fluidity and negotiation – aspects often ignored in discourses on Muslims in Canada. This thesis explored the, perhaps novel, phenomenon of a grassroots Canadian Muslim – not Muslim in Canada, but rather, Canadian and Muslim together – identity that is locale specific, unique and more fluid than how Muslim identity in Canada is commonly perceived.

This identity is explored through an ethnographically based case study of second and 1.5 generation Muslims in the prairie city of Winnipeg. I initially set out to undertake this exploration with the understanding that an insider perspective, ethnographic study, attention to discourse, space

¹¹⁶ An ambiguous term yet the data shows that these individuals may use terms like Canadian values to describe things that they feel are shared societal values.

and lived religion in the scope of second and 1.5 generation Canadian Muslims were key to a deep understanding of Canadian Muslim identity. In this effort I made Winnipeg the site of my research and Winnipeg Muslims the focus of this study. I chose to explore the social and individual spaces and discourses to develop an understanding of what this grassroots Canadian Muslim identity looks like, how it was being negotiated and the factors that shape and reshape its negotiations and expressions.

Through these lenses, I have attempted to understand a communal and individual sense of Canadian Muslim-ness sprouting from the prairie city and urban culture of Winnipeg and its people. This identity has proven to be intimately tied to this locale as well as feeding in and out of larger discourses in the embedded Canadian Muslim population demographic. Its peculiarities and locale-specific ties, expressions and navigations are what make it so interesting. There is a very specific pride in being a Winnipeg Muslim; their local achievements, bonds, histories and hurdles are unique to this community and its individuals.

It is difficult to absolutely and completely comprehend identity; one must often discuss identity in abstracts, in parts and in identifiable ways in order to conceptualize what identity is. Canadian Muslim identity is truly complex and multifarious; this much is evident in the data presented here. The data was not easily analysed, described or conceptualized. Quotes, sentiments, experiences cannot always be broken down to efficient and piecemeal understandings. I wanted to let the narratives, the negotiations, the explanations, the words and experiences build their own meanings to demonstrate just how complex identity, Canadian Muslim identity, can be. Despite the discourses we hear in media and popular culture, the issues addressed by our political and systemic organizations, and what we think we know about Muslims, the truth is that Canadian Muslim identity is a kaleidoscope of vibrancy, thoughtfulness, confusion, negotiations and evolutions.

I developed this thesis around the understanding that identity is dynamic, constantly negotiated and renegotiated, shifting, deep, as well as internally and externally engaged. I approach identity in this way so that we may comprehend that static, constant and unchanging understandings of identity are not true representations of the complexities of second and 1.5 generation Canadian Muslims. This

ethnographic endeavour has explored an identity that is complex, surprisingly fluid, individual as well as communally engaged. It is deep in a way that we cannot totally, and all at once, grasp the complexities and nuances lying within. Though we may point to certain common factors, experiences and expressions, the truth is that within each individual these look different and identity is not just an inward or outward reflection but a dynamically engaged symphony between its many nuanced parts to culminate in a self and in its expressions. It is passive and active, individual and social, with self-reflexive and performative facets. I have here chosen to explore an identity that is often posed as religious outsider, but I have found that though it has roots in a religious identity alongside this are its roots in the place and culture of Canada as well as the unique experience of a specific locale. It is not a Muslim identity of a person in Canada; it is the identity of a people, of individuals and of Canadians who are also Muslim.

The primary approach that brought me to this work came from firsthand experience: experience with Canadian Muslims, with minority communities, experience with research on Muslims in academia and on-the-ground projects, and experience as an insider with an intimate knowledge of second-generation identity negotiations. This, and an ethnographic research method, is the deep approach I have brought to the work on Canadian Muslims. This approach allowed me to delve into the stories and experiences of second-generation Muslims that are not usually explored in field-work. I was able to move past the structure and rules of religion and explore identity as lived, as hybrid, as fluid and as negotiated.

The awareness that community and locale play an important factor in Canadian Muslim identity was a pivotal one for this study and in this context. One that I noticed is surprisingly absent from many studies on Muslims in Canada. It was an observation made prior to this particular project, in multiple circumstances in different communities, but one that I was able to explore in more depth and nuance through this work. To explore this aspect of identity for Canadian Muslims I chose a locale and community I had a deep understanding of in order to be able to delve into the material and explore these complexities. My findings corroborated that community and locale do indeed factor

into Canadian Muslim identity in important ways. One of the important findings was that because popular discourse and media often work to portray Muslims as foreign these individuals utilize their communal ties and their embedded local experiences to form alternate identity narratives that work to form more negotiable Canadian Muslim identities. For example, the expression of a Muslims of Manitoba identity and a Winnipeg Muslim identity is fairly common in this demographic of study. There was even a bus and public campaign in 2009 entitled “Muslims of Manitoba”. This type of locale-specific identity has allowed these Canadian Muslims to draw on local landscapes, cultural experiences, and social networks to build different aspects of identity and belonging.

In my method and theory chapter I presented a typology that proved to be efficient to organize activities and categorize but did not prove truly useful in unpacking the data. It gave a loose understanding of the ways in which Muslims can be talked about but proved not entirely useful in discussing the scope of Canadian Muslim identity since, in almost all of the cases, one’s individual Muslim-ness went through changes, shifts, expressions and negotiations that could not always be concisely contained or explained in the conceptual categories the typology presented. I did not feel a new typology was required and thus did not provide one. I came to a realization that this kind of typology confined these people to their religiosity which was in contrast to my realization that Canadian Muslim identity was actually much more fluid and did not continuously adhere to one of these categories but rather spanned a few over the course of time and sometimes even within a short time range. I did use this typology where useful but also employed different descriptive forms where appropriate; it was heavily dependent on what the research showed.

The method and theory could undoubtedly be expanded in breadth and reach going beyond the limited scope I was able to examine in this study. Despite my study’s limitations, this analytical framework has allowed me see into the complexities of this grassroots and embedded Canadian Muslim-ness. It has allowed the idea of a Canadian Muslim identity, rather than the identity of Muslims in Canada, to be a real possibility. The area requires much more study, however, I was able to provide a skeletal frame of how Canadian Muslim and locale specific grassroots identity is

navigated, constructed, negotiated, shaped and tied as well as what it might look like. This work serves as evidence that the terminology of a 'Muslim in Canada' can become a meaningless term as these people may be conceptualized as such but they firmly expressed that they feel Canadian; Canadian Muslim, in fact, and neither mutually exclusive but both together in complex and intertwined ways that other Muslims in the world may not be able to understand and cannot give judgement or voice to. This research has proven that there is not an identity of Muslim over Canadian or Canadian over Muslim for these individuals (though in early youth they may have felt as such). Rather, there are lived and continual negotiations and renegotiations to live "Canadian Muslim" as a fluid identity individually as well as communally and a desire to express these struggles over identity discourses to facilitate the future of an embedded Canadian Muslim identity.

The data itself was analysed through the conceptual lenses of lived religion, discourse and space. I wanted to explore the discourses at individual and collective levels and keep an eye on the spaces of discourse to try and uncover what was being expressed regarding being Canadian and being Muslim and see if there was something to discover. The themes that emerged were concentrated through analysis.

The data analysis explored the social, individual and local nature and navigations of Canadian Muslim identity for these Winnipeggers. In exploring social space and discourse I quickly realized the complexity of the social in Canadian Muslim identity. The data analysis began with an exploration of a series of social considerations pertaining to Canadian Muslim identity in order to clarify the social discourses and spaces to facilitate a deeper understanding of the identity focus of this study. In this first section of analysis I unpacked expectations and perceptions which led me to an important understanding about community regarding the individuals in this study. Community is both an intimate space (like an extended family) and a public forum (offering access to larger discourses, spaces, and systems). This led to a discussion on social organization(s) within the strategies chapter in order to consider just what organized social space can offer and how it can impact Canadian Muslim identity. It is in the space of community, and further in the space of community

organizations, where discourses can be shaped and spaces can be carved out at a meta-level and acceptance or non-acceptance can play a factor in individuals' navigations and access. This seems to indicate that the level of community – much like organization – is a vehicle to access meta-level discourses, spaces, changes and shifts. For instance, rhetoric of Islamophobia can be addressed through the vehicle of community organizations by engaging other higher levels of discourse systems like the media, politics, and so forth. Community, through social organizations, can also provide resources for private and self-negotiations which are further negotiated on intimate social levels of family and friendships. Essentially there seems to be a degree of separation of private and public in the space of the community even though it is an intimate insider space.

The media, for reasons described previously, takes up a significant portion of the first data analysis chapter. This is because my research and data point to the media as a powerful shaper of identity discourses. It does not just form opinions for outsiders but forms, shifts, and changes internal community discourses and dialogues. It provides discourses for othering and discourses for normalizing; it can shift who is accepted as a Canadian and who is painted as an outsider. The exploration of media makes it evident that a concept of “Muslim” is built in the public consciousness by the media and this “Muslim” affects how real Muslims often navigate, conceptualize and express their identities. For this reason I unpacked some considerations on the media to better understand the social shapers of Canadian Muslim identity.

In the unpacking of social considerations I also explore gender expectations and perceptions as well as gendered and racialized discourses. I unpacked some of the ways gender is conceptualized at a societal, communal, familial and individual level. I then explored research work on gendered and racialized discourses on Muslims to put into perspective the very real and quite severe effect public opinion and action has on Muslims in Canada. Though severe, it does give us a real understanding of the kinds of discourses and related issues around gender and race pertaining to Muslims that are employed at the level of society and nation that have real effects on the movements and freedoms of Muslims.

In the series of social considerations, it was important to unpack considerations on the urban space of Winnipeg since this concept of Canadian Muslim identity is locale focussed. Because this thesis poses a concept of grassroots Canadian Muslim identity in Winnipeg unpacking the social site of Winnipeg provides the context and depth to better understand the interview data. The unpacking of Winnipeg in this chapter should be taken in consideration along with the information presented in the introduction to build a foundation for the following chapters. The introduction to this thesis explored a history of Muslims in Canada, Muslim history in Winnipeg and the Muslim community in Winnipeg. This information along with the exploration of the space of Winnipeg provides the foundation for the understanding of the locale specific Canadian Muslim identity of focus in this study.

In the exploration of the locale I unpack some questions: How does the Muslim community of Winnipeg act on the space(s) around them in transformative ways? Are modes of sacred spaces different than the 'home country' and if so how? What do the changes and tensions say? Are these changes similar to other situations across Canada? And, does this space fit within the urban landscape of this Canadian context? The questions presented in this section speak to the locale, its peculiarity and its place in Canadian Muslim identity constructions, navigations and expressions as explored in this research work. The importance of these questions to this work resides in discovering that these people and their spaces are not somewhere over there, foreign and passively going about existence as minorities in Canada, but are in fact embedded, contributing, productive Canadians with a real presence and shape in the Canadian landscape.

The unpacking of the social considerations pertaining to Canadian Muslim identity explore the project data through the lens of social space to build an understanding of the city, community and its peoples' social systems to better understand Canadian Muslims. The social is an integral part of understanding minority communities and minority identity in Canada.

After unpacking the social considerations I focused the analysis towards the individuals of this study. In exploring the reflections of individual Winnipeg Muslims I sought to uncover strategies of

identity navigation. The data revealed interesting strategies for navigating perceptions, expectations and social spaces of identity for Canadian Muslims. One thought-provoking but fairly common strategy that came across in the interviews was that of desensitization towards discrimination and othering. Desensitization came across as an underplaying or ignoring of being publically engaged in discriminatory exchange. In some cases it meant that over time one stopped noticing being stared at for observable difference (skin colour, hijab, dress, etc). In other cases it meant downplaying a direct experience of discrimination, like being yelled at or having been the recipient of racist commentary. Exploring these experiences revealed that though they might be ignored or downplayed they were definitely not entirely un-experienced or forgotten. They were often recalled when discussing experiences of discrimination and, surprisingly, they were often recalled in humour and bonding with other Muslims as well as non-Muslims. This desensitization indicates a desire to alleviate alienation and the experience of discrimination on a personal-public level since many indicated that the instigator was acting out of ignorance and did not know any better. In other words, these individuals did not want to give significance to these types of sporadic attitudes in the public arena. The narratives did, however, show that these experiences were relatively “normal” though insignificant in the lives of second and 1.5 generation Canadian Muslims.

Humour was also a common thread in the interviews and observations. It acted as a base for bridge building, social bonds, normalizing discourses, alleviating alienation and a host of other experiences that come with living a minority identity. It was used to diffuse awkwardness, to pass information, to relay experience and appropriateness, and to discuss sensitive information, among other things. Humour was expressed as one of the most easily accessible tools to deal with otherness and discrimination.

Both humour and desensitization indicate an attempt to normalize aspects of the Canadian Muslim experience. Both act as a way to mediate negative experience and/or to bring to the fore things that seem strange to those outside this identity in a relatable manner. Another common strategy that emerged in the interviews was an attempt or multiple attempts to appear “Canadian” as opposed

to foreign. This came across as ways to reduce being perceived as 'other', to reduce the potential for discriminatory experience and ways for individuals to claim their Canadian-ness. The ways of consciously expressing 'Canadian-ness' differed from individual to individual. Some put importance in tailoring appearance, like clothing and hijab, to appear more mainstream or on trend to be seen as fashionable or even less noticeable compared to what the public commonly sees as foreign. Others put importance in being up to date with social and pop culture activities and references. Some extended the efforts to new generations and considerations when naming their children. Interestingly, a few of the interviewees simply did not disclose their religion at all in workplaces, schools, etc. to avoid being perceived in a negative light or engaged in certain uncomfortable ways. Though the way it was done varied, it was a fairly common thread in the interviews and I would extend to say that it was also a thread in collective attempts by Manitoba Muslims. For example, the Muslims of Manitoba bus and billboard campaign in 2009 attempted to show Muslims in 'normal' circumstances doing 'normal' Canadian things like playing sports, having careers and raising families. There are also many examples of the community's engagement with local news media to show their charity outreach and community outreach events to normalize their place in Manitoban society. It was evident that the Muslims of Manitoba, the community and its individuals worked towards acceptance as Canadians, as Manitobans, and as Winnipeggers and part of this was done through normalizing discourses and actions to be and appear like other Canadians.

It is not uncommon for Canadian Muslims to seek information on religion and religious matters in order to make informed decisions about the religious aspect of their lives in relation to the many other parts, wants, desires, and necessities. Many of the second and 1.5 generation Muslims in this study demonstrated a desire and activity towards seeking information for making informed decisions. Information sought varied from prayers, to halal food guidelines, to gendered issues, and so forth. The interviewees all demonstrated a desire to understand the foundations and regulations around religion to discover what may be available to them to change, shift, alter and negotiate in creating their individual religious and Canadian selves. Despite seeking the information some did not

choose to incorporate what they learned into their decisions. In other words sometimes the information filtered into what they ultimately decided to do, and sometimes it was ignored, but having the information to consider was an important and common factor in most of the interviewees' strategies and navigations of Canadian Muslim identity. New information was also welcomed as a part of their progression as Canadian Muslims throughout the years. None of the interviewees demonstrated a static view of religious information and decisions and seemed accepting of shifts and changes over time.

As these second and 1.5 generation individuals matured in their communities, in their social niches and in their societies many found themselves in the position of being a representative to varying degrees. It was very common in the interviewees for this project because they were involved in community life and often ended up as mentors and sources of information and advice for other community members. Some even experienced the role of official resource or representative for the community and explained how this responsibility could become a burden with sustained engagement, often interfering in one's personal desires and decisions. Outside the community many found themselves in unofficial and official roles of representative in classrooms, workplaces, friend groups, and even on the volunteer boards and organizations in which they participated. Most admitted that after having many engagements in this role it could become an interference in their personal lives and personal decisions because they would have to adjust their personal and more nuanced experiences and decisions to fit within boundaries of what people could accept as 'normal' and acceptable for Muslims. Many eventually chose to step away from these positions of increased scrutiny and live their Canadian Muslim lives in more individualistic and personal ways.

In exploring the personal and individualistic experiences of Canadian Muslim identity it became evident that aspects of identity can sometimes be a reaction or resistance towards certain social portrayals and expectations. It is not uncommon for identity to have threads of resistance and reaction towards prevailing discourses and structures. The major resistance and reaction observed in the interviews was towards the portrayal of Muslims as foreign and not truly Canadian. This was

partially discussed in the observations that many individuals had, at one time or another, adjusted their behaviour and expressions of identity to appear “more Canadian”. It was also seen in collective desires and work towards normalizing Muslim presence in society. The subject of reactive and resistant identities can form a topic of research all on its own and though I was not able to explore it in great complexity it was commonly reflected in the negotiations and expressions of Canadian Muslim identity.

A portion of my data analysis discusses social organization and social movement. Social movements and social organizations play a major role in the identity negotiations and discourses occurring at the micro-level, or the level of the individual. They can be tools for the individual to draw their discourses and their concerns to a collective level where changes may occur. Reversely, social organizations have also been sources for individuals; sources offering variety for engagement and consumption which could factor into identity. Social organization has an important place in the identity navigations, considerations, expressions and participations of second and 1.5 generation Canadian Muslims. It is a tool, a platform as well as a source and social space. It has the ability to shape and reshape internal and external discourses by acting as a bridge to larger discourses and a ground for collective ruminations. In exploring social organization I also came to notice social movement experience as a fairly normal aspect of Canadian Muslim identity. Though I was not able to explore social movements to the depth required of such a large topic I did get an idea of the importance of social movements and the participation in movements for this demographic. It seems some of the issues being engaged in social movement forums were also important topics or concepts for Canadian Muslim identity; for example, the presence of Canadian Muslims in rejecting violence and extremism. This led me to a more theoretical consideration of social movement which could be expanded into deeper exploration on the ground in an expanded ethnographic study. My exploration of strategies towards navigating Canadian Muslim identity was enlightening and could lead to many other avenues for discussion. Contained in this thesis are some of the more central strategies:

desensitization, humour, ‘fitting in’, information and decision making, being a representative, identities of resistance, social organization, and social movement.

Unpacking the social considerations and the individual level strategies pertaining to Canadian Muslim identity for second and 1.5 generation Muslims in Winnipeg led me to a more thorough consideration of what grassroots Canadian Muslim identity in Winnipeg entails.

Grassroots Canadian Muslim identity in Winnipeg is part of a larger Canadian identity. A Canadian identity is one that is somewhat ambiguous¹¹⁷ but often expressed as more welcoming and accepting than certain other ‘Western’ nations¹¹⁸, globally concerned, multicultural and protective of its citizen’s rights¹¹⁹. Whether the reality of Canada reflects this or not, this exploration of Canadian Muslim identity demonstrates that the individuals in this study do have an awareness and buy-in of these ‘Canadian’ identity values. That is to say, many of them place themselves in this narrative of the Canadian experience; a narrative that is friendly, tolerant, globally concerned, peaceful, locally active, appreciative and protective of the rights the Canadian Charter and Multiculturalism policy and programs lay out. Many of them expressed a gratitude for their Canadian experiences, freedoms and opportunities while also holding a certain cultural awareness of circumstances and freedoms (or lack thereof) outside Canada.

Grassroots Canadian Muslim identity in Winnipeg is also a part of a larger Canadian Muslim identity that is itself diverse. In many respects second and 1.5 generation Muslims are trailblazing identity shifts, considerations and discourses. Their needs, their experiences, and their movements forward are creating new understandings of what being Canadian Muslim means. No longer an

¹¹⁷ This ambiguity may, in fact, be the tool that has allowed our diversity to build and hinder exclusionary discourses to some extent. There are of course countering opinions.

¹¹⁸ Specifically Canadians like to claim they are nicer, friendlier and more accepting of our southern neighbours (Sayed, 2006: 50).

¹¹⁹ Canadian multiculturalism and Multiculturalism policy puts forth the idea that difference is acceptable (Biles & Ibrahim, 2005; Khan, 2002; Sayed, 2006). ‘Visible minority’ status was added to the 1996 census thereby indicating another acceptable category of ‘Canadian’ (Beyer, 2008). Canadian citizenship has remained relatively open for a period of time which indicates an encouragement for immigration and diversity (Adams, 2007). Surveys indicate that Canadians feel diversity contributes to the prosperity of society and is central to the Canadian imagination (Biles & Ibrahim, 2005: 165). The values of democracy, pluralism, individuality, equality, freedom, and safety are central to the Canadian imagination. Although Canadian history demonstrates tendencies to marginalize non-European, non-Christian minorities, things are perceived to have changed (Bramadat & Seljak, 2005: 224).

immigrant generation but raised and embedded in the Canadian landscape they are fashioning a new kind of diversity amongst their generation; less concerned with forming a new life in a new land and more concerned with how to exercise, express and understand their various hybrid identities. This demographic of Canadian Muslims is making unique identity negotiations different from the generations before them and more rooted in their diverse Canadian experiences. New religio–social concern movements that are rooted in the Canadian Muslim experience have also emerged. Some examples are ‘progressive’ value groups, LGBT–Muslim communities, the Unmosqued movements and dialogues, women–led religious communities and discourses and so forth¹²⁰. There is a certain hybridity in the Canadian Muslim identity experience for second and 1.5 generation Muslims that demonstrates a desire for fluidity as well as a desire for freedom, choice, acceptance and belonging.

The individuals observed in this study, as well as their community, demonstrated that they do not just see themselves as Canadian Muslims but specifically as Canadian Muslims centered in Winnipeg, Manitoba; as Winnipeg Muslims or Muslims of Manitoba. They demonstrated pride and gratitude in this unique identity experience. Their narratives also reflected the ways in which their identities have been influenced by and are embedded in their locale and its many complex nuances and networks. They expressed pride and gratitude at having survived (and even enjoyed!) many long, cold prairie winters, the flood seasons, the summer mosquito populations (also jokingly known as the provincial bird), and the isolation of their prairie city. Many of the individuals interviewed delighted in the vast prairie landscape, the open skies, the proximity of farming communities, and the small–town character of Winnipeg and their community. They talked about their social networks and the double–edged sword of bumping into people you knew anywhere you went because of that small–town character of the city and its communities. Many were appreciative that despite the actual size of the city and its Muslim population they could still hold community activities that united the

¹²⁰ Though these are not occurring only in Canada their existence here is rooted in a certain Canadian experience and a certain discourse for tolerance and pluralism. Additionally, these type of groups may not apply directly to the individuals in this study but their existence, the fact that they are part of a larger discourse on Canadian Muslims, can filter into identity questions, considerations or even simply a realm of knowing that previously was not as accessible.

population and gave a sense of one big community. This sense of one big community was expressed across the interviews as one of the things that made Winnipeg Muslims unique from other metropolis centre Muslims¹²¹.

One of the common portrayals of Muslims in media and public discourse these days is that they are at odds with Canadian society and values. In my research I did not find many ways that these Muslims felt at odds with society except, interestingly, in the way that they were portrayed by media and in the resultant way this developed public perception. In many ways this was expressed as the way people perceived their appearance (dress and skin colour). The thing that really makes Winnipeg Muslims grassroots Canadian Muslims is their desire to find local solutions to their issues. For instance, the related issue of discrimination, misunderstanding of, and fearing Muslims prevalent in Canadian discourses and media was and is being dealt with in locally focused ways. In 2009 ISSA sought government funding to carry out an anti-discrimination campaign that resulted in bus tags, posters and billboards that attempted to ‘normalize’ Winnipeg Muslims across Winnipeg society. Muslims were shown in their careers, playing sports, raising families; some women were shown wearing hijabs while others were not. Essentially this campaign was an attempt to say ‘we are not that different’ and to show diversity within Muslim populations. Further, Winnipeg's Muslim youth participated in a forum hosted by CBC through the internet, social media and the radio in 2013 to ask the public the question “Do Muslims need to change?”. In order to foster dialogue a range of youth were available to engage in conversations for this forum. The Muslim-based organizations in Winnipeg have also come together to host ‘Public Teach-In Cafes’ or public forums several years in a row. These public forums were centered on women and Islam for the general public to come and participate in conversations and dialogue and ask questions to local Muslim women about their experience and views on hijab. These are just some examples of Winnipeg Muslims tackling a

¹²¹ Though in practice this meant both negative and positive experiences for the members; for instance, majority decisions meant some people were not pleased with status quo. It also meant that discourses had wider reach and if there was a concern, consensus for change could be developed because of the connectedness of networks. Additionally, it meant that the size of the community often stretched resources very thin.

Canadian Muslim issue at a local level and some of the ways Winnipeg Muslims work to create a place in Winnipeg society for them while also working to alleviate negative perceptions that exist on a Canadian level.

Winnipeg Muslims also, individually and collectively, contribute to local community building efforts like sandbagging in flood seasons, Winnipeg Harvest food bank efforts, inner city resource building, support for First Nations issues, bridge building between communities, and multiculturalism fostering events, to name but a few. They are locally concerned and engaged both as individuals and through community efforts. They participate in community, city and society building projects through careers, volunteer works, social movements and social organizations.

Besides active contributions to society and community, Winnipeg Muslims also engage in the social culture of the prairie city and its surrounding towns and cities. They take their families to the farming community festivals, like the Morden Corn and Apple Festival, the Morris Stampede, the Gimli Viking Festival; they participate in local Aboriginal festivals as well as multicultural events and festivals like Folklorama. They also look forward to the summer music, film and arts festivals. They embrace the Winnipeg arts scene, foodie interests and small segmented nightlife. They go vegetable picking, visit neighbouring farms, enjoy the beauty of the prairies, complain about the isolation, mosquitos and cold winters, and despite the complaints they even enjoy the prairie winters and the many activities that are common in such snowy climates. Grassroots Canadian Muslim identity in the prairie city of Winnipeg is a multifaceted and diverse identity that is being constantly negotiated and renegotiated, it is privately nurtured and fluid, publically expressed and engaged, it is embedded, local and unique.

Concluding Remarks and Looking Forward

This research, the data and the analysis make it possible to form insights and understandings about the transformations going on at a societal level and how these translate to community and individuals (and vice versa) and form a backdrop of what it means to be a Canadian. This concept of

Canadian Muslim identity I have explored has proven tied intimately to this locale as well as to larger discourses in the embedded Canadian Muslim population demographic. These Canadian Muslims have shown a pride and appreciation for the prairie city of Winnipeg, for the landscape, culture and society, for their community and even for the difficulties in figuring out what being Canadian Muslim feels, looks, and is shaped like, by themselves and others like them. This project provides a fuller portrait of Canadian Muslim identity of this specific sort: grassroots, locale, and of a new generation that are born and/or bred Canadians. They reflect the changing needs of Muslims in the 21st century as well as the foundations set by their immigrant parent generation. They are, as one participant described, the future of Canadian Muslims.

Though I am restricted in the scope and breadth of a single project I feel that my fieldwork is the real pearl of this endeavour; the data is a chasm of nuances and complexities that require complex unearthing, some of which I was able to bring to surface. The depth –the deep complexity –was what I found lacking in considerations of Canadian Muslims. What I found in this work is that these Canadian Muslims are dynamic, multifaceted and unique; they move beyond the rhetoric of a disadvantaged minority population and realize the potential in creating embedded bonds and roots in their locales. The narrative prejudicially applied to them in the public consciousness, in general opinion studies and in popular media is one of foreigner, victim, oppressive peoples and continual outsiders but they refuse to accept this as the status quo. They have created a strong communal presence and this is both reflective of and available for navigating their individual identities. They move beyond the popular rhetoric of being posed between two clashing worlds to live full and complete lives; they demonstrate an embedded–ness as Canadian Muslims, not one or the other but both, together.

Winnipeg Muslims settled in this particular locale, with their surroundings, their experiences, their communities and their networks, play a significant part in their identity considerations, negotiations and navigations. The Winnipeg Muslim identity is unique. The second and 1.5

generation Canadian Muslims in this study demonstrate embedded grassroots Canadian Muslim identity tied to their prairie locale; they express gratitude, pride, needs and desires also tied to their particular locale. They have expectations of forward momentum, change and a better and more cohesive society, not unlike other Canadians. They expect equality, freedom, justice and tolerance. Expressions of Canadian Muslim identity differ across the country, but here, in this thesis, I have attempted to shed light on grassroots Canadian Muslim identity experience in the prairie locale of Winnipeg.

Ultimately I have set out to do what my thesis required of me; to conceptualize and explore a locale specific grassroots Canadian Muslim identity in the second and 1.5 generation. This exploration has opened many curiosities. I have come to understand that the data cannot be simplified or unpacked in its fullness in the scope of this single project. It requires further expanded considerations to try and grasp what this Canadian Muslim-ness means. Exploring the possibility of Canadian Muslim identity is an intellectually fascinating arena and has left me with many more questions for future research. Some of these queries pivot on gender, some on a community bursting out of its 'smallness'¹²², some on the curious absence of extremist ideologies, and many pivot on the particular and peculiar ways individuals navigate the different aspects of forging this new Canadian identity.

I believe strongly that an expanded study with increased resources would prove similar considerations but allow for more depth of analysis and potentially allow for more variation in data. Some of the questions at the forefront of my imagination on ending this project are: How could similar research tailor toward an understanding of gendered experience? How will the strategies of Canadian Muslim identity shift for the younger cohort in this study after five or ten years? Would a parallel study in another medium-sized Canadian metropolis reveal similar grassroots identity

¹²² As previously described, Winnipeg is no longer a small city but a major metropolis of Canada; despite this the city, its people and its communities still hold onto the small city character and take pride in not sharing the character of larger cities of Canada. This small town character is reflected in the Muslim community, despite its size growing larger and larger each year and its population numbers being above 10, 000 according to Statistics Canada (2011) the community still holds onto a united character and lives out its negotiations and activities with the vibe of a small community.

experiences? Finally, what does the future of Canadian raised and locally embedded Muslim identity and experience really look like. The contemporary media and politics surrounding Muslims can often be frightening but this exploration has led me to understand that despite these difficulties and misinformed perceptions Canadian Muslims will continue to make roots and negotiate their identities, belonging, and equality in the scope of the Canadian nation alongside their Muslim-ness.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Form

Consent Form for Participants- Interview

Research Project: Canadian Minorities in the Urban Space- An Exploration of Grassroots Canadian Muslim identity

As mentioned in initial contact, my name is Qamer Hameed and I am a student at the University of Ottawa working on my Master's Thesis Project. I would like to interview you because I am interested in Muslims in Canada in smaller metropolis/urban centres. As a Canadian and as a Muslim you have much to contribute to how people understand your community, participation and place here in Canada. I appreciate your willingness to participate in this voluntary study that should last an hour or two in a single occurrence if you should choose to be interviewed. We can discuss a mutual location for an interview that will provide the necessary privacy such as an office. This participation will ask you to reflect on and discuss your experience as a Canadian Muslim and will be audio recorded.

Please understand that you do not need to answer any questions you do not want to, and that I want you to tell me at any time if you do not want to continue with the interview without fear of reprisal. You may refuse to answer any question(s) and are free to withdraw from the study at any time before the research is presented without consequence. You may ask any questions about any part of my research project and I will provide you the answer. Please note that you are not obliged to participate if you do not wish to be involved or feel uncomfortable.

I would also like you to know that the information you have so kindly provided could be used in several different ways. I intend to use the information to construct my thesis project examining minority Canadians under the supervision of Dr. Peter Beyer at the University of Ottawa who may be reached at the University of Ottawa by contacting our department at (613) 562-5714 or by contacting myself. Full contact information will be provided below. The information may further be used by myself in lectures, conference presentations, and/or potential publications. Any request of information or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project can be addressed to the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research.

I do not foresee any discomfort or harms created by this research but if you feel such at any point you may withdraw from the study. Participation in this study will expand and enrich research on minorities in Canada and potentially add to the betterment of a diverse society.

If you are interested in reading my thesis upon completion you may contact me at the number or email provided.

I intend to keep all participants anonymous by using pseudonyms and restricting discernible markers of identity. I alone will have access to the pseudonyms or codes that would link the data to the participants' identities.

Electronic data will be password protected while physical data will be kept under secure lock and key at the University of Ottawa. Data will be kept under protected supervision for 10 years following the completion of

my thesis research project. All data will be stored securely under guidelines directed by the University of Ottawa Ethics Board.

I would like you to know that I am accountable to you for the accuracy of the information and for other aspects of the research. I am also accountable to the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity at the University of Ottawa. If you have any concerns about the way this study is conducted you may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5 at (613)562-5387 or via email at ethics@uottawa.ca. I encourage you to first ask me any questions you may have about the work.

Do you freely consent to participate in this study? YES NO

I thank you sincerely for your participation; please see below for all contact information.

Qamer Hameed

Acceptance: I, _____(NAME)_____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Qamer Hameed of the University of Ottawa Department of Classics and Religious Studies, which research is under the supervision of Dr. Peter Beyer.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact the researcher or his supervisor.

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is yours to keep.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Contact Information: